Annual Museum Survey 2025:

London Area Report

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Table of contents

The below table helps navigate the report's different sections.
If you are using its online interactive version, you can click on the page number which will take you to the report's part of your choice.

Introduction	3
About the museums	8
Audiences in 2024/25	14
Staff and volunteers in 2024/25	21
Finances in 2024/25	27
Engagement and outlook	34
Museum snapshots	38

Introduction

Introducing the report and understanding the data

About the Annual Museum Survey 2025

Through data submitted by participating museums, the Annual Museum Survey provides insights into the sector's health as well as the challenges and opportunities it faces.

By benchmarking data generated every year, we have been able to spotlight past and current trends such as the impact of the pandemic and the museums' post-pandemic recovery.

This year, we tell a story of local authority reliance and support, a positive outlook for many museums and wider economic impact accounting for visits, employment and procurement.

The annual dataset helps understand the state of England's non-national museums including independent, local authority and university-governed organisations.

We invite you to learn more about our research methodology and the survey scope and also to familiarise yourself with the information on weighting, sample sizes and further context. This detailed information can be found on the following three pages.

☑ **2025 Museum survey participation:**

44 in the area = **37%** area response rate

692 nationally = **56%** national response rate

The survey helps us understand the museum sector's situation in terms of...

- **Opening hours & Audiences**
- **Use of online tools & methods**
- **Workforce & Volunteering**
- **Finance**

Understanding the survey approach

Scope:
The Annual Museum Survey includes data from independent, local authority and university museums. The scope of the survey should be considered when interpreting the findings in this report. Where sample sizes allow, this report provides analysis by governance type such as independent or local authority.

Strengthening the survey design:
We have retained the core set of Annual Museum Survey questions to reliably compare across years in order to better understand the impact of the pandemic on museums. However, to ensure a bigger and more reliable response to each question, we ask two questions: one checkbox question with bands and a follow-up numeric field if they are able to provide specific data. Additionally, open-ended text questions were tweaked to bring further qualitative insights to each of the four main survey's themes.

Accessing the survey questions:
All the survey questions and further guidance documents have been available from the dedicated Annual Museum Survey website throughout the data collection period and afterwards. If you would like to see these, please visit Annual Museum Survey - Museum Development South West.

Economic impact of visitors calculation:
We have used the latest 2024 Economic Impact Toolkit from the Association of Independent Museums. Calculations used in this report account for local and day visitors but exclude overnight stays. Due to changes in data from this toolkit, comparisons should not be made to previous economic impact estimates. For more information, go to: https://aim-museums.co.uk/helping-organisations/resources/

Understanding more about data preparation

Weighting:

Weighting is a statistical process which adjusts data by key variables to improve the accuracy of survey estimates. Data from the Annual Museum Survey has been weighted to ensure the findings are representative of the visitor size, governance type and regional location of museums.

As data in the Annual Museum Survey is weighted nationally to account for variance in regional response rates, there may be instances where an underrepresented region has a larger analysis base size than the number of responses to the survey (those responses have been given more 'weight').

Accounting for organisations with more than one museum site:

The Annual Museum Survey captures data from both single-site museums and organisations with more than one museum site. Data provided by 'multi-site' organisations is a mix of site-specific (for example, visit numbers) and organisation-wide (for example, staffing and finance).

Additional data sources:

Where possible, secondary data sources have been connected to the Annual Museum Survey dataset to provide additional analysis. These include rural-urban classifications, indices of deprivation, economic impact using the AIM calculator, volunteer value derived from ONS median pay by local authority and existing Accreditation data.

Updated size categories:

Throughout the report, any analysis by size categories is based on latest data on visit numbers. In recent years, these size categories were based on an assessment of a museum's size using pre-pandemic visitor numbers. Size categories include micro (less than 10,000 visitors per year), small-medium (between 10,000 and 50,000 visitors) and large-largest (more than 50,000).

Understanding more about data analysis

Sample sizes:

The number of museums able to provide data for each question is denoted by 'n' (for example, n=25). This is a weighted base size and is useful context when considering the findings, with more confidence the more responses there are. The graphs present figures that may not always add up to 100% (e.g., +/- 1%) and these are due to rounding.

Confidence in the survey results:

The level of response in each area is measured by the response rate and confidence interval. Across England, 56% of all museums in scope responded to the survey. The confidence interval (sometimes called the margin of error) is the plus-or-minus figure usually reported in market research and opinion polls.
The national confidence interval of 2.46% means that when interpreting headline results in the area you can be confident that if every single museum responded the true figure would be 2.46 percentage points more or less than the figure reported here. The smaller the confidence interval, the more confidence in the results. This confidence level will vary depending on sample sizes for individual questions.
The London's museum response is 37% and the area confidence interval is 11.78%.

Analysis and interpretation of data:

Throughout the report, base sizes (n=) are provided to show the unweighted sample size each statistic is based on. Any median values in this report are based on all museums providing data in the survey and may differ to some values in the national report where a constant sample has been used to monitor trends over time. When reporting any ranges within this report we use the 5th and 95th percentile, ignoring the minimum and maximum values as outliers. To understand significant findings and differences in this report, it is also important to take into account museums' different situations and operating contexts. For example, the extent to which they are reliant on volunteers will affect their survey response and the way they might interpret the figures provided.

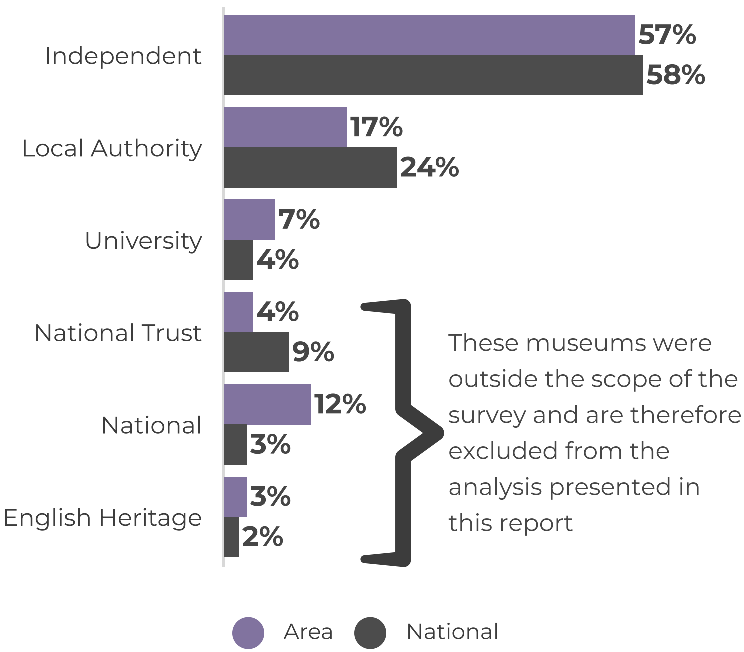
About the museums

What do Accredited museums look like in London?

There are 148 museums within the Accreditation scheme in the area

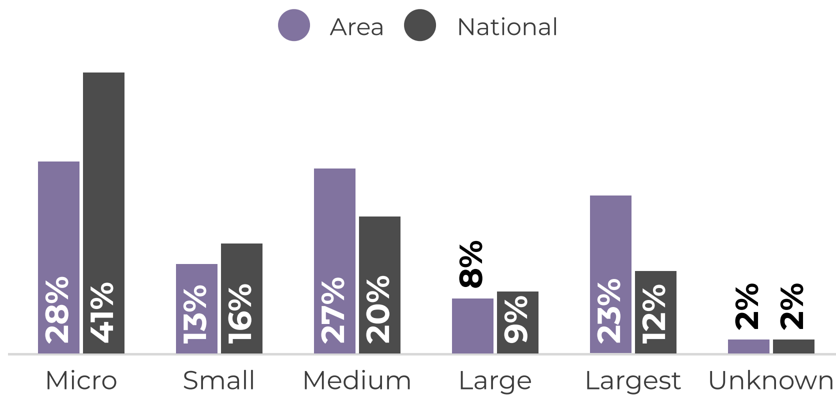
Governance and location data is drawn from Arts Council England's Accredited and Working Towards Accreditation (WTA) museums lists available in March 2025. Of the 119 independent local authority and university museums, 30 are part of an organisation with multiple sites.

There are more National museums in the area compared to nationally



More information about the Scheme available from: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme

23% of museums in the area are Largest



The bands are:

Micro: **<10K**

Small: **10 - 20K**

Medium: **20 - 50K**

Large: **50 - 100K**

Largest: **>100K**

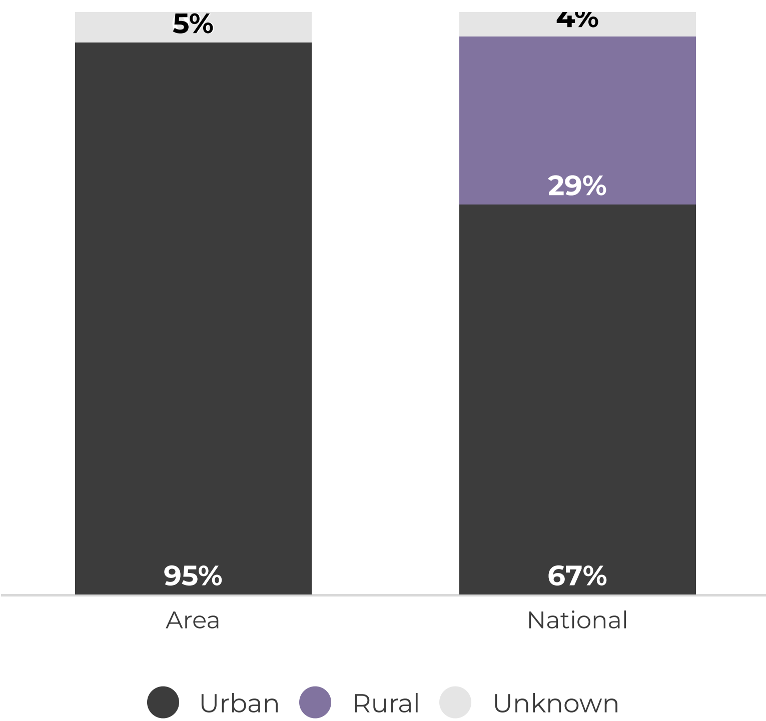
Size categories are used throughout this report and are determined by the total number of visitors each year. These are based on data provided by museums for 2024/25.

