Understanding UK Artists' Livelihoods: The 2024 Survey

November 2025

Centre for Creative Economies (CCE)

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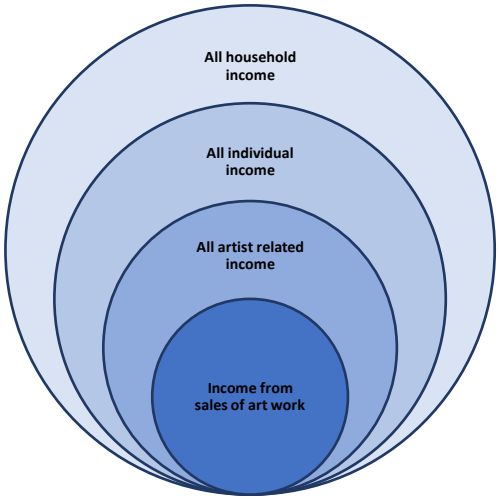
Executive Summary: Understanding Artists' Livelihoods

This report presents the findings from the **Artists' Livelihoods 2024 Survey**, undertaken by Coventry University's **Centre for Creative Economies (CCE)** for **Creative United**, with the financial support of **Creative Scotland** and **Arts Council England**. It provides an evidence base that quantifies earnings from artistic production by artists, distinct from other forms of employment or income support mechanisms. It captures visual artists income through the sale of their work and examines how this relates to wider livelihoods, including total artistic, personal, and household earnings. It also offers insights into the role of public investment schemes into artistic consumer markets, such as **Own Art**, in supporting artists' livelihoods.



A snapshot of artists' lives and labour

The online survey ran from **16 April to 13 June 2025**, gathering responses from **271 UK-based visual artists** about their earnings in the calendar year ending **31 December 2024**. It captured a cross-section of age, gender, geography, and practice types. The majority of respondents were mid-career (aged 45–64), and more than one in five identified as disabled or living with a long-term health condition.

The data paint a stark picture. While the UK's creative industries contribute over **£124 billion** annually to the national economy, this value does not translate into sustainable incomes for most artists. Over half (56%) of respondents earned less than **£5,000** from art sales in 2024, and only 13% earned more than **£15,000**. Even when wider artistic income — such as teaching or facilitation — is included, the **median annual artistic income** remains just **£12,500**, well below both the **UK Living Wage (£24,000)** and the **national average salary (£34,000)**.

When total personal and household income are considered, the picture improves slightly but remains modest. Nearly half of respondents live in households with earnings below the national median. Overall, the Artists Livelihoods 2024 Survey earnings and income results build on and mirror those reported in other recent pieces of data-driven research focused on artists' livelihoods.

Inequalities and income gaps

Gender, age, and disability shape access to opportunity and income. Mid-career artists (aged 45–64) report the highest earnings, while younger and older artists cluster at the bottom of the income scale. The underrepresentation of younger artists is not only a demographic detail but a potential red flag for sector renewal and sustainability. Women and non-binary artists are overrepresented in lower earning brackets, confirming longstanding pay gaps across the visual arts. A significant 23% of respondents identify as disabled or living with long-term health conditions — one of the highest rates of any economic sector — underscoring both the accessibility of artistic work as an employment gateway and the vulnerability of those who rely on it.

Sales infrastructure and strategy

Artists combine multiple sources of income — including teaching, commissions, residencies, facilitation, and non-artistic employment — in pursuit of sustainable livelihoods. Most artists sell work through a mix of in-person, gallery-based, and digital routes. Those able to diversify across multiple channels tend to achieve stronger financial outcomes, though access to these opportunities depends on time, resources, and networks not equally available to all.

The contribution of consumer credit schemes

Creative United's **Own Art** programme continues to provide an important mechanism for supporting artists' livelihoods by facilitating incremental arts sales that might not otherwise occur. Evaluation of the scheme's operation in Scotland during 2024/2025 suggests that 32% of Scottish artists surveyed made their income solely through sales or commissions of arts and crafts, and that, on average, **14%** of their sales came through Own Art.

If a 14% 'uplift' figure from Own Art usage were to be applied to income from sales of artwork reported by all the artist respondents in the UK Artists' Livelihoods 2024 data set, then it would suggest a total uplift through **Own Art Sales of for more than £330k of income in 2024** across the survey respondents. That would equate to an average of approximately **£1,500 for each respondent** who earned income from sales during the year. This amount would equate also to 12% of average earnings from artistic activities amongst the UK Artists' Livelihoods 2024 respondents.

Conclusions

The Artists' Livelihoods 2024 Survey confirms that while the UK's visual artists contribute significantly to the cultural and social fabric of the nation, their economic position remains precarious. In this survey, art sales — or even broader artistic income — do not achieve financial stability. Structural inequities relating to gender and age persist, and the value of artistic labour continues to be undervalued.

Artists are adapting through diversification, but current data suggest that adaptability alone does not deliver sustainable livelihoods. To realise the full potential of the creative economy, greater recognition and policy support are required — including, for example, fair pay frameworks, investment in sales infrastructure, and continued backing for schemes like Own Art which provide vital pathways between artists and the ability to grow art and craft markets.

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1. Understanding Artists' Livelihoods

1.1 Purpose

The primary objective of this artists' livelihoods research is to establish a context against which Creative United and its funders can better understand the current and future potential contribution of consumer credit scheme investments on artists' livelihoods. These publicly funded initiatives are designed to increase access and the ability to purchase original art and craft – and in so doing support artists' livelihoods.

In particular, Creative United seeks better contextual understanding of the value of incremental sales generated by its own consumer credit schemes:

- **Own Art** is a national initiative that makes buying contemporary art and craft affordable by providing interest-free credit to consumers for the purchase of original works of art. Since 2004, the scheme has enabled more than 83,000 UK customers to get access to the art they love. Delivered through a network of over 300 galleries and art fairs across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, Own Art has so far supported over £75 million of sales of contemporary art and craft, benefitting many thousand individual artists living and working across the UK.
- **Made Possible** was a time-limited extension of the Own Art consumer credit model piloted in Scotland to make it more affordable to buy original high-quality art, craft, and design directly from independent artists, makers, and craftspeople. It was created to test a consumer finance model to support independent artists and designers who predominantly sell work direct to the consumer via their own sales channels, rather than through gallery representation.

This report presents the findings of a UK-wide Artists' Livelihoods 2024 survey of 271 visual artists to establish the average annual income generated through their individual sales of works of art and/or craft. The findings include analysis of how such sales contribute to artists' total artistic income, total personal income, and household income. Crucially, then, the report quantifies earnings from artistic production, distinct from other employment activities and/or support mechanisms.

The report supports Creative United to demonstrate their wider role in strengthening the livelihoods of UK-based artists and their contribution to national debates on achieving an environment that enables sustainable artist livelihoods. The report offers valuable insight for policymakers and funders seeking to support the role of individual artists in local and national economic and place-based development[1].

[1] See Henry, N., Barker, V., Sissons, P., Broughton, K., Dickinson, P., Lazell, J., & Angus, T. (2021). Creating Value in Place: Understanding the Role, Contribution and Challenges of Creative Freelance Work; and Henry, N., Barker, V., Sissons, P., Broughton, K., Dickinson, P., Lazell, J., & Angus, T. (2021) https://www.creativeunited.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Mind-the-Understanding-Gap-The-Value-of-Creative-Freelancers.pdf

1.2 Methodology and timeline

Coventry University's Centre for Creative Economies (CCE) were engaged to support Creative United to undertake this research. This involved the creation of an online survey (hosted on the JISC platform)[2] - that drew from the core research questions in this study, and key parallel approaches including DACS[3] and Own Art member gallery surveys.

Income categories in the survey were matched with DACS research into artist income, and categories of artistic practice were matched with Creative United's previous Own Art scheme surveys, as were geographic regions. We used national survey best practice approaches to gather data on gender identity, disability and long-term health conditions, and ethnicity. The construction of our survey questions in this way was intended to allow comparison of the results of our Artists' Livelihoods 2024 Survey with published datasets or analysis from other work.

We tested a pilot version of the survey with Creative United's Artist Advisory Group to ensure that the purpose and instructions were clear. With support from the Arts Council of Wales, we also offered a version of the survey in Welsh. The survey went live on 16th April 2025 and was advertised to the sector across home nations using partner networks and social media.

Ethical approval was gained through Coventry University procedures including the use of anonymised data protocol – participants were given the following introductory information and could only proceed with the survey by confirming that they were over 18 years old and gave their explicit consent to participation in the research.

> ***This survey is being delivered by Coventry University's Research Centre for Creative Economies, working in partnership with Creative United and with the support of its Own Art scheme funding partners Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council of Wales.***
>
> ***You are being invited to take part in this survey because you responded to an open call for participation by UK-based visual artists. Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, and you can opt out at any stage by closing and exiting the browser.***
>
> ***Your answers will help us to identify and develop support for sustainable artistic livelihoods. There are four questions about your income and earnings during the year 2024 and the whole survey should take no longer than ten minutes to complete.***

[2] JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) are the UK digital, data and technology agency focused on tertiary education, research and innovation

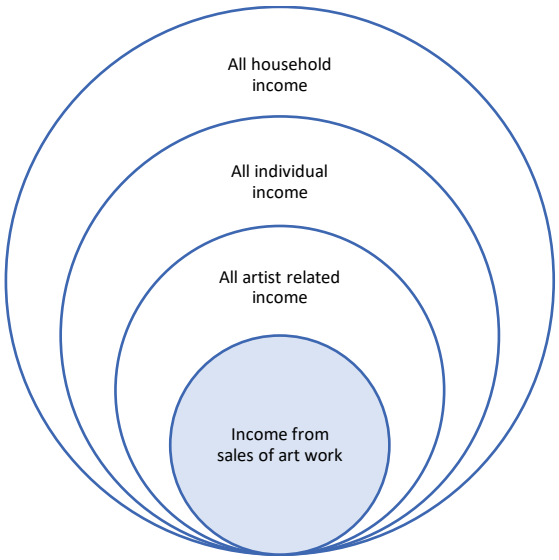
[3] DACS (Design and Artists Copyright Society) are a visual artists' rights management organisation.

> ***Your answers will be treated confidentially and the information you provide will be kept anonymous in any research outputs / publications. All information will be handled in accordance with Coventry University Policies, Standards, and Procedures, including our Research Ethics and Integrity Statements and our Research Privacy Notice available on our website at https://www.coventry.ac.uk/gdpr-and-data-protection/privacy-notices/.***

Both English and Welsh versions were live until 13th June 2025. During the eight-week period, the survey generated 282 English language responses and one Welsh. A total of 271 responses were received from artists in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The remaining 12 responses were 'from outside of the UK' and have been discounted in the analysis which follows in this report.

Unique data was analysed to determine the proportion of income reported specifically from the sale of artworks. This is the shaded circle within the nested categories of income shown in Figure 1.1 below. This model adds to wider sector research into artist incomes to allow comparison of data.

Figure 1.1: nested scales of income for artists' livelihoods survey



1.2.1 Compendium of Artist Livelihood Surveys

We have sought to contextualise our findings with reference to four significant pieces of data-driven research focused on artists' livelihoods (see below), all conducted over 2024 and 2025 and using a survey methodology across the home nations of the UK. In large part, these comparator pieces based typically on large-scale surveys reinforce findings from the Artists' Livelihoods 2024 survey. In doing so they increase the validity of the conclusions we have drawn from the 271 responses received and analysed in this report.

	Artists' Livelihoods Survey 2024	Own Art	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
Date	*2024 (Published 2025)*	*2025*	*2025*	*2024 (Published 2025)*	*2024*
Organisation(s)	*Coventry University / Creative United*	*Creative United*	*Freelancers Make Theatre Work / University of Essex*	*FRY Creative with the input of the Crafts Council.*	*Centre for Regulation of the Creative Economy (CREATe) at University of Glasgow*
Funder	*Creative United (Arts Council England / Creative Scotland)*	*Creative United (Arts Council England funded)*	*Arts Council England*	*Crafts Council*	*DACS (Design and Artists Copyright Society)*
Focus	*UK Visual Artists*	*Visual arts and galleries*	*TV, theatre, performing arts*	*Crafts, makers and visual arts*	*Visual arts*
Respondents	*271*	*109*	*1000+*	*1000+*	*1000+*
Geography	*England: 77% Scotland: 13% Wales: 8% Northern Ireland: 2%*	*England: 54% Scotland: 31% Wales: 15% Northern Ireland: 0%*	*England: 87% Scotland: 7% Wales: 3% Northern Ireland: 1% Other: 2%*	*England: 87% Scotland 7% Wales 6% Northern Ireland 1%*	*England: 76% Scotland 10% Wales 4% Northern Ireland 8% Outside of UK 8%*

More detailed summaries of these surveys are provided in a Compendium (Section 7) at the end of this report to support comparative analysis and understanding. Additional contextual points are drawn from older data in the Arts Council Livelihoods dataset (2018), and other qualitative work on and for the sector (see References, Section 6).

1.3 Funding Partners

This research has been part-funded by Creative Scotland, which contributed toward the project as part of its investment in the Own Art scheme in Scotland for the financial year 2024/25.

Additional match funding — including support for survey design, incentives, marketing, publication, and stakeholder engagement — has been provided by Creative United using funds granted by Arts Council England for the strategic development of the Own Art scheme.

In addition, the Arts Council of Wales and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland supported the dissemination of the survey.

1.4 Structure of the Report

This report is structured into seven sections, each offering detailed insights drawn from the Artists' Livelihoods 2024 survey.

- **Section 2** presents a detailed profile of survey respondents, including demographic characteristics (such as gender, age, and ethnicity), and geographic distribution across the UK. It establishes the social context from which the income and practice data emerge.

- **Section 3** explores artists' artistic, personal and household income levels, providing a wider picture of financial circumstances. It includes an analysis of total earnings (both artistic and non-artistic) and comparisons with national earnings benchmarks.

- **Section 4** examines how artists generate income from their creative practice. It focuses on the number and type of sales channels artists use, the relative value of different sales approaches, and the relationship between sales strategy and income.

- **Section 5** draws together the key findings. These are intended to inform further debate and to support the development of more equitable, effective, and sustainable support structures for artists' livelihoods.

- **Section 6** provides a list of references used in the report, with live links to all cited sources.

- **Section 7** provides a compendium matrix table for five significant recent pieces of data-driven research focused on artists' livelihoods. All were conducted in 2024/2025 using a survey methodology across the home nations of the UK. These are summarized to support cross comparison.

2. Respondent Profile

Similar to other recent surveys, the artist workforce in this survey is concentrated in the 35–64 age bracket (mid- and later-career practitioners). More than 1 in 5 artists reported a disability or long-term health condition. More than one quarter of respondents identified as ethnically diverse, showing some progress in representation in visual arts relative to older benchmarks. Artist activity remains regionally uneven, with London and the South East accounting for a disproportionate share of the sample, mirroring previously reported sectoral patterns. Painting and drawing dominates art forms reported but the breadth of other responses illustrates a more complex and evolving practice field. Overall, artist respondents are active across a wide range of materials, methods, and conceptual orientations.

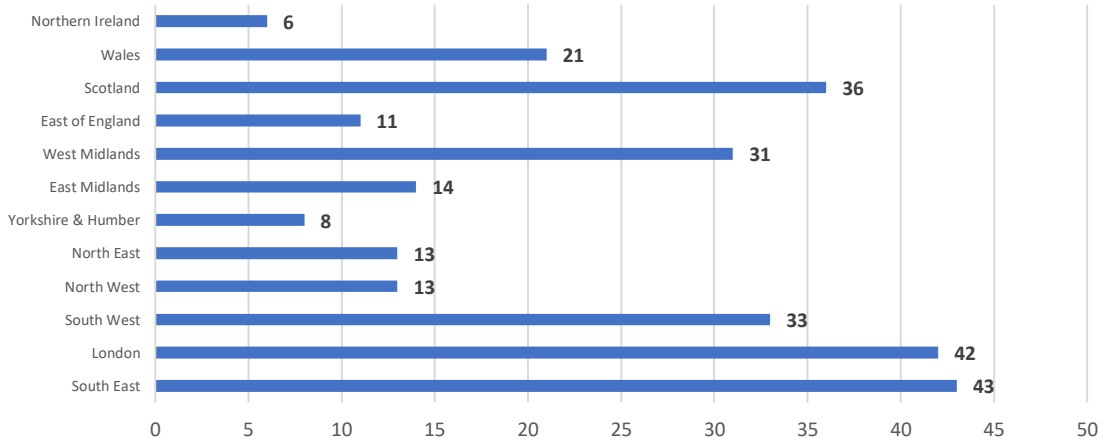
The Artists' Livelihoods 2024 survey presents a demographic profile of professional artists working across the UK. This section analyses the geographic distribution, age, gender, ethnicity, disability status and art form of the survey's 271 UK respondents.

2.1 Geographic Distribution

Figure 2.1 presents respondents by UK region and nation. Artists based in London and the South East make up a substantial segment of the sample, 31%, compared to these two regions accounting for an estimated 27% of UK population in 2023 (Statista, 2024). The South West (12%), West Midlands (11%), and Scotland (13%) also had notable representation in the survey. In each case, these proportions are above the proportion of the national population living in those regions which, in 2023, stood at just 5.3% in the South West, 9% in the West Midlands, and 8% in Scotland.

Conversely, Northern Ireland (2%), Yorkshire and the Humber (3%), and the East of England (4%) were among the least represented regions in the survey. In the case of Northern Ireland, this response rate is proportionate to the share of the national population found. However, for Yorkshire and the Humber and the East of England, response rates are well below their proportions of the national population, 8% and 7% respectively.

