

A multi-story brick building with a ground-floor cafe and outdoor seating. The building has several floors of windows, some with awnings. The ground floor features large arched windows and a white facade. In front of the building, there is an outdoor cafe area with wooden tables, black chairs, and red umbrellas. People are sitting at the tables, and a few are standing. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

# HERITAGE AND SOCIETY 2019

HERITAGE COUNTS



Our cultural heritage inspires a sense of awe and wonderment; it connects us to the past and influences our understanding of who we are today. Heritage shapes and defines our identity and provides crucially needed continuity and stability in an ever changing, fast paced world.

.....

As **individuals**, the historic environment enriches our lives. It's a source of pride and identity; it provides a deep emotional connection and a focus for shared experiences.

As a **society**, understanding our heritage helps make sense of our place in the world. It helps create a sense of familiarity and belonging, bringing communities together and connecting us to our shared past, in all its diversity.

*Heritage and Society* presents evidence on the ways that the historic environment impacts individuals and communities. The evidence is gathered from a wide range of reliable sources including major household panel surveys, systematic literature reviews, bespoke evaluation studies and public opinion surveys.

The evidence is structured around six topics:

1. Heritage **enriches our everyday lives and is enjoyed by millions** (p.4)
2. Heritage is a **source of national and local pride** (p.14)
3. Members of the public **care and want to secure the future of our heritage** (p.18)
4. Heritage **enhances our experience and connection with place** (p.22)
5. Heritage is the story of us: it **promotes collective identity and belonging** (p.26)
6. Heritage is **important for our health and wellbeing** (p.34)

All the evidence is offered here as brief, bite-sized, statements with links to the detailed evidence sources for more technical readers or those with specific evidence needs.

Together with *Heritage and the Economy*, *Heritage and Society* can be used by anyone to make the case for heritage.

# 1. Heritage enriches our everyday lives and is enjoyed by millions

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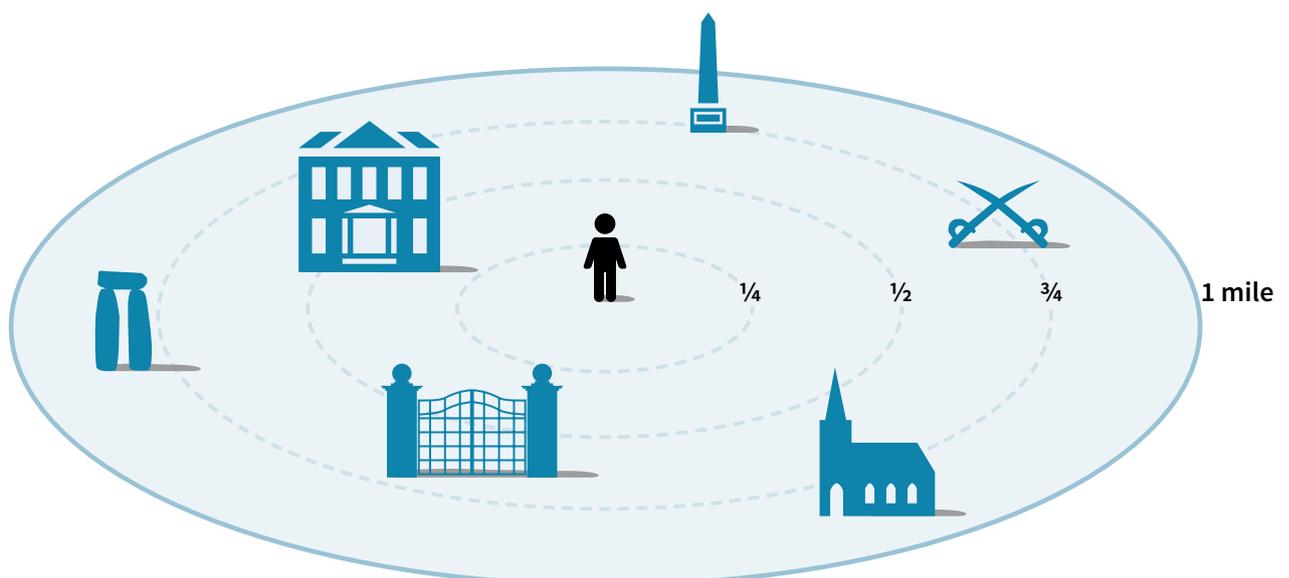
Heritage is all around us. All thriving places, whether a medieval market town or a post-war city centre, have a unique and distinctive history at their core. Heritage is part of the fabric of our everyday lives, providing opportunities for unique experiences and engaging people all year round.

- **Our heritage is all around us, with 99.3% of people in England living less than a mile from a listed heritage asset.** Historic England's National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is the only official, up-to-date, register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites in England. In 2019 there were over 400,000 registered assets. The NHLE data was mapped against the location of England's population using the 2011 Census data demonstrating the close proximity between residents and heritage ([Historic England 2015](#)).
- **Heritage is comparatively more important to UK citizens.** 53% of UK citizens state that heritage is "very important" to me personally compared to a 42% EU average. Evidence from

a special Eurobarometer Survey of 27,900 EU citizens in 2018 demonstrates the comparable importance of heritage to UK citizens. The UK ranks 3rd out of 28 EU countries. 35% of UK citizens "totally agree" that the presence of cultural heritage influences their choice of holiday destinations. This is the 4th highest proportion of the survey respondents from the 28 EU countries ([European Commission 2018](#)).

- **UK citizens visit heritage sites twice as often as EU counterparts.** According to the Eurobarometer Survey of 27,900 EU citizens, 20% of UK citizens visit heritage sites frequently (more than 5 times in 12 months) compared to the EU average of 10%.

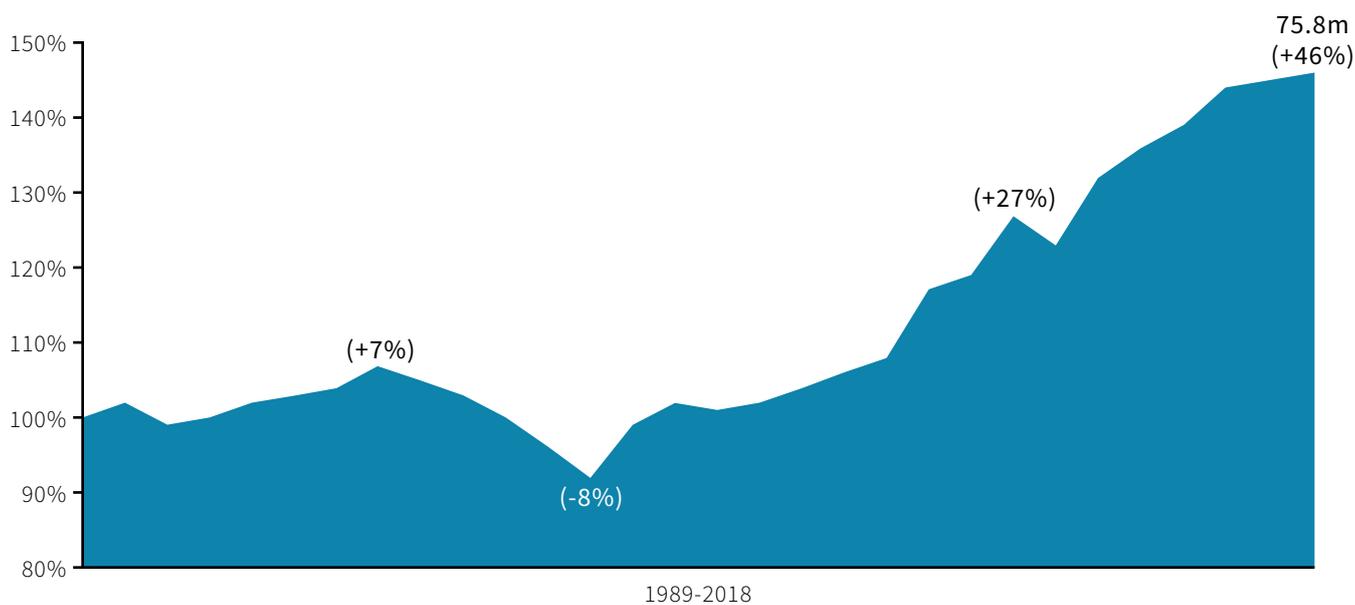
## Distance from home to listed heritage assets



Queen Victoria monument, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester.