95% of museums in London are located in an urban area

And 11% of London museums are in one of the 20% most deprived areas in the country

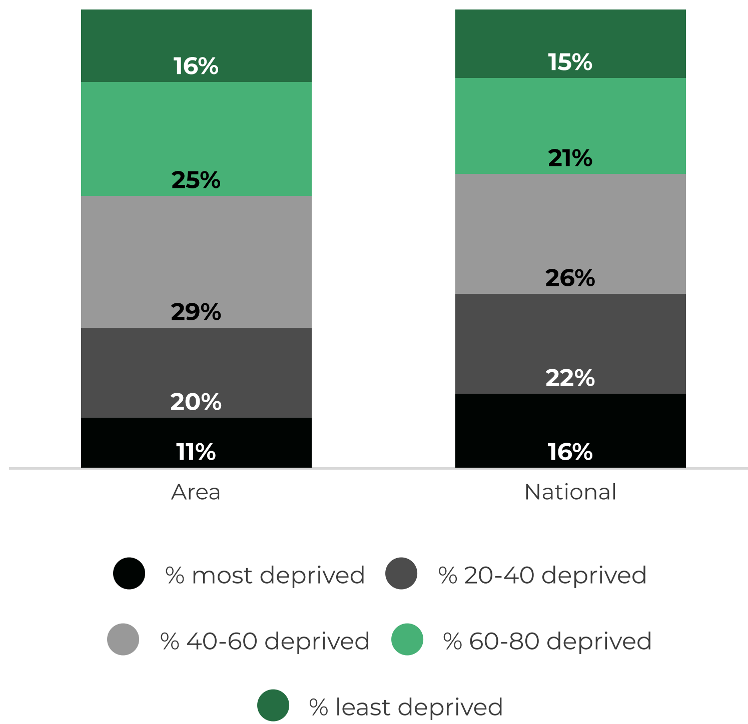
Rural-urban breakdown:

Area compared to national



Deprivation breakdown:

Area compared to national



Rural-Urban classifications determined by postcode of museum using ONS classification
Deprivation levels generated from Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles at an LSOA level

Introducing 'local authority reliance'

Rationale for inclusion in this year's Annual Museum Survey

The 2025 survey expands its analysis of museums by governance type, as defined by the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme, in response to the evolving landscape of local government investment in museums. Data collected from the survey over the last five years has contributed to research on how this investment reaches both local authority and independently governed museums[1][2]. Based on organisations governance and further responses to the survey questions around governance, ownership, operations, funding and non-financial investment, museums are attributed to one of three local authority categories. See page 12 for the three category definitions.

Importance for the Sector

Understanding the extent of Local Authority investment in museums—whether owned, directly maintained, or supported—is essential for effective advocacy for sustained public funding. Increasing financial pressures on local authorities affect not only museums they operate, but also those transferred to independent trusts, housed in local authority-owned buildings, or receiving regular local authority-distributed grants.

Additional Context

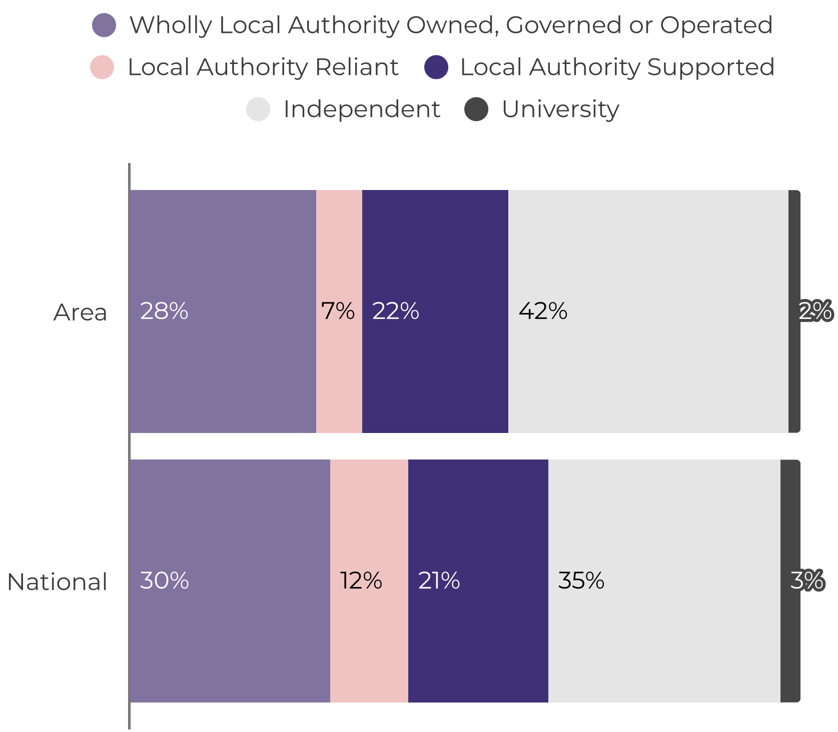
Insights from the Annual Museum Survey 2025 offer a detailed view of public investment in museums, contextualised by factors such as staffing, volunteer engagement, income (earned and contributed), and audience reach. This informs a richer understanding of the value and impact of public funding across the sector.

(1) Research to understand the levels of public investment in museums | Arts Council England
(2) Annual Museum Survey: Five year trends analysis

35% of museums in the area are wholly owned or reliant on a local authority

Compared to 21% of museums in the area categorised as Local Authority governance type by the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme

Local authority reliance overview: Area compared to national



Local authority reliance and support segments (n = 44)

How are we defining these local authority categories?

- **Wholly Local Authority Owned, Governed or Operated** - either categorised as Local Authority by the UK Accreditation scheme or indicated in the survey that they are "wholly owned, governed or operated by a local authority"
- **Local Authority Reliant** - self-described as per the survey question "would your museum be described as 'local authority reliant'?
- **Local Authority Supported** - not indicated that they are wholly owned or reliant, but identified one or more forms of support they receive from a local authority, which could include: funding, governance, building premises ownership, financial contribution to facilities, collections ownership, staffing or other

Snapshot: The museums sector in the London

Museums overview

34% Museums that charge for admissions

8% Wholly volunteer-run museums

35% Wholly owned or reliant on a local authority

61% Feel positive about the year ahead

Workforce and volunteering

58% Museums hiring staff or contracts

3.0 Volunteers to every one staff member

51% Increased volunteers in last year

35% Contributed volunteer hours increased in last year

Audiences

69% Museums open all year round

28% Museums with less than 10k annual visits

42% Visitor numbers have increased in past year

79% Museums providing on-site education sessions

Finance

13% Museums with less than £25k turnover

43% Museums reporting increased income

64% Museums reporting increased expenditure

73% Museums receiving project grant income

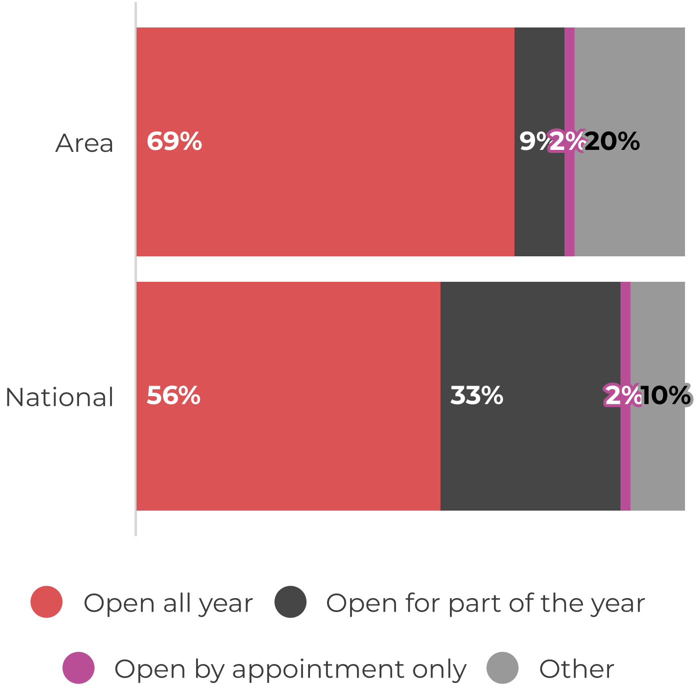
Audiences in 2024/25

Analysis of data on opening hours, on-site visitors, educational providers and use of digital

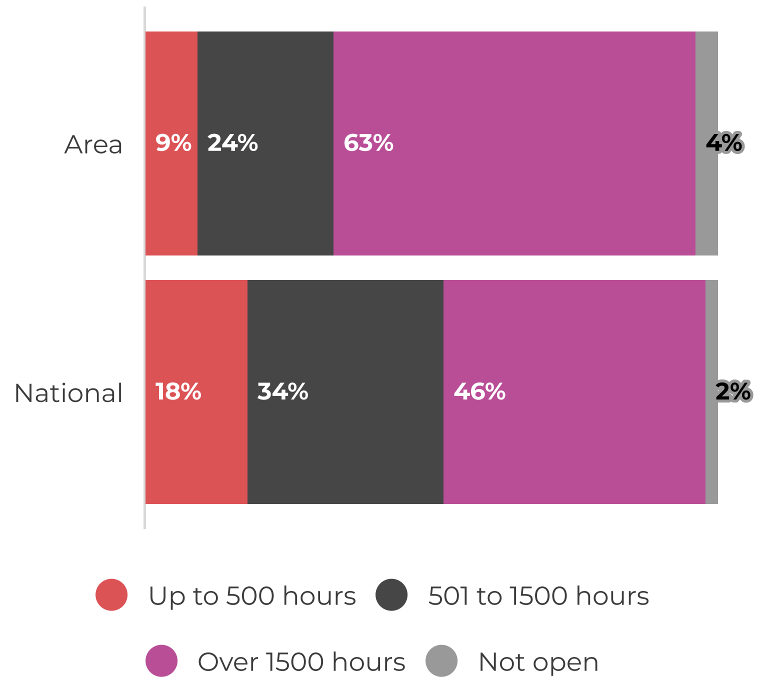
69% of museums in the area would usually be open all year round

The median number of hours open for a museum in the area was 1,928 while the national median is 1,436

Usual opening hours pattern: Area compared to national



Opening hours during 2024/25: Area compared to national

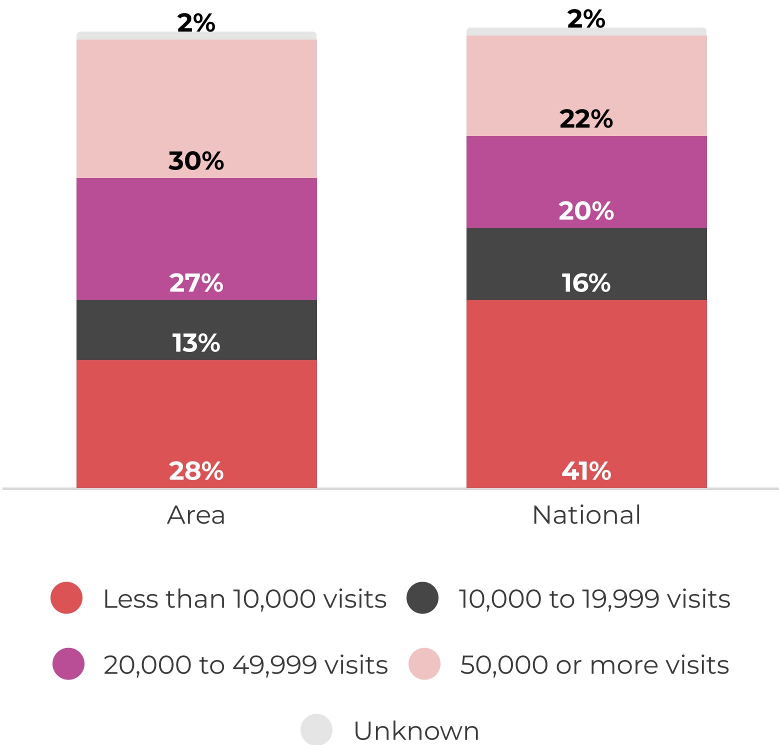


"How would you class your museum's usual opening hours?" (n = 44)
"How many hours was your museum open to the public in 2024/25?" (n = 44)

