

LONDON DIGEST

A survey of artists' studio
groups & organisations in London
from a national survey conducted by Acme Studios in 2004

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Acme Studios is a London-based charity that supports fine art practice by providing artists with affordable studio and living space. Acme was formed in 1972 and is the largest organisation of its kind in the United Kingdom. It has helped more than 5,000 artists with this fundamental means of support. Acme is recognised as the leading development agency for artists' working and living accommodation.

Capital Studios is an advocacy programme led by Acme Studios on behalf of the affordable artists' studios sector in London. The programme (July 2005 to June 2006) is co-ordinated by Val Millington.

Copies of this report and the complete national survey report and register can be downloaded from www.acme.org.uk

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London Digest – a survey of artists’ studio groups and organisations in London

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Introduction – the London Digest

This report presents, for the first time, a comprehensive picture of affordable studio provision for artists in London. It provides a detailed analysis of the groups and organisations who provide this vital service, maps where studio buildings are located, what they are like and what they cost. It also highlights a range of issues including the high level of demand from artists and threats to the current infrastructure. The findings have been drawn from a national survey of artists' studios carried out between June and September 2004 and published as a report in May 2005. The survey was initiated and conducted by Acme Studios with financial support from Arts Council England.

The national survey was based on 116 studio groups and organisations and 166 studio buildings. This London Digest looks at the 27 London groups and organisations and the 72 buildings which they operate.

The criteria for inclusion in the survey were that groups or organisations should be operating to provide affordable space, wholly or mainly for fine artists, and that each building should provide at least five studios or support five artists.

A register of studio groups and organisations in England was published at the same time as the national report. Data for the register was collected at the time of the survey and later on some further groups and organisations were added. This register, the first national database of affordable studio providers in England, is currently being updated and will be published by Acme in April 2006.

The 2004 survey and associated work provides the first detailed and comprehensive review of artists' studios in England. It serves not only to celebrate and promote its achievements, but also, and this is important, to help others to support its continuing existence, development and vitality.

Following completion of the national survey, Arts Council England, London commissioned Acme Studios to undertake a London-wide artists' studio development programme, working with other studio providers. **Capital Studios** aims to raise awareness of artists' workspace as an important element in urban renewal programmes, with a view to creating opportunities for long-term sustainability and growth. The programme will deliver a series of advocacy events to key potential partners: local authorities, development agencies, property developers and housing associations.

This report is one of a series of studies Acme is publishing within the *Capital Studios* programme. Together they will provide a substantial body of evidence in support of the need for permanent, affordable studio space for visual artists in the capital and help to demonstrate the public benefit which ultimately flows from this activity.

Jonathan Harvey, Co-Director, Acme Studios – March 2006

Key findings – London

- London has more studio buildings than the rest of England combined, with 58 per cent of the total studio space in which 27 organisations manage 72 buildings. More than two-thirds of this space is in the east and south east of the capital.
- The 72 buildings in London provide studios for more than 2,000 artists.
- More than nine out of 10 of these studios are occupied by fine artists.
- There are more than 4,500 artists on waiting lists for studios nationally, 3,553 in London.
- This is a self-help movement; almost all the groups providing studios were started by artists.
- Of the 27 providers more than half have been in existence for over 10 years, three for over 30 years.
- Most buildings have been converted from an amazing range of previous uses.
- Half the total cost of converting studio buildings has been self-financed.
- Only two buildings were designed and built as studio space.
- More than half of studio buildings are also resource spaces for the public, providing exhibition space and education programmes.
- There are very few buildings (eight out of 72) which are owned and permanent – nearly 80 per cent of the total space is rented.
- A significant number of buildings are ‘at risk’, jeopardising, within the next ten years, the future of more than 430 artists’ studios.
- The National Lottery has been of critical importance in providing capital funds to help to secure a number of permanent studios – three major buildings in the last 10 years.
- An average London studio measures 341 square feet and an average studio building has 25 individual studio units.
- Rents for London studios are the most expensive nationally – an average inclusive rent of £7.54 per square foot per year – at nearly £215 a month for an average size studio.
- Seventy per cent of studio groups have charitable status.

- Management capacity amongst groups and organisations varies widely; there is a clear need for professional development and support.
- Studio providers rely on a huge amount of voluntary staffing, mostly by their artist tenants.
- The studio sector in London received less than £250,000 in revenue support in 2003/04, 33 per cent of the national total; the money went to four organisations managing over 70 per cent of the total space operated by funded organisations.
- The total 'subsidy' achieved through business rate relief for charities is at least equal to the total revenue support.
- Studios are almost 100 per cent continuously occupied; just seven per cent of all space changes hands each year.
- Only three buildings in our survey were considered fully accessible for disabled people.
- Eleven per cent of all buildings are in a 'poor' condition, with only 29 per cent having central heating.

1 London and the national context

The national survey data was analysed in relation to the regions of Arts Council England which are shown below.



Table 1.1 – National overview

The following table shows the number of buildings, studio units and net square footage managed and the number of individual artist tenants supported among the 116 groups and organisations surveyed.

Region	Organisations	Buildings managed	Studio units	Artists	Net square footage
East	6	7	116	117	27,869
East Midlands	13	13	166	206	44,383
London	27	72	1,832	2,209	625,323
North East	6	6	70	130	21,163
North West	15	15	266	322	87,387
South East	13	15	269	287	67,726
South West	10	11	232	299	59,051
West Midlands	7	7	169	150	38,247
Yorkshire	19	20	354	378	100,297
TOTAL	116	166	3,474	4,098	1,071,446