## Visits to historic properties 1989-2018



1989 = 100%

1989-2018

Source: [BDRC \(2019\)](#)

- **England's heritage is enjoyed by millions, with 75.8 million visits** to 725 historic visitor attractions recorded in 2018-19. The Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions is an official statistic produced in adherence with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics \(2018\)](#). In 2019 5,497 attractions are invited to participate in the survey. 1,501 English visitor attractions responded to the survey in 2018 of which 725 are categorised as heritage attractions ([BDRC 2019](#)).
- **Visits to heritage attractions have increased by 49% since 1989.** The Annual Survey of Visits to Visitor Attractions has been monitoring the performance of visitor attractions and measuring the number of visitors to each attraction since 1989. As responding historic sites tend to vary between years, the trend is estimated by asking operators to provide the number of visits for both the survey year and the previous year ([BDRC 2019](#)).
- **Historic houses continue to be the most popular type of historic visitor attraction accounting for 39% of all heritage visits,** followed by visits to historic gardens (14% of all heritage attraction visits) ([BDRC 2019](#)).
- **Membership to heritage organisations has grown dramatically over the past decade.** The National Trust reports a 50% increase in members since 2006/7; English Heritage a 71% increase since 2007/8; while membership to Historic Houses has risen by 112% since 2007 ([Heritage Counts 2018](#)).
- **In 2018, the National Trust had 5.2 million members while membership of the English Heritage Trust exceeded 1.1 million for the first time ever** ([Heritage Counts 2018](#)).
- **Our heritage is all around us. 72.4% of all members of the public engaged with heritage by visiting a heritage site at least once during 2018/19,** similar to 73% of the population that did so during 2017 ([DCMS 2019c](#)). The Taking Part survey is a national survey of over 8,000 UK citizens that records participation and engagement in heritage through visits to a city or town with historic character; a monument such as a castle, fort or ruin; a historic park or garden open to the public. The face-to-face survey has been running since 2005/6 ([DCMS 2018](#)).



Bracken control, Scale Beck, Loweswater, Cumbria.  
© Historic England Archive



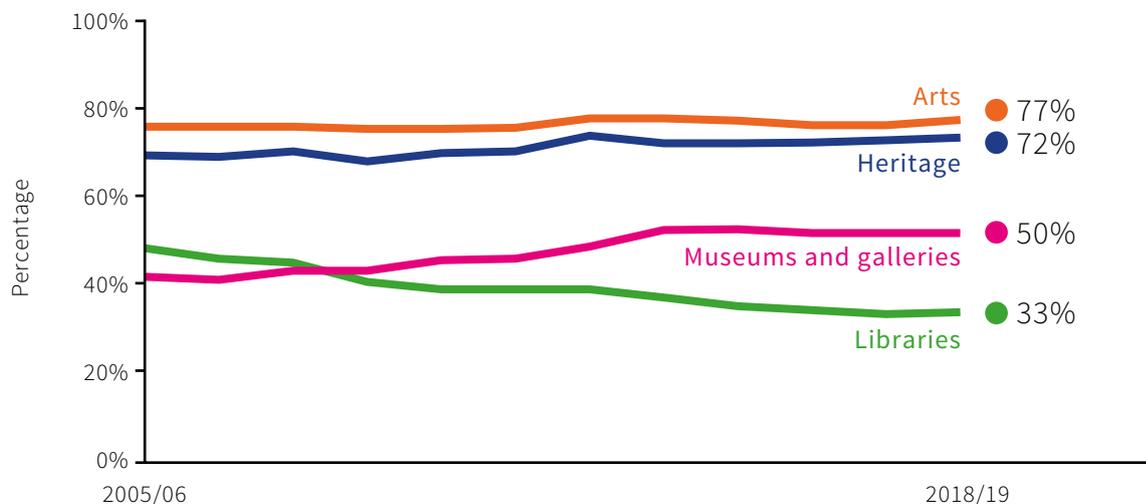
Laying flooring, Adlingfleet, East Riding of Yorkshire.  
© Historic England Archive

## Continuous increase in membership to heritage organisations



- The Taking Part survey 2019 reports that amongst adults, the key motivation for visiting heritage sites is to spend time with friends and family (42.4%), closely followed by having a general interest in heritage or history (41.6%) ([DCMS 2019c](#)).
- Members of the public regularly engage with heritage. 44.5% of adults visited a heritage site three or more times during the past year, while 27.9% had visited once or twice during that period. In Year 13 (2017/18) the Taking part survey yielded a representative cross-sectional sample of c8,100 adults aged 16+ ([DCMS 2018](#)).
- Cities and towns with historic character are the most frequented heritage sites, visited by 59% of those contributing to the Taking Part survey in 2017/18. Historic parks and gardens open to the public and monuments such as castles, forts or ruins were also popular destinations- visited by 43% and 40% of the public each year ([DCMS 2018](#)).

## Proportion of adults engaging in cultural activities in the last 12 months



Source: DCMS (DCMS 2019c)

- In 2018/19, 70.5% of children aged 5-10 had visited a heritage site outside of school in the last 12 months. Amongst young adults aged 11-15, 67.2% visited heritage each year (DCMS 2019d).

The Taking Part survey reports evidence from face-to-face interviews with a nationally representative cross-sectional sample of youth (aged 11-15) and children (aged 5-10).

- Heritage engagement amongst young people is linked to: their engagement in other leisure activities; adult encouragement and their socio demographic profile. A detailed cross sectional and longitudinal regression analysis of the Understanding Society survey data found that:

- time spent on social media and TV is negatively related to levels of engagement, particularly for girls, whereas time spent on homework and household chores are positively related to levels of engagement. 51% of young people spending an hour or more per day on social media visited heritage sites compared with 65% who spend less than an hour a day.
- young people's engagement is higher where adults in their household participate in similar activities. 67% of young people living with adults who visited heritage sites, reported making such visits themselves, compared with 38% of those living with non-visitors.
- There is a correlation between participation and encouragement from family members.

*Cultural education and participation in schools is one of the main routes by which young people come to engage with the arts and culture... (However) The average number of arts subjects taken at Key Stage 4 (GCSE level) is the lowest in a decade (NESTA 2018).*



Visitors reading information panels on the approach to Rievaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire.

- **Engagement varies among young people from different ethnic groups.** Young people of Black Caribbean origin had relatively low levels of heritage engagement. (39% vs 59% for white young people) ([Lakey et al 2017b](#)).

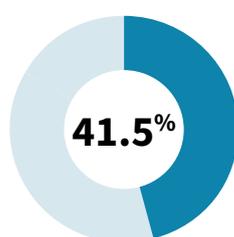
■ **The majority of the public who visit heritage sites do so consistently, visiting heritage sites every year.**

The Taking Part survey provides evidence from a sample of people who have been re-visited each year since 2011/12 (a longitudinal sample). Analysis in 2016 shows that more than half (54%) of respondents visit heritage consistently every year over the reviewed 3 years. 14% of respondents were classified as *Former visitors* (reporting a visit at the first year but not the third) while 10% were classified as *New visitors* (reporting a visit at the third

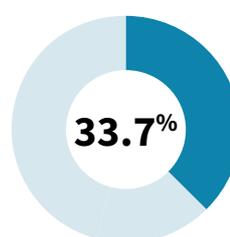
year, but not the first). *Former visitors and New visitors have a similar socio-demographic profile – they are more likely to be young, more likely to report a disability, more likely to come from urban areas and less likely to be white.* This suggests a different pattern of heritage engagement amongst different socio-demographic groups ([DCMS 2016](#)).

- **The top three barriers to visiting places of historic interest cited by non-visitors are lack of time (41.5%), lack of interest (33.7%) and a health problem or disability (14.9%).** The Taking Part survey reports the reasons why people do and do not engage in heritage. Amongst those that do visit heritage sites, the main reason why people reduce the frequency of their visits is due to ‘less free time’; other preferred activities; ‘increased work demands’ and finally health problems ([DCMS 2019](#)).

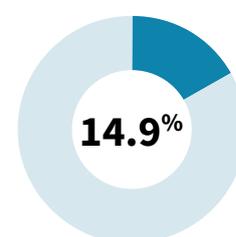
## Top three barriers to visiting places of historic interest



Lack of time



Lack of interest



Lack of health



Visitors reading the guidebook at Rievaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire.

■ **There are significant barriers to engagement with heritage particularly in urban areas.** A report on behalf of the National Trust using a mixed methods approach, finds that amongst individuals, key barriers to engagement are lack of awareness, lack of diversity in the existing heritage support base, lack of inclusivity from decision-makers in the heritage sector and economic barriers to participation ([BOP 2018](#)).

■ **There are significant regional differences in heritage participation.** The Taking Part survey is a household survey of over 8000 people recording their participation in heritage, arts and sports activities. London has the lowest proportion of adults who had visited a heritage site in 2018/19: 57.1% compared to 66% for the North West. The South East (81.5%), South West (80.1%) and

East of England (80.3%) were estimated to have larger proportions of people having visited a heritage site in the past 12 months ([DCMS 2019c](#)).