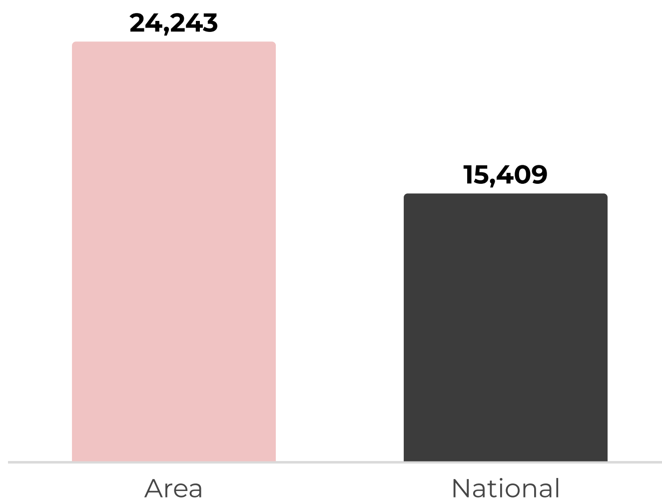
42% of museums in the area saw visit numbers increase in 2024/25

Compared to 29% nationally

Visitor numbers overview in 2024/25: Area compared to national



Median number of visitors to an Accredited museum in 2024/25: Area compared to national



In the area, this ranges from **1,018** (5th percentile) to **580,000** (95th percentile)

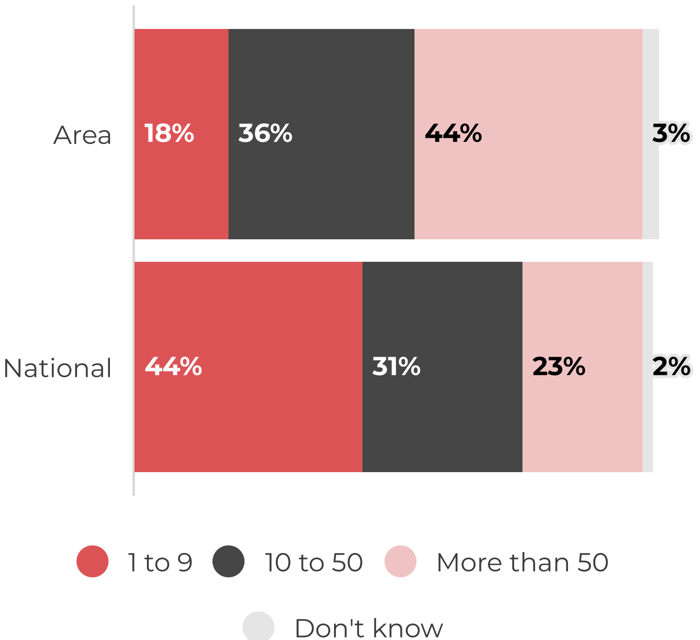
Combined variable using total opening hours and total visit numbers (n = 39)

The median number of formal education providers engaged by a museum in the area in 2024/25 is 39

This compares to 10 across England

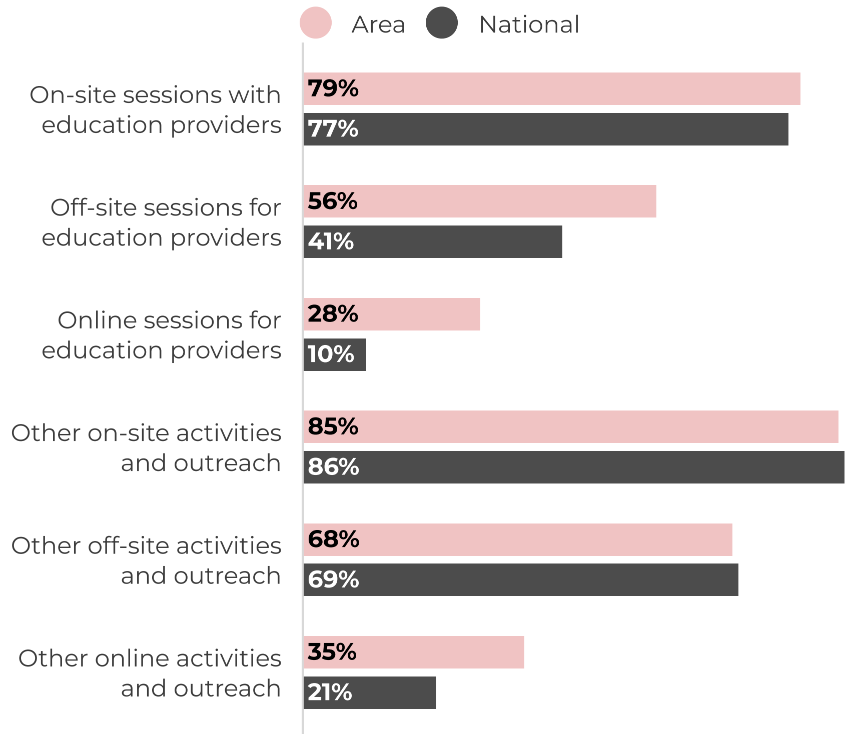
Number of education providers engaged:

Area compared to national



On-site, off-site and digital sessions:

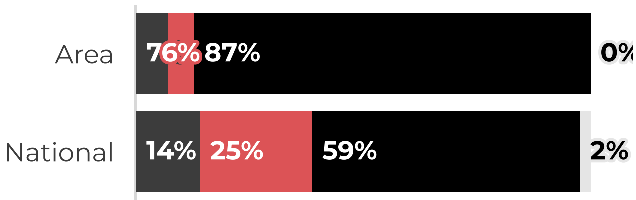
Area compared to national



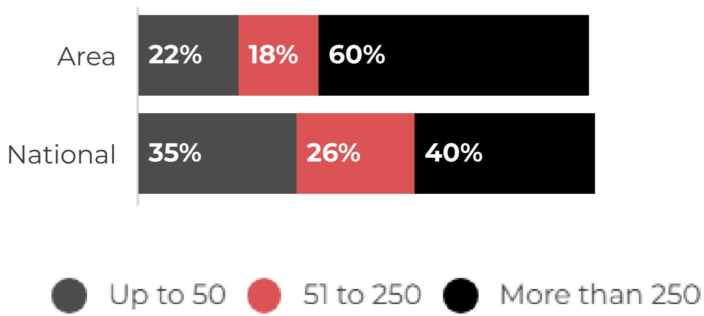
"For 2024/25, please indicate the total number of formal education providers engaged in on-site, off-site and online sessions (e.g. number of schools, colleges etc)." (n = 38)

Participation in education sessions and activities at museums in the area compared to nationally

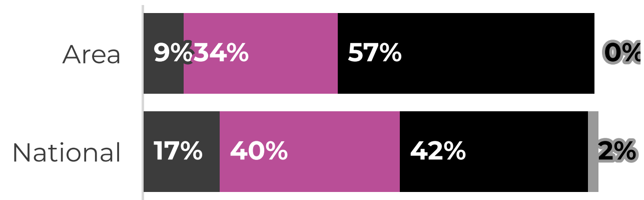
On-site participants at education sessions: Area compared to national



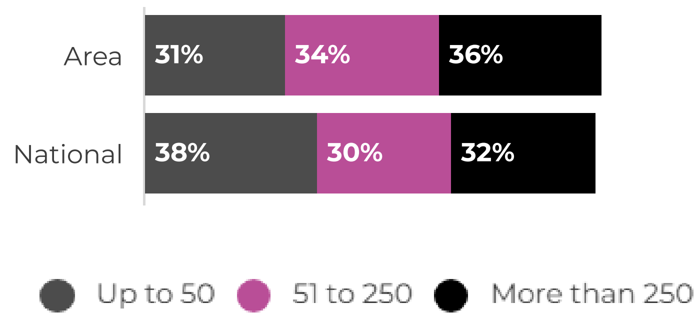
On-site participants of other activities and outreach: Area compared to national



Off-site participants at education sessions: Area compared to national



Off-site participants of other activities and outreach: Area compared to national



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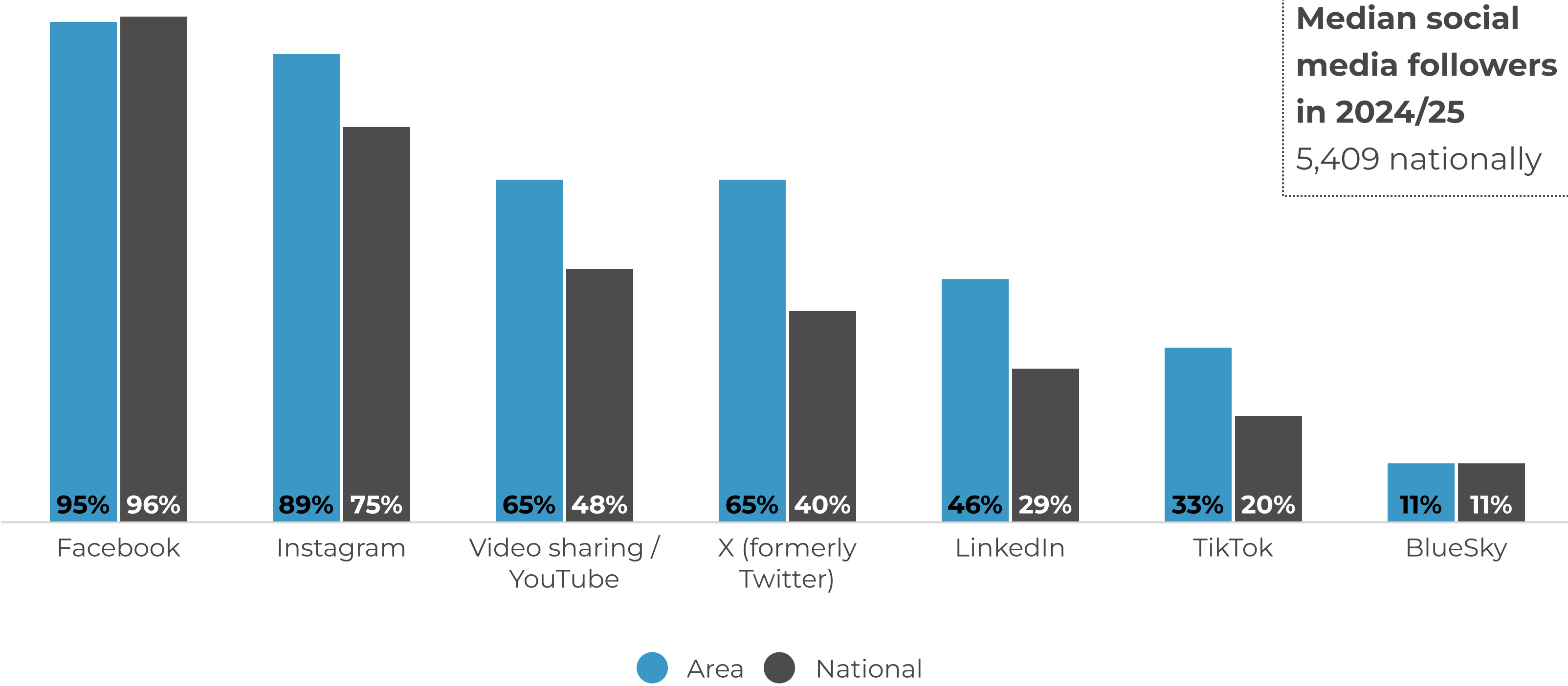
"For 2024//25, please provide the number of participants for... on-site education sessions" (n = 30);
"other on-site activities and outreach" (n = 32);
"off-site education sessions" (n = 21); "other off-site activities and outreach" (n = 26)