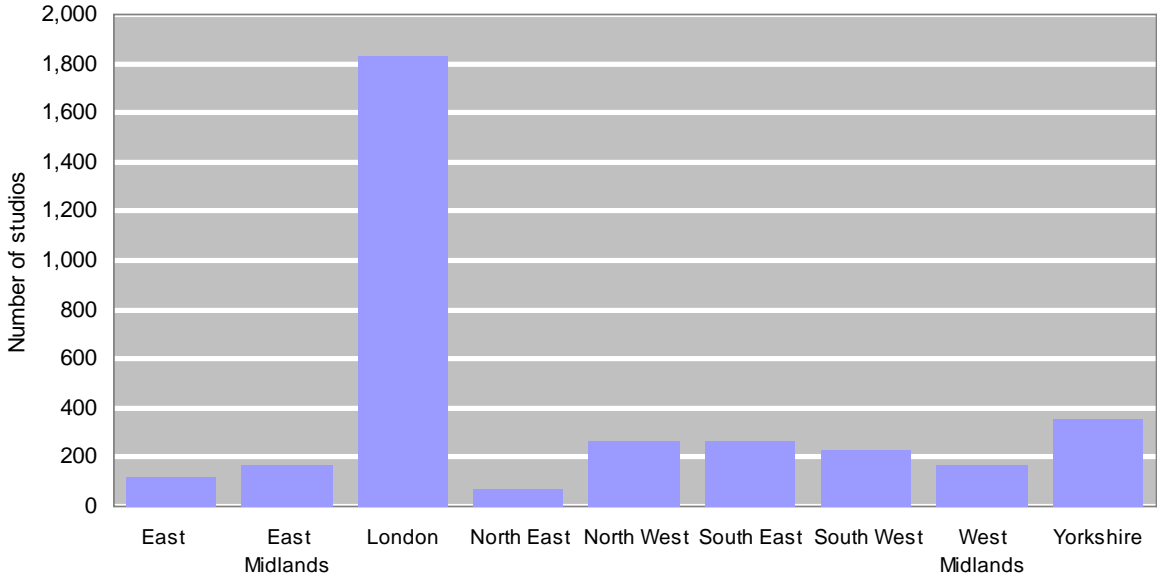
London has the largest number of studio groups and organisations (27) with 23 per cent of the total, with Yorkshire the second largest (19 per cent).

Although London has 23 per cent of the organisations included in the survey it has 43 per cent of the buildings because it has five studio management organisations which manage more than one building. There were two organisations managing 17 buildings each, one managing 10, one managing five and one managing two.

London studio buildings tend to be larger, comprising 25 units compared with the national average of 21. Studios are also larger, with the London average being 341 square feet as against the national average of 308.

London has 58 per cent of the total studio space in England measured in square feet.

Figure 1.1 – Number of studios by region



Some studios are shared by artists. The national occupation figure is 117 per cent and that of London 121 per cent i.e. for every 10 studios there are 12 artists.

Table 1.2 – London overview

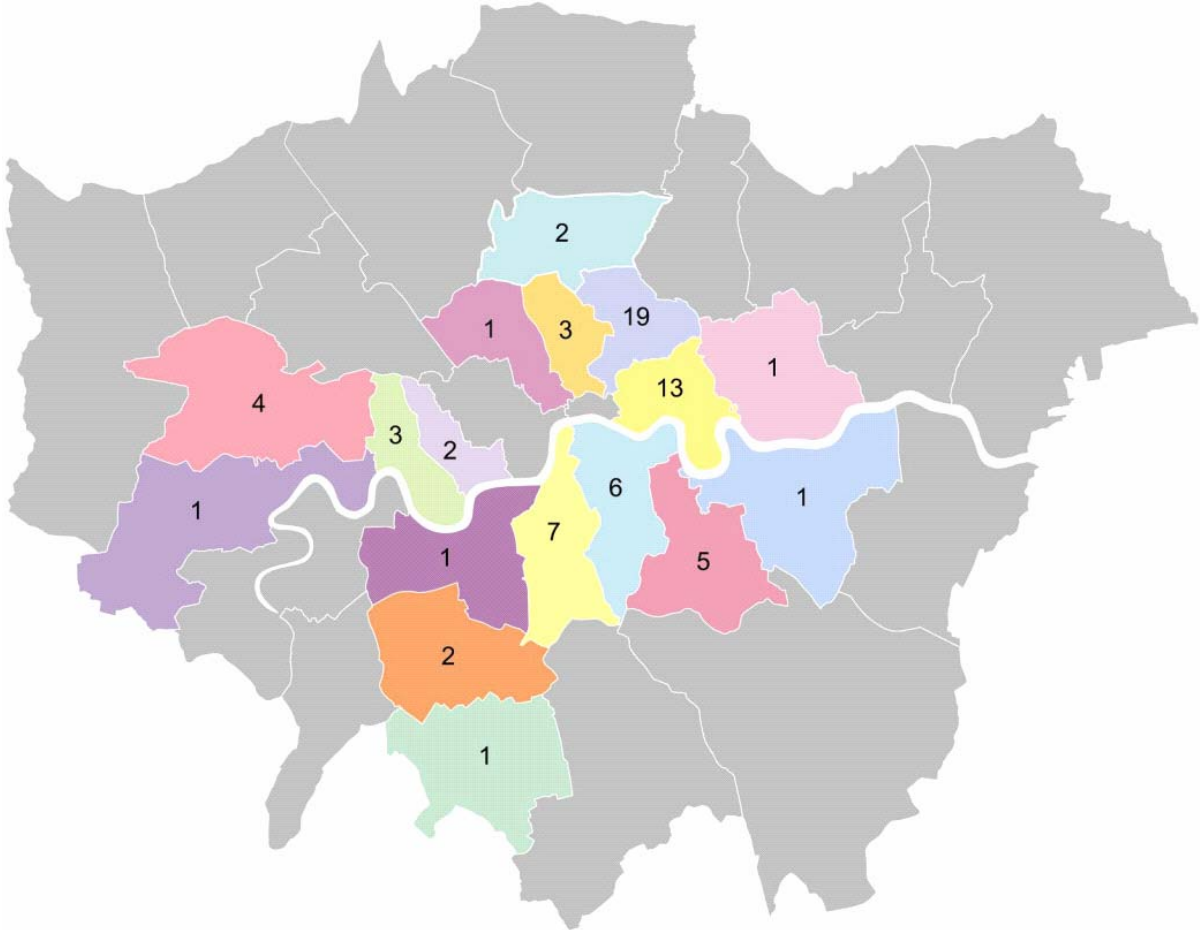
The chart below shows the location by borough of the 27 London groups and organisations included in the survey in terms of the number of buildings, studio units, artists and net square footage. Where a borough does not have an organisation but has studio buildings it is because those buildings are managed by a multiple-studio management organisation whose administrative base is located in another borough.

London borough	Organisations	Buildings managed	Studio units	Artists*	Net square footage
Camden	0	1	5		1,990
Ealing	1	4	51		9,244
Hackney	7	19	440		155,954
Hammersmith and Fulham	0	3	53		14,995
Haringey	1	2	50		10,221
Hounslow	1	1	Not given		Not given
Greenwich	0	1	5		1,792
Islington	2	3	84		26,329
Kensington and Chelsea	0	2	21		5,900
Lambeth	5	7	179		54,468
Lewisham	3	5	217		79,680
Merton	0	2	21		4,756
Newham	0	1	35		10,025
Southwark	2	6	120		43,888
Sutton	0	1	12		2,660
Tower Hamlets	4	13	435		185,421
Wandsworth	1	1	104		18,000
TOTAL	27	72	1,832	2,209	625,323

The London borough of Hackney has the largest number of studio buildings and units (24 per cent of the London total of units), but Tower Hamlets has the largest square footage (30 per cent of the total). The boroughs to the east and south-east of London (Hackney, Greenwich, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets) have 68 per cent of the total number of studio units. East London has been at the centre of the development of artists' studio space with groups and organisations attracted, in the past, by the availability of suitable and cheap property.