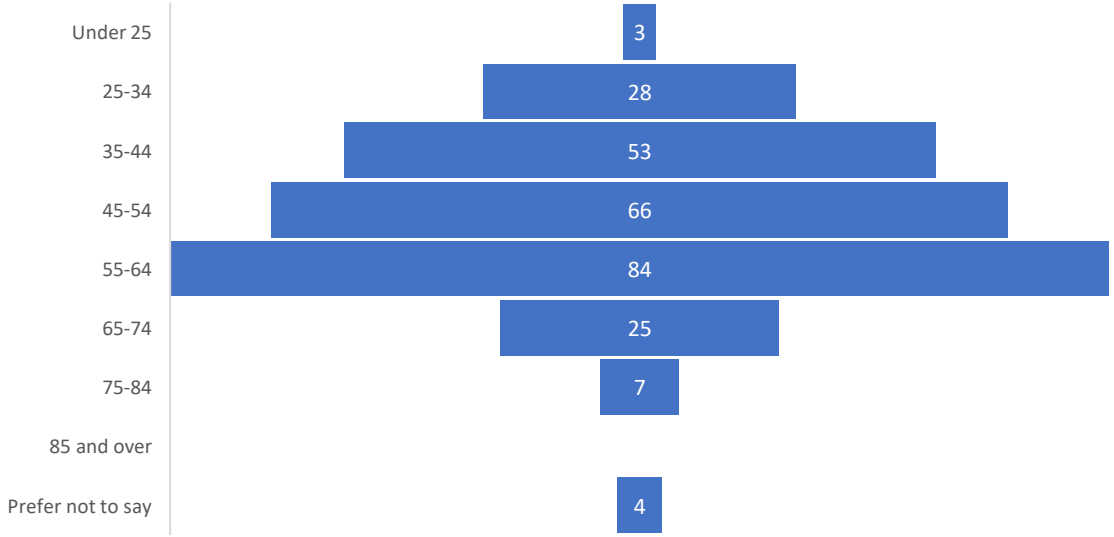
Figure 2.1 Respondents by Region



2.2 Age Profile

Figure 2.2 shows the age distribution of respondents. The majority were aged between 45 and 64, with the largest single age band being 55-64, accounting for 30% of the total sample. Respondents aged 45–54 comprised a further 24%, and those aged 35–44 accounted for 20%. At the younger end of the spectrum, only 1% of artists were under 25, and a further 10% were aged 25–34, bringing the total proportion of artists under 35 to just over 11%. Artists aged 65 and above represented a relatively small but present group, at approximately 12%.

Figure 2.2 Respondents by Age Group



The DACS 2024 report similarly found that 51% of respondents were aged between 45 and 64, and 8% were under 35. Likewise, the Crafts Council 2024 survey saw the majority of respondents in the 40-69 age bracket. This distribution confirms that the UK's professional artist population — at least among those engaging with surveys and professional and funding-related networks — is skewed toward mid- and later-career practitioners.

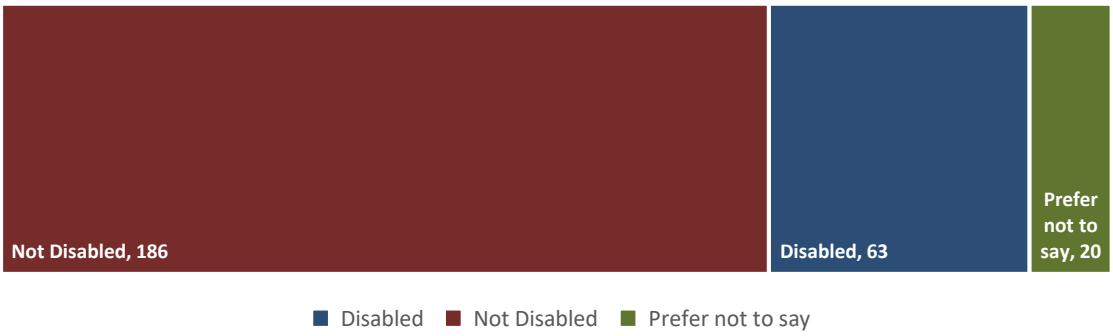
This is different from some other creative sectors, for example, companies specialising in computer games, which are more likely to be led by younger people, but similar to sectors such as health and social work, education, finance, and manufacturing, which UK Labour Force Survey data show are all reliant on older workers aged 50 and above (DWP, 2024).

2.3 Disability and Health Conditions

Figure 2.3 indicates that 23% (63) of respondents identified as having a disability or long-term health condition. A further 7% of respondents in this survey selected "Prefer not to say," and it is plausible that this includes individuals who experience health or access barriers but choose not to identify through formal categories. This is comparable to the 2025 Makers Survey for the Crafts Council which received responses from 24% participants identifying as neurodivergent and 21% identifying as disabled or d/Deaf. This is a

significant proportion and appears well above data from Arts Council England's 2022 Diversity Report, which found that 10.3% of the overall creative workforce identified as disabled.

Figure 2.3 Respondents by Disability

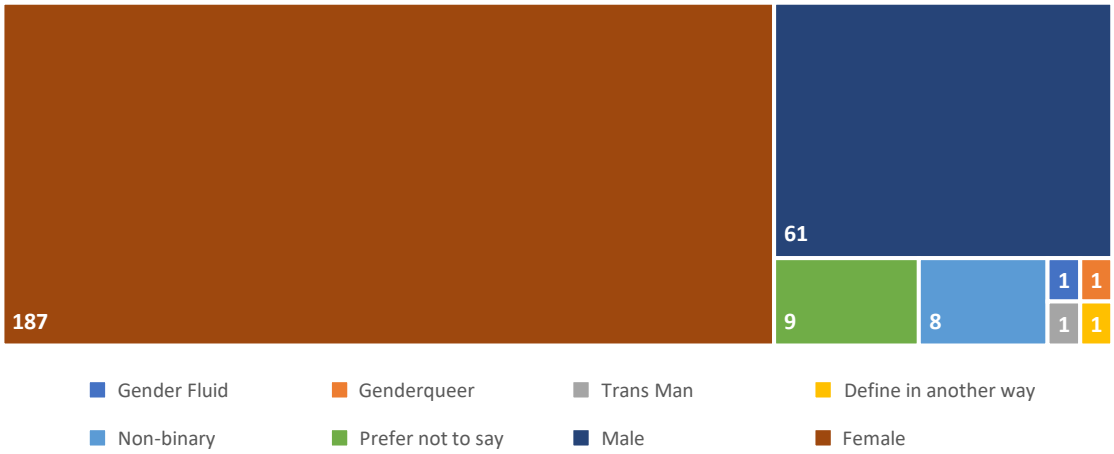


This identifying proportion rises to 14% in the DACS 2024 survey, where qualitative analysis also noted that disabled artists often face multiple structural barriers, including inaccessible venues, inflexible work environments, and challenges navigating funding systems. In all three surveys the proportion of disabled workers is favourable when compared to other economic sectors. Only areas such as health and social work, retail and education show such high rates (Labour Force Survey). This suggests that artistic occupations provide an important employment gateway for those identifying as disabled. The DACS/CREATe report compared their respondent figures to the UK Labour Force survey (not the UK population or creative sector) as they note that the relative characteristics of the visual arts workforce are unknown.

2.4 Gender Identity

Figure 2.4 shows an uneven split between respondents identifying as female (187 individuals, 69%) and male (67 individuals, 22%). A further 4% of respondents identified outside of the gender binary, including those selecting non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer, trans, or self-described categories. By comparison, the DACS 2024 report found that 44% of respondents identified as female, 50% as male, and 2% as other, including trans and non-binary.

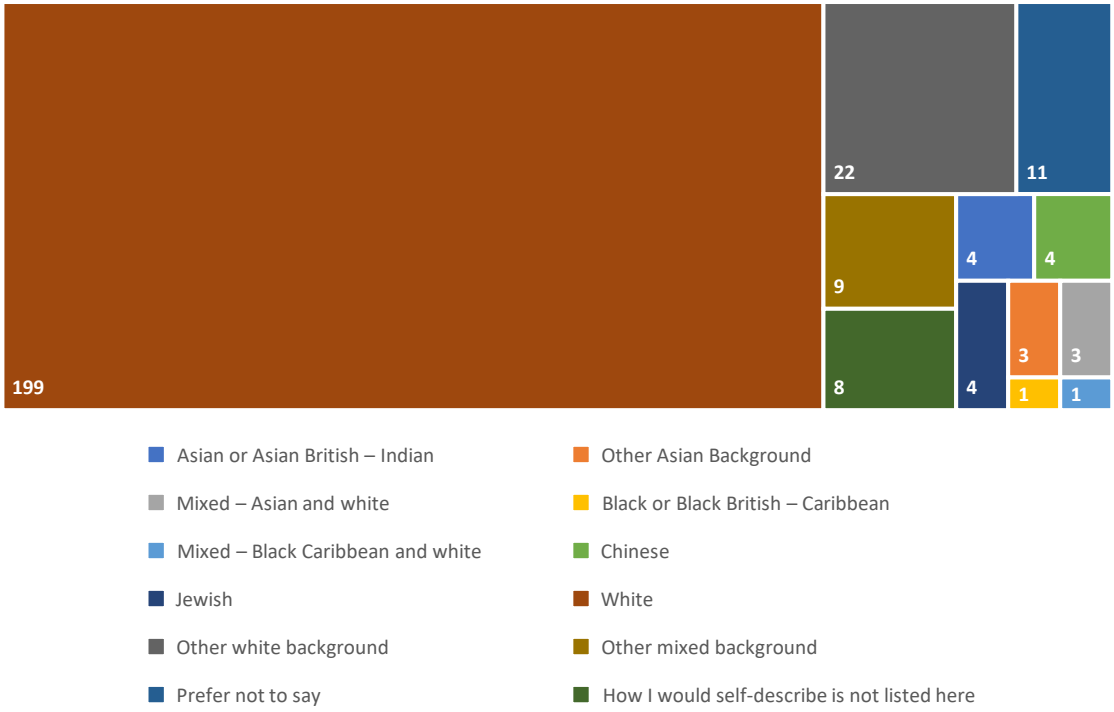
Figure 2.4 Respondents by Gender



2.5 Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity was recorded across 24 categories, with results shown in Figure 2.5. Most respondents identified as White British or White Other (73%). The remaining 27% of respondents represented a range of racially and ethnically diverse identities, including Black Caribbean, Asian Indian, Chinese, Mixed heritage, Jewish, and self-described categories. This represents an over-representation of ethnic minority respondents compared to the UK population more broadly, where 18% identify with an ethnic minority group, according to 2021 Census data (ONS, 2023).

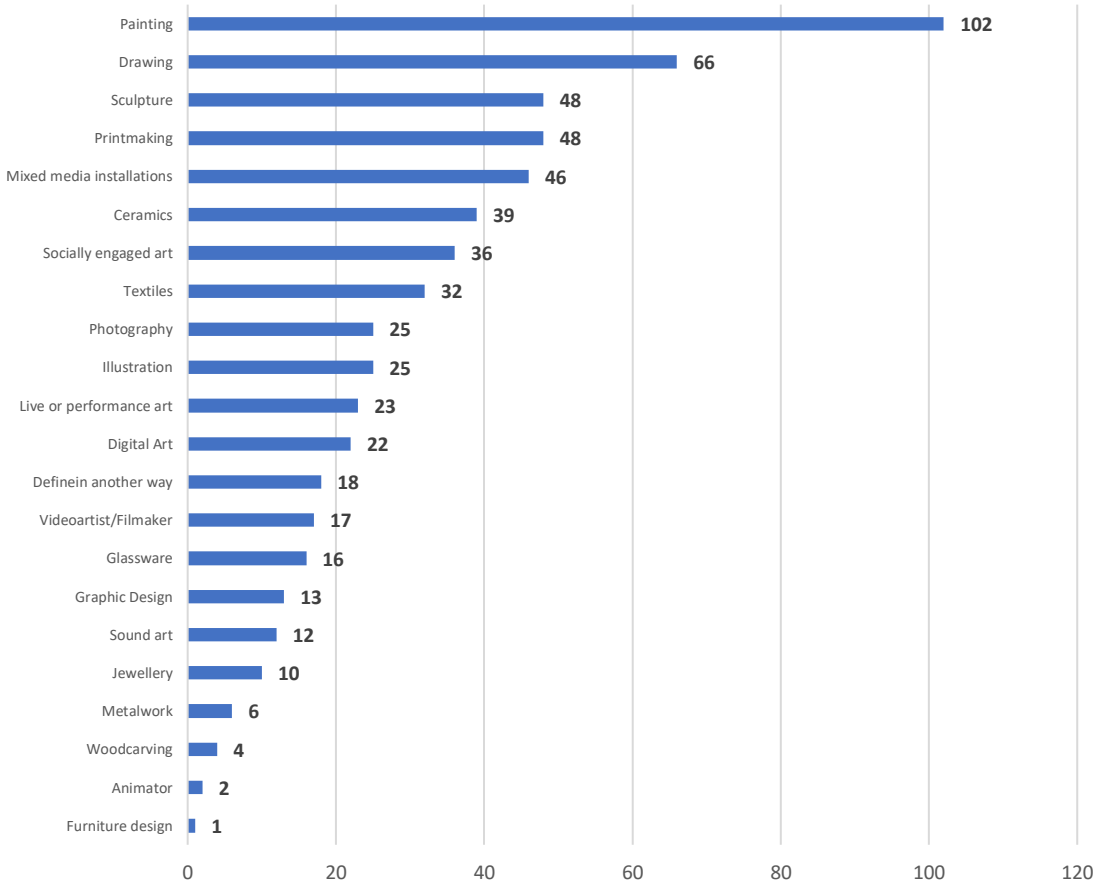
Figure 2.5 Respondents by Ethnicity



2.6 Distribution of Practice Across Art Forms

Figure 2.6 shows that the top five most reported art forms by respondents were painting, selected by 102 artists, followed by drawing (60), printmaking (48), sculpture (48), and mixed media/installation (46). The continued dominance of painting and drawing suggests a strong anchoring in traditional two-dimensional forms; however, the breadth of other responses illustrates a more complex and evolving field. Artist respondents are active across a wide range of materials, methods, and conceptual orientations.

Figure 2.6 Principal Art Forms



2.7 Regional Variation in Art Form Prevalence

Figures 2.7 to 2.10 provide a breakdown of art forms across the four nations of the UK, revealing subtle but meaningful geographic distinctions. In England, the breadth of practice is widest, including significantly higher numbers of respondents in digital art and mixed media installations than in the other nations.

In Scotland, artists appear strongly represented in ceramics, socially engaged work, and craft-adjacent practices, possibly echoing the country's investment in community arts and publicly funded creative development. Wales shows a distinctive presence of artists working in performance, textiles, and mixed media, while Northern Ireland, though represented by a much smaller group of respondents, shows relative concentration in both traditional two-dimensional art forms and digital art.

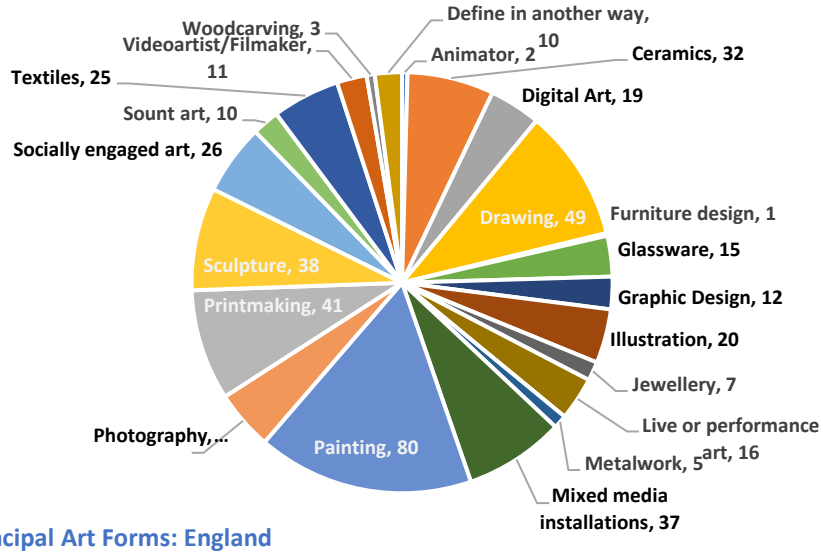


Figure 2.7 Principal Art Forms: England

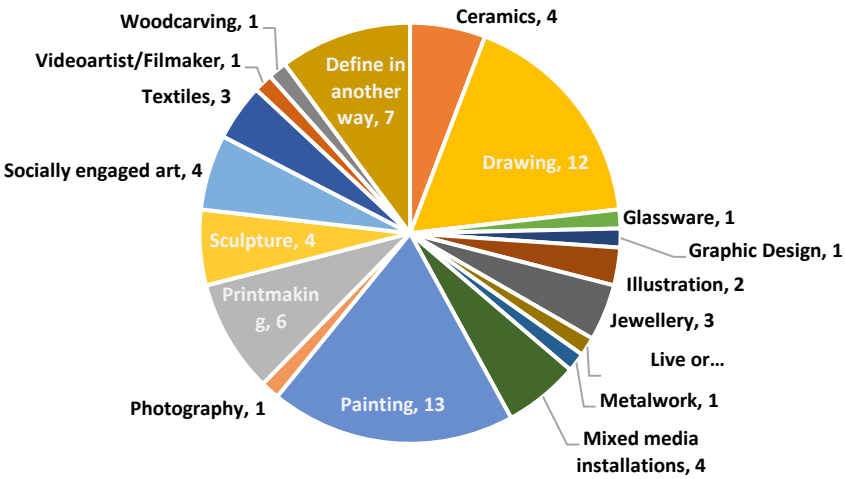


Figure 2.8 Principal Art Forms: Scotland

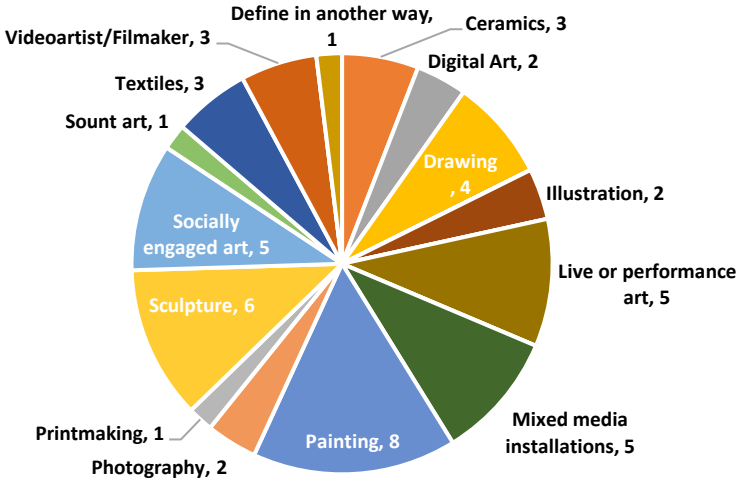


Figure 2.9 Principal Art Forms: Wales

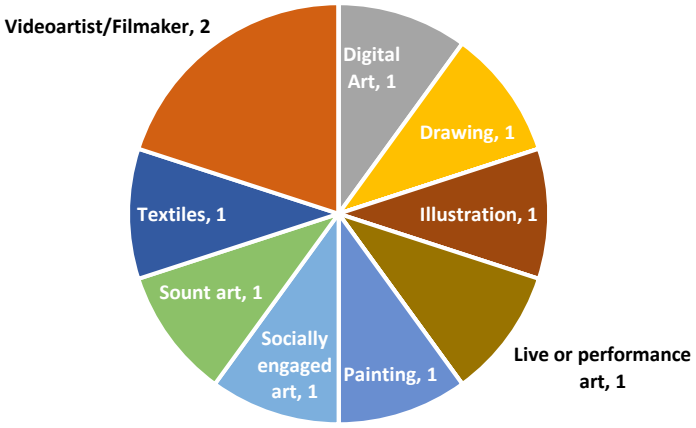


Figure 2.10 Principal Art Forms: Northern Ireland

3. Artists' Incomes in 2024

Survey income data analysis confirms that most artists in the UK earn well below national earnings averages. Earnings from the sales of artwork alone are modest, with few artists surpassing the £10,000 threshold. Even when teaching, commissions, and other arts-based income are included, only a small proportion report incomes comparable to a full-time living wage. Personal income remains low for most, and while household income is somewhat higher, it is often still insufficient to bring artists above the national earnings median.