Median annual website visits to a museum in the area in 2024/25 is 113,302

This compares to 55,483 across England

Social media platforms used by museums in 2024/25: Area compared to national



9,730

Median social media followers in 2024/25

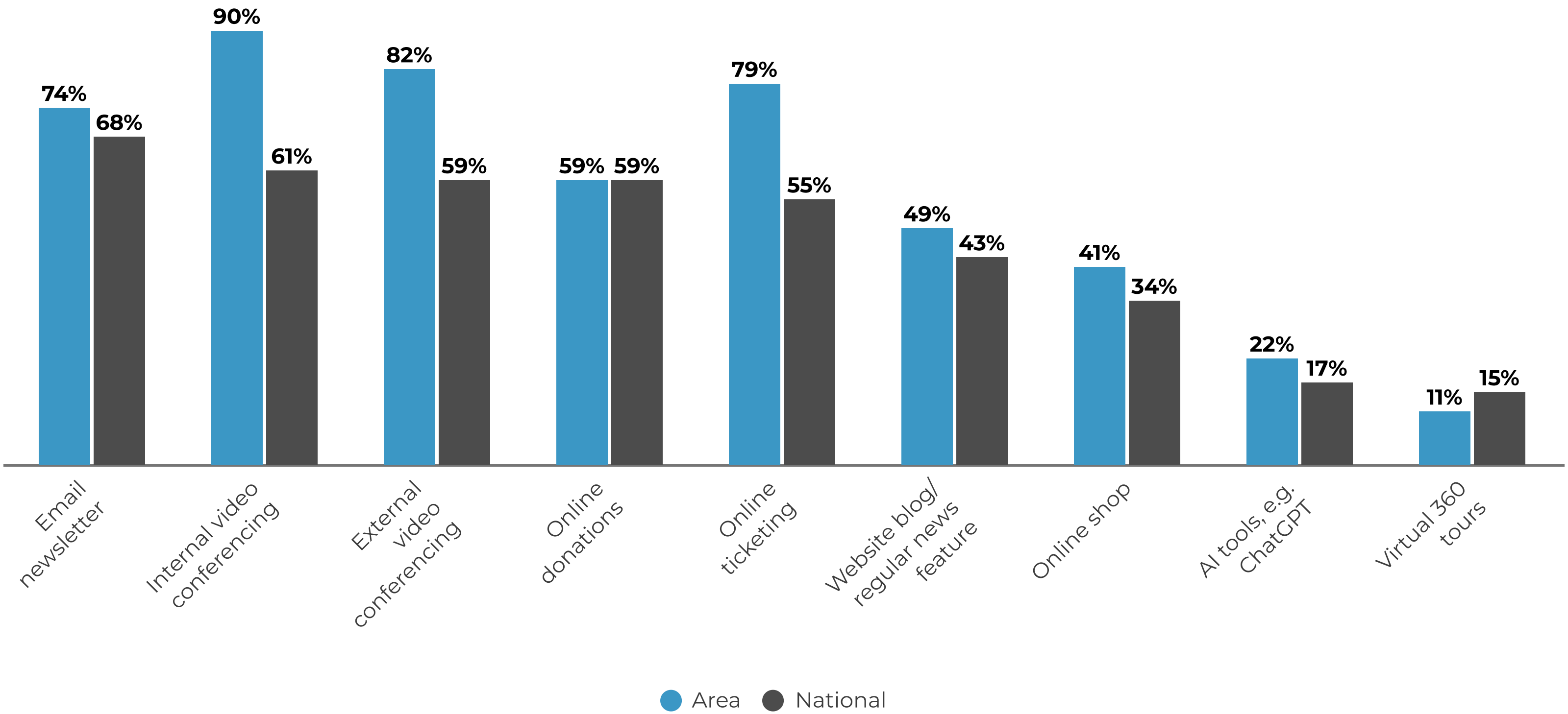
5,409 nationally

"What was the total number of unique visitors to your website between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025?" (n = 16)
"How many followers/subscribers did your museum have to its social media platforms at the end of 2024/25?" (n = 29)

79% of museums in the area used online ticketing to increase income during 2024/25, compared to 55% across England

59% of museums used online donations, which is the same across England (59%)

Digital tools used during 2024/25: Area compared to national



"Has your museum used any of the following digital platforms or tools during 2024/25?"
(n = 38)

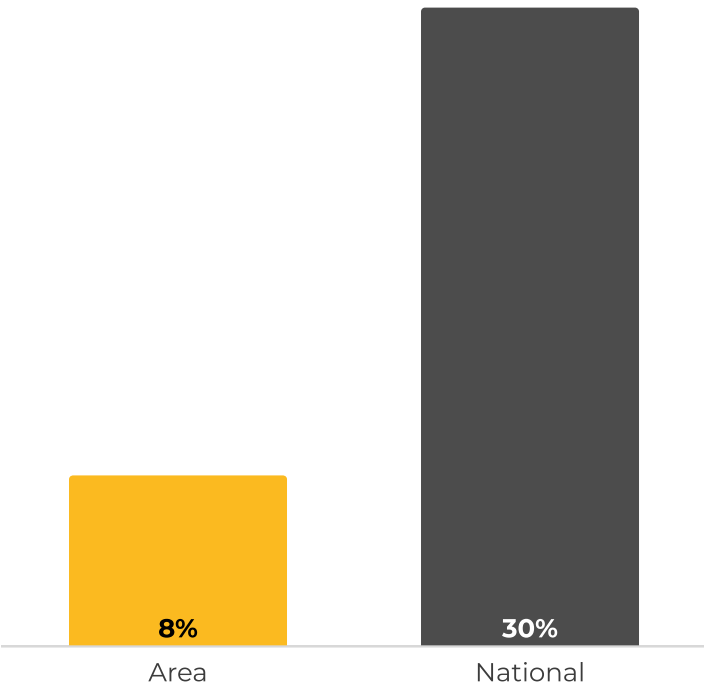
Staff and volunteers in 2024/25

Analysis of data relating to the workforce and volunteering

8% of museums in the area are wholly volunteer-run

This is lower than the national breakdown

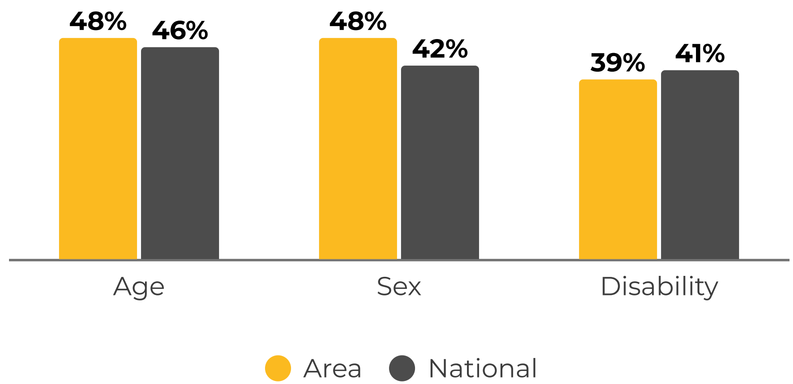
Proportion of museums in the area that are wholly volunteer-run compared to national



43% **Do not collect any equality and diversity information about staff or volunteers**

Compared to **51%** of museums across England

Museums with paid staff are most likely to collect information on age, sex and disability: Area compared to national



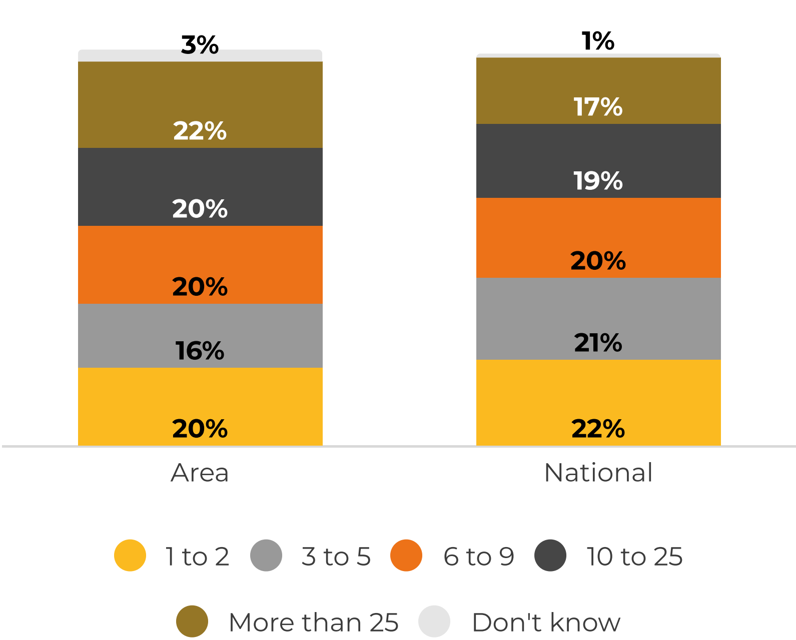
"In 2024/25, did you collect the following information about your...? Paid staff and regular volunteers"
(n = 35)