■ **Participation in heritage varies between areas with lower levels of deprivation and those with higher levels of deprivation:** In the 10% most deprived areas, 59.8% of adults had visited a heritage site in the past 12 months, compared with 85.7% for those in the 10% least deprived areas ([DCMS 2019c](#)).

■ In 2018/19, those of **75.4% of those of 'White' ethnicity visited a heritage site in the past 12 months, while those with ethnicities described as 'Asian' or 'Black' had significantly lower engagement: 56.3% and 42.3% respectively.** This is a trend that has remained relatively stable since 2005/6 ([DCMS 2019c](#)).



## Visits to heritage sites

**70.5%**  
sample: 1,580

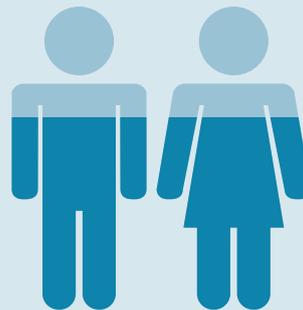
**Children  
5-11 years**



visited a heritage site at least once in the last 12 months (not as part of a school visit).

**72.4%**  
sample: 8,100

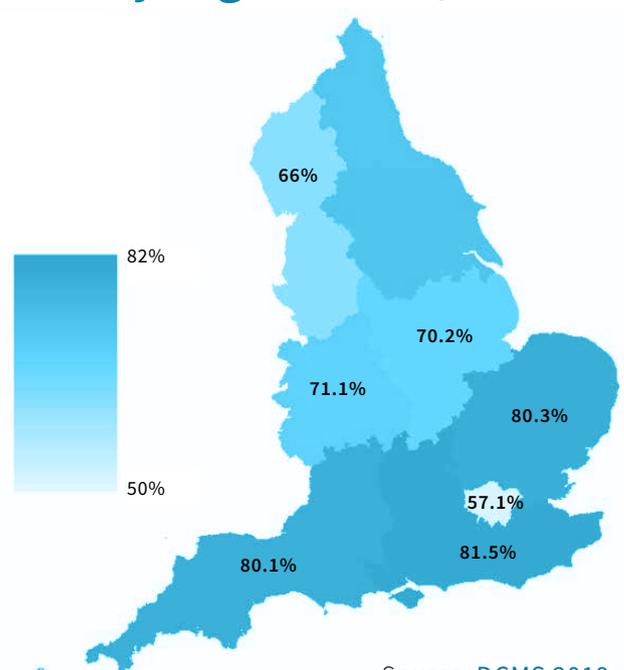
**Adults  
16+ years**



visited a heritage site at least once in the last 12 months.

- Other things being equal, **adults were less likely to visit heritage sites or to have taken up visiting if they were aged 16 to 24 years, of Asian or black ethnic origin, or in poorer financial circumstances.** These findings come from analysis of longitudinal data from a panel of 20,007 adults from England who completed the Understanding Society adult survey in 2010/11, and again in 2013/14 (Lakey et al. 2017a).
- The gap between those visiting heritage with a long-term illness or disability and those without has narrowed during the last decade, from 8.4 percentage points in 2005/06, to only 4 percentage points. This suggests that accessibility to heritage sites is improving. This is important as long-term health problems or disability was found to be **the third most common barrier to visiting a heritage site** (DCMS 2019c).

## Heritage engagement by region 2018/19



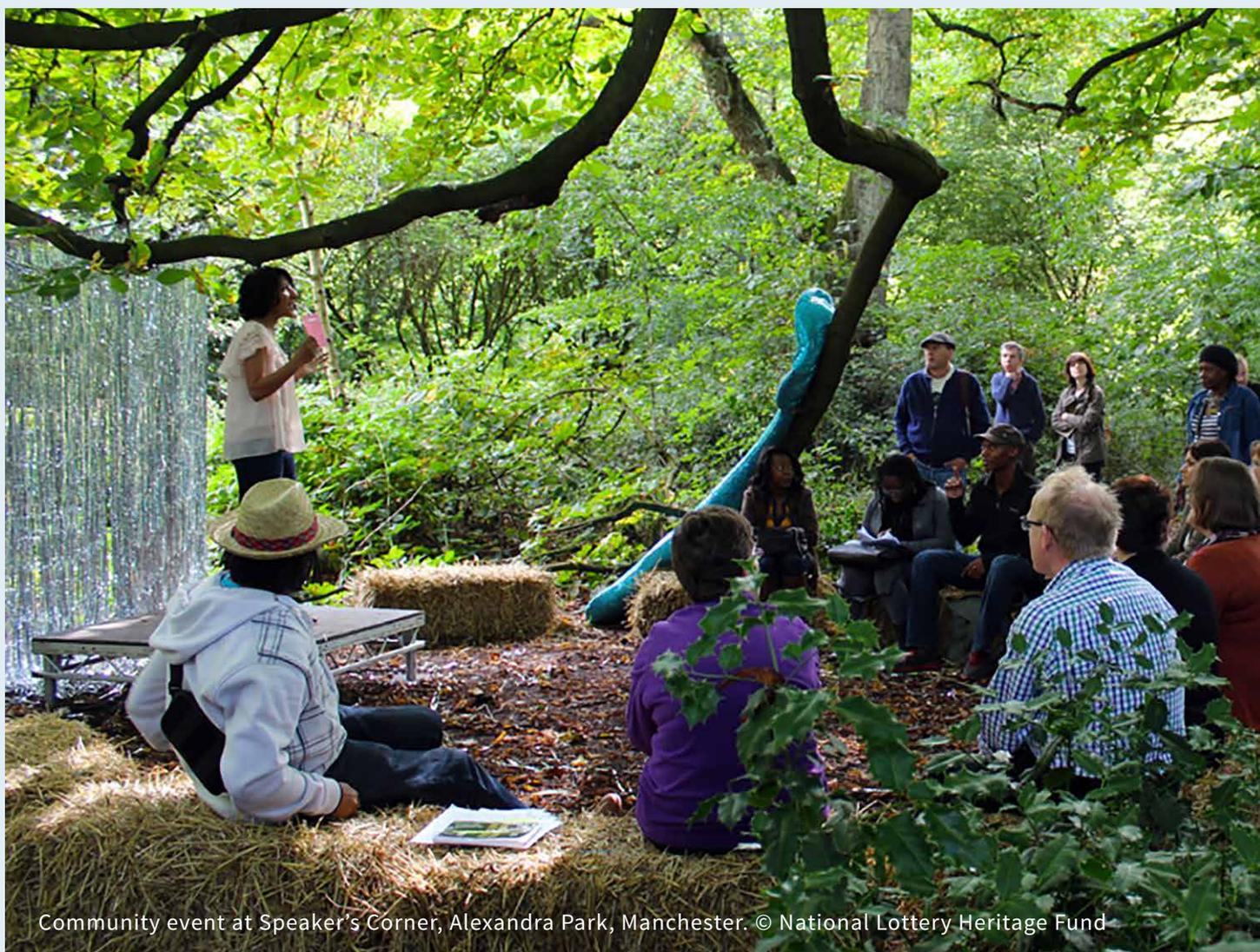
Source: DCMS 2019c

## SPACE TO THRIVE: EVIDENCE OF THE BENEFITS OF PARKS TO PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

Parks and green spaces are a key component of social infrastructure; ‘the physical places and organisations that shape the way people interact’ (Klinenberg, 2018, p.5). A recent evidence review commissioned by National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund, conducted by Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield includes a peer review of 385 studies. It highlights the social benefits of parks and green spaces (predominantly in the UK, Europe, the

US and Australia) and underlines the potential of parks to deliver multiple health benefits for the local communities and support long term mental and physical health ([Dobson et al, 2019](#)).

Many of our parks and green spaces are registered as Historic Parks and Gardens and protected due to their historic significance. Since 1996, over £900m of National Lottery funding has been awarded to more than 900 UK public parks.



Community event at Speaker's Corner, Alexandra Park, Manchester. © National Lottery Heritage Fund

The key findings of the review suggest:

- Physical health, wellbeing and life satisfaction are enhanced through access to and use of parks and green spaces.
  - Studies on obesity levels among children, showed levels are lower when there is more nearby green space to their residence (Dadvand et al., 2014).
  - Proximity to green spaces is associated with reduced anxiety and mood disorder (Nutsford, Pearson and Kingham, 2013).