*We did not collect a breakdown of artists for each individual studio building from the multiple-building organisations making it impossible to provide a breakdown of artists for each borough.

The following map shows the distribution and numbers of studio buildings in London by borough. There are a large number of boroughs where there is no affordable studio space for artists.



■ Greenwich (1)	■ Merton (2)	■ Hammersmith & Fulham (3)	■ Islington (3)
■ Lewisham (5)	■ Sutton (1)	■ Kensington & Chelsea (2)	■ Hackney (19)
■ Southwark (6)	■ Hounslow (1)	■ Camden (1)	■ Tower Hamlets (13)
■ Lambeth (7)	■ Ealing (4)	■ Haringey (2)	■ Newham (1)
■ Wandsworth (1)			

Table 1.3 – Space allocation policy

We asked: ‘which of the following visual arts activities are allocated space?’

An average of nine separately identifiable activities were allocated space per respondent. This represents allocation policy and not current levels of occupation for each activity.

The table shows the percentage of organisations allocating space to particular activities e.g. 100 per cent of all organisations allocated space to painters and 74 per cent to artists using digital technology.

Activity	Percentage	Activity	Percentage
Art in public places	74%	Live art	56%
Artists film and video	85%	Multi media	82%
Artists photography	93%	Painting	100%
Bespoke furniture	19%	Printmaking	67%
Ceramics	41%	Sculpture	89%
Digital	74%	Textiles	44%
Glassmaking	30%	Traditional crafts	22%
Installation	89%	Other	30%
Jewellery & precious metals	26%		

Current occupation

In terms of current occupation by activity, respondents were asked ‘what percentage of the total number of artist/tenants is made up by fine artists’. Our own current definition of ‘fine art’ was included as a note to the questionnaire: ‘Acme’s current definition includes the following: painter, sculptor, print-maker or artist working in installation, photography, film, video, live art, time-based, digital or multi-media work’. Artists working in traditional crafts, or with ceramics or jewellery, would not be included in this definition.

The figure for London was 93 per cent compared with a national average of 89.

One of the criteria for inclusion in the survey was that groups or organisations were providing space wholly or mainly for fine artists. The high percentages of fine artists in occupation is therefore not unexpected, but with a national average of 89 per cent, the support of fine artists is, for most organisations, their core activity.

2 Organisations

This chapter shows the vast range of groups and organisations, from recently formed collectives with no more than a handful of units, to long-established studio management organisations. It looks at their legal status, their governance, staffing and how they are funded.

Status of groups or organisations

Respondents were asked to identify the status of their group or organisation by selecting a particular category. Of the 27 London groups and organisations only four were unincorporated i.e. having no legal status. The remainder were either companies limited by guarantee (9), educational charities (4), charitable trusts (4), Industrial and Provident societies (3). Two were 'sole traders' but operating with a 'not-for-profit ethos, effectively charging for studio space at cost or providing a discount. One was a co-operative group.

Nationally 29 per cent of groups had no legal status against a London average of 15 per cent.

Charitable status

Respondents were asked whether they were a registered charity, an exempt charity or currently applying for charitable status. Charitable status is important because it helps organisations get access to public funding and reductions in business rates.

In London there were 14 registered charities, four exempt charities and one organisation was currently applying. Eight groups had no charitable status. The 33 per cent of London groups with no charitable status compares with the national figure of 57 per cent.

Governance

Respondents were asked how their group or organisation was governed. Eleven had a formal committee structure with external trustees, seven had a committee of artists/tenant elected from their membership and four were run as a combination of these. Two groups were run as collectives and three were sole traders who consulted with the artist/tenants.

Table 2.1 – Formation of group or organisation

Respondents were asked when their group first became active and when the organisation was formed.

Years in existence	No of organisations
0 to 5	7
5 to 10	7
10 to 15	7
15 to 20	1
20 to 25	2
25 to 30	0
30 to 35	2
35 to 40	1
Total	27

Number of years in existence

Of the 116 groups and organisations nationally, 79 (68 per cent) had been formed in the last 15 years compared with 78 per cent in London. From our experience we believe there are more studio groups and organisations in England (and London) now than say 20 years ago, but we cannot state this with certainty as previous research does not provide us with directly comparable figures.

Origins of studio groups/organisations

Respondents were also asked: ‘where was the group first active? (i.e. at a different location or in another context e.g. art college)’. Of the 18 responses to this question, six groups had been associated with a particular art college, eight had moved from a previous studio site. Three said that their studio buildings had been the initiative of particular artists who then approached others to share occupation. One group had first become active at the site they currently occupied.

Staff

Groups and organisations were asked how their studios were run on a day-to-day basis: whether they had paid staff (including payment in kind, such as a free studio) and if so what would be the average total number of paid staff days worked each week.

Of the 116 organisations nationally, 61 were run on a voluntary basis and 55 (47 per cent) had some paid staff. In London a higher percentage (74 per cent) had some paid staff. Of the 20 organisations in London with paid staff the amount of staff days worked expressed in terms of full-time equivalent is shown in the table 2.2.

Table 2.2 – ‘Full-time equivalent’ staff days in groups with paid staff in London

Number of full-time staff	No of organisations	Number of full-time staff	No of organisations
Less than 0.5 full-time	6	Up to 5 full-time	0
Up to 1 full-time	5	Up to 6 full-time	1
Up to 2 full-time	4	Up to 7 full-time	0
Up to 3 full-time	1	Up to 8 full-time	3
Up to 4 full-time	0	TOTAL	20

The four organisations which employed more than five full-time members of staff were together managing a total of 1,314 studios, amounting to 37 per cent of the national total and 72 per cent of the London total.

Groups and organisations were asked if their paid staff were supported by volunteers and if so what would be the average total number of volunteer days per week. Of the organisations with paid staff the amount of volunteer days worked each week is shown in table 2.3.

Table 2.3 – Volunteer days per week in organisations with paid staff in London

Volunteers – days per week	No of organisations
No response	4
Less than 1	10
1 to 2	3
2 to 4	2
4 to 6	0
6 to 8	0
More than 8	1
TOTAL	20

The seven groups with no paid staff (i.e. run as collectives on a voluntary basis) were asked what the average total number of volunteer days were worked each week.