20% of museums with paid staff in the area have 1 to 2 employees

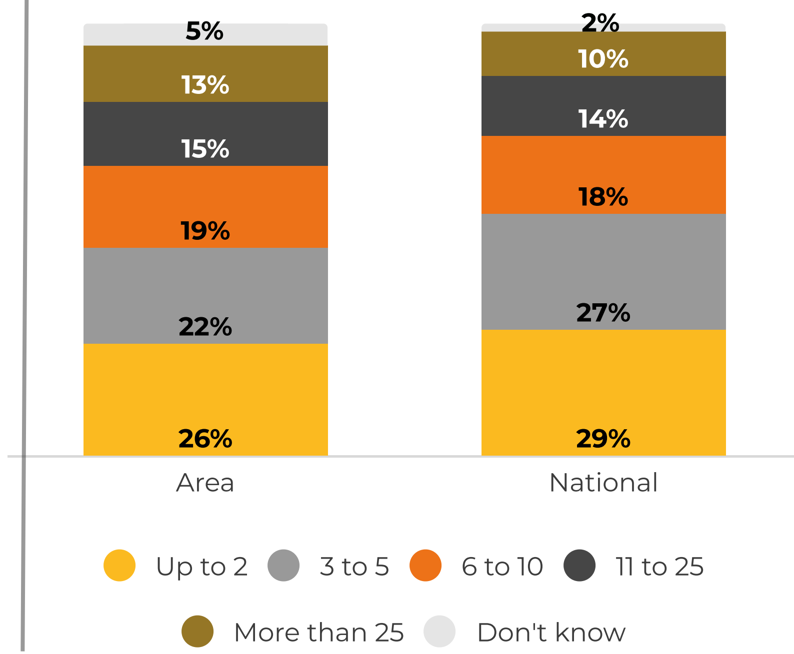
8 **Median headcount of paid staff in London for 2024/25**
7 nationally

4.6 **Median FTE headcount of paid staff in London for 2024/25**
4.0 nationally

Number of employees at museums with paid staff:
Area compared to national



FTE of employees at museums with paid staff:
Area compared to national

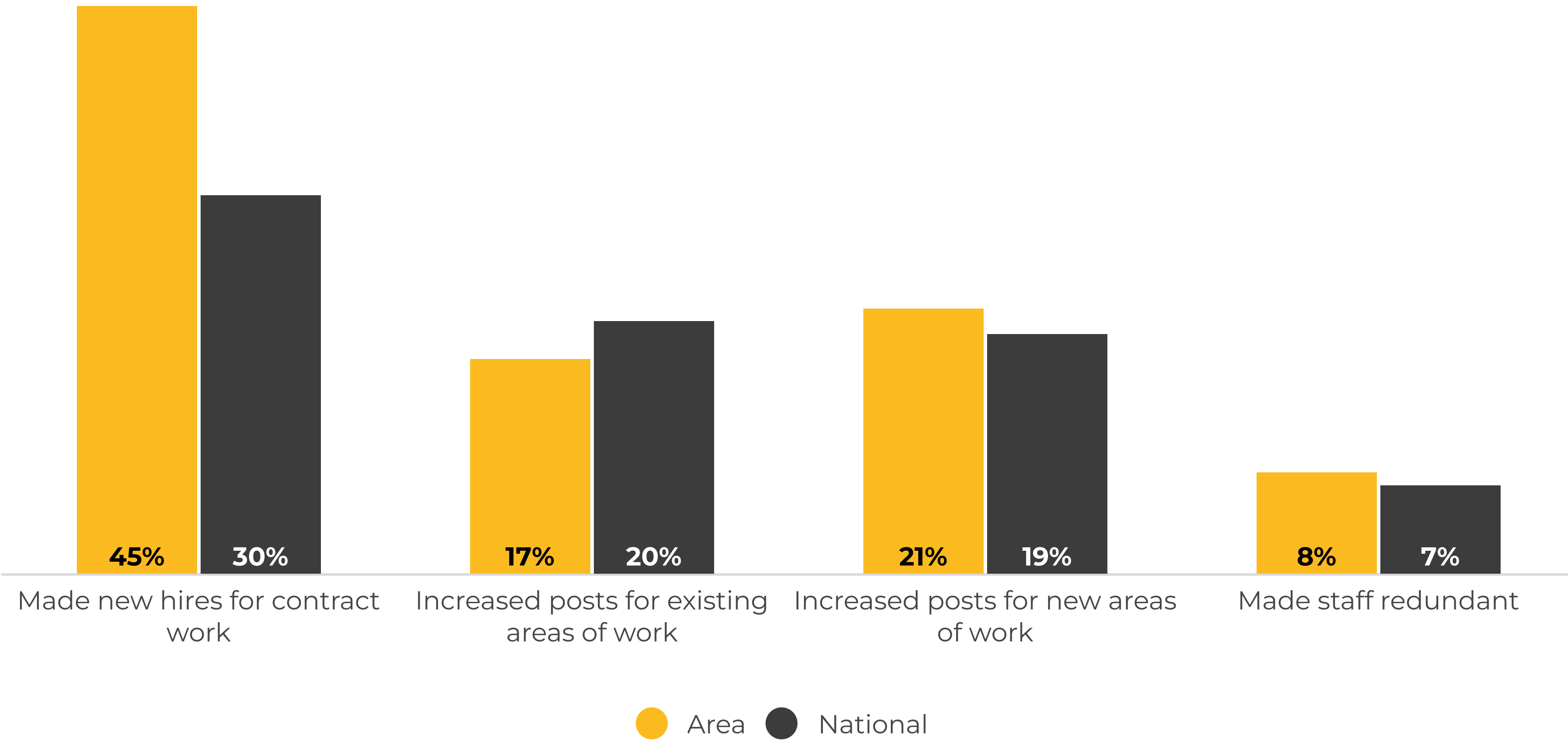


"In 2024/25, what was the total headcount of paid staff employed by your museum? "
(n = 35)

60% of museums with paid staff in the area hired new staff or contract work

Compared to 50% of museums with paid staff across England

Proportion of museums with paid staff making changes to staffing during 2024/25: Area compared to national



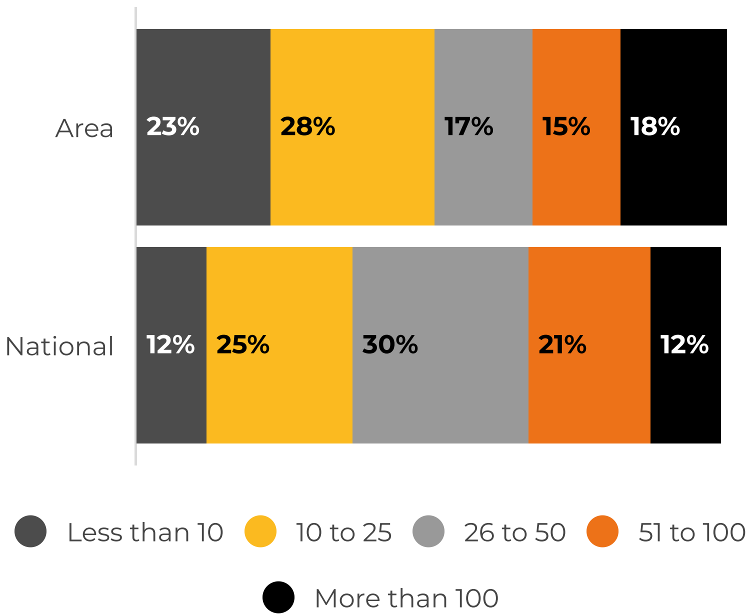
"In 2024/25, did your museum organisation do any of the following"
(n = 35)

There are 3 volunteers for every 1 employee in London's museums

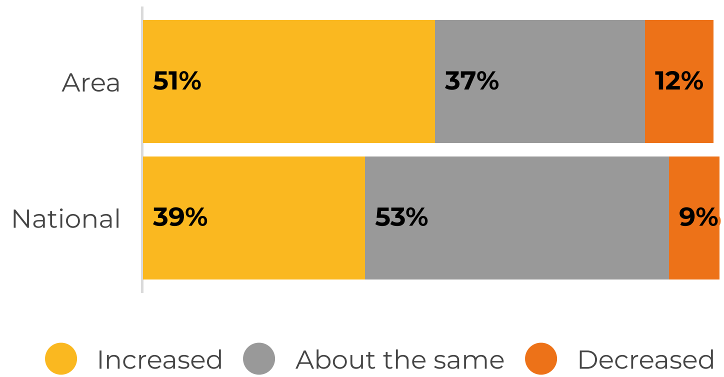
Compared to 5.6 volunteers for every one employee in museums across England

20 **Median number of volunteers in the area** 39 nationally

Number of volunteers in museums: area compared to national



Reported change in new volunteers recruited: Area compared to national



£42,400

Median value added by volunteers (hours contributed x local pay) in the area

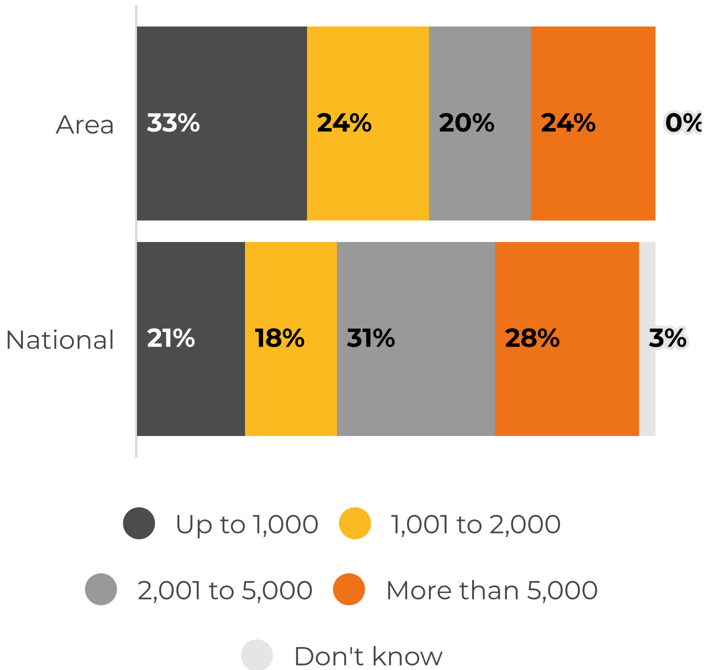
Compared to £46,879 nationally

Volunteer to staff headcount ratio - number of volunteers divided by number of paid employees

(n = 29)

The median number of hours volunteers have contributed to a museum in the area is 2,000

Number of volunteer hours contributed in museums: Area compared to national

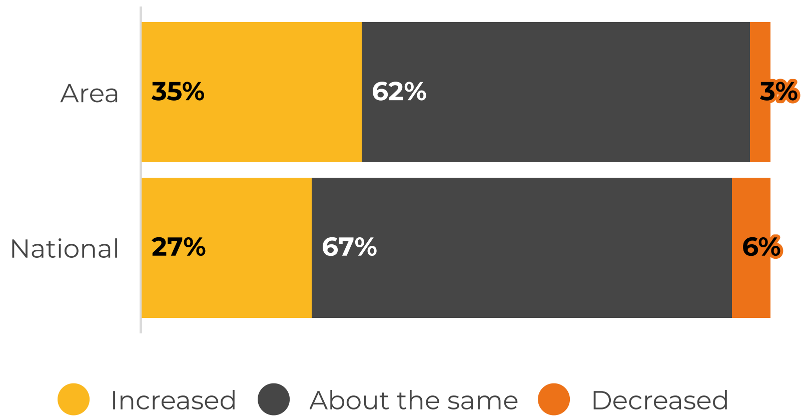


2,000

Median volunteer hours contributed at a museum in the area for 2024/25

Compared to 2,783 across England

Reported change in volunteer hours committed: Area compared to national



"In 2024/25, what was the total number of volunteer hours contributed at your museum?"
(n = 27)