These income levels vary significantly by age and gender. Mid-career artists (aged 45–64) report the highest earnings, reflecting the cumulative nature of opportunity in the sector. Gendered income inequality remains entrenched, with women and non-binary artists more likely to earn less across all income types. Artistic form significantly affects earning potential. The evidence also suggests that multidisciplinary artists are more likely to report higher incomes. Across all income measures, the results reflect those reported by DACS, a-n, and Arts Council England, and confirm that little progress has been made in addressing the income precarity of artists in the UK.

The Artists' Livelihoods 2024 survey paints a picture of economic hardship for professional artists working in the UK today. Although the UK's creative industries contribute over £124 billion to the national economy (DCMS, 2023), this value does not translate into financial security for most individual artists.

The data presented in this section is drawn from four key income dimensions: income from the sale of artwork; total income from all artistic activity; total individual income (personal, from any source); and total household income (see earlier Figure 1.1). Together, these categories provide a layered view of how artists support themselves, through and beyond their practice.

3.1 Income from the Sale of Artwork

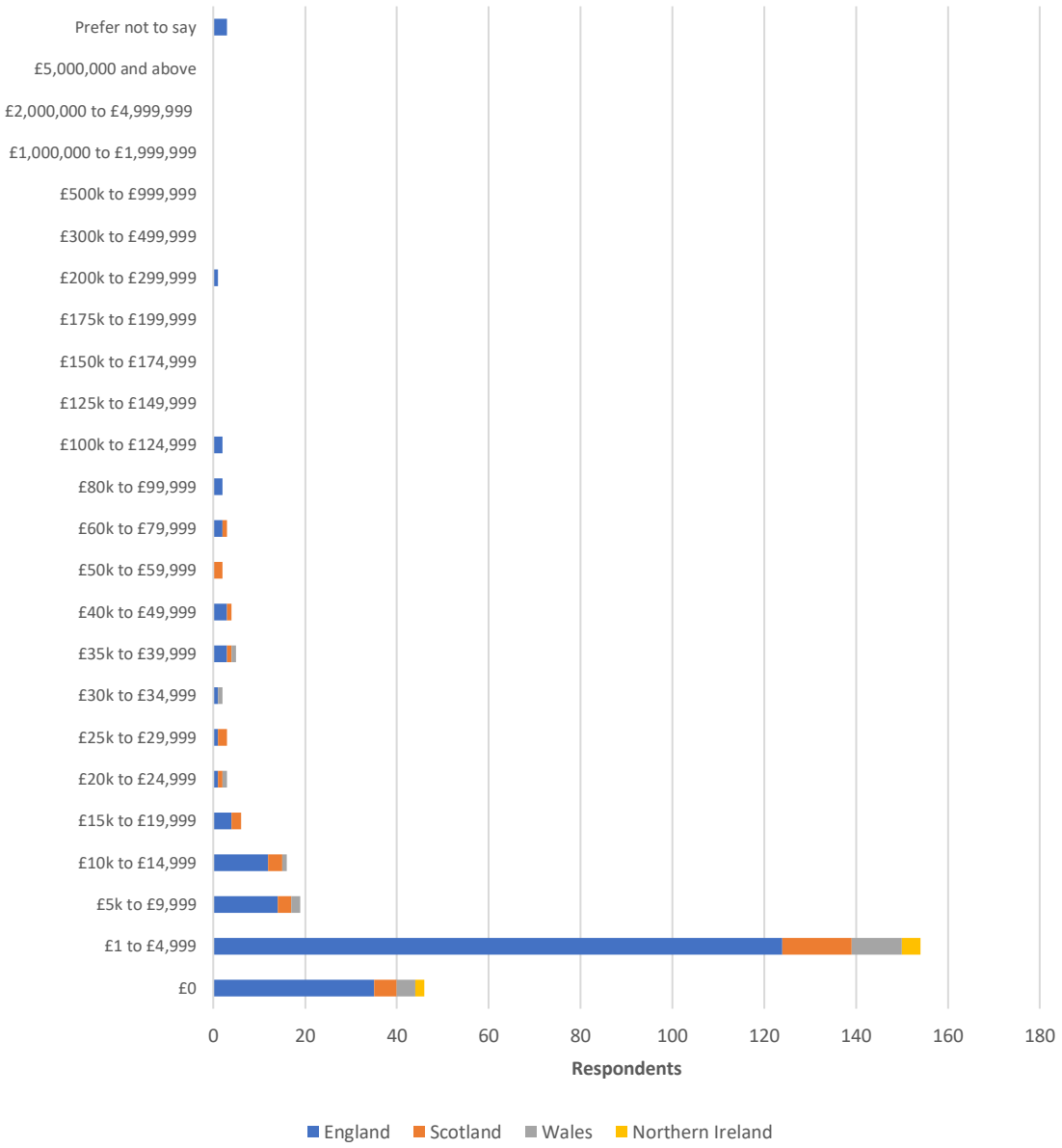
As shown in Figure 3.1, many artists in this survey earned very modest sums from selling their artwork alone in 2024:

- more than half (56%) earned between £1 and £4,999
- 17% reported no sales (or income) at all
- a total of 14% earned £5,000 to £14,999
- just 13% of respondents reported earning more than £15,000, and fewer than 10% earned over £25,000.

These findings align closely with those from DACS (2024), which reported that 59% of artists earned less than £10,000 from their practice, with a median income of £7,500. More recently, Arts Professional's Arts Pay Survey 2025 revealed that freelance and self-employed workers earning the majority of their annual income from the arts are making a median average of £20,000. Our 2024 data, therefore, reconfirms that art sales alone are

an insufficient income source for most artists and that the market continues to fully reward only a relatively small segment of practitioners.

Figure 3.1 Income from the sales of Artwork 2024
(Income from selling finished artistic products)

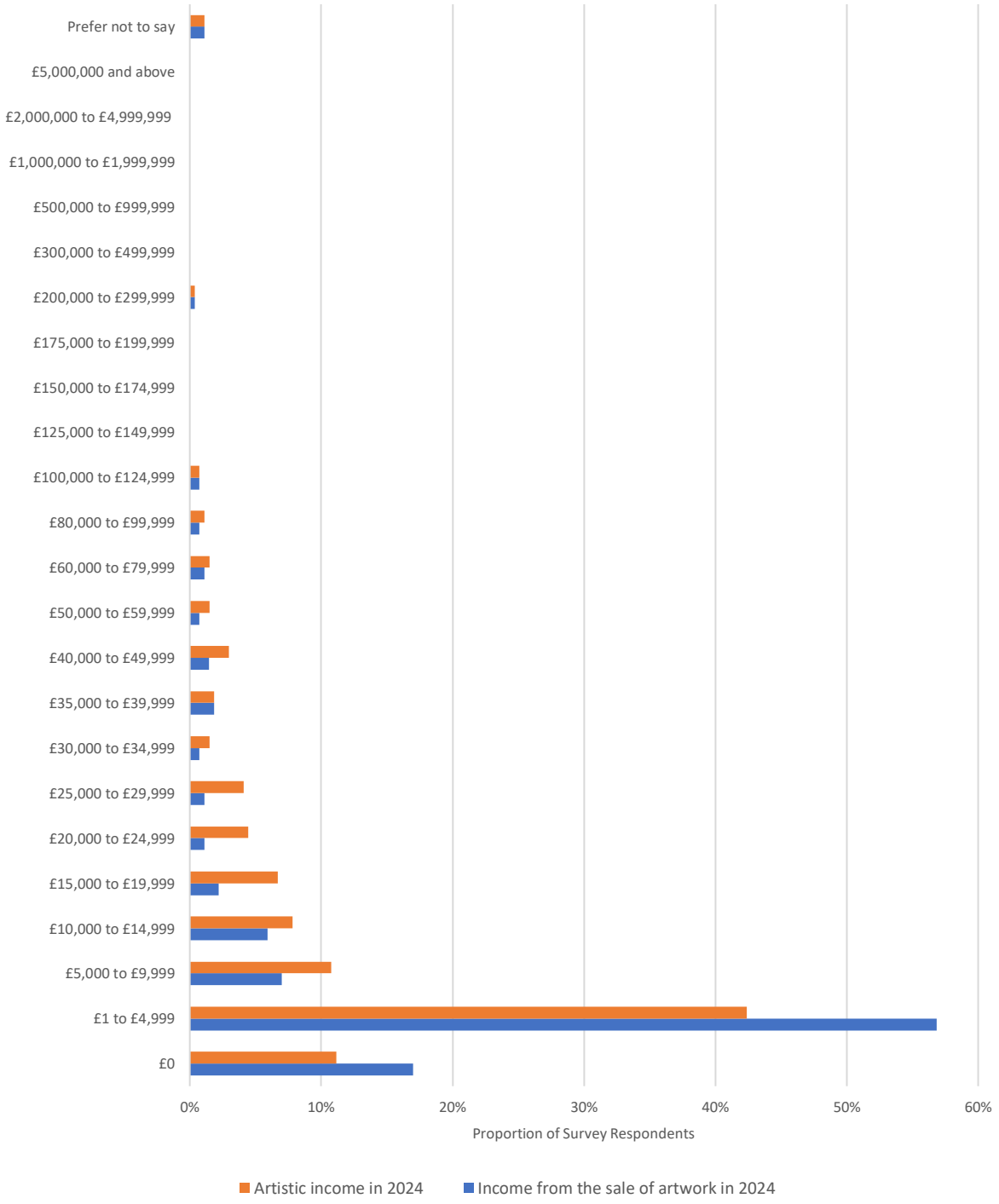


3.2 Total Artistic Income

When earnings from related artistic activity are included — such as public commissions, teaching, facilitation, or curating — there is an improvement in the income profile. As Figure 3.2 shows, the proportion earning between £1 and £4,999 falls to 42%; whilst those reporting zero income drops to 11%. The proportion earning between £5,000 and £14,999 rises to 19%, alongside a rise for those respondents who reported earning more than £15,000 (27%), and over £25,000 (16%). However, as with income from sales of artwork,

very few (8%) reported artistic income above £40,000.[4] A substantial minority earn below £5,000 per annum from their work as an artist, potentially suggesting that monetary reward may not be a motivation for their artistic practice.

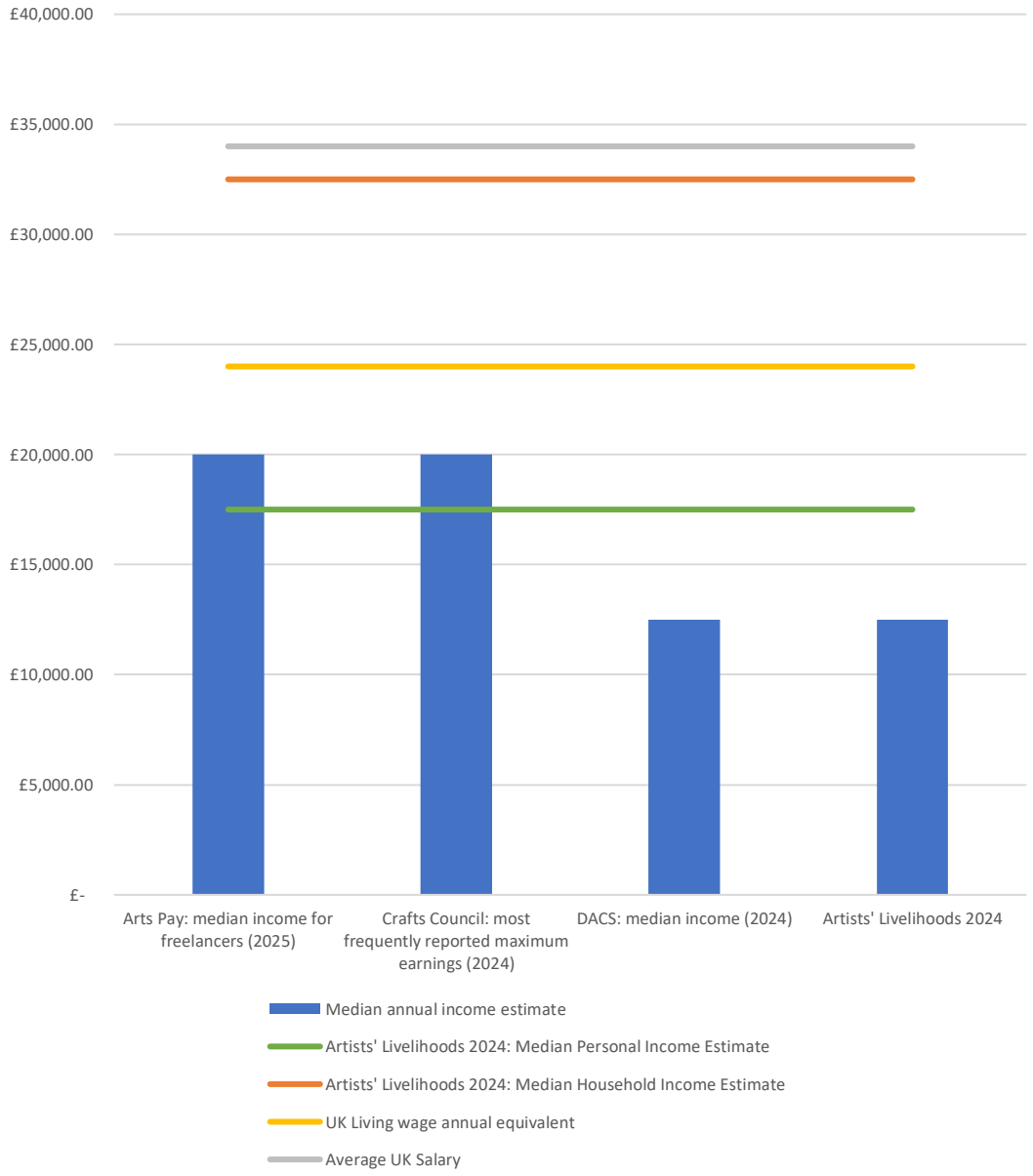
Figure 3.2 Income from the sales of Artwork vs Artistic Income, 2024



[4] Arts Council England (2018) observed a similar pattern in their research on visual artists' livelihoods, noting that artists' employment tends to be "fragmented and episodic," with income punctuated by long gaps between projects or teaching contracts.

The median income in this dataset from **all artistic activity** sits at £12,500, based on the distribution of responses. This is in line with the findings of previously publicised surveys by DACs (2024) and ACE (2018), indicating little substantive change in the financial position of artists over the past decade, and well below the UK living wage annual equivalent of £24k and the UK average salary of £34k (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Comparing data on median artistic earnings for artists and creative freelancers

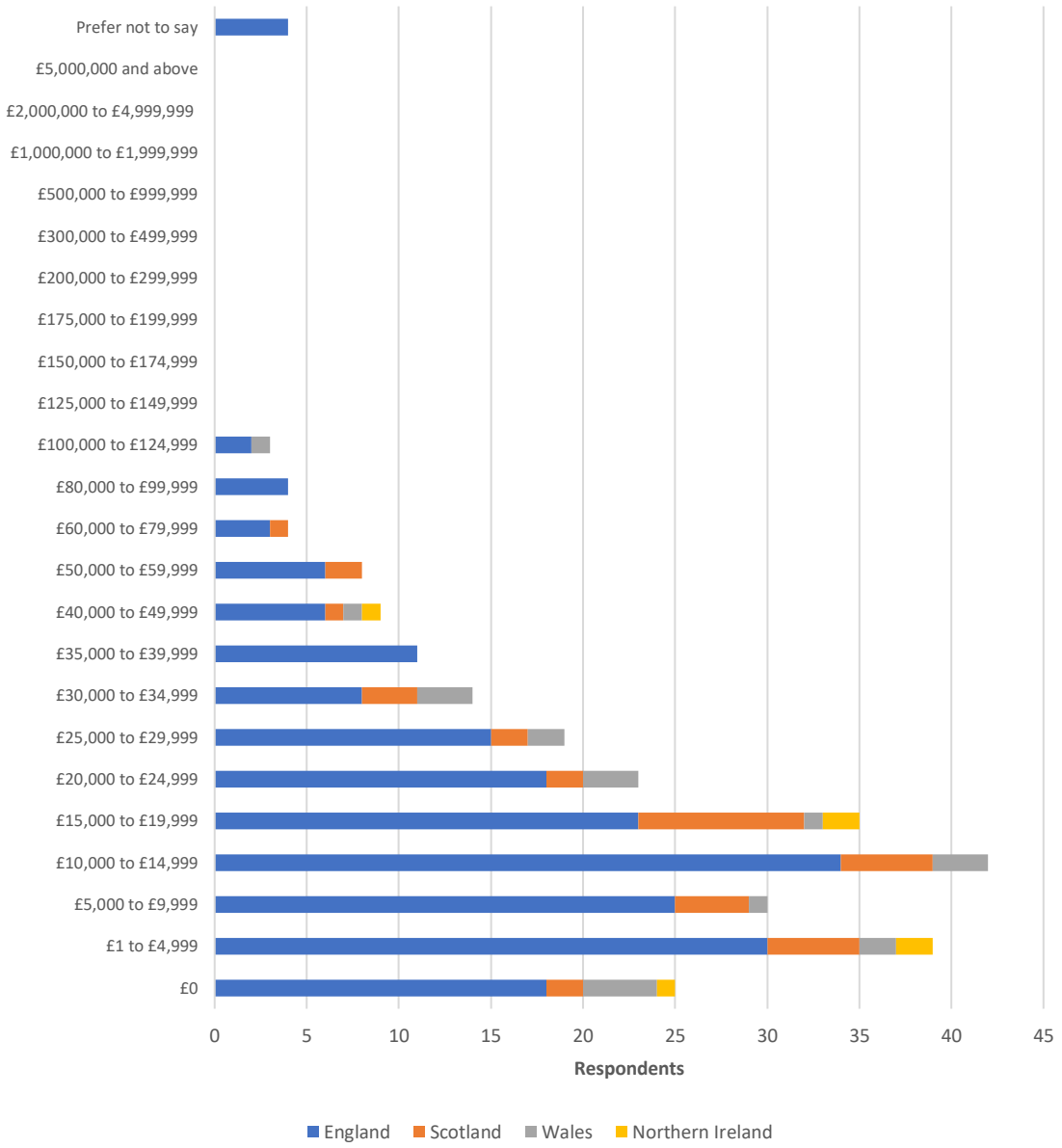


3.3 Total Personal Income

When all sources of income are considered — not just those derived from the arts — the data continues to point to financial insecurity for many artists. Figure 3.4 shows that 25% of respondents had personal income of less than £10,000 annually, while 51% earned less than £20,000. Only 21% reported personal income above £30,000. For context, the median

gross annual earnings for full-time employees in the UK in April 2024 was £37,430 (ONS, 2024).