Table 2.4 – Volunteer days per week in organisations with no paid staff in London

Volunteers – days per week	No of organisations
No response	1
Less than 1	1
1 to 2	2
2 to 4	0
4 to 6	2
6 to 8	0
8 plus	1
TOTAL	7

Funding

Groups and organisations were asked about any forms of revenue funding they received towards the cost of their activities in providing studio space for artists. When conducting the interview the emphasis was placed on studio provision rather than the other activities with which studio groups are engaged such as running a gallery or undertaking educational work.

Nationally during the 2003/04 financial year, 21 organisations (18 per cent of the total), received revenue funding as shown in table 2.5. The table shows the number of studio units managed by funded organisations which amounts to 49 per cent of the national total.

Table 2.5 – Revenue funding

Region	Revenue funding	Total funding	Studio units managed
East	1	£2,250	26
East Midlands	1	£700	8
London	4	£240,530	1,208
North East	2	£107,000	34
North West	2	£25,500	14
South East	4	£65,000	63
South West	2	£183,000	147
West Midlands	4	£58,031	141
Yorkshire	1	£40,000	64
TOTAL	21	£722,011	1,705

The four London-based organisations received 33 per cent of the national funding but managed 71 per cent of the total number of studio units.

Funding - sources

Groups and organisations were asked to give the sources of their revenue funding, but not the breakdown of sources if they were funded by one or more organisation.

In London four were funded by Arts Council England and one by a local authority.

3 Buildings – general overview

This chapter looks at all the buildings, whether owned or rented. It presents data on:

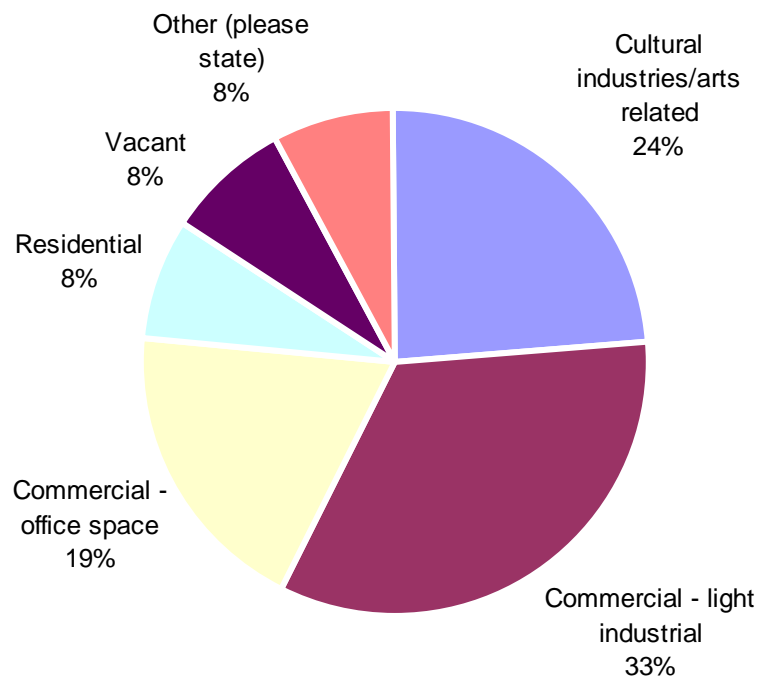
- Nature of occupation
- Designed or adapted for purpose
- State of repair, heating and security
- Disability access
- Conversion
- Other uses and activities

Buildings – nature of occupation

Groups and organisations were asked whether they occupied the whole or part of their buildings.

In nearly half the studio buildings (33 [46 per cent]) studio organisations were the sole occupants. Of the 39 buildings (54 per cent) where occupation was shared with other tenants, the nature of occupation of the other parts is shown below:

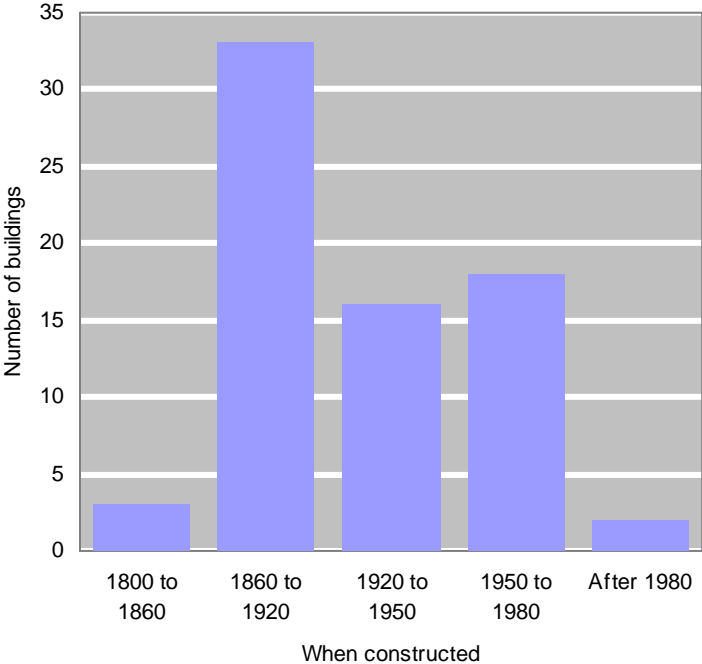
Figure 3.1 – Nature of occupation of others in studio buildings



Nature of building or premises

Figure 3.2 – Age of buildings in London

Respondents were asked when their buildings were constructed. The chart below shows 72 responses.



Nearly three-quarters of buildings were more than 50 years old, suggesting a high repairs and maintenance requirement.

Figure 3.3 – Designed and built or adapted

Respondents were asked whether their studio premises were designed and built, or adapted, for their current purpose. Of the 72 responses, scarcely any were purpose-built: 70 buildings (97 per cent) had been adapted to create studio space. Only two (3 per cent) had been designed and built as artists' studios.