Finances in 2024/25

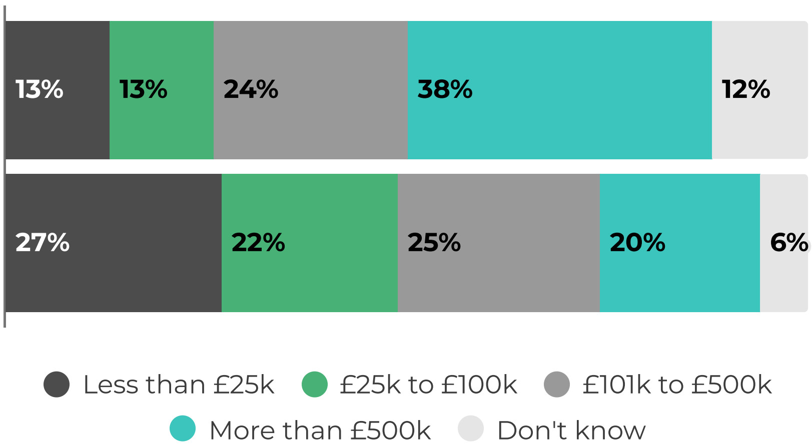
Analysis of financial data

13% of museums in the area reported an annual turnover of less than £25k in 2024/25

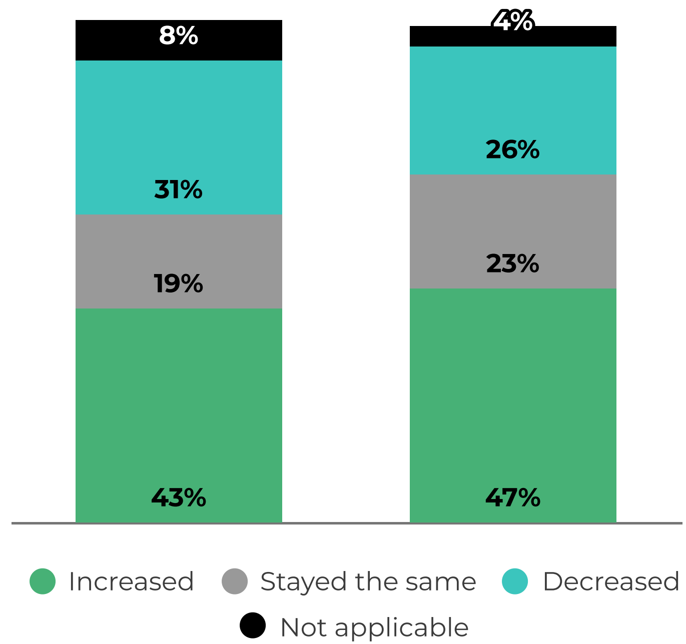
27% of museums across England reported an annual turnover of less than £25k

£527,797 **Median annual turnover of museums in the area**
£99,431 across England

Annual income/turnover in 2024/25:
Area compared to national



Reported change in income levels during 2024/25:
Area compared to national



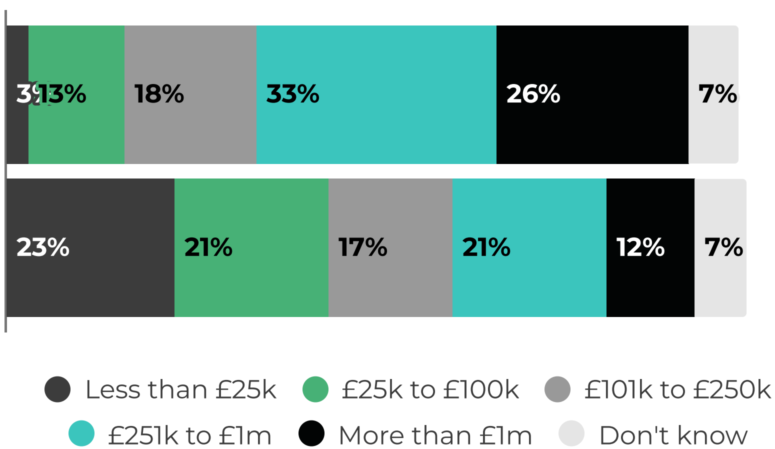
"What was your museum's annual turnover/income in 2024/25?"
(n = 24)

64% of museums in the area reported that they increased expenditure in 2024/25

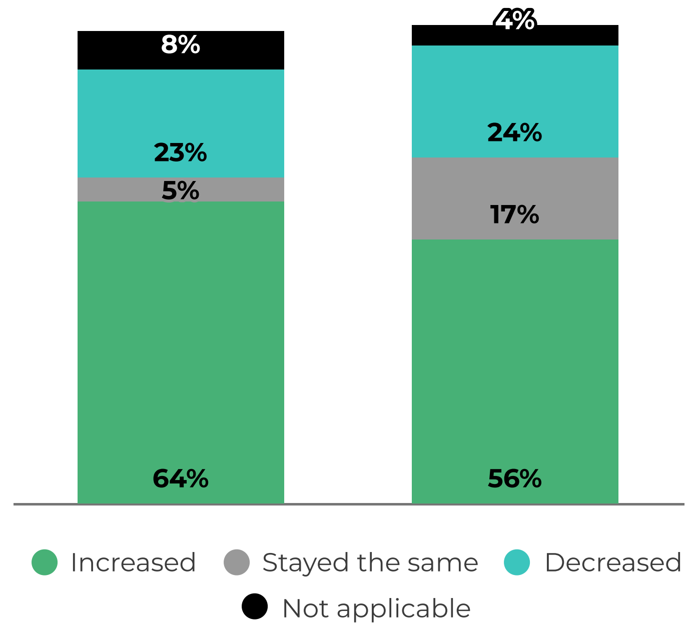
56% of museums across England reported an increase in expenditure

£533,000 **Median annual expenditure of museums in the area**
£125,254 across England

Annual expenditure in 2024/25: area compared to national



Reported change in expenditure levels during 2024/25: Area compared to national



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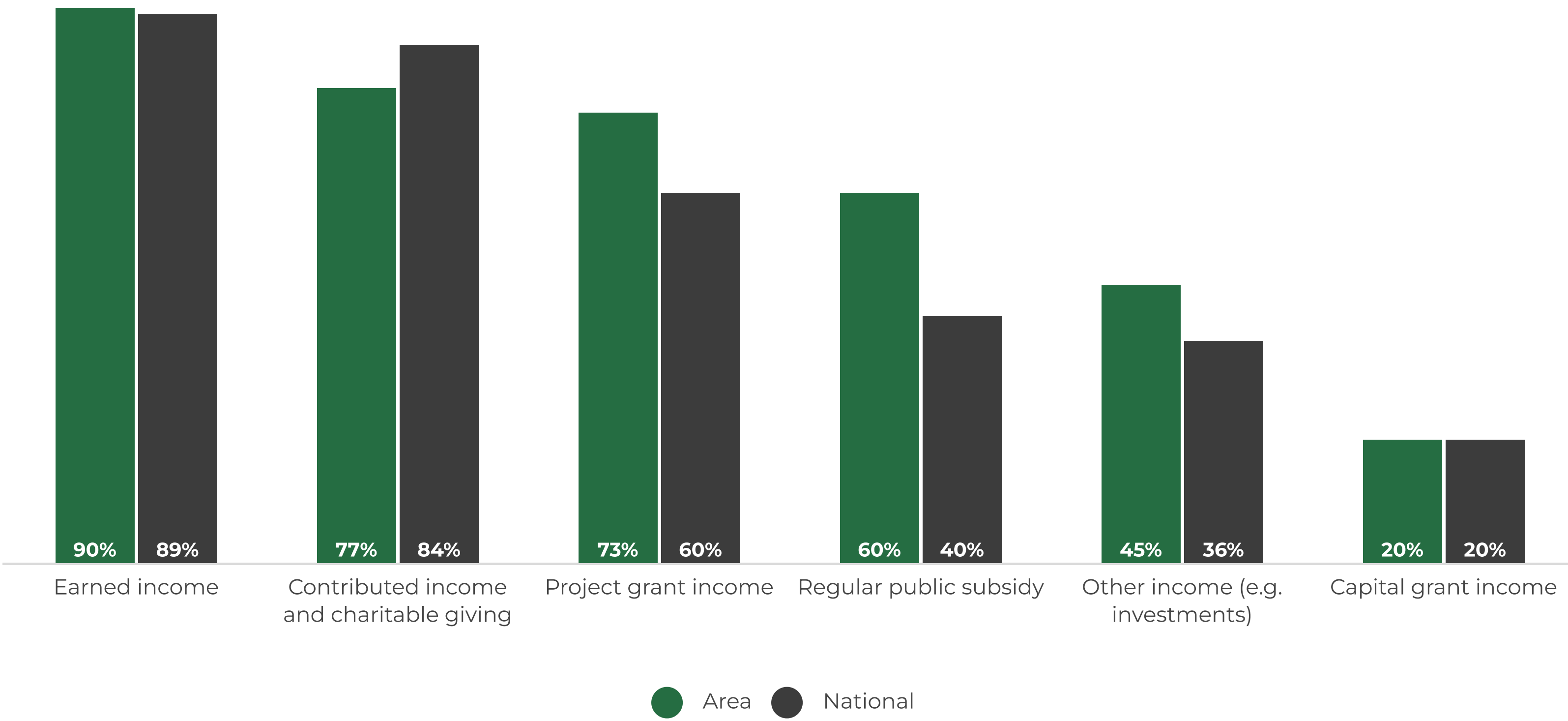
"What was your museum's annual expenditure in 2024/25?"
(n = 22)

90% of museums in the area received earned income in 2024/25

89% of museums across England received earned income which includes admissions, retail and refreshments