- Parks create important opportunities for social integration.
  - Urban green spaces support immigrants in the process of identifying with their new home (Jay and Schraml, 2009) while preserving **connections with the past** (Rishbeth and Powell, 2013).
  - Facilitated visits to green spaces improved the self-esteem, mental wellbeing and social lives of people with disabilities (Jakubec et al., 2016).
- Parks provide opportunities for community engagement and local residents value the chance to be involved in designing and improving their green spaces.
  - Studies show that children and young people appreciate being asked to have their say on park design and use (Derr and Tarantini, 2016; Malone, 2012; Gallerani et al., 2017).
- Parks and green spaces enable people to connect with nature, which in turn benefits wellbeing. A sense of connectedness to nature is linked with greater psychological wellbeing (Cervinka et al., 2011; Howell et al., 2011).
  - The evidence review is part of the Parks for People programme evaluation which will be followed by an in-depth case studies of six parks (to be published in July 2020).

Source: [Dobson et al, 2019](#)

## 2. Heritage is a source of national and local pride

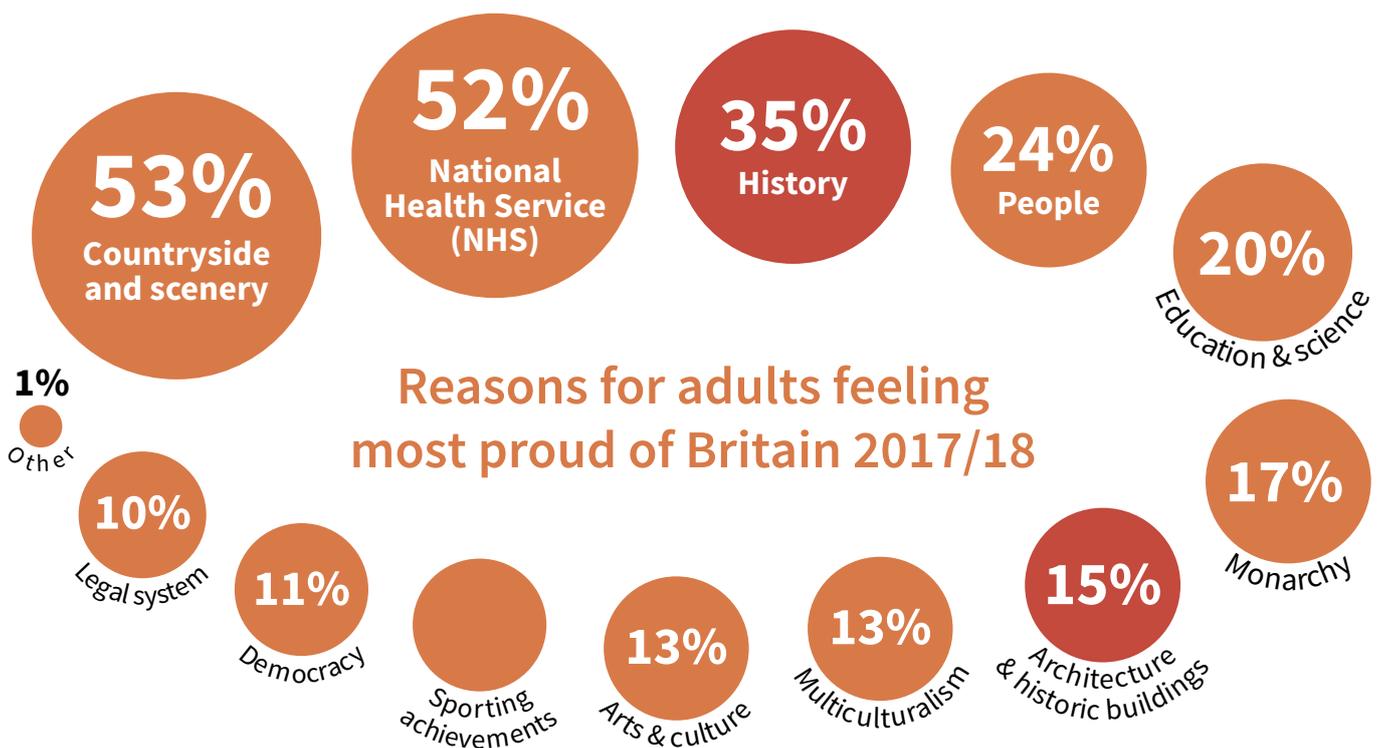
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England's rich and varied history inspires passion, intrigue and fascination. Our history is cherished by members of the public who identify British history as the third most important factor that makes people proud of Britain.

- **History is the third most quoted factor that makes people most proud of Britain** – 35% of nearly 8,000 adults feel proud of our history. According to the Taking Part Survey, the British countryside and scenery (53%) was the top factor that makes people proud of Britain, followed closely by the British health system (52%) ([DCMS, 2019a](#)).
- **British architecture and historic buildings also generate feelings of pride, with 15% of people identifying these as the main factor that makes them most proud of Britain** ([DCMS, 2019a](#)).
- **Local heritage is an important source of pride amongst two-thirds of adults in England.** A YouGov survey of 1,731 adults found that 66% agree with the statement that 'Historic buildings are a source of pride in the local area where I live' ([YouGov 2018b](#)).
- **Caring for listed buildings is driven by a strong sense of pride and custodianship.** A postal survey of 10,000 listed building owners with a 10% response rate, found that owners describe themselves as custodians who are proud of and enjoy contributing to a part of history. 93% of listed building owners considered their property important to the character of the local area; and 67% thought the property important in terms of 'national history' ([Historic England, 2015](#)).
- **92% of respondents to an 'on-street' survey in areas that had seen significant heritage-led regeneration reported high levels of pride in the local historic environment.** Research using a mixed methods approach consisting of surveys of approximately 1,000 people and 122 businesses in five areas around Britain examined the historic environment's role in local areas with historic buildings and sites that had undergone major redevelopment. The research found that heritage investment increased pride in their area as a result of the regeneration investment ([Amion and Locum 2010](#)).
- **Learning about local heritage improved pupil's sense of pride.** Historic England's Heritage Schools programme aims to help school children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance. The programme has reached approximately 100,000 children since it began in 2012. An evaluation of the 2016-17 Heritage Schools Programme found that amongst teachers and partners:
  - 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 ([Historic England 2017c](#)).
- **"England's history and heritage" contributes more to pride amongst older people than to younger people.** A major YouGov study of more than 20,000 English adults, reveals that young people in England are less likely to be proud of their English identity (56%) than their elder peers (89%) ([YouGov 2018a](#)).



Heritage Open Days: Group being led around Blackfriars, Gloucester, Gloucestershire.





## EXPLORING MIDDLEFIELD: REVEALING PRIDE IN LOCAL HISTORY AND DEVELOPING SKILLS THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGY

The Middlefield archaeological dig is part of a project called *Middlefield's Utopia* – a community-led investigation in collaboration with the University of Lincoln. The aim of the project was to uncover the history of the estate through participative engagement with residents carrying out small-scale excavation and an oral history project.

Middlefield in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire was one of many new post-war British housing estates built to replace 19th century slums judged unfit for habitation. New and better quality housing was built using the 1928 'garden city'-inspired green-focused plan of Radburn, New Jersey, US.



**Left:** Residents of Middlefield Lane in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, taking part in community archaeological excavations on the estate. © Carenza Lewis

Feedback from the project showed:

- 90% of the participants rated the experience of the excavations as excellent, and that they particularly appreciated the opportunity to work collaboratively within the local community to learn something new;
- More than 80% felt the experience had helped them develop or improve transferable skills including team working, verbal communication, working persistently, and working to set standards and interpreting evidence;
- More widely, in excess of 800,000 listeners heard about the project through a Radio 4 broadcast in June 2017 and a hands-on exhibition about the project was featured in the national 'Being Human' festival in November 2018 at the Waterside Shopping Centre in Lincoln.

The Middlefield project provided new data about the pre-20th century use of the landscape the estate now occupies and also revealed an unusually high number of child-related finds from 20th century deposits. These show that Middlefield estate's iconic greens were indeed used by children for outdoor play.

The project not only advanced the understanding of the history and value of social housing but also, through its public engagement approach, generated an inspiring shared community experience which connected residents to the history of their estate and built social and cultural capital by engaging residents in university research and developing transferable skills (CAER 2017).

Source: <https://middlefielddig.sites.lincoln.ac.uk/about/>

### 3. Members of the public care and want to secure the future of our heritage

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Heritage connects us to the past and encourages us to think about our future. Our heritage tells the story of how societies have evolved and formed, and facilitates a greater understanding of our lives today and inspires the lives of future generations.

*“It excites me to think that generations of families have lived in our home, that they have touched the same, beam or stone or historic feature and that I can maintain that legacy that future families can hopefully continue what we feel and that they may appreciate the continued enhancement of our home no matter how subtle that change or renovation may appear. We are part of this building’s heritage, and nothing can change that.”*

Owner of Grade II building in the North West.