Of the 70 buildings, 72 original uses were described. The chart below shows the main categories:

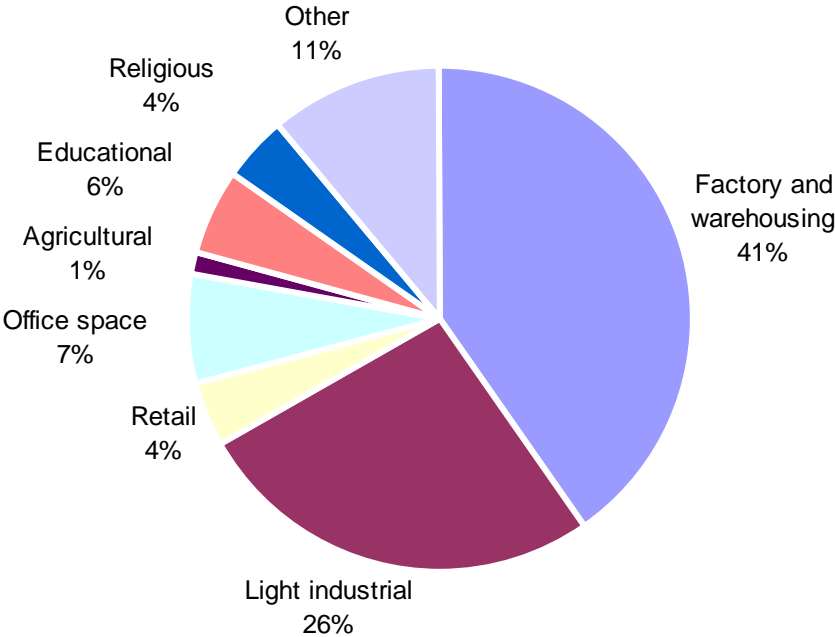
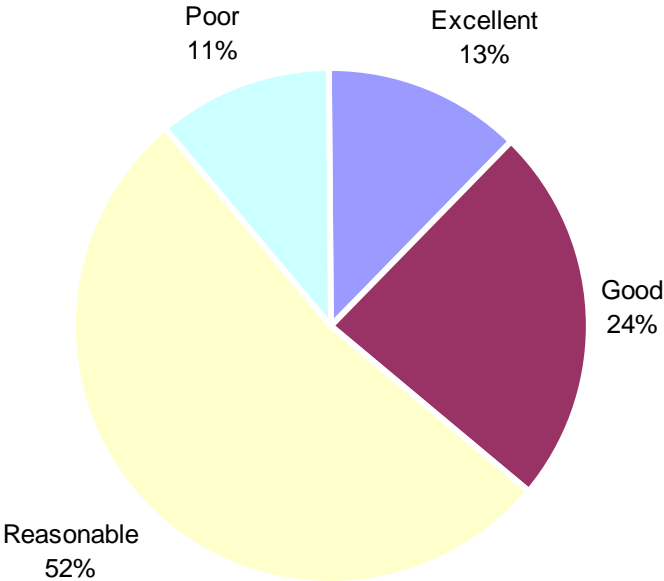


Figure 3.4 – State of repair

Respondents were asked to describe the state of repair and general condition of their buildings. It is worth noting that respondents were asked to record their perception of the state of repair and the responses are not based on independent condition surveys. It is possible that perceptions of condition might be influenced by cost. For instance, a very cheap building might have been perceived to be in an adequate condition simply because it represented good value for money.



Eleven per cent of all buildings were considered to be in a 'poor' condition. This compares with a figure of 22 per cent nationally (including London) which suggests that London studio buildings are generally in a better state of repair than buildings elsewhere in England.

Heating

Of the 72 buildings 21 (29 per cent) had some form of central heating system, but 51 (71 per cent) had no heating of this kind.

Security

For nearly three quarters (50 [70 per cent]) of respondents security from intruders was a significant issue. In the previous 12 months 10 (14 per cent) had had their building broken into.

Access

Respondents were asked whether their building had been professionally audited to assess the level of accessibility. Of 72 responses, 62 (86 per cent) indicated that they had not.

Respondents were asked to estimate how much of the building they occupied was accessible to people using wheelchairs. As with the question about the state of repair of buildings, respondents' perceptions of accessibility may not be the same as an independent access auditor. In London, 30 per cent (187,762 square feet) was considered accessible.

Awareness of Disability Discrimination Act

Sixty-two respondents (86 per cent) were aware of the potential impact of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) on their building.

Seventeen respondents (24 per cent) had taken some steps to comply with the DDA.

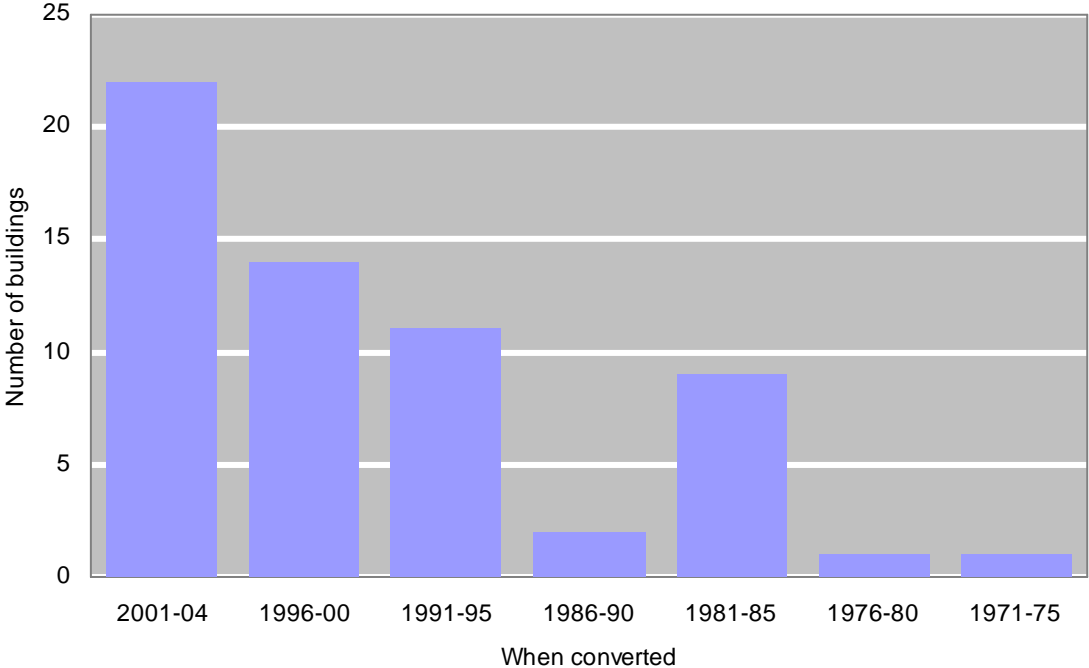
Conversion of buildings or premises to studio space

Respondents were asked whether their building was already suitable for its use as studio space. Of 72 responses, 61 (85 per cent) replied 'no'.