Breakdown of income received in 2024/25: Area compared to national

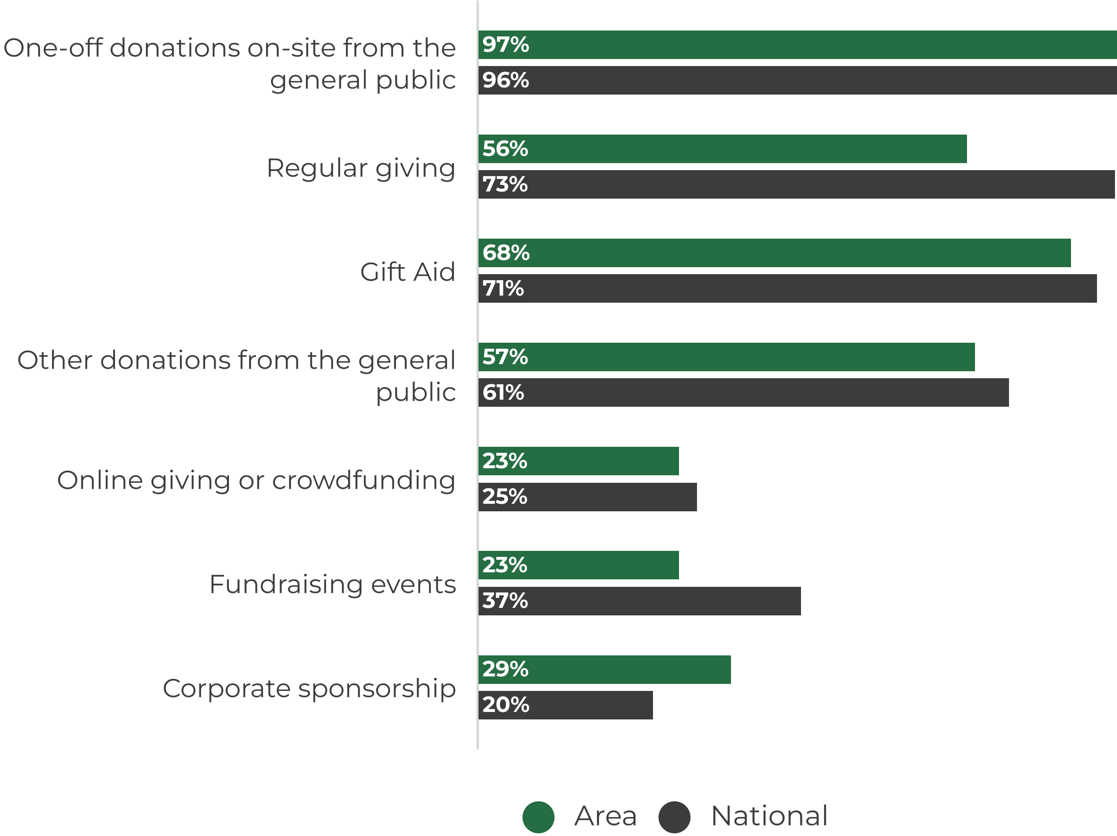


"In 2024/25, did you receive income from...?"
(n = 37)

97% of museums in the area received on-site donations in 2024/25

96% of museums across England received income from on-site donations

Museums receiving contributed or charitable income: Area compared to national

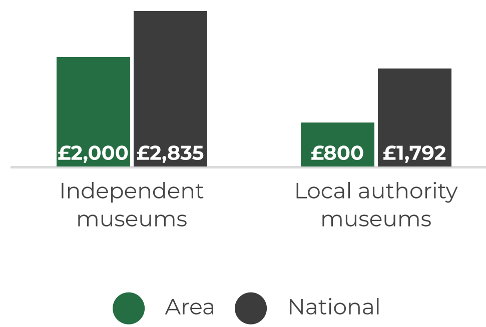


£1,792

Median on-site donations at museums in the area

£2,812 across England

Median on-site donations: Local authority and independent museums

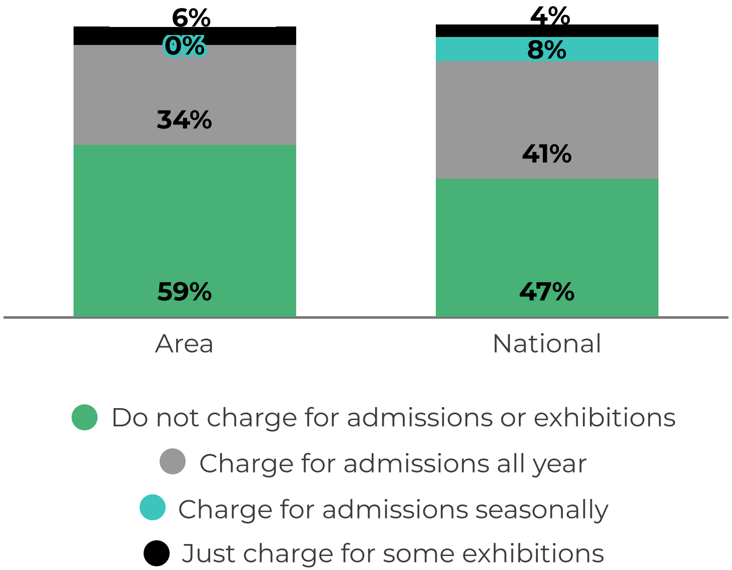


"In 2024/25, did your museum receive contributed or charitable income from...?" (n = 18)

34% of museums in the area charge for admissions all year or seasonally

49% of museums across England charge for admissions all year round or seasonally

Whether museums charge for admissions: Area compared to national



Adult **£12** £8

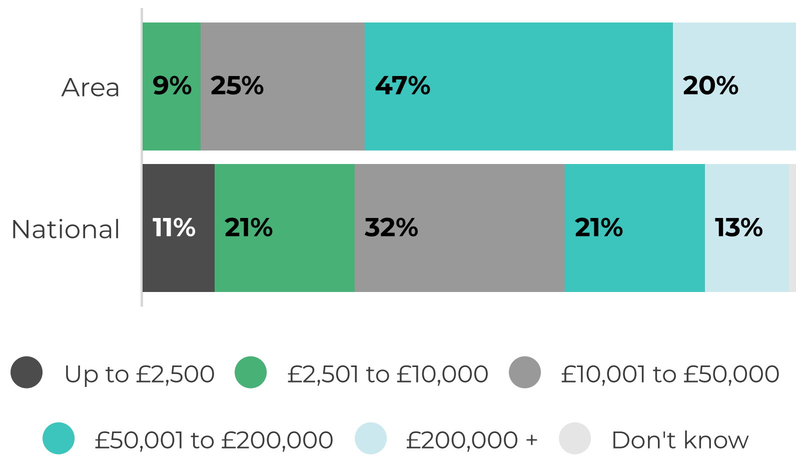
Median admissions charge National

Child **£6** £5

£173,800 **Median admissions income of all museums in the area**

£42,465 across England

Admissions income in 2024/25: Area compared to national



"Which of the following best describes your museum's admissions charges?"
(n = 33)

The median visitor local and day economic impact of a museum in the area was £667,129 in 2024/25

The AIM Economic Impact Toolkit 2024 has been used to calculate the economic impact of day/local visits, employment and procurement of local goods and services. The Annual Museum Survey takes a broad picture calculation applying key elements of the tool based on data provided. We invite museums to develop their own economic impact calculation with additional data, e.g. accounting for overnight stays.

£667,129

Median economic impact of local/day visits to a museum in the area

Compared to £346,782 nationally

£88,392

Median economic impact of employment at a museum with paid staff in the area

Compared to £86,210 nationally

£74,593

Median economic impact of procuring local goods and services at a museum in the area

Compared to £12,519 nationally

Economic impact in 2024/25: local/day visits (n = 40), employment (n = 33), procurement (n = 19)

Engagement and outlook

Museums engagement with the regional MD organisation and outlook for the coming year

36% of museums receiving project grants do so from Museum Development

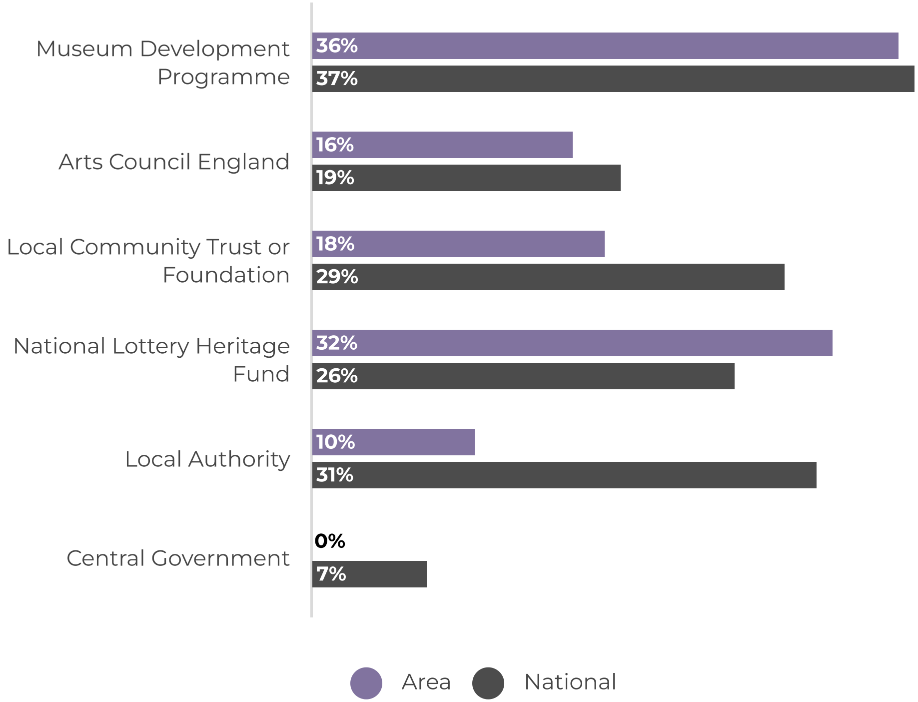
£84,438

Median project grant income of museums in the area

£16,263 across England

Project grant income overview:

Area compared to national



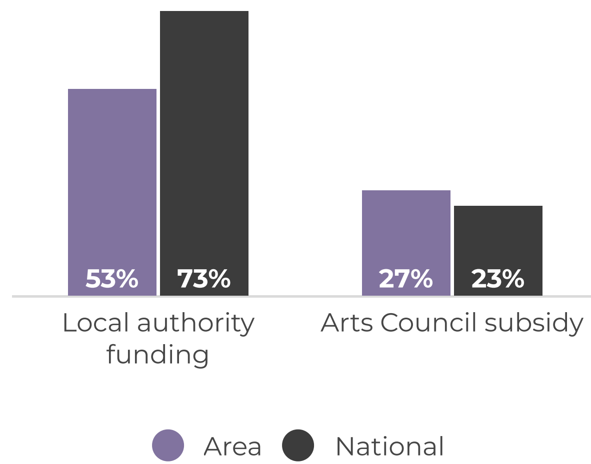
£357,250

Median public subsidy income of museums in the area

£125,000 across England

Public subsidy income from local authorities and Arts Council:

Area compared to national

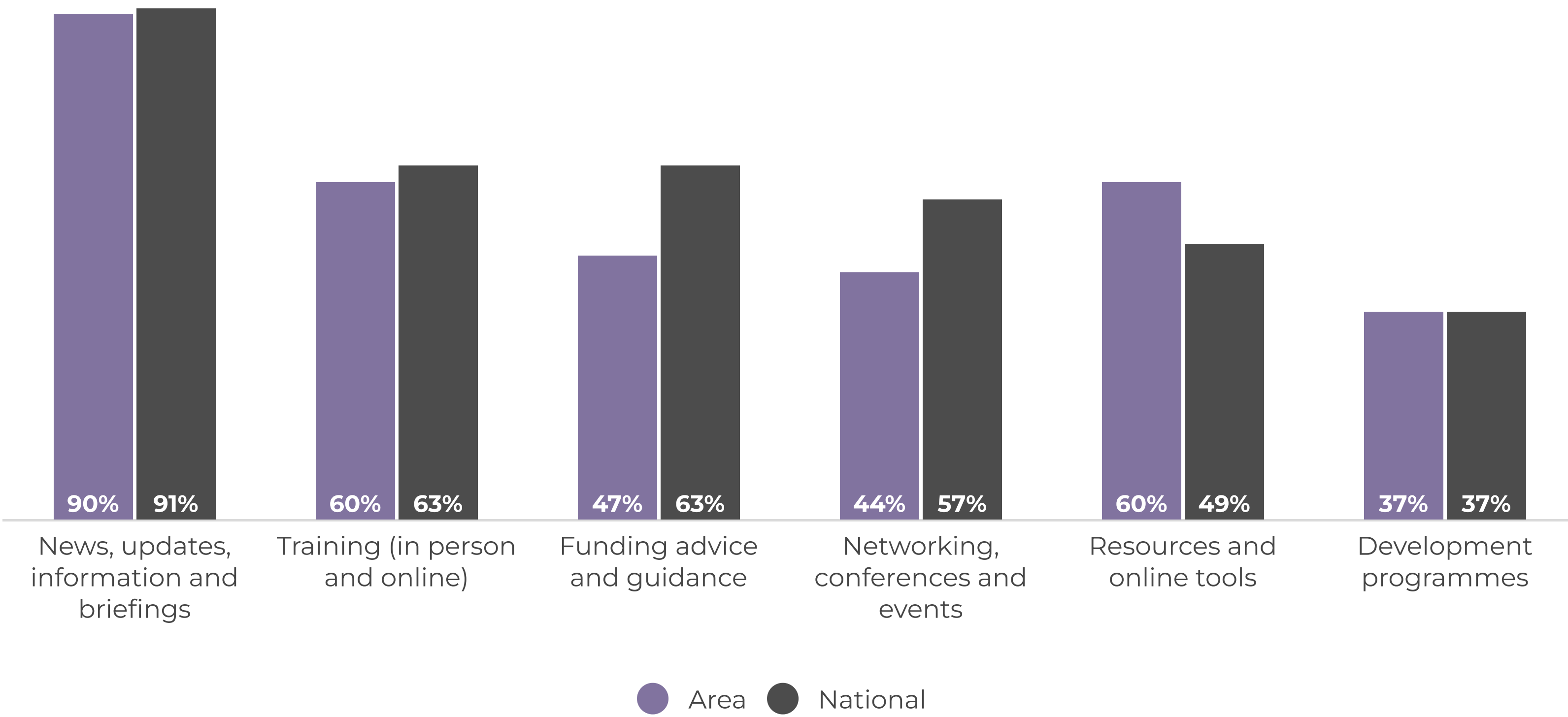


"In 2024/25, did your museum receive project grant income?"
(n = 28)

60% of museums in the area received training from Museum Development

63% of museums across England received training from their Museum Development area during 2024/25

Types of support museums received from their Museum Development area during 2024/25: Area compared to national



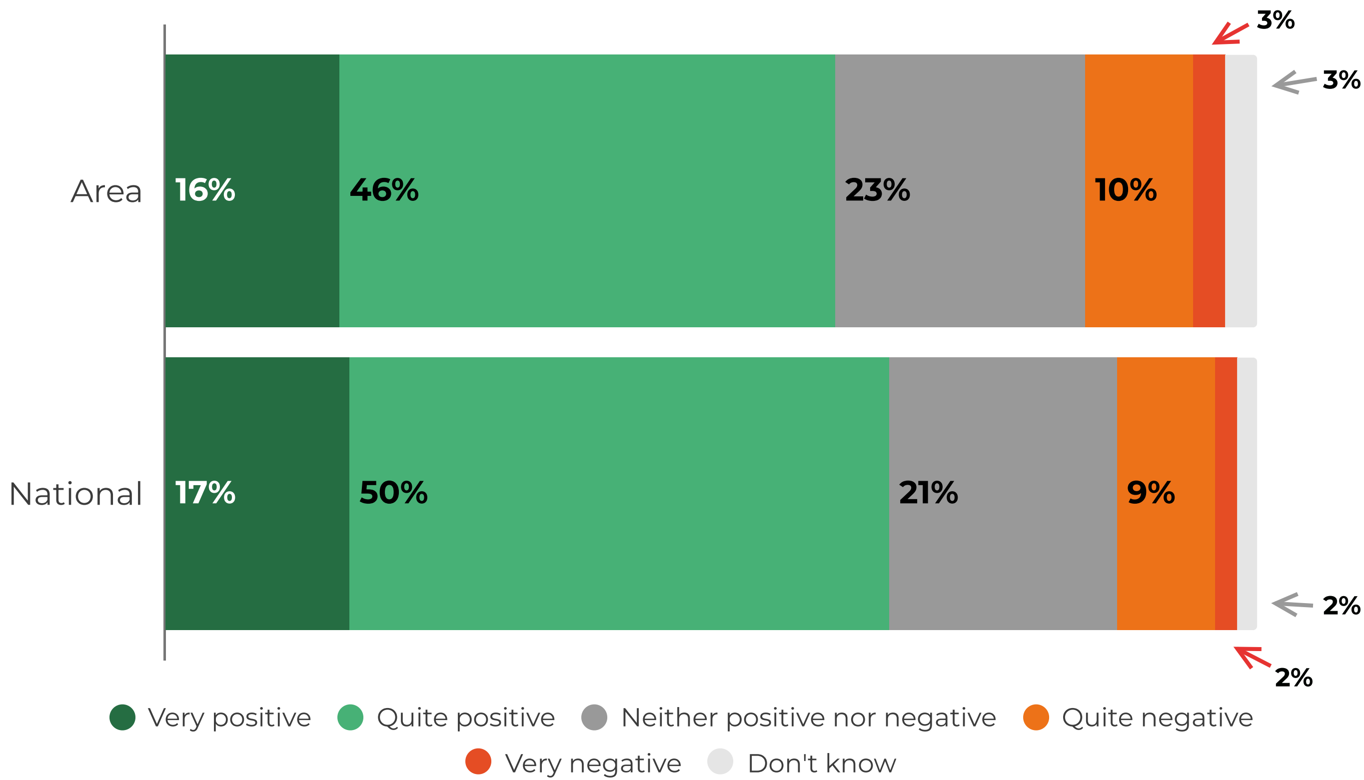
"In 2024/25, have you received any of the following support from your MD provider?" (n = 38)

61% of museums in the area feel the outlook for the coming year is positive

Compared to 67% across England

How positive museums are about their outlook for the coming year:

Area compared to national



"Do you consider your museum's outlook over the coming year to be...?"
(n = 38)

Museum snapshots

Snapshots by museum governance type and visitor size

Snapshot: Independent museums in the area

Museums overview

7% Museums in the most deprived areas

11% Wholly volunteer-run museums

70% Feel positive about the year ahead

32% Are large/largest (+50k visits per year)

Workforce and volunteering

46% Museums hiring staff or contracts

4.7 Volunteers to every one staff member

50% Increased volunteers in last year

35% Contributed volunteer hours increased in last year

Audiences

63% Museums open all year round

26% Museums with less than 10k annual visits

17% Visitor numbers have increased in past year

77% Museums providing on-site education sessions

Finance

11% Museums with less than £25k turnover

47% Museums reporting increased income

71% Museums reporting increased expenditure

70% Museums receiving project grant income

* = Median % change based on constant sample. Other statements present percentage of museums affected
I/S = Insufficient sample: The number of respondents not sufficient enough to provide a reliable statistic

Snapshot: Local authority museums in the area

Museums overview

14% Museums in the most deprived areas

38% Museums with outdoor spaces

50% Feel positive about the year ahead

44% Are small / medium (-50k visits per year)

Workforce and volunteering

81% Museums hiring staff or contracts

I/S Volunteers to every one staff member

I/S Increased volunteers in last year

I/S Contributed volunteer hours increased in last year

Audiences

93% Museums open all year round

21% Museums with less than 10k annual visits

I/S Visitor numbers have increased in past year

80% Museums providing on-site education sessions

Finance

21% Museums with less than £25k turnover

29% Museums reporting increased income

49% Museums reporting increased expenditure

90% Museums receiving project grant income

* = Median % change based on constant sample. Other statements present percentage of museums affected
I/S = Insufficient sample: The number of respondents not sufficient enough to provide a reliable statistic

Snapshot: Micro museums in the area

Museums overview

18% Museums that charge for admissions

16% Wholly volunteer-run museums

37% Wholly owned or reliant on a local authority

68% Feel positive about the year ahead

Workforce and volunteering

53% Museums hiring staff or contracts

I/S Volunteers to every one staff member

51% Increased volunteers in last year

34% Contributed volunteer hours increased in last year

Audiences

46% Museums open all year round

7% Museums open for 2000+ hours annually

I/S Visitor numbers have increased in past year

69% Museums providing on-site education sessions

Finance

23% Museums with less than £25k turnover

46% Museums reporting increased income

31% Museums reporting increased expenditure

61% Museums receiving project grant income

* = Median % change based on constant sample. Other statements present percentage of museums affected
I/S = Insufficient sample: The number of respondents not sufficient enough to provide a reliable statistic

Snapshot: Small/medium museums in the area

Museums overview

44% Museums that charge for admissions

6% Wholly volunteer-run museums

37% Wholly owned or reliant on a local authority

51% Feel positive about the year ahead

Workforce and volunteering

56% Museums hiring staff or contracts

3.6 Volunteers to every one staff member

60% Increased volunteers in last year

27% Contributed volunteer hours increased in last year

Audiences

72% Museums open all year round

45% Museums open for 2000+ hours annually

I/S Visitor numbers have increased in past year

94% Museums providing on-site education sessions

Finance

6% Museums with less than £25k turnover

37% Museums reporting increased income

88% Museums reporting increased expenditure

75% Museums receiving project grant income

* = Median % change based on constant sample. Other statements present percentage of museums affected
I/S = Insufficient sample: The number of respondents not sufficient enough to provide a reliable statistic

Data sharing, use and attributes

Museum Development England is the term used by the five area Museum Development providers across England when delivering activity and collaboration at a national Level. Museum Development England is core funded by Arts Council England. Its "goal is to collaborate to enable diverse, inclusive and innovative museums that welcome people from all backgrounds. Together we create a thriving museum sector by raising standards, driving excellence and training people working in museums. Find out more here."

The Annual Museum Survey is operated by Museum Development South West and hosted by Bristol City Council with support from PS Research. For further information on the process undertaken for the Annual Museum Survey 2025 or to access this report in an accessible format, please contact museum.data@bristol.gov.uk.

For further information on the Annual Museum Survey reports, please visit:
Annual Museum Survey - Museum Development South West

Thank you

To the 44 museums in the area who took part in the Annual Museum Survey 2025 and who made this report possible.

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