Figure 3.4 Individual Income 2024
(All personal sources of income)

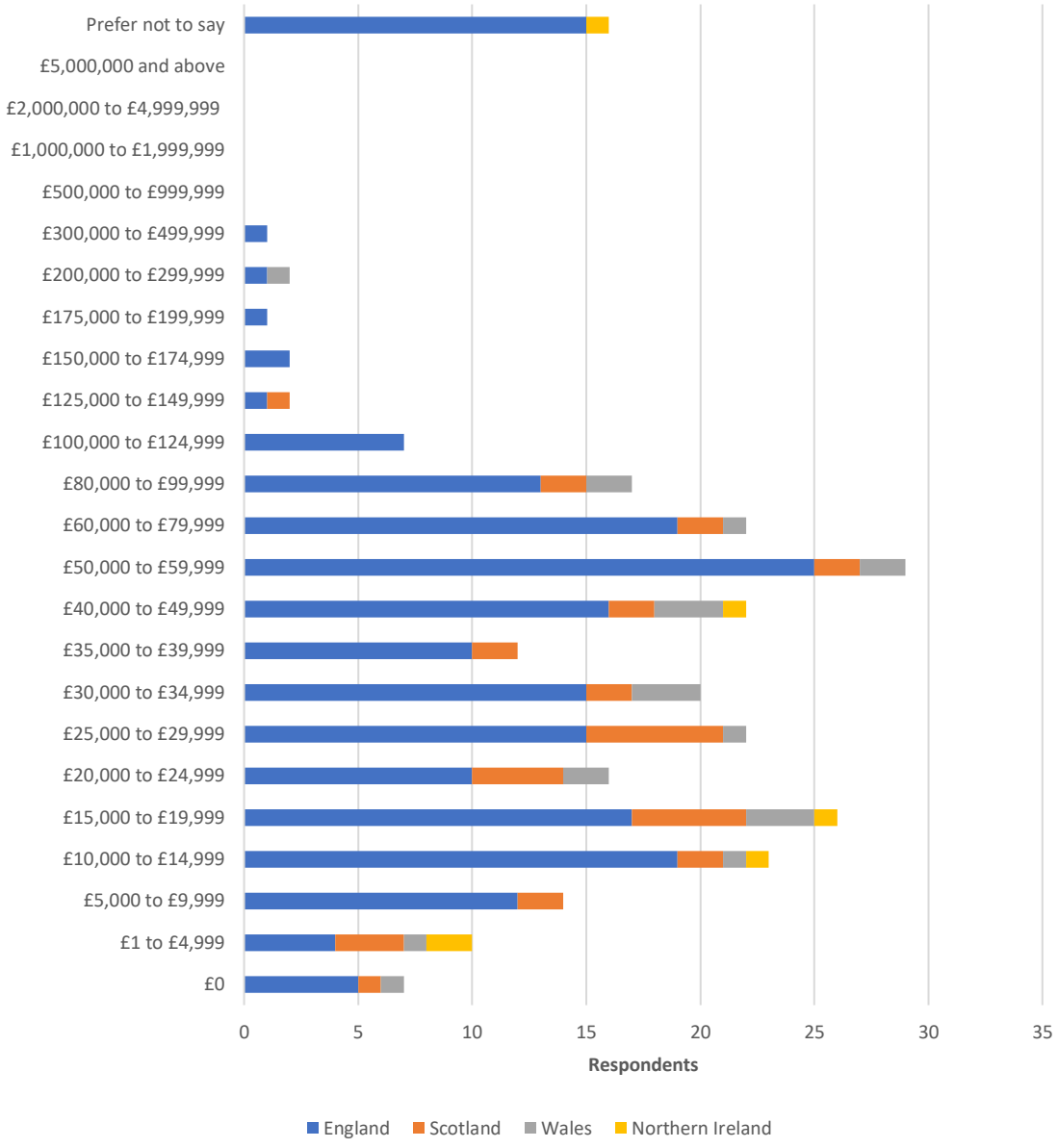


3.4 Total Household Income

Household income data (i.e. including other earners if there are any present in the household), shown in Figure 3.5, are modestly higher. Only 7% of artists reported household income under £10,000, and 32% fell between £10,000 and £29,999. A further 19% of respondents reported household income between £30,000 and £49,999, and almost 30% exceeded £50,000. This suggests that in a large minority of cases, second earners or other household income contributes to greater overall stability. Nevertheless, nearly half (47%) of respondents live in households that fall below the national median. These findings confirm that many artists operate both within financially constrained

domestic contexts, and that their practice is supported by other income sources outside the sector.

Figure 3.5 Household Income 2024
(All sources of income to the household)

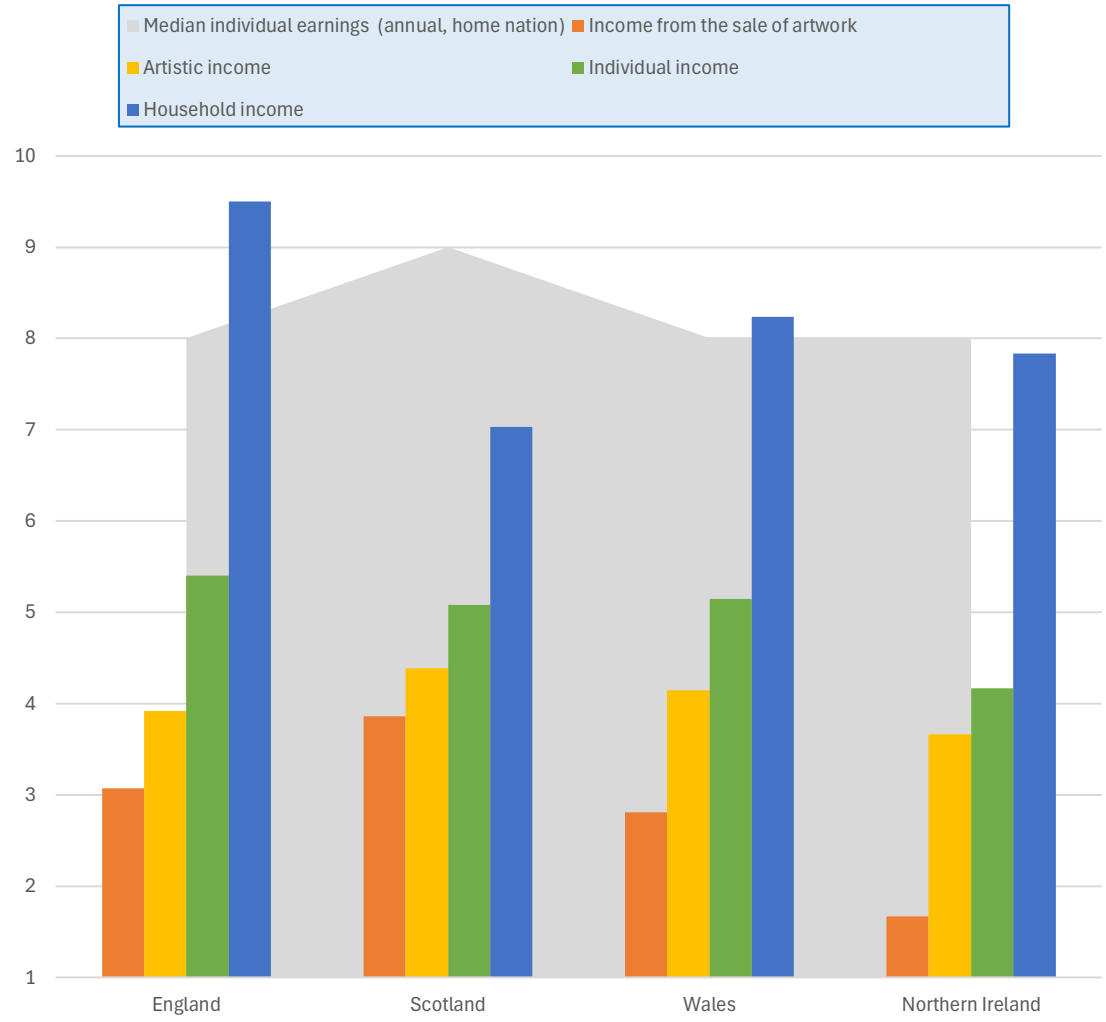


3.5 The Household Incomes of Artists by Nation

Figure 3.6 shows the place of artistic sales in income versus other forms of artistic, personal and household income per home-nation. These income levels are set against the background of reported median individual earnings by home nation (grey shading, UK figures are used as a proxy for England).

This shows that the median incomes of visual artists, both artistic and personal, fall below comparative average earnings for each home nation. Only when household income is accounted for, do artists' incomes meet or exceed wider measures of average earnings. Even then, Scotland and Northern Ireland lag somewhat behind.

Figure 3.6 Sales, artistic, individual and household income by home nation respondents against average individual earnings for each home nation.



£0	1	£35,000 to £39,999	9	£175,000 to £199,999	17
£1 to £4,999	2	£40,000 to £49,999	10	£200,000 to £299,999	18
£5,000 to £9,999	3	£50,000 to £59,999	11	£300,000 to £499,999	19
£10,000 to £14,999	4	£60,000 to £79,999	12	£500,000 to £999,999	20
£15,000 to £19,999	5	£80,000 to £99,999	13	£1,000,000 to £1,999,999	21
£20,000 to £24,999	6	£100,000 to £124,999	14	£2,000,000 to £4,999,999	22
£25,000 to £29,999	7	£125,000 to £149,999	15	£5,000,000 and above	23
£30,000 to £34,999	8	£150,000 to £174,999	16	Prefer not to say	24

3.6 Variation by Age Group

Figures 3.7 and 3.8 explore how income levels vary by age. Artists aged 45–64 are most likely to report income from the sales of artwork and artistic income above £10,000, while those under 35 and over 65 are concentrated in the lowest bands. 25–34-year-olds had the highest concentration in the £0–£4,999 range for both artwork sales and total artistic income. This suggests that younger artists face the steepest challenges in establishing viable careers, with limited sales and perhaps fewer opportunities to access paid work in teaching or commissions.

At the other end of the age spectrum, artists over 65 see a decline in income, which may reflect changes in availability, health, or the shift to retirement-phase working patterns. The mid-career age band (45–64) remains the most financially active and successful group, likely reflecting accumulated networks, professional experience, and market presence. This pattern is echoed in both the DACS and ACE studies and supports the notion that career progression in the visual arts is typically long and uneven, with no guaranteed economic peak.

3.7 Variation by Gender

Figures 3.9 and 3.10 show a consistent gendered disparity in income. Women artists are overrepresented in the lowest income bands, particularly in the £0–£9,999 range and underrepresented in the higher brackets. Male respondents are more evenly distributed across the income range, and more frequently found in the £20,000+ bands. Artists identifying as non-binary, genderqueer, or other gender-diverse identities — while representing a much smaller group — also appear concentrated in the lower earning categories.

These trends echo those found in DACS (2024), which reported that in respect of their self-employed earnings, men earn a median income of £12,500, which is 40% more than the £7,500 earned by women and visual artists who identify neither as men nor women. Similarly, Arts Council England Livelihoods data (2018) shows a gender gap, with practice earnings for women of £5,370 and men of £7,780. This consistent evidence across surveys confirms that gender continues to shape economic opportunity within the visual arts, with implications for representation, retention, and long-term career development.

3.8 Income Patterns by Art Form

A more complex picture emerges when income is analysed by art form. As shown in Figures 3.11 and 3.12, respondents working in digital art, illustration, and ceramics were among the most likely to report higher earnings from their practice. These disciplines are often more commercially adaptable, able to generate income not only through direct sales but also through licensing, design work, or commissioned production for both cultural and non-cultural clients.

By contrast, artists working in sound art, textiles, and socially engaged or participatory practice were more frequently represented in the lowest income brackets. These forms often produce non-object-based or process-oriented outcomes, which can be difficult to monetise within traditional art markets. They tend to rely more heavily on public sector commissioning, short-term projects, or institutional funding, which are often competitive, under-resourced, and temporally fragmented.

Even painting, despite its prevalence, shows a widespread occurrence across income bands, with no consistent relationship between its popularity and income potential. This suggests that working in a dominant medium does not necessarily equate to greater financial return.

These findings are broadly consistent with the DACS (2024) survey, which reported that more commercially oriented or “applied” art forms — such as illustration or object-based design — provided greater economic returns, while practices with socially or politically engaged orientations faced more unstable funding conditions.

3.9 Multidisciplinary Practice and Income Resilience

The data also underscores the value of multidisciplinary practice as a form of economic adaptation. Figures 3.13 and 3.14 show that a large proportion of respondents practice across two or more art forms, and those doing so report significantly higher levels of income both from sales of artwork and their total artistic work.

Artists identifying with three or more disciplines were more likely to earn over £10,000 from their practice, suggesting that diversifying creative outputs provides access to a broader mix of income sources, perhaps including commissions, public projects, education, and product-based sales.

This trend echoes broader sector research, including DACS (2024), which found artists who operated flexibly across different domains — especially combining fine art with illustration, digital design, or socially engaged methods — were better equipped to adapt to institutional demands, in turn providing greater career stability and resilience in the face of changing market conditions. However, not all artists are equally able, or wish, to sustain multidisciplinary work. The ability to navigate across disciplines often requires additional training, material investment, or digital infrastructure.

Figure 3.7 Income from the sales of Artwork 2024 by Age Group

(Income from selling finished artistic products)

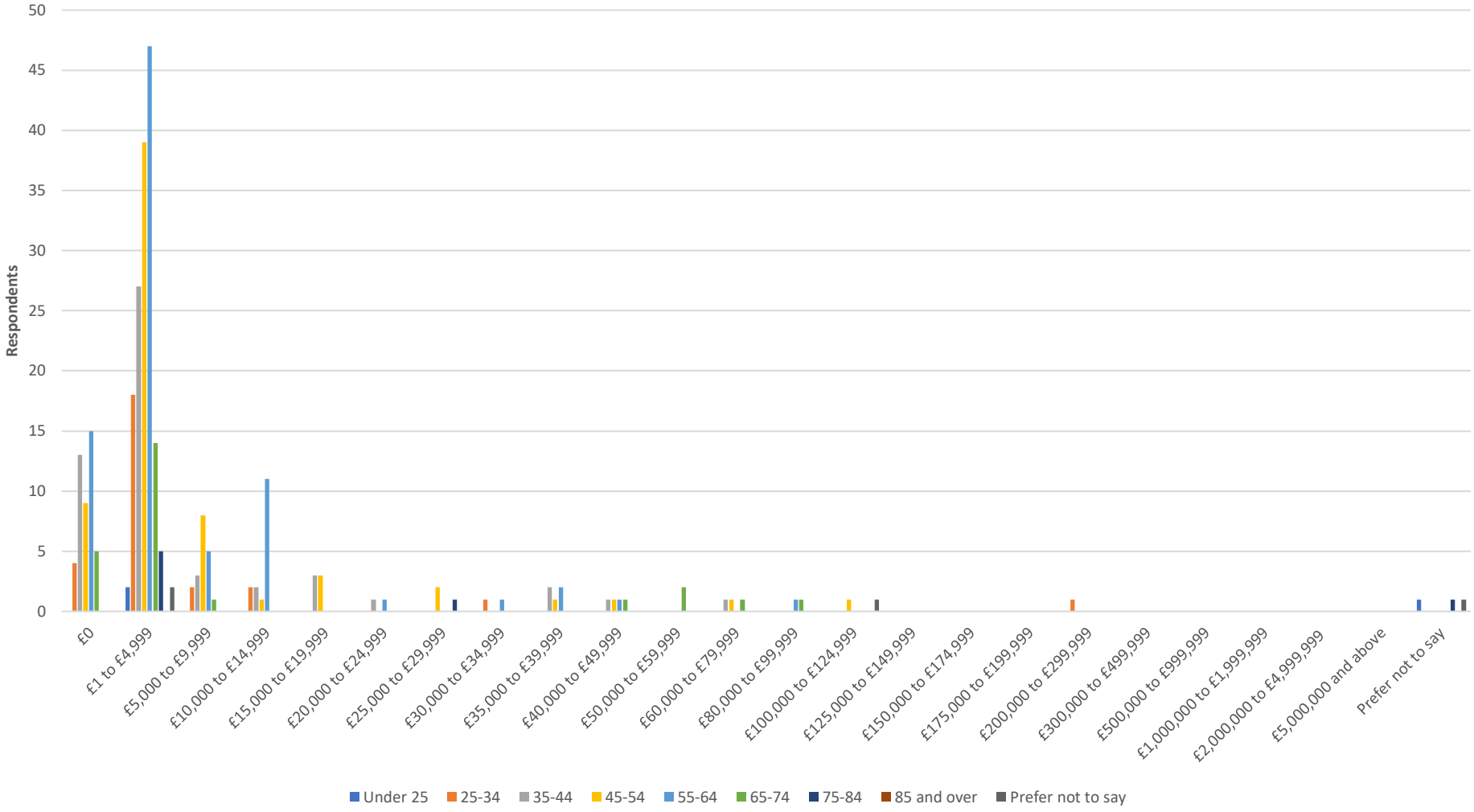


Figure 3.8 Artistic Income 2024 by Age Group
(All arts related work and practice income)