The 11 (15 per cent) who replied 'yes' were asked whether the building had been converted/adapted by another body, such as a local authority on behalf of the group/organisation. Four said 'yes', seven 'no', suggesting that seven buildings were of a nature already suited to studio use and occupation, that is not requiring conversion.

Of the 61 who said that their building needed to be adapted, all said that they had carried out the work of conversion/adaptation.

Figure 3.5 – When conversion work was undertaken

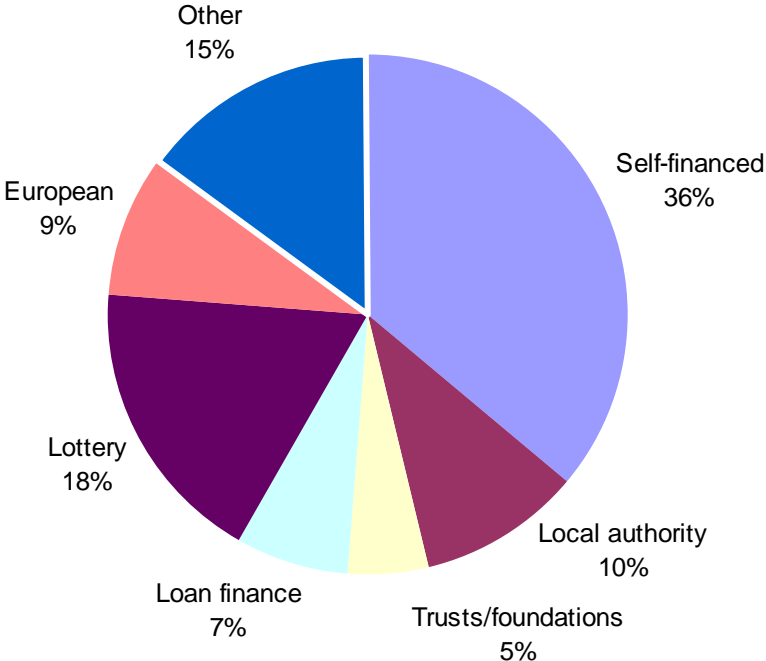


How conversion work was organised

Groups and organisations were asked how the conversion work was organised. Of 59 responses, 17 (29 per cent) organised it themselves (self-help), 17 (29 per cent) organised it themselves using external contractors for some of the work and 25 (42 per cent) had all the work carried out by an external contractor.

Figure 3.6 – How conversion work was financed

Groups and organisations were asked how conversion work was financed. Respondents provided a percentage breakdown of the total cost divided between seven finance categories.

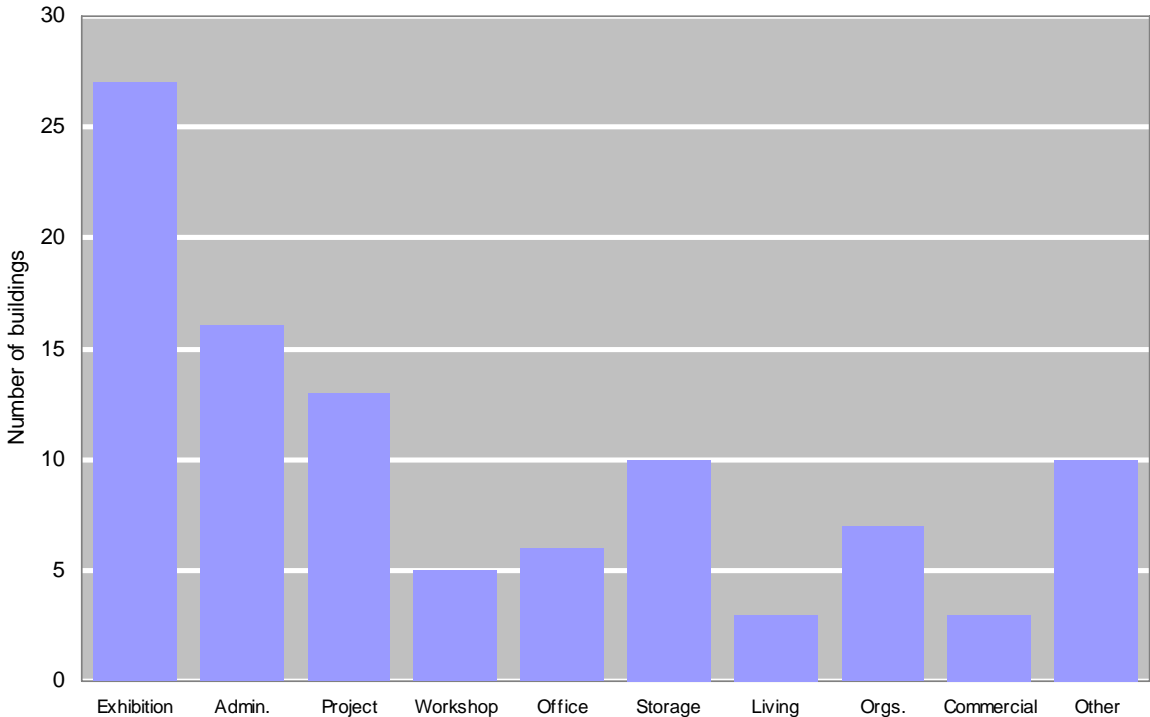


More than a third (36 per cent) of the conversion costs were provided by groups and organisations themselves.

Figure 3.7 – Use of studio buildings for other purposes

Respondents were asked if they used parts of their buildings or premises for other purposes. Of 72 buildings, 32 were used solely as studio space. More than half of the studio buildings (56 per cent) are used for other purposes for the benefit of the public as well as artist/tenants.

Of the 40 buildings where groups or organisations used parts of their buildings for other purposes the uses were identified as follows:



The number of citations for each category is as follows:

- Gallery, exhibition, performance space (27)
- Administrative space for group of organisation (16)
- Project space for tenants (13)
- Equipped workshop space for tenants (5)
- Equipped office space for tenants (6)
- Dedicated storage space for tenants (10)
- Living accommodation (3)
- Space let to other cultural or voluntary organizations (7)
- Space let commercially (3)

Ten respondents indicated other uses not covered by the categories above which they described as follows:

Kitchen

IT training room

IT suite

Education space

International residency programme

Work/live space (3)

Media resource centre (2)

4 Buildings – rented premises

Scarcely a tenth of studio buildings in our survey are owned. The rest are rented – three-quarters from private landlords. A significant number of studio buildings are ‘at risk’, jeopardising, within the next ten years, the future of at least 430 artists’ studios. That represents nearly a quarter of all the collectively managed affordable studios in London.