- **People want to secure the future of heritage:** 87% of adults agree that *‘finding new uses for historic buildings rather than demolishing them’* is important.

A national survey of 1,731 adults in England on behalf of Historic England shows that the conservation of heritage assets is important to the majority of the public ([YouGov 2018b](#)).

- **94% of people agree or strongly agree with the statement *‘it is important to me that heritage buildings or places are well looked after’.***

According to the Taking Part survey, attitudes towards heritage amongst members of the public are statistically significantly positive. An examination of trends over time using the Taking Part survey’s Web panel data first collected in 2010/11, shows that trends have remained stable over time. Between 93% and 95% of respondents answer positively each year to the question: *“It is important to me that heritage buildings or places are well looked after”* ([DCMS 2017](#)).

- **Finding new uses for industrial sites matters to people as this allows us celebrate England’s rich heritage.**

A YouGov survey of 2,028 adults (of which 1,742 were in England) focusing on mills and industrial buildings, found that 91% of the respondents supported the reuse of mills for cultural, residential, commercial, retail or manufacturing purposes. Respondents felt that our industrial heritage is an important part of England’s heritage, with 85% stating they do not want to see historic mills demolished and replaced ([Historic England 2017b](#)).



Heritage Action Zone, Long Row Central, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire.

- **People expect public authorities to lead the protection of our heritage: 66% of UK citizens agree that public authorities should allocate more resources to cultural heritage.** According to a European Commission ‘Public Opinion’ survey of 1368 UK residents, 39% believe national authorities should do the most to protect heritage. This is followed by 34% who believe it is the responsibility of local and regional authorities while 33% suggest it is the responsibility of citizens ([European Commission 2018](#)).
- **Support for local authority planning powers to protect heritage.** Three quarters (74%) of 1,975 adults surveyed in England believe that Local Authorities should have the powers to restrict changes to buildings and streets in order to protect the character and appearance of Conservation areas. An additional sample of **adults living in conservation areas surveyed (597 individuals)** shows an even higher proportion (83%) believe that Local Authorities should have the powers to restrict changes to buildings in areas ([YouGov 2017](#)).

■ **Planning controls are seen as an effective way of protecting heritage.** 88% of Conservation area residents surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that *“conservation area designation is effective in protecting the character and appearance of my area”*. A postal survey of 1,345 listed residential property owners and 292 Conservation Area residential property owners found that the majority of respondents were positive about the benefits of Conservation Area Designation (Ecorys et al. 2017).

■ **People see investing in local heritage as a good use of public money.** Survey evidence of 4,200 residents from 12 research locations across the UK which had received National Lottery Heritage Funding (previously HLF) shows wide public acceptance of the value of the investments:

- 81% said heritage is important to ‘me personally’
- 76% rated the NLHF-funded projects in their area as good or excellent value for money (NLHF 2015)

■ **Living in a historic environment is linked with greater community engagement in local decisions.**

People living in a Conservation Area are twice as likely to engage in development or planning decisions in their local area compared with the general population: 24% and 13% respectively. This is based survey evidence of over 2,400 adults residing in England, including 597 adults who were identified as living within a Conservation Area (YouGov, 2017).

■ **Heritage encourages active citizenship with more than a third of adults in England saying they have taken action to protect a historic place.**

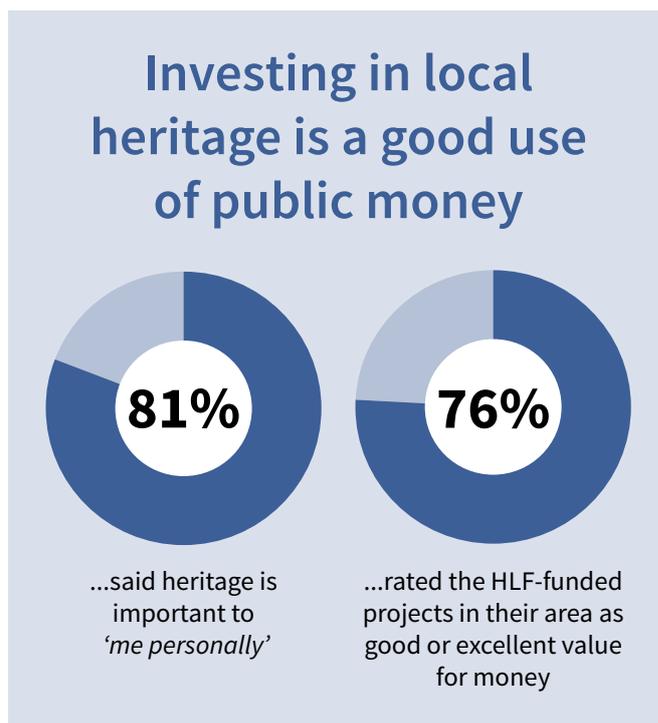
A survey of more than 5,000 adults in England found almost 38% of the public have taken action to protect a local historic building or local place from damaging change, or from becoming derelict or disused, with action including signing a petition, joining a membership group, fundraising/donating for local heritage and attending a public meeting about local heritage (Historic England 2015).

■ **89% of UK residents ‘totally agree’ or ‘tend to agree’ that history and culture should be taught in the classroom.**

A European Commission ‘Public Opinion’ survey of 1,368 UK residents looking at attitudes to cultural heritage, demonstrates that there is strong support for heritage to be taught in schools (European Commission, 2018).

■ **Volunteers – helping to secure the future of our heritage.** The Taking Part survey estimates the 5.5% of the adult population have volunteered in a sector connected with heritage in the past 12 months. It also identifies activities undertaken by those who volunteer in any sector. In 2018/19

- 33.5% of those who volunteered in any sector helped to organise or run an activity or event.
- 6.6% acted as trustees (up from 5.1% last year) while
- 5.8% engaged with conservation or restoration.
- 1.8% of volunteers acted as stewards at a heritage site/museum or gallery (DCMS 2019e).



## URBAN ROOMS NETWORK: GIVING LOCAL COMMUNITIES A VOICE IN PLACE-MAKING AND HERITAGE PLANNING



Writing of an Ode to Liberty, a performance which acknowledged The English Channel as a shared space. Artist project by Ana Dana Beros focusing on the heritage of Sound Mirrors as military infrastructure part of the Folkestone urban room exhibition © George Corey

The Urban Rooms Network is a concept first introduced in 2014 as part of the *Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment*. Commissioned by the UK Government, the Farrell Review sought to highlight the importance of governments, professionals, and others engaging positively with citizens on large-scale changes in the built environment. One of the key recommendations of the Farrell Review was the need to create urban rooms. A network group called Place Alliance was established, led by UCL, which established an [Urban Rooms Network \(URN\)](#). (Tewdwr-Jones et al.,2019)

The purpose of the *Urban Room Network* is to foster meaningful connections between people and place, using creative methods of engagement with the public. They are physical spaces where everyone can reflect on how a city has evolved, understand what sort of a place it is now and debate how it should

develop in the future (Dixon et al. 2019). An urban room can act as an exhibition hall, a community centre and a learning space, while giving people opportunities to help redesign and reimagine their city's future (Dixon et al. 2019).

In England, Urban Rooms have been established in many cities in collaboration and partnership with university departments, public and private stakeholders and local communities. The Urban Room network provides a good opportunity to celebrate the importance of each city's heritage and to understand the role heritage can play in shaping the future through the lense of local communities.

Research as part of the university-led Newcastle City Futures Programme has shown how urban rooms can positively shape strategic urban development and regeneration projects, by increasing civic engagement and public participation in forging a vision for the city.

## 4. Heritage enhances our experience and connection to place

.....

*“We appreciate charm, atmosphere, life, peace, good humour and agreeable manners, all of which are part of beauty, and all of which we find abundantly in our architectural heritage”*  
(Building Beautiful commission 2019)

### ■ Historic buildings affect the way we perceive and value our surroundings

Survey evidence of 1,713 adult respondents (including 597 residents in conservation areas), in UK, shows that

- Over two-thirds (68%) agreed with the statement *‘historic buildings were generally built to a high standard’*.
- 58% agreed that *‘the age of a building makes a difference to the way I perceive its quality and design’*.
- In comparison only 26% of the sample, agreed with the statement *‘new buildings are generally built to a high standard’* (YouGov b 2018).

### ■ 80% of people stated local heritage makes their area a better place to live. Evidence from twelve National Lottery Heritage Fund investment locations across the UK, selected from a sample of cities with over 10,000 inhabitants. The survey included the perceptions and views of ca 4,300 people. Respondents suggest that investments realised during the last 20 years had an impact on their perceptions of local place, supported local pride, and promoted social cohesion (Britain thinks and NHLF 2015a).