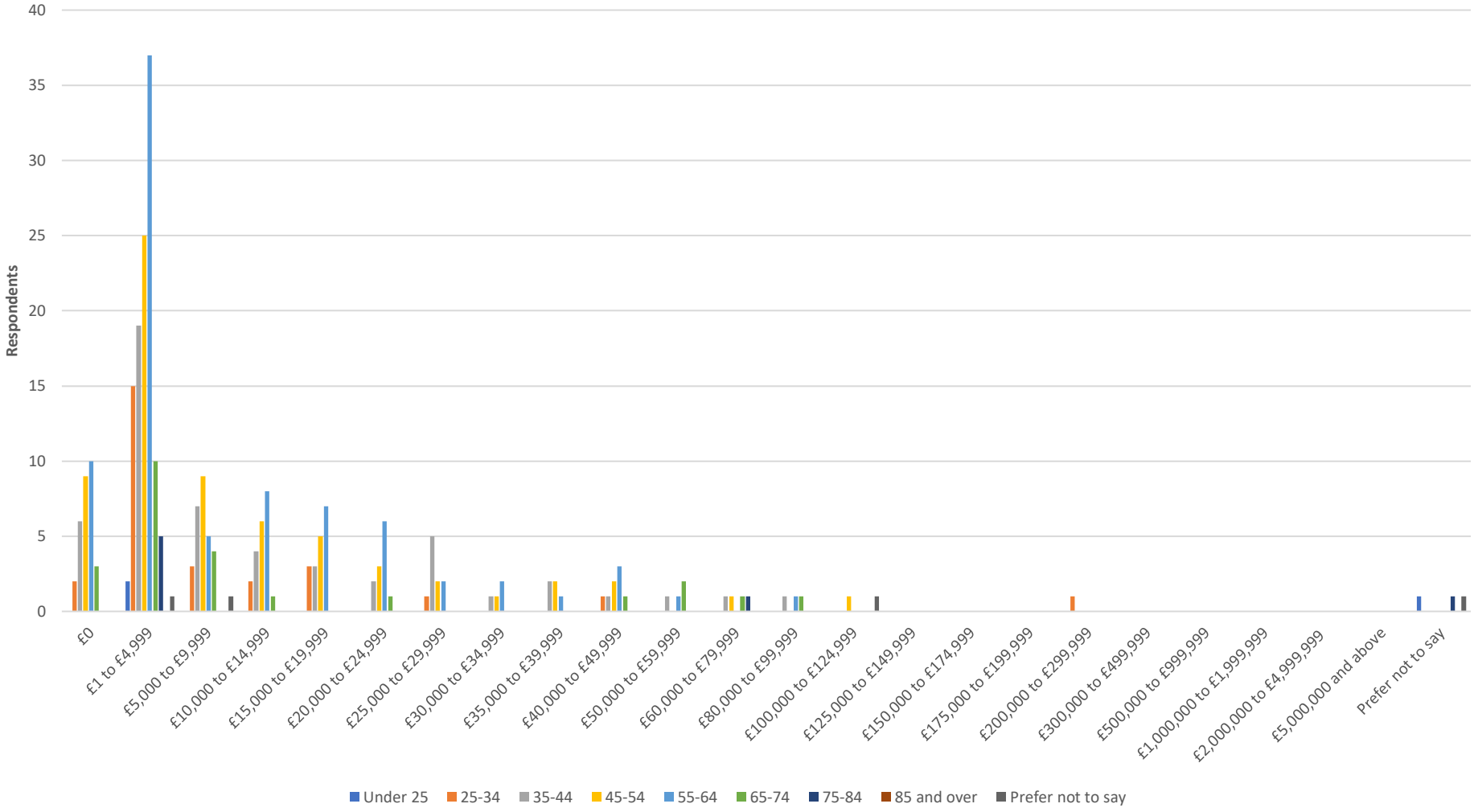


Figure 3.9 Income from the sales of Artwork 2024 by Gender

(Income from selling finished artistic products)

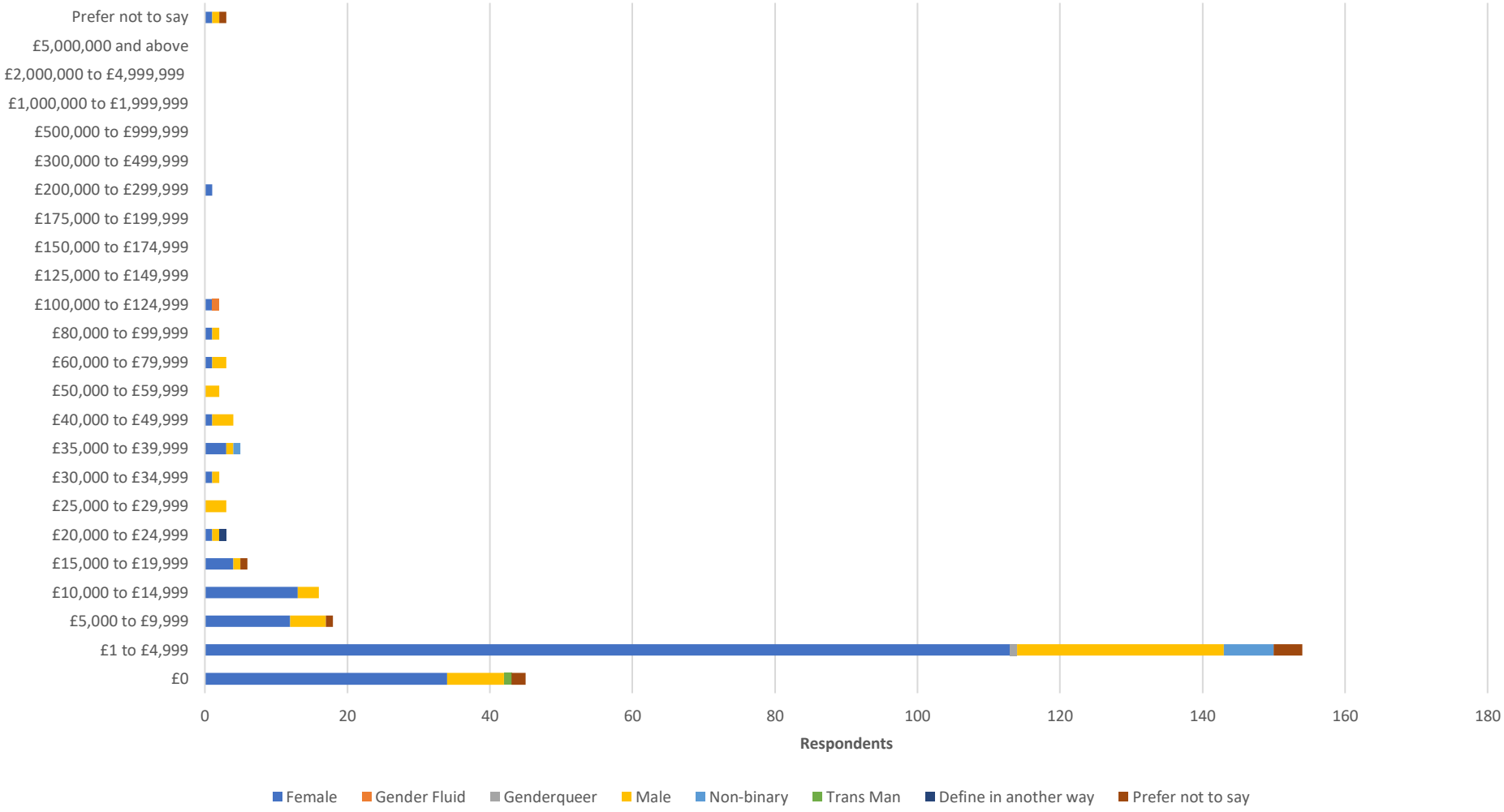


Figure 3.10 Artistic Income 2024 by Gender
(All arts related work and practice income)

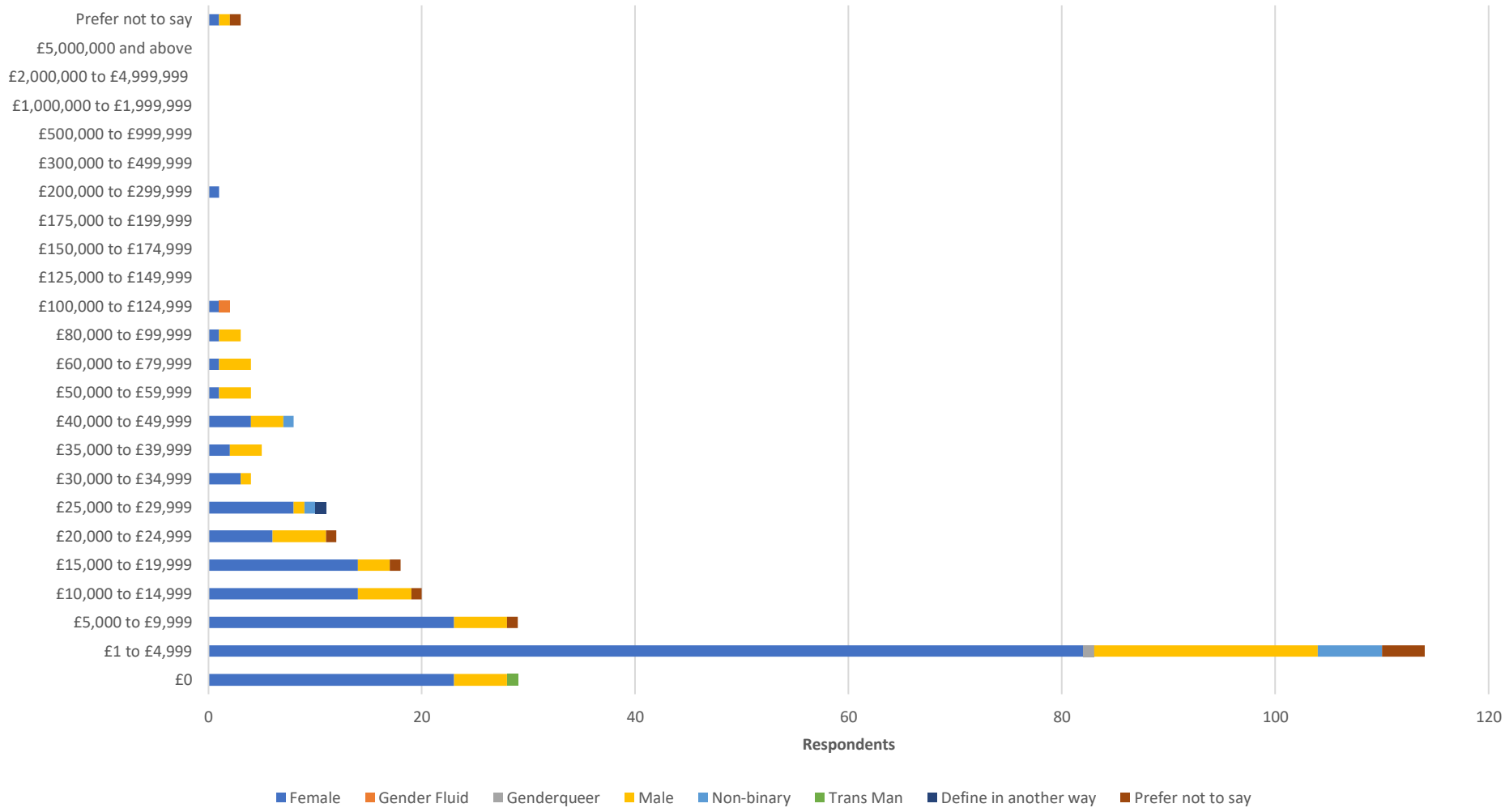


Figure 3.11 Income from the sales of Artwork 2024 by Principal Art Forms

(Income from selling finished artistic products)

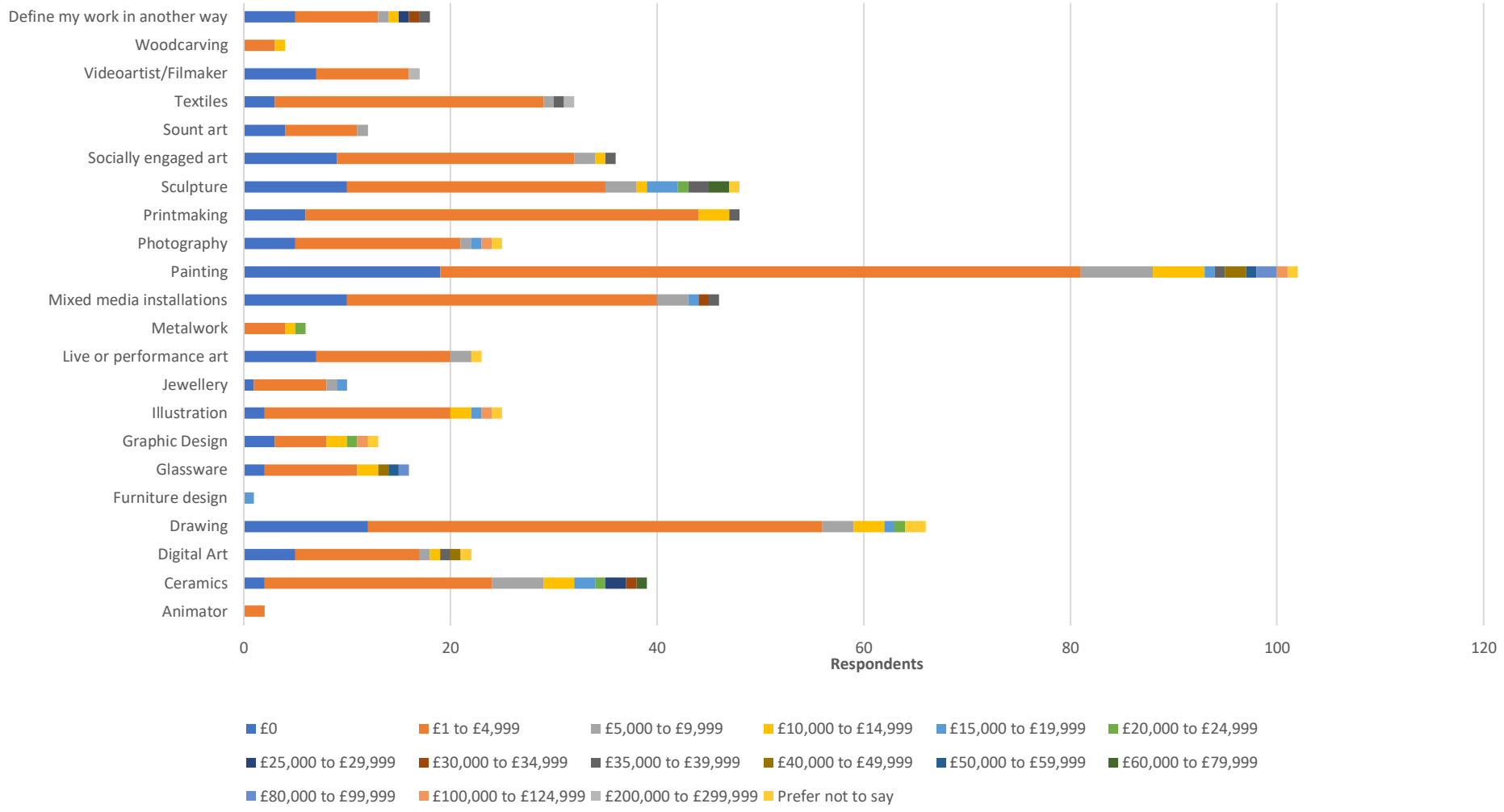


Figure 3.12 Artistic Income 2024 by Principal Art Form
(All arts related work and practice income)

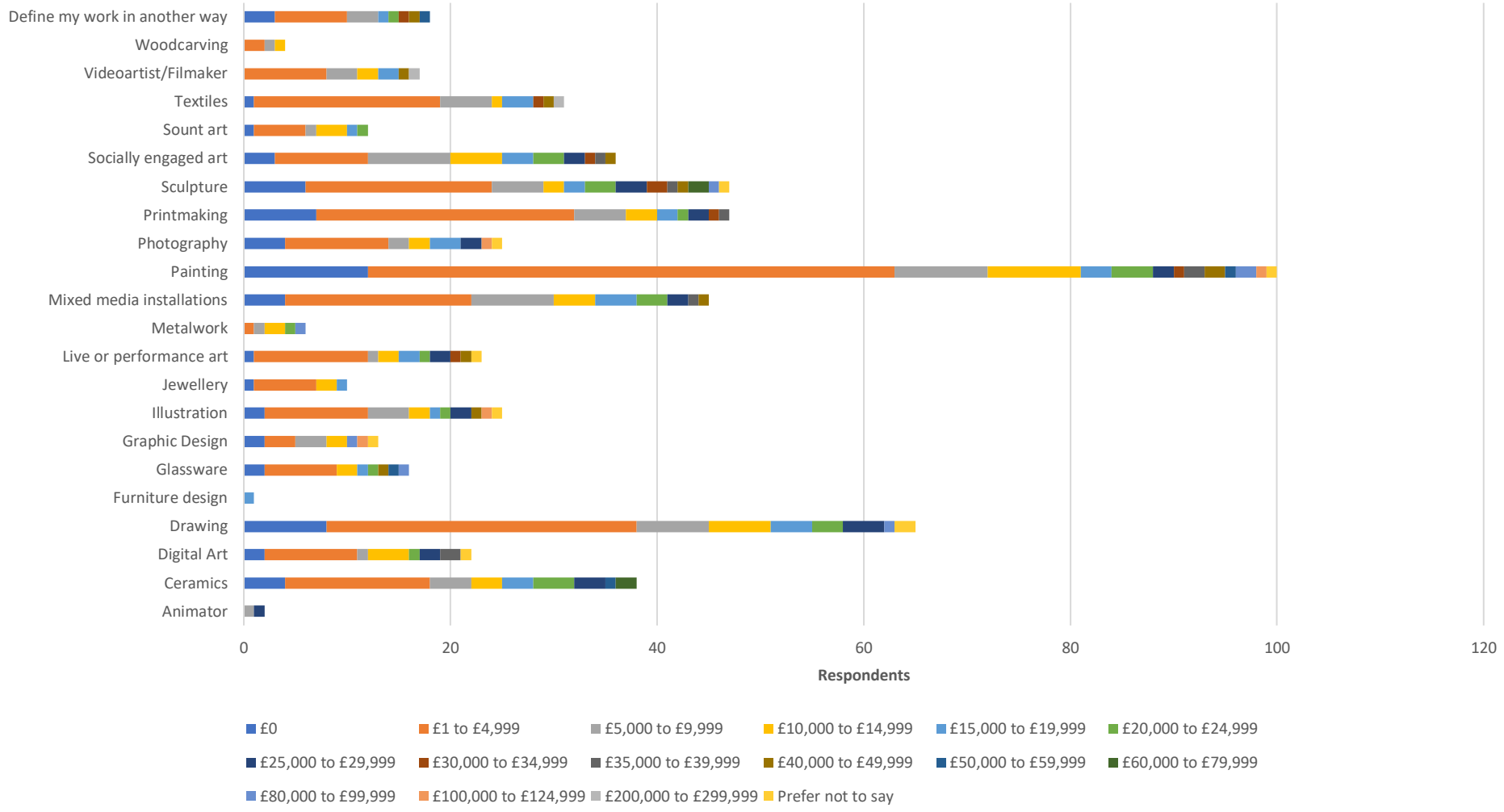


Figure 3.13 Income from the sales of Artwork 2024 by the Number of Principal Art Forms Reported

(Income from selling finished artistic products)