This chapter presents data about rented premises, namely:

- Landlords
- Buildings at risk
- Costs

Nature of landlord

Respondents were asked to indicate if they rented their building or premises. Of the 72 buildings in the survey, 64 (89 per cent) were rented and eight (11 per cent) were owned (see Chapter 5 for more on owned buildings).

If renting, respondents were asked about their landlord. 47 (73 per cent) were renting from a private landlord, 11 (17 per cent) from a local authority and six (10 per cent) indicated ‘other’.

Of the ‘other’, three were renting from a charitable trust, one from a community trust, one from the Church Commissioners and one from the Crown Estate Commissioners.

Leases – buildings at risk

We analysed data for 51 buildings with lease expiry dates before 2013 (or where expiry dates were unknown) and expectations about renewing leases. Table 4.1 shows leases likely to expire before the end of 2008 and expectations for renewal on a borough-by-borough basis. By the end of 2008, 13 buildings (301 studios) are likely to be vacated, and to the end of 2013 a further four buildings and 130 studios. The total number of buildings at risk may be larger as those with expectations of renewal before 2008 may be vacated before 2013.

Table 4.1 – Lease renewal expectations to 2008

London Borough	Expect to renew		Expect to vacate		Total	
	Buildings	Studios	Buildings	Studios	Buildings	Studios
Camden			1	5	1	5
Ealing	2	13	1	26	3	39
Hackney	8	114	4	148	12	262
Hammersmith and Fulham			1	35	1	35
Haringey	2	50			2	50
Hounslow			1	0	1	0
Islington	2	44			2	44
Lambeth	1	40	1	21	2	61
Lewisham	2	23			2	23
Newham	1	35			1	35
Southwark	2	26	2	50	4	76
Tower Hamlets	1	39	2	16	3	55
TOTAL	21	384	13	301	34	685

Table 4.2 – Lease renewal expectations 2009 to 2013

London Borough	Expect to renew		Expect to vacate		Total	
	Buildings	Studios	Buildings	Studios	Buildings	Studios
Ealing	1	12			1	12
Hackney	2	15	1	32	3	47
Kensington and Chelsea	1	1			1	1
Lambeth	3	49	1	39	4	88
Lewisham	1	55			1	55
Merton	2	21			2	21
Southwark	1	30			1	30
Sutton	1	12			1	12

Tower Hamlets	1	90	2	59	3	149
TOTAL	13	285	4	130	17	415

Table 4.3 – Rent paid

Organisations were asked what annual rent they paid, calculated per square foot. They were also asked whether this included VAT. Where VAT is included the figure quoted below is net of VAT to provide comparable figures, although many organisations are not registered for VAT so this will be an additional cost.

Reliable data was available in respect of 62 buildings.

The following table shows the average, maximum and minimum rent paid by studio groups and organisations to their landlords.

London Borough	Rent per square foot per year		London Borough	Rent per square foot per year	
Camden	Average Maximum Minimum	£7.34 £7.34 £7.34	Lambeth	Average Maximum Minimum	£2.96 £4.40 £0.00
Ealing	Average Maximum Minimum	£5.76 £12.50 £3.00	Lewisham	Average Maximum Minimum	£3.16 £5.00 £2.72
Greenwich	Average Maximum Minimum	£2.00 £2.00 £2.00	Merton	Average Maximum Minimum	£3.67 £4.70 £0.40
Hackney	Average Maximum Minimum	£3.11 £9.50 £1.26	Newham	Average Maximum Minimum	£0.00 £0.00 £0.00
Hammersmith and Fulham	Average Maximum Minimum	£3.75 £3.75 £3.75	Southwark	Average Maximum Minimum	£3.39 £6.46 £0.07
Haringey	Average Maximum Minimum	£4.20 £4.20 £4.20	Sutton	Average Maximum Minimum	£2.85 £2.85 £2.85
Hounslow	Average Maximum Minimum	£19.34 £19.34 £19.34	Tower Hamlets	Average Maximum Minimum	£2.48 £5.90 £1.15
Islington	Average Maximum Minimum	£2.47 £3.85 £0.00	Wandsworth	Average Maximum Minimum	no data no data no data
Kensington and Chelsea	Average Maximum Minimum	£7.28 £7.28 £7.28	London	Average Maximum Minimum	£2.76 £19.34 £0.00

There were two buildings where no rent was paid. In one case the landlord was a local authority, in the other English Partnerships.

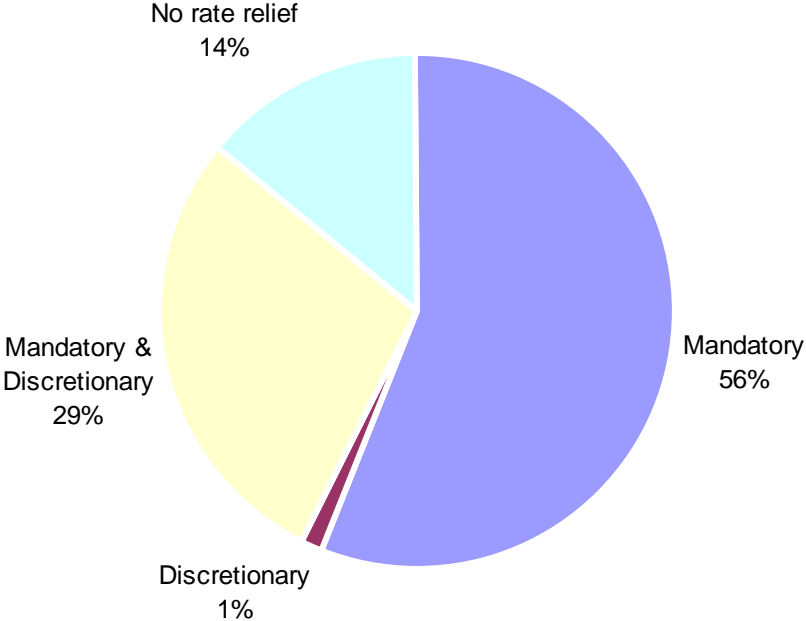
Business rate relief

Groups and organisations were asked whether they received business rate relief from the local authority on their studio building. Charities in receipt of mandatory relief pay one fifth business rates. Discretionary relief is granted at the discretion of the local authority and may be 100 per cent.