### ■ A study asking people to identify ‘beautiful’ buildings in Sheffield found that the two cathedral buildings were most readily identified.

The reasons for this related to the perceived longevity of their presence as well as their grandeur, rather than style. By contrast many contemporary buildings were considered lacking in character. People’s appreciation and understanding of the history of a place contributes to its perceived aesthetic value (CABE and Ipsos Mori, 2010).

### ■ Heritage-led regeneration can improve perceptions of place.

On average, 93% of a sample of 1000 people in five heritage-led regeneration zones around Britain, felt that their local heritage project improved their perceptions of the local area and 91% felt that it had improved the image of the wider town too (Amion and Locum Consulting 2010).

### ■ Heritage spaces that enable public space sociability can enhance urban quality of life.

An ethnographic study finds that public spaces act as sites of sociability and face-to-face interaction. Public spaces support social wellbeing as they are shared places’ connecting people. However the quality of public spaces is important as it impacts the quality of life in urban centres (Cattell et al 2008).

*Perhaps one of the most striking areas of consensus was in the value people placed on old versus new buildings. Across all age groups, older buildings were invariably favoured as being more beautiful (CABE and Ipsos Mori, 2010).*

Bridge to Island, Newquay Beach, Newquay, Cornwall.



- **People are emotionally connected to place.** 75% of members of the public want to pass on their love of a place to significant others. 92% agree that they would be upset if their **meaningful place was lost.**

The research used Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) scanning and found that key areas of emotional processing in the brain are activated by 'a place deemed to be special' by an individual, supporting the feelings of a deep connection.

The National Trust research used a mixed methods approach including additional qualitative interviews and a survey of over 2,000 people ([National Trust 2017](#)).

- **In places with larger numbers of heritage assets, people have a stonger sense of place.**

Living in 'more historic' built environments (assessed in terms of density of listed buildings present in the area of residence) is correlated to a stronger sense of place even after factoring in socio-economic factors that impact on sense of place ([CURDS 2009](#)).

- **Being historic was the single most cited reason for young adults deciding a building, monument or space to be distinctive or special to them.**

This is followed by attractiveness, architectural distinctiveness or, more generally, it being special to that area and/or its value to the local community (eg. for religious purposes). Another key factor was their personal use. These findings are from the a study which specifically involved over 900 young people attending 21 state maintained schools along with 54 young people attending 7 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs).

The study also found that:

- Over half (58%) of respondents identified at least one listed building or designated site among their important buildings and places
- Over a fifth (22%) of respondents cited important for them buildings, monuments or spaces that were found to be listed buildings or designated sites ([CURDS 2011](#)).

## **PLAISTOW SOUTH BIG LOCAL: CELEBRATING THE PAST AND BELONGING THROUGH HERITAGE**

Plaistow South Big Local (PSBL) is a resident-led community regeneration group that received funding from **National Lottery Heritage Fund** to develop an **oral history project**, '[Growing Up in Plaistow](#)'.

The project looked at the history and development of south Plaistow through the childhood memories of current and former residents.

Eastside Community Heritage (ECH), a local charity, led training sessions with local secondary school students enabling them to conduct oral history interviews, to undertake local history research and



A photograph which is part of the Plaistow heritage project archive, © Zute Lightfoot/Local Trust.York)

to run reminiscence sessions with elderly groups in the local area. The students recorded memories about what it was like to live in Plaistow from the 1930s right up to the present day ([ECH 2016](#)).

- **Heritage and culture led regeneration enhances the experiences people have of an area by shaping place identity.**

Arts Council England’s recently published report on the “**Value of arts and culture in place-shaping**” shows how culture helps to attract people and businesses to an area by creating desirable places to live and work but also offers a different experience to shop and socialise and foster strong community ties, further shaping a place’s identity (Wavehill 2019).

- **Strengthening community social relationships and day-to-day participation in culture, arts and heritage can unlock the value of places** that have been ‘marginalised’.

This in turn supports greater cultural production and creative activity (Miles and Ebrey 2017 and Skeggs 2014).

**Right:** Site Gallery, Sheffield, South Yorkshire. A new building structure arising from the conservation of former industrial architecture.



The project resulted in a touring exhibition launched at the re-opening of Plaistow Library. The exhibition included archive photographs of Plaistow, its outdoor spaces and its older residents. The exhibition was shown at a series of venues, including schools, community centres and a popular youth market where young people sell their own creative work.

Through the project podcast and a selection of audio clips, youthful memories of work, leisure, education and wartime London, are used to evoke an earlier Plaistow. The diverse heritage of the area was celebrated through collecting memories from Plaistow residents who began their education in the Caribbean,

before establishing themselves in Plaistow. The students recordings, as well as full length oral history interviews conducted by ECH, were fully archived and are freely available to members of the public.

Detailed analysis of the project identifies how: “*heritage draws on issues of local identity and community cohesion by reminding people they are part of a story that began long before they were born and cannot be written for future generations without them*” (Newson, 2018).

## 5. Heritage is the story of us: it promotes collective identity and belonging

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Heritage helps us make sense of our place in the world and plays an important role in uniting people and generations. Heritage provides shared spaces to meet, relax and work together enhancing how we connect with others around us. Our heritage reminds us of who we are, how we got here and the collective future we can build with heritage at the heart of healthy, diverse and inclusive communities (Ward 2017)

### ■ Heritage led initiatives improve self-esteem and sense of belonging.

A qualitative evaluation of the '*young musicians for heritage*' project based in Manchester and South Cheshire, reported improvements in participants' emotional awareness, self-esteem and perceived sense of belonging within a group (Clennon and Boehm 2014).

### ■ Heritage increases social connectivity and strengthens our relationships with others.

81% of heritage volunteers that took part in a cross-cultural museum sector study, reported improvements in social connectivity. The study used qualitative evidence from a sample of 481 volunteers at five museums across three countries (Norway, Denmark and Sweden) in 2015 (Christidou and Hansen 2015).

### ■ Engaging in heritage activities can enhance our sense of identity.

An academic research study actively engaging young people and elderly individuals with local history, found that the young participants especially experienced an enhanced sense of sense of identity, increased 'social connectedness', as well as a greater attachment to place. Amongst elderly participants, personal memories and recollections created the stronger link to aspects of identity (Johnston and Marwood, 2017).

### ■ Heritage builds self-awareness and connectedness with others.

The *Improving Futures project* which focused on building confidence and skills amongst disadvantaged young people including those with poor mental health, underlined connectedness as major positive outcome of engaging in heritage. Benefits included increased self-awareness, self-expression, a sense of belonging and an ability to relate to others by seeing things from a different perspective (National Lottery Fund 2016).

### ■ Connectedness, like contact with friends is more important for the mental health of people living in deprived households than for those who are better off. These findings highlight the importance of such outcomes to diminish inequalities (Stafford et al. 2008).

### ■ Visiting heritage as a collective activity improves social connectedness.

A study that used a mixed methods approach including a survey of all of 1,600 members of Historic Houses, found that visiting independently owned historic houses and gardens, improved social connectivity, education and learning. Half of the Historic Houses host community events, while one third host primary school visits; one fifth secondary school visits and many welcome higher education students and adult learners (DC Research 2015).





Conservation work in progress, Haworth, West Yorkshire.



Imam greeting congregation, Bristol Central Mosque, Easton, Bristol.



People enjoying the environment, St Michael's Church, Glastonbury Tor, Somerset.

- **Heritage volunteering helps people socialise and create new friends.**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund's (NLHF) evaluation of volunteering projects found that **the majority of the volunteers surveyed (over 90%) reported benefits from socialising with others, while 35% sustained friendships outside of the project** (BOP Consulting 2011).

- **75% of people stated that events commemorating the Centenary of the First World War had helped them to understand the experience of people during the war.** The Taking Part Survey 'Focus on... First World War Centenary' report focuses on the proportion of the adult population in England who have been engaged with the First World War Centenary commemorations (DCMS 2015b).

- **Historic public spaces can bring different social groups together, supporting social cohesion.** An ethnographic study focusing on understanding links between aspects of wellbeing and perception of public spaces, argues that community wellbeing is enhanced through using those spaces to socialise. By employing qualitative methods including discussion groups with local residents of multiple ethnic backgrounds and observation of sites, the study found that such spaces convey feelings of safety and belonging (Cattell et al 2008).

- **Community level wellbeing is higher in places that offer a 'degree of constancy' in the physical and social environment.** By constancy the researchers refer to aesthetic aspects and morphological aspects that remain the same over time. The historic environment can provide constancy e.g. by maintaining physical and identity aspects of place over time (Cattell et al 2008).

- An evaluation of the impacts of heritage funding found that **56% of local community members agreed that the site 'provides me with an important connection to this area's history'** (National Lottery Heritage Fund 2009).