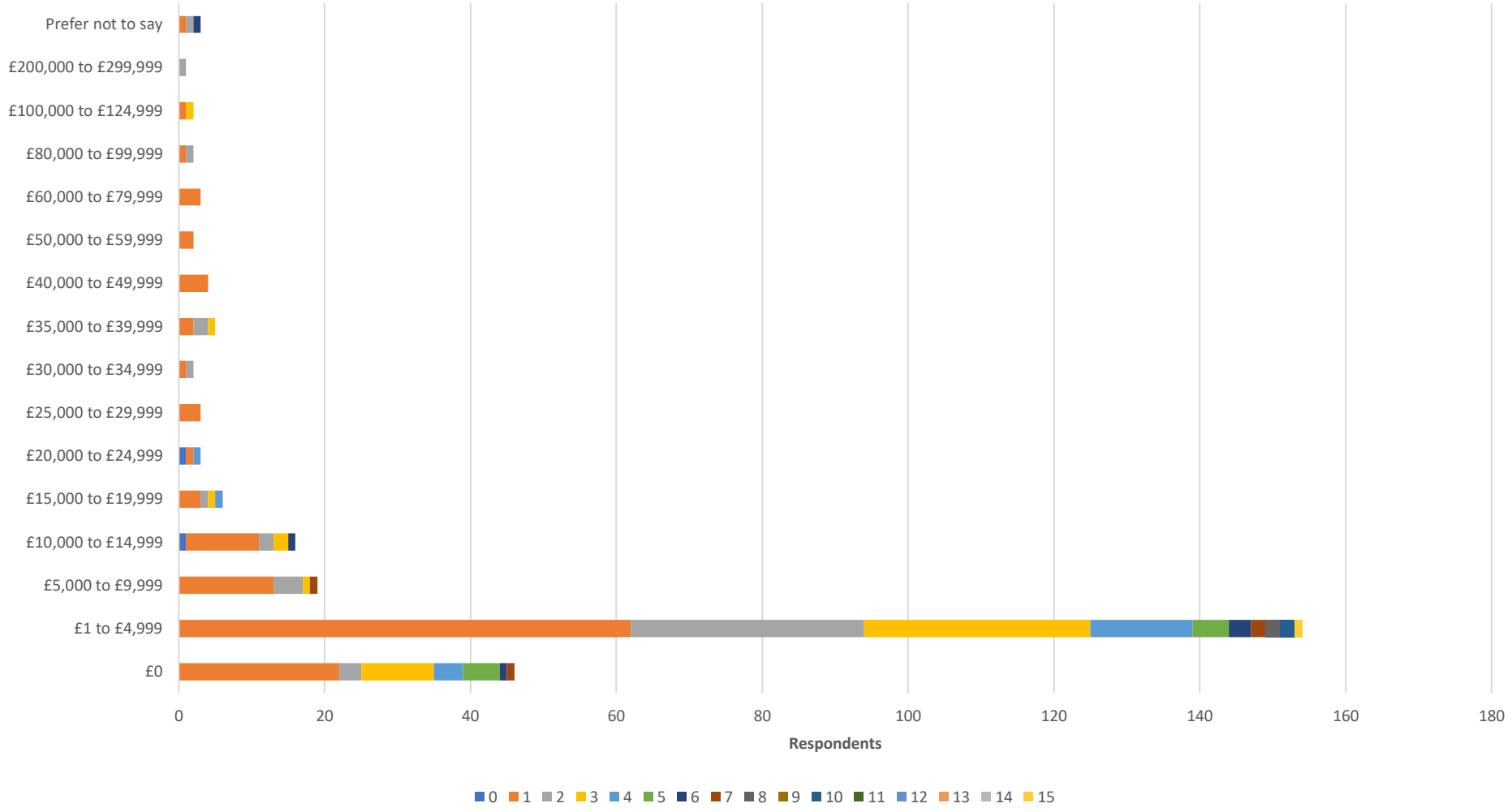
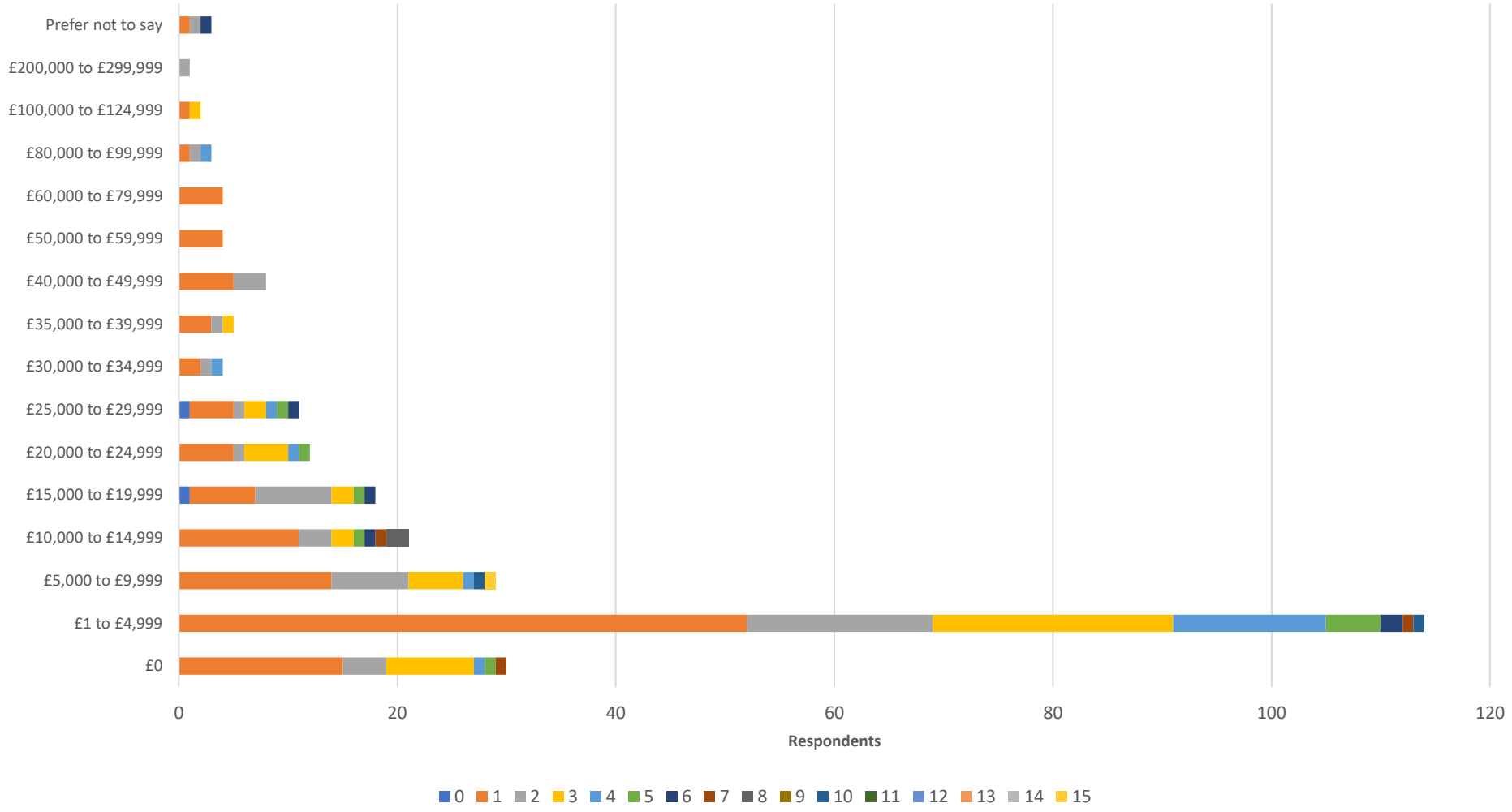


Figure 3.14 Artistic Income 2024 by the Number of Principal Art Forms Reported
(All arts related work and practice income)



4. Artists' Sales Channels

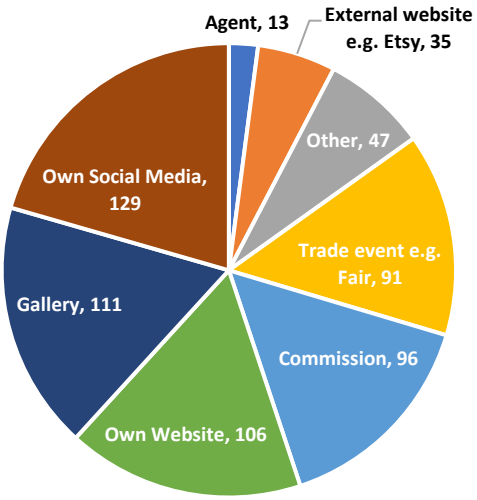
Artists in 2024 rely on a wide mix of sales channels, with their own social media, personal website, and galleries being the most common. Galleries and personal websites are more frequently associated with higher earnings, while more accessible channels like social media tend to yield modest financial returns. Artists who use five or more sales channels are notably more likely to earn higher incomes from their practice, highlighting the importance of sales diversification. Mid-career artists appear best equipped to build multi-channel strategies, while younger and older practitioners tend to use fewer routes.

Understanding how artists generate income through different sales channels is vital to building a picture of how work is monetised and how artists engage with audiences and buyers. The Artists' Livelihoods 2024 survey presents a dataset on the types and combinations of sales routes artists use, the relationship between these routes and income levels, and how these vary by geography and age.

4.1 Core Sales Channels Used by Artists

As shown in Figure 4.1, the most used sales channels by artists in this survey were: own social media (used by 136 respondents), galleries (117), own website (111), and commissions (98). Other common methods included sales via events and fairs (93) and third-party online platforms (39).

Figure 4.1 Principal Sales Channels



4.1.1 Sales Channels: Multiple and Combined

These data suggest that artists are increasingly entrepreneurial in their marketing and sales efforts, often managing multiple routes to market in parallel. The prominence of social media and personal websites points to the increasing importance of digital visibility and self-promotion in contemporary art practice. The reliance on commissions also suggests that many artists are working on a bespoke or client-initiated basis, rather than producing work speculatively for the open market.

For comparison, DACS (2024) found that only a minority of artists had gallery representation, and that most operated outside of the traditional gallery-dealer system. It is clear that many artists now view galleries as just one of several routes to market, often complemented or replaced by direct digital engagement with collectors and audiences.

4.2 Differences Across Nations and Regions

Figures 4.2 to 4.5 present a breakdown of the sales channels used by respondents in each of the UK's four nations: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. While broad similarities are visible — particularly in the popularity of social media and personal websites — there are important distinctions in channel preferences that may reflect differing regional infrastructure and support systems.

- **In England**, which accounts for the largest proportion of respondents, there is widespread use of social media (49%), galleries (41%), and personal websites (39%). These data suggest a relatively even engagement across a mix of both digital and physical sales models.

- **In Scotland**, while social media and personal websites are also prominent (at 47% and 42% respectively), there is a higher use of galleries (50%) and trade events (42%) compared to other nations. This may reflect more active engagement with physical retail models or a strategic response to the distribution of physical sales venues.

- **Wales** shows a marginally reduced reliance on social media (43%) and personal websites (33%) when compared to either England or Scotland. However, the use of other, external electronic sales platforms (19%) is proportionately the highest of any of the four nations.

- **Northern Ireland** provided the fewest respondents of the four nations, with just six completed survey responses. As such, examining proportionate data regarding the use of different sales channels is of limited value. Notwithstanding this caveat, personal websites are the most cited sales channel, noted by half of the six respondents from the province.

Figure 4.2 Sales Channels: England

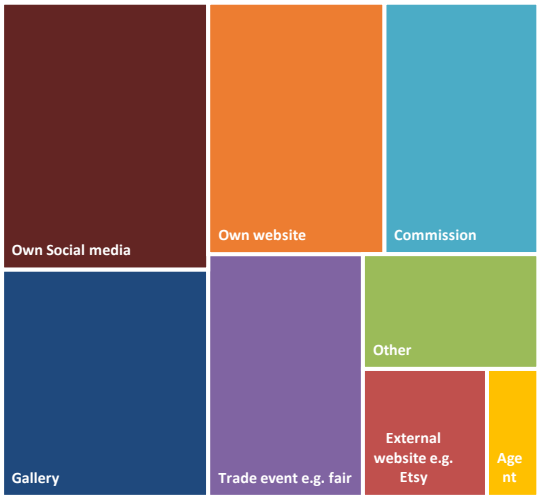


Figure 4.3 Sales Channels: Scotland

Figure 4.4 Sales Channels: Wales

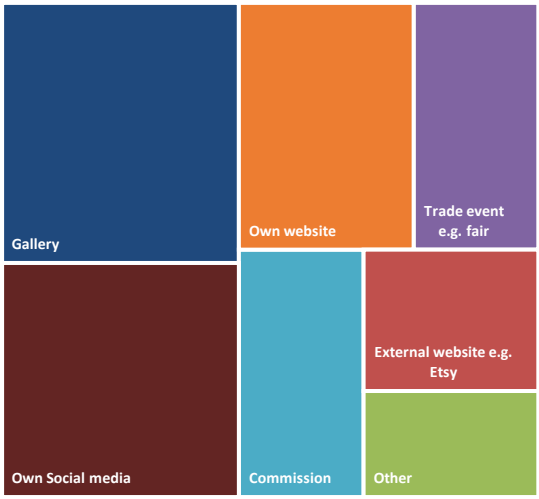


Figure 4.5 Sales Channels:Northern Ireland

4.3 Income Levels by Sales Channel

Figures 4.6 and 4.7 analyse income levels associated with each sales channel, showing which routes were more strongly associated with higher earnings. The data shows that artists using galleries, own websites, and commissions were more likely to report incomes over £10,000, both in terms of sales and total artistic income. By contrast, those relying on external electronic sales platforms, events such as fairs, and social media tended to cluster in the lower income brackets.

This should not be taken to mean that galleries or websites inherently generate higher income — causality cannot be confirmed — but it does suggest that these channels are perhaps associated with more commercially engaged or established practices. Artists who can maintain a professional web presence or secure gallery relationships may be better positioned to access higher-paying buyers or larger commissions. These findings are supported by DACS (2024), which observed that artists with gallery affiliations or strong digital infrastructure tended to have more stable income levels, though still modest overall.

Sales via social media — while the most common route — are not strongly associated with higher income, suggesting that while these platforms may be effective for audience-building or exposure, they do not necessarily translate into consistent sales or premium pricing. Arts Council England (2018) similarly found that while artists increasingly depend on digital channels to promote their work, many have trouble converting this visibility into sustained income, particularly for mid-range and higher-value work.

4.4 Number of Channels Used and Income Outcomes

Figures 4.8 and 4.9 show a relationship between the number of sales channels an artist uses and the likelihood of higher income. Respondents using five or more sales channels were more likely to report earnings over £10,000, whereas those using only one or two channels were concentrated in the lower bands.

This highlights the potential value of a multi-channel sales strategy, where artists combine digital, in-person, and institutional routes to build more resilient income streams. These data do not suggest that any single channel is sufficient on its own; rather, artists with the capacity to diversify and coordinate multiple sales routes appear better equipped to reach different buyer types and price points.

However, it is important to acknowledge that building and maintaining multiple sales channels requires considerable time, technical skill, and sometimes financial investment — resources not equally available to all artists. As a result, the ability to develop a multi-channel approach may itself be shaped by socio-economic status, skills, digital literacy, and geographic access.

4.5 Variations by Age Group

Figures 4.10 and 4.11 explore how sales channel use varies by age group. Artists aged 45–64 were the most likely to use multiple sales channels and were particularly active across online routes, commissions, fairs, and galleries. Those under 25 or over 75 used fewer channels on average and were more likely to focus on a single sales mode.

This trend supports the notion that mid-career artists are the most commercially active group, likely reflecting a combination of experience, network development, and confidence in navigating different markets. One interpretation of the lower uptake of diverse sales channels among younger artists might be that it reflects barriers to entry, while for older artists, it may reflect retirement-phase adjustments or different professional priorities.

Figure 4.6 Income from the sales of Artwork 2024 by Sales Channel

(Income from selling finished artistic products)

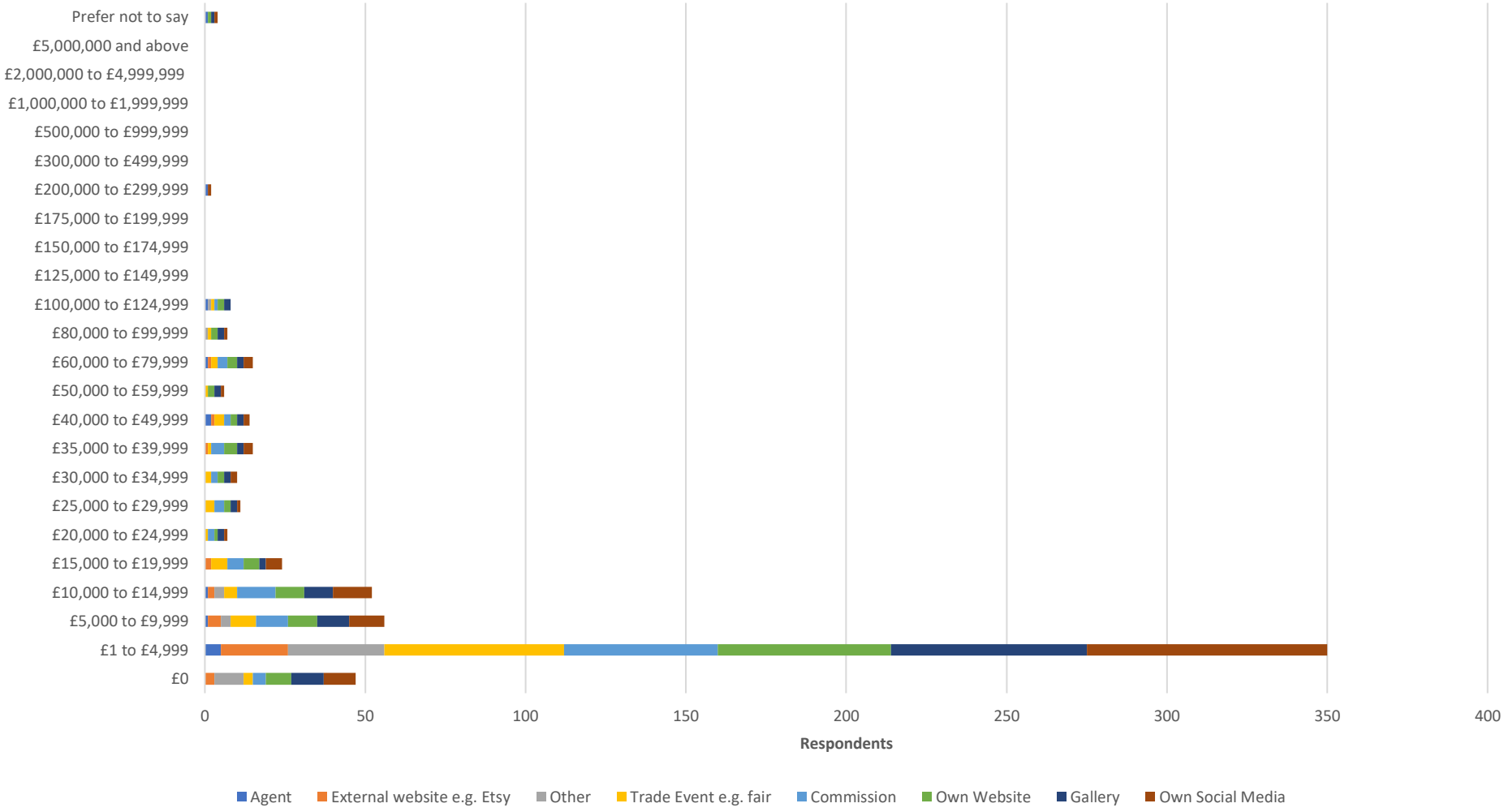


Figure 4.7 Artistic Income 2024 by Sales Channel
(All arts related work and practice income)