- **Heritage can constitute a tool, medium or space for enhancing and developing social capital.** Cultural heritage contributes to various aspects of social capital, **including bonding, bridging and linking aspects.** Based on review of evaluation studies from cultural heritage programs in Poland and the UK, researchers found that heritage activities create opportunities for individuals to encounter other social groups they would not normally meet (Murzyn Kupisz and Dzialek (2013).

## HERITAGE ENGAGING HOMELESS PEOPLE IN RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY LIFE IN SHEFFIELD

The National Heritage Lottery Fund (NLHF) funded a research project in collaboration with Sheffield University and [Roundabout](#) – a Sheffield-based youth charity which maintains a hostel as an emergency residency for young people who are homeless.

The objective of the project was to encourage hostel residents to try ‘things they wouldn’t normally do’ and enable access to ‘places they wouldn’t normally go’. The project also aimed to familiarise participants with research practices. Project participants were encouraged to participate in multiple activities, such as working on a ‘heritage trail’, visiting local historic sites or research visits to the local library and the university.

The participants examined the history of the local area and local places including the hostel itself (a Grade II Listed structure dating to the late 1700s) and the people who lived there. They compiled a scrapbook which brought together written reflections on experiences of and connections to the hostel. Participants’ perceptions and changes in attitudes were mapped through conversations held with the project participants.

The research found that the project opened up the process of research as a practice to a much wider audience, democratising heritage as a process for positive social change. The project

allowed participants to explore different ways of ‘belonging’, providing a link to a specific place for this very transient community (it is estimated that participants may change ‘residence’ every 6 months on average).

*“I think in the beginning the scrapbook talks about just the hostel and the history of the hostel and what we have found out but then further on it goes into the young people’s stories and messages, so hopefully they’ll just carry on doing that and then when people come in nearly two, three years’ time they’ll realise that there was other people in the same situation that have come from the same backgrounds as them ... so hopefully it will keep evolving and getting added to.”*

The research is presented in a published paper: “Action Heritage: research, communities, social justice” ([Johnston and Marwood 2017](#)).





Sheffield Town Hall and Peace Gardens, Sheffield, South Yorkshire.

## 14-18 NOW PROGRAMME: HERITAGE, INTERGENERATIONAL LINKS AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The 14-18 NOW cultural programme was conceived as part of a UK-wide programme of events and happenings that sought to mark the centenary of the First World War. The project brought together arts and heritage with a vision *‘to support the creation of artworks by contemporary artists, to engage and stimulate the UK public in fresh and engaging ways that will lead to new perspectives on the First World War and its resonance today.’*

Over the course of five years, 14-18 NOW commissioned 107 artworks in 220 locations across the UK. The programme attracted an audience of 35 million people and was delivered with the support of 580 arts, heritage and community partners including the Imperial War Museums, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and English Heritage amongst others. The tour of the Poppies sculptures *Wave and Weeping Window* by artist Paul Cummins and designer Tom Piper alone attracted



‘Weeping Window’ at Imperial War Museum, London. © IWM London

4.6 million visitors at 19 locations across the UK. The work reached additional audiences through broadcast (in partnership with the BBC), print and social media.

One of the major achievements of the programme was to engage over **6,000 volunteers representing an in-kind contribution of over 137,000 hours.** More than half of those involved were new to volunteering.

The programme was met with widespread public support and viewed as a different approach to ‘memorialising’ the First World War – 76% of the population felt that the programme with its arts-led commissions was ‘a good idea’. Interestingly, the participant profile suggested that **the programme bridged generational and cultural divides.**

Source: <https://www.1418now.org.uk/>



‘Wave’ at Imperial War Museum, Manchester. © IWM North



‘Wave’ at Fort Nelson, Portsmouth. © Vincent Griffin

## 6. Heritage is important for our health and wellbeing

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Heritage connects us with the world around us. Heritage engages us in our past; generating feelings of belonging, enjoyment, confidence, happiness; influencing our quality of life and life satisfaction. In this way heritage has a wide range of benefits for our wellbeing.

*“Mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in the UK. The cost to the economy is estimated at £105 billion a year – roughly the cost of the entire NH.”* ([Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England, 2016](#))

- **Engaging in heritage-led activities can improve health and wellbeing.** Halton Clinical Commissioning Group is increasingly using of *social prescribing* as a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. The Group has identified heritage as a ‘*crucial context in which people live their lives*’ and that heritage supports a ‘*powerful sense of place, of being and purpose*’. The group recommends heritage based activities for social prescribing ([Halton NHS Clinical Commissioning Group 2017](#)).
- **Arts and heritage social prescribing has a demonstrated high return to public health investment.** 600 museums and galleries out of 2,500 in the UK, have programmes targeting health and wellbeing. A museum directory of social prescribing and wellbeing activity in North-West England has been published by Health Education England, showing a £3 return on every £1 invested ([Health Education England 2016](#)).
- **Visitors to heritage sites, libraries or museums are more likely to report good mental and physical health than non-visitors.** Visiting heritage sites is estimated to save over £193.2m to NHS from reduction in GP visits and psychotherapy ([Fujiwara et al. 2015](#)). Mental ill health represents 23% of all ill health in the UK - the largest single cause of disability ([WHO, 2008](#)).
- **Visiting heritage has a positive impact on wellbeing.** A study commissioned for [Heritage Counts 2014](#), reports the measured value of visiting eight different types of heritage, from historic towns, to industrial sites, places of worship and archaeological sites. The study found a positive effect on wellbeing equal to or larger than doing other activities, including sports. The monetary value of this positive impact on wellbeing is calculated as £1,646 per person per year for the average heritage goer ([Fujiwara et al. 2014](#)).

*“By 2030, there may well be an additional 2 million adults in the UK facing severe mental health issues and it is likely that there will be a social care crisis too, with a funding gap of close on to £13bn by that date.”* ([Mental Health Network, 2014](#))



Former TVam Building, Camden, Greater London.

■ **Visiting heritage sites is associated with increased rates in adults' subjective wellbeing.**

The Taking Part Survey, a household survey of over 8,000 adults, shows a difference in subjective wellbeing, assessed through an evaluative question on happiness. Individuals who engage with heritage had an 8.1 average in life satisfaction compared to a lower average of 7.8 amongst non-heritage participants. Engagement is considered as visiting a heritage site at least once in the past 12 months ([DCMS 2017](#)).

■ **Engaging in heritage is positively correlated with happiness and life satisfaction.** People who visited heritage sites once a year or more reported happiness scores 1.6% greater than those who did not visit. People who visited heritage also reported higher life satisfaction scores reported lower anxiety than non-visitors. A statistical model was constructed controlling for factors which have previously been suggested to affect wellbeing ([DCMS 2015a](#)).

Late medieval wreck on Tankerton foreshore, Tankerton, Whitstable, Kent.



■ Even less frequent engagement in cultural heritage activities like museums/historical sites, has positive association with satisfaction.

Research exploring the relationship between engagement in arts, culture, heritage, sport, and subjective well-being found higher levels of subjective wellbeing (SWB) in those who engaged in such activities. The research applied ordered probit analysis of UK data from wave 2 (2010–2011) of the Understanding Society survey. Measures of SWB used in the study were self-rated overall life satisfaction and happiness questions and domain specific/leisure satisfaction ([Wheatley and Bickerton 2017](#)).

■ Heritage spaces can be highly effective for tackling social needs and supporting essential local services that improve wider quality of life.

An evaluation of the *Inspiring Futures* project – a training and volunteering programme across ten heritage venues in greater Manchester – found:

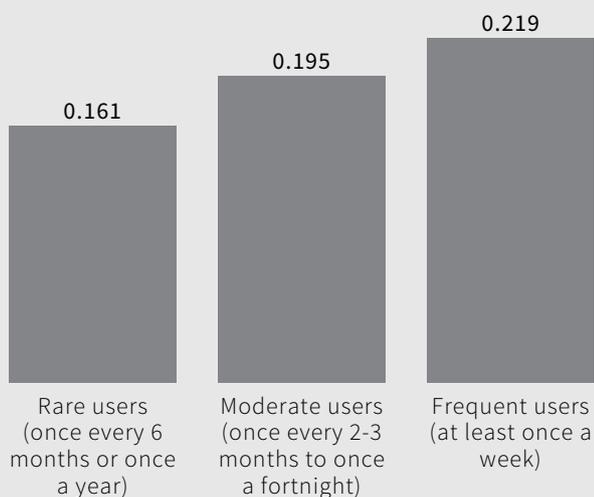
- 75% of volunteers reported a significant increase in wellbeing after a year,
- 60% reported sustained wellbeing over 2-3 years.
- 30% of volunteers found employment or other opportunities for getting into work.
- For every £1 invested approximately £3.50 of social and economic return was generated ([Envoy Partnership 2017](#)).