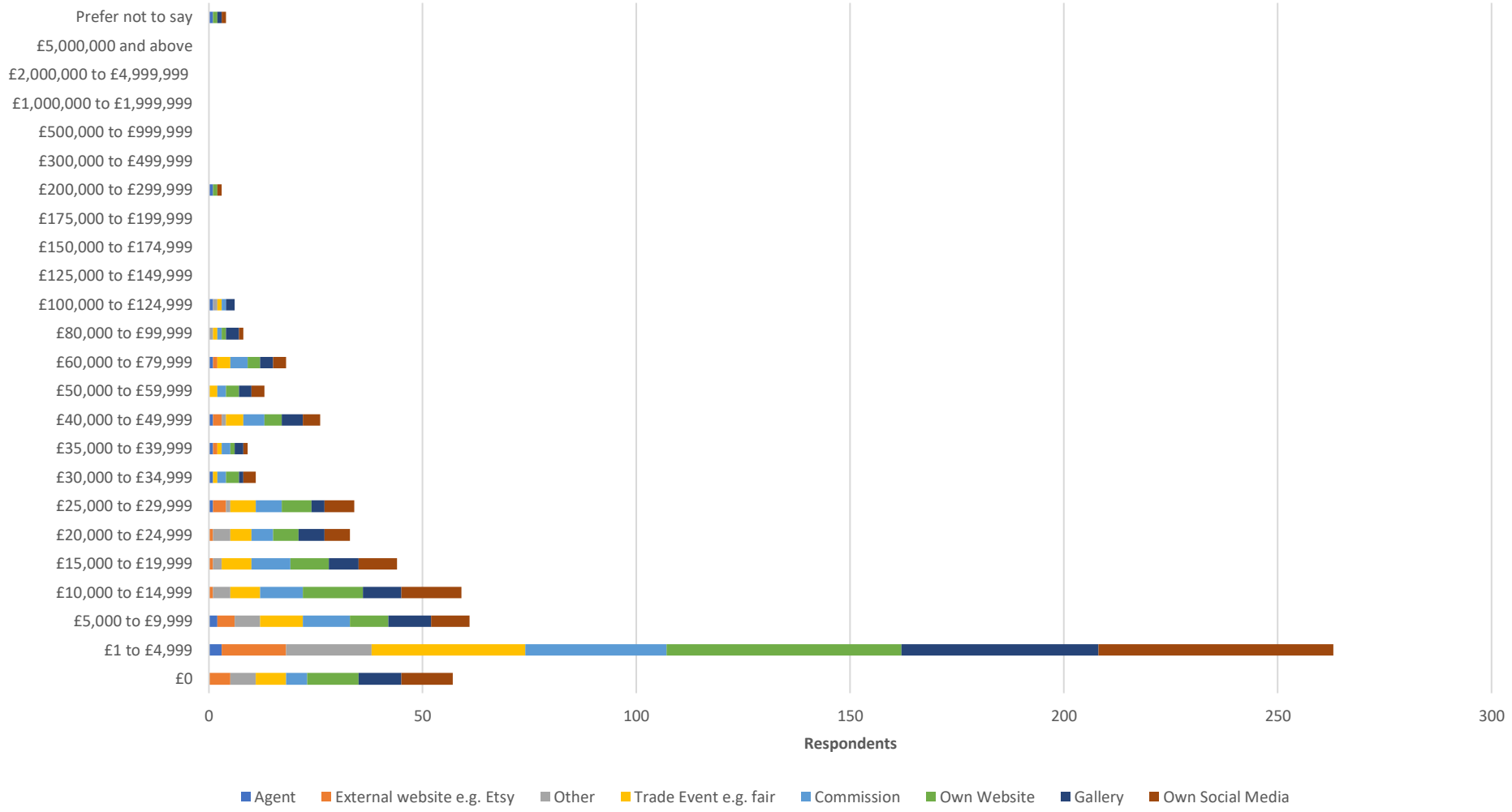


Figure 4.8 Income from the sales of Artwork 2024 by Number of Sales Channels Used

(Income from selling finished artistic products)

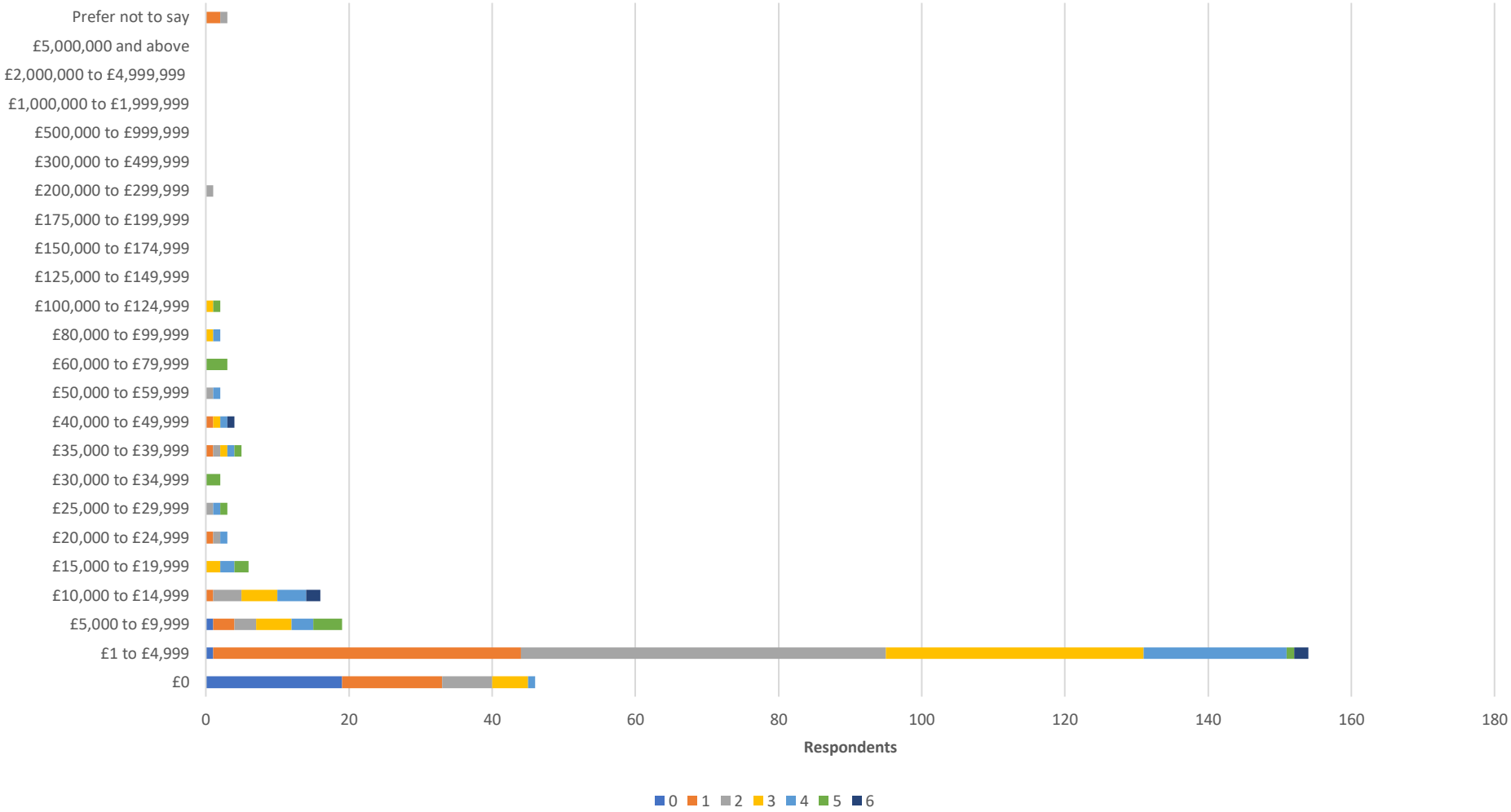


Figure 4.9 Artistic Income 2024 by Number of Sales Channels Used
(All arts related work and practice income)

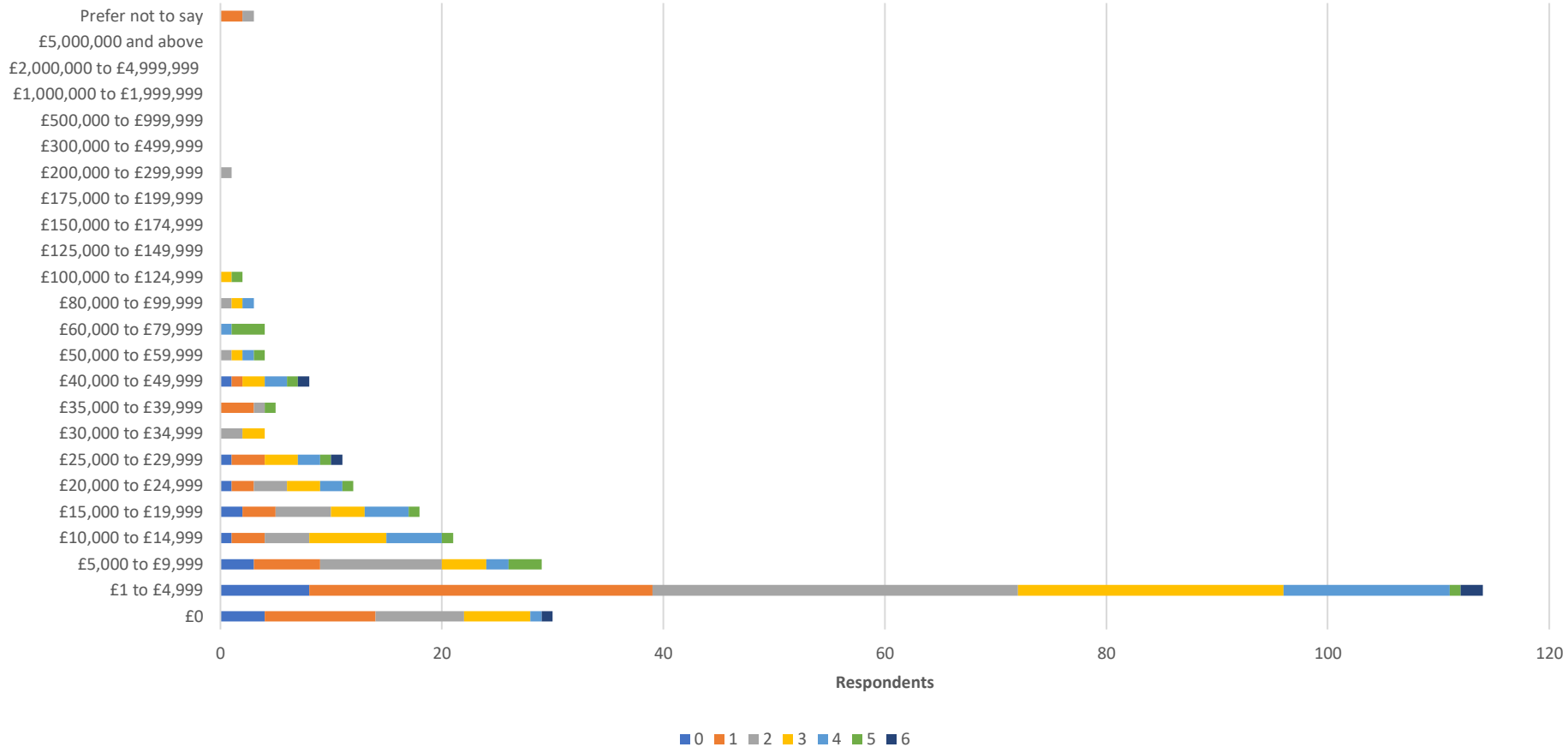


Figure 4.10 Sales Channels Used by Age Group

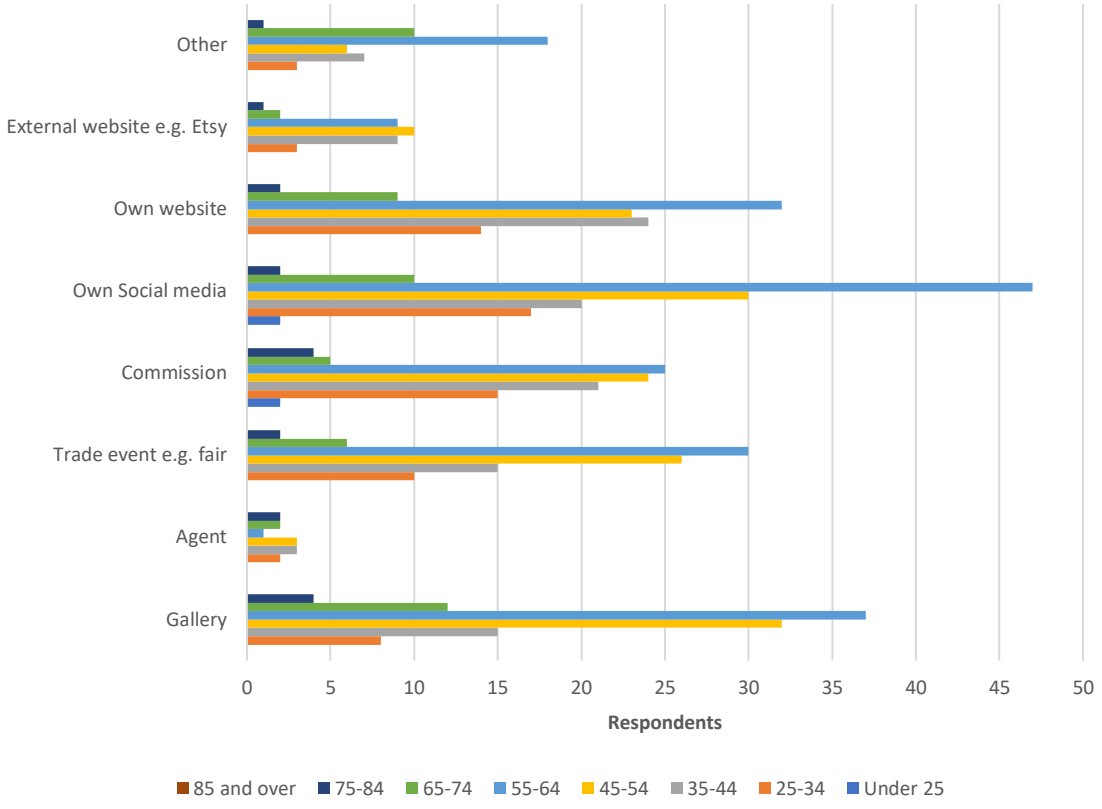
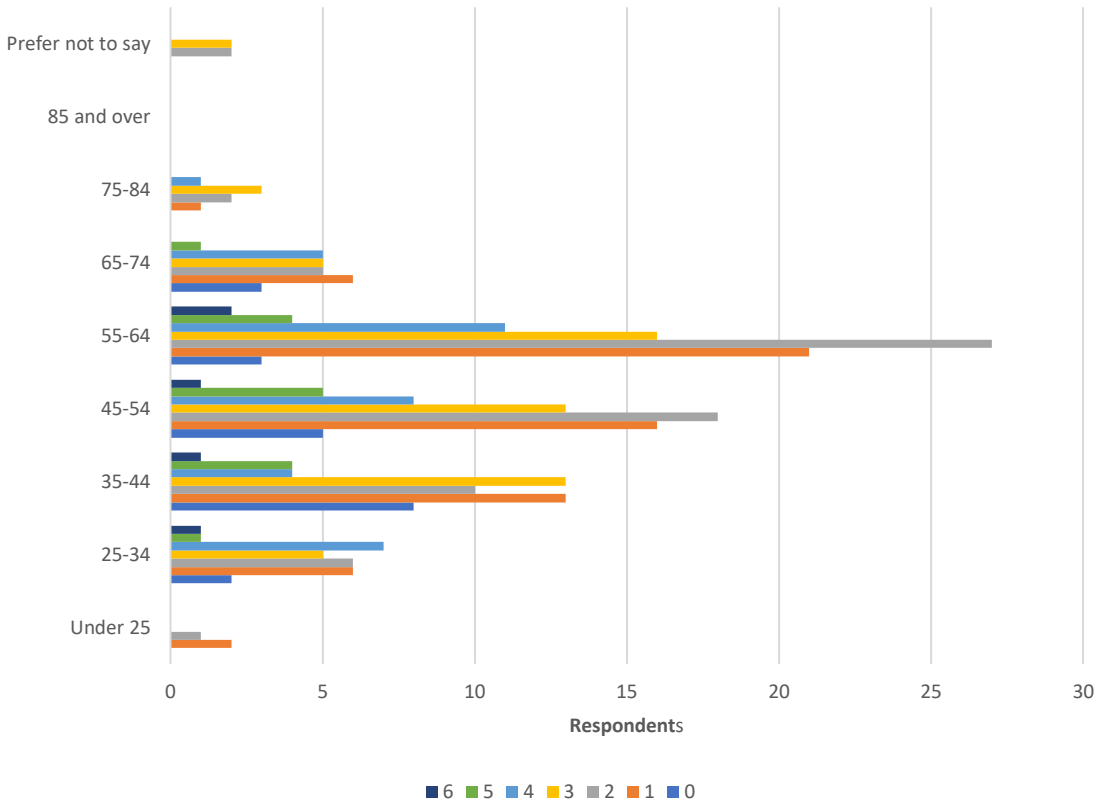


Figure 4.11 Number of different Sales Channels Used by Age Group



5. Conclusions: Selling Artwork as a Livelihood

Own Art and Artist's Livelihoods

Own Art is a UK-wide interest-free loan scheme, established in 2004 and managed by Creative United in partnership with Novuna Consumer Finance. Supported by arts councils across the four home nations, the scheme allows individuals to purchase contemporary art and craft from a network of more than 300 participating galleries through loans ranging from £100 to £25,000, repayable over 10 months (or 20 months for higher-value works). The programme is designed to reduce financial barriers to buying original art, diversify the collector base, and improve income streams for artists and galleries.