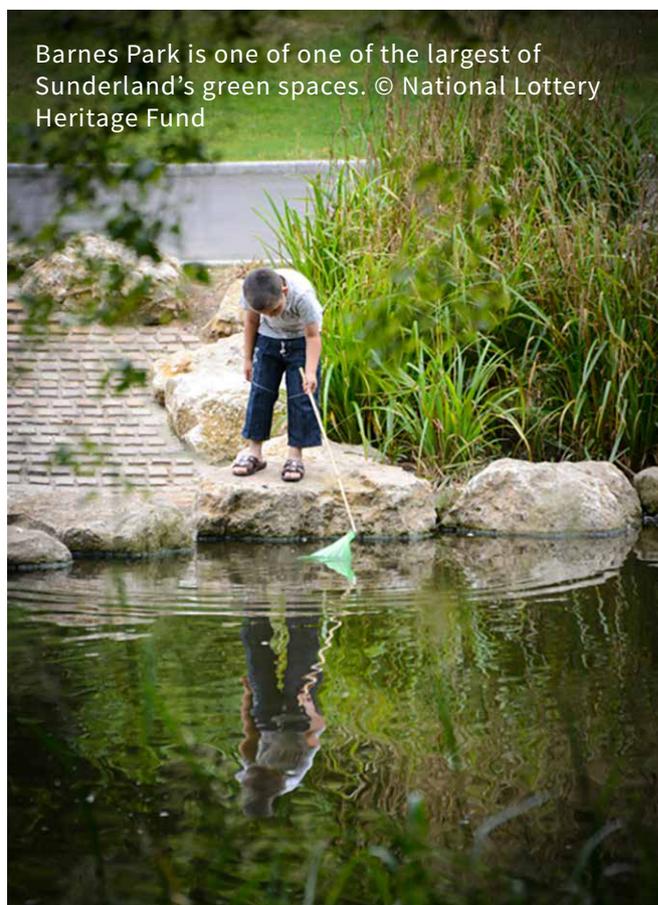
■ **Engaging in archaeological projects led to demonstrable increases in participants' levels of happiness.** Evidence from a 2015 study on impacts of active engagement with archaeological excavations, showed that involvement in community archaeological excavation projects led to significant increases in participants' levels of happiness, satisfaction, interest, social connectivity, and their perception of being a 'strong' person after the intervention, compared to before. Measures used include the modified visual analogue scale (MVAS), and positive and negative affect schedule (PANAS) ([Sayer 2015](#)).

■ **The historic environment in our towns and cities, including 'blue spaces' like canals and rivers, contribute to increased life satisfaction.** Spending time by 'blue space', including historic canals and rivers in our cities, is associated with higher levels of happiness and greater life satisfaction. Frequent users of 'blue spaces' (those who visit at least once a week) reported higher average life satisfaction compared with rare users (those who visit at least once every six months). The research was based on the Waterway Engagement Monitor (WEM), an online survey with a nationally representative sample of 11,500 adults from England and Wales, and the Towpath face-to-face Survey of 2,781 users ([Simetrica 2018](#)).

## Estimated difference in life satisfaction between users and non-users of 'blue space'



Source: [Simetrica 2018](#)



- **Historic parks are a vital part of urban 'green space networks' shown to support long-term psychological health and wellbeing.**

An 18-year longitudinal study by Exeter University looked at the self-reported psychological health of individuals over time and the relationship between urban green space around their residence, levels of wellbeing and mental distress. The research shows that parks improve aspects of psychological wellbeing, highlighting the importance of protecting parks and green spaces from a wellbeing perspective ([White et al 2013](#)).

- **Living close to historic places is associated with higher levels of health.**

Living in close proximity to historic places and assets is associated with higher levels of self-reported health ([Fujiwara 2013](#)), higher levels of happiness and is also associated with higher life satisfaction ([Fujiwara et al. 2014](#)).

- **Local heritage has an impact on people's quality of life.**

93% of residents say that local heritage has an impact on their quality of life, while 80% think local heritage makes their area a better place

to live. This is based on a telephone survey of approximately 4,200 residents in 12 research locations which had received National Lottery Heritage Funding (previously HLF) all around Britain ([NLHF 2015](#) and [Britain thinks, 2015b](#)).

- **Heritage engagement supports equality in life satisfaction.**

Greater engagement in heritage activities is found to be associated with lower levels of experienced wellbeing inequality. Heritage activities increase wellbeing particularly amongst those with lowest-life satisfaction. The evidence is from the What Works Centre for Wellbeing on the 'drivers of wellbeing inequality' which highlights the positive correlation between heritage, volunteering and wellbeing ([WWcfW 2017](#)).

- **People who cease visiting heritage sites report significant declines in physical health, mental health and life satisfaction.**

Findings of the NATcen research on patterns of participation for adults, also suggest that social connections play an important role in making engagement more attractive and enjoyable ([Lakey et al. 2017a](#)).

## HOMELESS HERITAGE: BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND SELF-WORTH THROUGH HERITAGE

The *Homeless Heritage* project explored how archaeology can give rough sleepers and the homeless community a voice. The project worked with around 40 homeless people in Bristol and York working on sites that were regarded as significant places but are often ignored, abandoned or seen as threatening, including disused and abandoned buildings, bridge underpasses, walkways and neglected ruins in parks.

*‘...the initial aim of the Homeless Heritage project was to see whether approaching a contemporary culture using archaeological methods could tell us anything new. A second question was, would homeless people be at all interested in heritage? The answer to both of these questions is yes.’*

The project involved fieldwork and excavations at locations drawn on a ‘homeless map’. Participants recovered ceramic, glass, building materials as well as other items related specifically to homelessness including portable food packaging and paraphernalia related to drug use.

*‘At times, homeless perceptions convey a far more multi-sensory and*

*phenomenological understanding of landscape akin to those more common to indigenous world views.’*

The project resulted in beneficial outcomes amongst participants, including increased confidence. It was the inclusive dynamic that appeared to be of most importance, giving people a sense of self-worth and usefulness (Kiddey 2017).

The research project was directed by Rachael Kiddey and published as part of her doctoral thesis (Kiddey 2017).



Taking a break during excavation on the Homeless Heritage project 2010-2014. © R. Kiddey

## HUMAN HENGE: ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH A CREATIVE EXPLORATION OF THE ANCIENT LANDSCAPE

The *Human Henge* project explored the links between historic landscapes and mental well-being using Stonehenge and the surrounding landscape as the setting for cultural therapy. The project recruited people with a range of needs from across Wiltshire to take part in a series of events and workshops. The project began in September 2016 and ended in December 2018 (Drysdale 2018). A parallel research project led by Bournemouth University addressed the question of whether *Human Henge* was an effective way to improve people's mental health and wellbeing.

The Richmond Fellowship, a charity specialising in supporting individuals with long term mental health needs,

recruited participants to the Human Henge project. The Restoration Trust acted as a bridge organisation, supporting people with mental health issues to engage with heritage in order to reduce social exclusion and improve their mental health. Three cohorts of 10 week sessions ran with a total of 36 participants attending the project at no personal cost. Sites provided free access to the ancient landscapes, in addition to the free use of the learning spaces and resources.

*"Human Henge allowed [participants] the space to use their imaginations and expand their minds."* L. Drysdale, Director of Restoration Trust



A photograph from one of the group sessions of Human Henge in Stonehenge © Chris Hogg

The research project, led by Bournemouth University captured quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaires on thoughts and feelings towards the project. The Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scales were used to measure participants' mental wellbeing, supplemented with questions regarding their interests in history, heritage and archaeology.

The research found that on completion of the programme, participants experienced positive results in all seven dimensions of mental health (using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales) and also in terms of wellbeing (measured using dimensions of the New Economic Foundation's '5 ways to wellbeing'). At the start of the programme 43.5% of participant said they never or rarely felt

optimistic; this reduced to 30.4% by the end of the programme ([Drysdale 2018](#)).

One year on from the two programmes at Stonehenge, an evaluation of the project stated:

*'it is evident that for the majority of participants there was a positive impact upon their mental health and wellbeing which they attribute to the programme and associated activities.'*

The project was largely funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) with additional grants from English Heritage, National Trust and Amesbury Area Board ([NLHF 2018](#)).



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Contact: Eirini Gallou, Senior Social Analyst, Policy and Evidence: Analytics Department, Historic England  
([Eirini.Gallou@HistoricEngland.org.uk](mailto:Eirini.Gallou@HistoricEngland.org.uk))

Front cover: Eagle Works, Little Kelham, Green Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire. General view of building  
with Domo restaurant prominent on ground

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