Since Novuna became the credit provider in 2007, more than 80,000 loans have been issued with a total value exceeding £73 million[5]. Average loan sizes sit at just over £1,000, and survey data indicate that around 13 percent of users are first-time art buyers, suggesting the scheme is widening engagement beyond traditional collectors. Repeat uptake is high, with 65 percent of customers returning and 69 percent stating they would not have made their purchase without the scheme.

Stakeholders benefit in distinct ways. Buyers gain access to artworks without needing to pay the full cost upfront; artists and galleries make sales that might not have occurred otherwise; and funders and policymakers value Own Art as a strategic tool for sector resilience. The credit provider, Novuna, has continued its involvement for nearly two decades, demonstrating confidence in the model's financial sustainability.

Evaluation of the scheme's operation in Scotland during 2024/2025 suggests that 32% of Scottish artists surveyed made their income solely through sales or commissions of arts and crafts, and that, on average, 14% of their sales came through Own Art. In the context of that evaluation, 14% equated to an average of £3,650 of incremental sales of arts per artist in 2024-2025. **If the 14% figure is applied to income from sales of artwork reported in the wider UK Artists' Livelihoods 2024 data set, then Own Art Sales could account for more than £330k of income in 2024 across the survey respondents. That's between £350 and £35,000 across the income range reported, or approximately £1,500 for each respondent who earned income from sales during the year. This could also be expressed as 12% of average earnings from artistic activities reported in the UK Artist's Livelihoods 2024 Survey.[6]**

5.1 For many, art sales alone – even combined with broader artistic activity – are not a viable livelihood

The vast majority of artists are unable to earn even a Living Wage through the sale of their artwork. The findings show that while some artists can generate meaningful sales income, many operate at very modest levels.

[5] See https://www.novuna.co.uk/news-and-insights/consumer-finance/own-art-scheme/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

[6] These estimates are based on a scenario where all survey respondents would be registered users of Own Art. This is a hypothetical assumption and presents a 'what if' best case impact of Own Art across the survey cohort.

Less than a third of artists can earn above a Living Wage through all their total artistic income (sales and other artistic activity). Even when teaching and other arts-based income are included, only a small proportion report incomes comparable to a full-time living wage.

Only 21% reported personal income above £30,000. The median gross annual earnings for UK full-time employees in April 2024 was £37,430 (ONS, 2024). Nearly half (47%) of respondents live in households that fall below the national median.

These findings confirm that many artists both operate within financially constrained domestic contexts, and that their practice is supported by other income sources outside of the sector.

5.2 Artistic activity is a significant employment gateway for those identifying as disabled/with a long-term health condition

The rate of respondents identifying in the Artists' Livelihood 2024 survey is equivalent to those sectors in the economy employing the highest rates of those identifying as disabled.

5.3 Age and gender impacts the ability to achieve a sustainable artist's livelihood

Mid-career artists (aged 45-64) report the highest earnings in the sector; younger and older artists cluster at the bottom of the income scale. The underrepresentation of younger artists is not only a demographic detail but a potential red flag for sector renewal and sustainability. Gendered income inequality remains entrenched with women and non-binary artists more likely to earn less across all income types.

5.4 Access to sales infrastructure and diversification are income development strategies

Artists who used a wider range of sales routes - such as online platforms, fairs, studio events, and gallery representation - tended to report higher levels of sales income. This suggests that expanding channels can help mitigate the limitations of any single route.

5.5 Consumer credit schemes can provide measurable contributions to artist incomes

Given the low income achieved on average through the sale of arts and crafts, Own Art's sales results represent a significant contribution to livelihoods for a substantial minority of artists. These income benefits sit alongside the wider benefits of Own Art stated by artists (for example, recognition of their practice) and the wider benefits to society of artist freelancers activity.

5.6 The wider benefits of artistic activity

Creative adaptability deserves recognition and support but alone it is not enough. Cultural, economic and place-based policy is yet to support, fully recognise, or provide an economically just ecosystem for the diversity of artistic labour or the value it generates for society, place and economy[7].

[7] See Henry, N., Barker, V., Sissons, P., Broughton, K., Dickinson, P., Lazell, J., & Angus, T. (2021) https://www.creativeunited.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Mind-the-Understanding-Gap-The-Value-of-Creative-Freelancers.pdf

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7. Compendium of Data-Driven Research on Artists' Livelihoods

We contextualise this study with reference to four significant (and recent) pieces of data-driven research focused on artists' livelihoods. All were conducted in 2024/2025 using a survey methodology across the home nations of the UK. These are summarized in the following matrix, which allows for cross comparison.

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
Date	2025	2025	2024 (published 2025)	2024
Organisation(s)	Creative United	Freelancers Make Theatre Work University of Essex	The Makers Survey was undertaken by FRY Creative in September 2024, with the input of the Crafts Council.	Centre for Regulation of the Creative Economy (CREATe) at University of Glasgow
Funder	Creative Scotland and Arts Council England	Arts Council England	Crafts Council	DACS (Design and Artists Copyright Society)
Creative Industries sector	Visual arts who reported working in the following principal art forms: Animator 0.3% Ceramics 6.4% Digital Art 3.6% Drawing 10.8% Furniture design 0.2% Glassware 2.6% Graphic Design 2.1% Illustration 4.1% Jewellery 1.6% Live or performance art 3.8% Metalwork 1.0% Mixed media installations 7.5% Painting 16.7% Photography 4.1% Printmaking 7.9% Sculpture 7.9% Socially engaged art 5.9% Sound art 2.0%	Respondents reported working in TV 14.2% Film 15.5% Theatre 83.6% Live events 33.5% Opera 23.3% Dance 21.6% Circus 4.2% Recorded audio 13.5% Video games 2.1% Other 11.7%	Respondents reported working in Textiles 27.4% Ceramics 27% Mixed media 19.3% Embroidery 15.2% Printmaking 11.3% Woodworking 9.8% Knitting 9.6% Weaving 8.6% Glassmaking 7.7% Paper art 7.4% Metalworking 7.2% Felt art 6.5% Silversmithing 5.5% Furniture making 5% Leatherworking 3.4% Basketry 3.4% Toy making 3.4% Stone carving 1.3% Lacemaking 0.9% Horology 0.2%	respondents who spent at least some of their working hours working as a visual artist. (this was a filter question for survey) Of those selecting primary occupation (n960) Photographer 22.9% (217) Painter 4.5% (175) Illustrator 15.1% (136) Other 14.3% (136) Multi-media artist 6.2% (59) Sculptor 5.5% (52) Craftsperson / maker 4.0% (38) Printmaker 2.5% (24) Socially Engaged Artist 2.5% (24) Cartoonist 2.0% (19) Video Artist / Filmmaker 2.0% (19) Digital Artist 1.5% (14) Graphic Designer 1.5% (14) Installation Artist 1.5% (13)

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
	Textiles 5.2% Videoartist/Filmaker 2.8% Woodcarving 0.7% Define in another way 2.9%		(multiple responses were possible)	
Methodology notes	an online survey (hosted on the JISC platform). Income categories in the survey were matched with DACS research into artist income, and categories of artistic practice were matched with Creative United's previous Own Art scheme surveys, as were geographic regions. National survey best practice approaches were used to gather data on gender identity, disability and long-term health conditions, and ethnicity. English and Welsh versions of the survey tool were live for an eight week period ending on 13th June 2025. The survey generated 282 English language responses and one Welsh. A total of 271 responses were received from artists in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The remaining 12 responses were 'from outside of the UK' and were discounted for the purpose of analysis and reporting.	Fifth of five annual online surveys 1270 responses 2025 UK population Demographics, income, experiences, challenges. Mix of free text and multiple choice responses	Over 1000 responses UK population Future of the sector Demographics Income Sales channels (in-person and online) Methodology notes p35 The Makers Survey was undertaken by FRY Creative in September 2024, with the input of the Crafts Council. FRY Creative reviewed existing materials including the Maker Needs Survey, Directory Membership Survey and Crafts Magazine Membership Survey, alongside strategic documents, including evaluation frameworks and funding agreements, to ensure alignment with Crafts Council's strategic priorities. User testing of a draft survey was conducted in August 2024 with nine individuals from the crafts sector, selected to represent varied demographic and stakeholder groups. Follow up interviews were undertaken with seven users using cognitive testing approaches to identify potential	Feb 29 2024 to April 7 2024 (5 weeks) 1,241 respondents No statistical weights were applied to make the survey more representative of the total population of visual artists, because the characteristics of the population are not known. The incomes reported below are before tax in the 2022/2023 tax year Email address entered at end to enter prize draw for incentive (not publicised in advance) Focus groups conducted following survey where participants opted in. This survey was sent to DACS members via newsletter, to c.13,000 recipients. (vb this is a 9.5% response rate)

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
			issues with survey comprehension. Interview participants received a £25 voucher for their feedback, which was used to develop the final survey. This was then disseminated to makers across the UK, including those who already engage with the Crafts Council and those who do not. The survey remained open for three weeks (2–24 September 2024) and was distributed through Craft Council's communication channels and also by a network of craft community organisations. It was open to anyone who defined themself as a maker in the UK. Stakeholder groups who had lower response rates were specifically targeted to ensure that all groups are represented in the findings.	The survey was also publicised on DACS' social media channels and shared by other UK-based visual arts organisations: a-n, CVAN, UAL Schools, ArtQuest, Artist Union England, The Association of Illustrators and The Association of Photographers. The link to the survey was publicly available via DACS' website, and could in theory have been accessed more widely. Partial responses were accepted to allow skipping of irrelevant questions Asked about other sources of income allied to and different from creative visual arts work Categories of work and sales channels
Survey respondents	**Location** South East: 15.9% London: 15.5% South West: 12.2% North West: 4.8% North East: 4.8% Yorkshire & Humber: 3.0% East Midlands: 5.2% West Midlands: 11.4% East of England: 4.1% Scotland: 13.3% Wales: 7.7%	England: 86.9% Northern Ireland: 0.9% Scotland: 7.1% Wales: 3.2% Other: 2.0% Age 16-24 5.7% 25-34 30.9% 35-44 26.8% 45-54 18% 55-64 14.4%	76.8% Women 17.5% Men 3.6% Prefer not to say 1% Non-binary 0.7% Self-described 0.4% Not applicable Age 5.4% 16–29 8.2% 30–39 16.6% 40–49 27.1% 50–59	Reporting distinguishes between 3 samples – full sample (n1241), primary occupation (those who spend at least half of their working time as an artist) = n960, and only occupation (those who spend ALL working time as an artist n601) – does this mean double reporting of the last group in the middle group? Age (full sample)

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
	Northern Ireland: 2.2% **Age** Under 25: 1.1% 25-34: 10.4% 35-44: 19.6% 45-54: 24.4% 55-64: 31.1% 65-74: 9.3% 75-84: 2.6% 85 and over: 0.0% Prefer not to say: 1.5% **Gender** Gender Fluid: 0.4% Genderqueer: 0.4% Trans Man: 0.4% Define in another way: 0.4% Non-binary: 3.0% Prefer not to say: 3.3% Male: 22.7% Female: 69.5% **Ethnicity** Asian/Asian British - Indian: 1.5% Other Asian Background: 1.1% Mixed - Asian and white: 1.1% Black/Black British - Caribbean: 0.4% Mixed - Black Caribbean & white: 0.4% Chinese: 1.5% Jewish: 1.5% White: 74.0% Other white background: 8.2%	65+ 4.3% Ethnicity 84.6% white British, white Irish or other White 15.4% Global Majority	27.1% 60–69 8.3% 70–79 2% 80+ 6.2% Prefer Not to Say 24% identify as neurodivergent 21% identify as disabled or d/Deaf 83.1% White backgrounds 6% Prefer not to say 3.2% Asian backgrounds 3.1% Mixed heritage 1.9% Self-described 1.4% Black backgrounds 0.8% Other backgrounds 0.5% Not known Location - Regional breakdown within England South East 18.5% Greater London 18.1% South West England 14.5% North West England 7.9% West Midlands 7.7% East of England 6.8% Scotland 6.7% Wales 5.7% East Midlands 5.5% Y&H 5.5% North East England 2.1% Northern Ireland 0.8% Ireland 0.1%	Under 25 1.0% (10) 25-34 7.3% (72) 35-44 14.2% (141) 45-54 24.3 (240) 55-64 27.1% (268) 65 – 74 16.9% (167) 75-84 7.4% (73) 85+ 0.6% (6) “The proportion of individuals with disabilities is lower among visual artists compared to the general UK labour force.” (vb even though elsewhere it says the total population sample and characteristics are unknown) Disability (Full sample) Non-disability 79.5% (783) Disability 14.3% (141) Compared to UK Labour Force survey Ethnicity (full sample) Asian or Asian British 2.2% (22) Black, Black British, Caribbean or African 1.4% (14) Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups 4.1% (41) White 86.2% (852) Other ethnic group 1.7% (17) Gender (full sample) Men 49.5% (485) Women 44.1% (432)

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
	Other mixed background: 3.3% Prefer not to say: 4.1% How I would self-describe is not listed here: 3.0% **Disability** Disabled: 23.4% Not Disabled: 69.1% Prefer not to say: 7.4%			Other 2.3% (23) Some skew toward higher earnings / sole profession reported by male respondents The data indicates that respondents to this survey come from a less diverse range of demographics compared to the overall UK labour force. For example, the proportion of respondents with a disability was 14.0%, compared to 24.4% in the UK population. Similarly, Asian and Black visual artists in this survey are represented at less than half of their proportion in the broader UK workforce. Women make up 45.7% of respondents, compared to 51.7% of the general UK population, Location Regional breakdown within England South East 15% London 21.3% South West England 10.8% North West England 5.1% West Midlands 5.1% East of England 5.5% East Midlands 4.1% Y&H 5.0% North East England 4.0% Scotland 9.8%

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
				Wales 4.4% Northern Ireland 8.4% Outside of UK 8.4%
Key findings or themes	The vast majority of artists are unable to earn even a Living Wage through the sale of their artwork. The findings show that while some artists can generate meaningful sales income, many operate at very modest levels. Less than a third of artists can earn above a Living Wage through all their total artistic income (sales and other artistic activity). Even when teaching, commissions, and other arts-based income are included, only a small proportion report incomes comparable to a full-time living wage. These findings confirm that many artists operate both within financially constrained domestic contexts, and that their practice is supported by other income sources outside the sector. Artistic activity is a significant employment gateway for those identifying as disabled/with a long-term health condition The rate of respondents identifying in the Artist Livelihood 2024 survey is equivalent to those sectors in the economy employing	Only 47% of this year's respondents earn 100% of their income from freelance work in the sector. This year's survey findings show that 18% of freelancers are working over 50 hours per week in the sector (a slight increase on 17% in BFS24). The number of freelancers taking on extra work to supplement their income has also increased: from 43% in BFS24 to 49% in BFS25. Only just over half (52%) of BFS 2025 participants said that they have a pension or other financial plan for retirement. This number was only slightly higher (58%) for those nearing retirement, aged between 45-64. Of those respondents who had a retirement plan, 1 in 4 had not paid into it over the last twelve months.	The survey reveals that most craft businesses are sole traders, micro-enterprises or small-to-medium enterprises, where dayto-day needs often take precedence over long-term growth strategies, meaning makers' ability to invest in their own skill-building is limited. Most makers operate on modest incomes from craft: half of respondents (49%) earned less than £10,000 from making in the past year, and 70% earned less than £20,000. The average UK wage is around £34,000, and many makers (62.3%) rely on additional income sources from outside the creative industries. The vast majority of craft businesses (94.9%) did not employ anyone on PAYE contracts in the past two years, indicating that most are sole proprietors. Just 0.13% employ 25 or more people. Two-fifths (41.6%) earn some of their income from making but have another source of income. Among those with an additional source of income, almost two-thirds (62.3%)	The report focuses on the subsample of visual artists whose visual arts is their 'Primary Occupation' who are defined (across previous studies) as those who allocate at least 50% of their time to the profession under survey. Where appropriate, the report makes comparative reference to findings from other surveys of creators' earnings in this series which employ the same methodology allowing for transferability of findings. The report also offers, where appropriate, contextualisation of the findings alongside data on the UK labour market, specifically considering the employed population aged 16 and over in the same year that the survey was conducted. Where data is not available for the UK labour market, the report applies data from the entire UK population aged 16 and over, regardless of employment status. The data reveals that visual artists who do not devote all their time to visual arts (Full Sample and

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
	the highest rates of those identifying as disabled. Age and gender impacts the ability to achieve a sustainable artist's livelihood. Mid-career artists (aged 45-64) report the highest earnings in the sector; younger and older artists cluster at the bottom of the income scale. The underrepresentation of younger artists is not only a demographic detail but a potential red flag for sector renewal and sustainability. Gendered income inequality remains entrenched with women and non-binary artists more likely to earn less across all income types. Artists who used a wider range of sales routes - such as online platforms, fairs, studio events, and gallery representation - tended to report higher levels of sales income. This suggests that expanding channels can help mitigate the limitations of any single route. Given the low income achieved on average through the sale of arts and crafts, Own Art's sales results represent a significant contribution to livelihoods for a		derive it from outside the creative industries. Income breakdown figures also reported <£1,000 18.2% £1,000 - £4,999 17.4% £5,000 - £9,999 13.4% £10,000 - £19,999 21.7% £20,000 - £39,999 12.7% £40,000 - £100,000 8.2% >£100,000 1.5% Prefer not to say 7% Reports "Income brackets of those who work full-time on their craft" page 18 – we can't replicate.	Primary Occupation) frequently engage in non-creative work, with 46.1% of the Full Sample involved in such activities. Additionally, 37.0% of the Full Sample participates in other creative work. For those whose Primary Occupation is visual arts, the engagement in non-creative work drops slightly to 41.5%, and involvement in other creative work is 37.8%. Furthermore, 34.0% of the Full Sample is involved in other work related to visual arts, compared to a higher 41.3% of those for whom visual arts is their Primary Occupation. See income charts on p27 onwards Median earnings by demographics are shown p38 (using mid point of bandings) Despite the finding that visual art is a 'privileged' profession, the majority of respondents do not have parents or extended family members in the industry. Specifically, 79.7% of those for whom visual arts their Primary Occupation report not having family connections in the industry. This suggests that the (privileged) socio-economic background of a

Title	Artists Livelihoods: 2024 Survey	Big Freelancer Survey	Crafts Council Makers Survey	DACS 2024
	substantial minority of artists. These income benefits sit alongside the wider benefits of Own Art stated by artists (for example, recognition of their practice) and the wider benefits of artist freelancers activity.			visual artist can act as a 'safety net' to allow entry into, and sustainability of, their career, without necessarily being a nepotistic profession per se. p22 BUT Visual artists from privileged socio-economic backgrounds earn almost double that of less privileged visual artists in respect of their self-employed earnings p43