The value of relief on business rates available to charitable organisations is a significant subsidy for studio providers. In London (based on an analysis of our own Acme Studios' buildings) the value of this reduction in rates amounts to roughly £1.20 per square foot per year and multiplied across the country would at least be equal to the total amount of direct revenue funding that the sector receives

Of 71 responses, 61 (86 per cent) either received mandatory relief, discretionary relief or both. Ten (14 per cent) received no rate relief.

Figure 4.1 shows the London picture which includes both rented and owned buildings.



5 Buildings – owned premises

Only eight of the 72 buildings surveyed were owned and therefore permanent. This chapter presents data about the owned buildings.

Table 5.1 – Owned buildings

The table below shows the distribution of owned building in London with square footages:

London Borough	Number of owned buildings
Hackney	1
Hammersmith and Fulham	2
Kensington and Chelsea	1
Lewisham	1
Tower Hamlets	3
TOTAL	8

Of the eight buildings, seven were existing buildings which had been converted to provide studio space. One was newly built and designed for purpose.

Purchase dates of buildings

Of the seven buildings where the purchase date was available, one building was bought in each of the years 1983, 1984, 1985, 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2000.

Sources of funding

Of the four buildings purchased since 1995 the sources of funding were as follows: Self-finance 10 per cent, National Lottery 24 per cent, Local authority nine per cent, Trusts and foundations twelve per cent, Loan finance 36 per cent and Other nine per cent.

6 Buildings – artists’ use and occupation

Artists’ rents vary very widely and studio providers do what they can to make studios affordable and secure for their tenants. This chapter presents data on:

- Artists’ rents
- Agreements with artists
- Demand and waiting lists
- Turnover, voids and arrears
- Other facilities

Table 6.1 – Artists’ rent and other charges

Table 6.1 shows the average, maximum and minimum rent charged to artists on a square foot per year basis for each of the London boroughs.

London Borough	Rent per square foot per year		London Borough	Rent per square foot per year	
Camden	Average Maximum Minimum	£11.30 £11.30 £11.30	Lambeth	Average Maximum Minimum	£9.36 £11.50 £6.00
Ealing	Average Maximum Minimum	£10.40 £18.86 £8.68	Lewisham	Average Maximum Minimum	£7.49 £10.56 £1.89
Greenwich	Average Maximum Minimum	£6.50 £6.50 £6.50	Merton	Average Maximum Minimum	£9.87 £10.21 £8.90
Hackney	Average Maximum Minimum	£7.78 £13.50 £4.50	Newham	Average Maximum Minimum	£6.00 £6.00 £6.00
Hammersmith and Fulham	Average Maximum Minimum	£8.28 £8.75 £7.15	Southwark	Average Maximum Minimum	£6.84 £9.25 £4.30
Haringey	Average Maximum Minimum	£9.58 £9.58 £9.58	Sutton	Average Maximum Minimum	£7.00 £7.00 £7.00
Hounslow	Average Maximum Minimum	no data no data no data	Tower Hamlets	Average Maximum Minimum	£6.58 £10.90 £1.40
Islington	Average Maximum Minimum	£8.10 £11.42 £7.75	Wandsworth	Average Maximum Minimum	no data no data no data
Kensington and Chelsea	Average Maximum Minimum	£10.39 £17.76 £9.85	London	Average Maximum Minimum	£7.54 £18.86 £1.40

Studio groups and organisations use different methods for calculating rents. The most common is an ‘inclusive’ rent based on the amount of space occupied, with artists paying extra for electricity and heating.

To achieve comparable figures the table includes (where applicable): business rates, building insurance, service charges, repairs and maintenance, membership, management and cleaning costs. Where electricity and heating is metered and charged additionally it has been excluded. Four buildings have not been included in this sample because the organisations did not wish to give financial data or the data was unreliable.

The London average of £7.54 compares with the national average of £5.82.

The rent for an average studio nationally, therefore, of 308 square feet would be £1,793 a year or £149.38 a month. The rent for an average London studio (of 340 square feet) would be over £2,500 a year or £210 a month.

Some organisations have to add VAT to artists’ rent charges because they are registered for VAT and reclaim VAT on costs. Very few artists reach the threshold for VAT and very few are registered. As a result VAT can be a net additional cost to artists.

Rent charges vary widely but the average of £7.54 per square foot per year can be taken as a benchmark of affordability in London.

Table 6.2 – Other facilities provided to tenants

Respondents were asked: ‘does the group or organisation provide other facilities or opportunities in addition to studio space for its artist/tenants (please indicate whether or not they are included in the studio rent)?’

The table below shows, for each of the 27 groups or organisations, whether particular facilities or opportunities are provided and, if so, whether they are included in the rent charged.

Facilities or opportunities	Not provided	Inclusive	Exclusive
Access to creative equipment e.g. darkroom, firing kiln, etc.	59%	19%	22%
Gallery, exhibition, performance space	41%	37%	22%
Business support programmes e.g. mentoring, marketing etc.	44%	37%	19%
Administrative support	41%	48%	11%
Access to the internet	48%	30%	22%
Telephone	41%	19%	41%
IT equipment	52%	22%	26%
Open studios	26%	56%	18%
Living accommodation	81%	0%	19%

Agreements with artists

Respondents were asked what kinds of agreements were granted to artists. They were given three choices: business leases/tenancy agreements, licence agreements or other.

As some multiple-building organisations use different forms of agreements for different buildings responses were required in relation to each building. There were 37 buildings (51 per cent) where artists occupied on licence agreements and 32 (45 per cent) where artists occupied on business tenancies.

Of those who indicated 'Other', an analysis of the responses shows that 3 buildings (four per cent) were occupied by artists on the basis that they signed some other form of non Landlord and Tenant agreement, for example a copy of the groups constitution, a set of rules or some other form of 'home-made' contract.

Security of tenure

Respondents were asked 'If the artist/tenant is granted a lease for a year or more, is the lease excluded from the security provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954?'

There were 33 (46 per cent) 'yes' and seven (10 per cent) 'no' responses. 28 (38 per cent) did not answer the question and four (6 per cent) said they did not use leases.

Feedback from the surveys indicated that many groups and organisations did not understand what 'excluded leases' were and a more appropriate question might have been: 'do you understand what is meant by contracting out of the Landlord and Tenant Act?'

Figure 6.1 – Turnover

Respondents were asked ‘How many times a year does a studio in the building or premises become available (average of last three years)? There were 41 responses. The total number of studios becoming available was 133. Respondents were not asked to define whether these studios were long or short term, or sub-lets.

A turnover of 133 represents seven per cent out of the 1,832 studios in the survey. This means that while there is a fairly stable population of artists within studios, roughly one in 14 studios does become available each year to other artists.

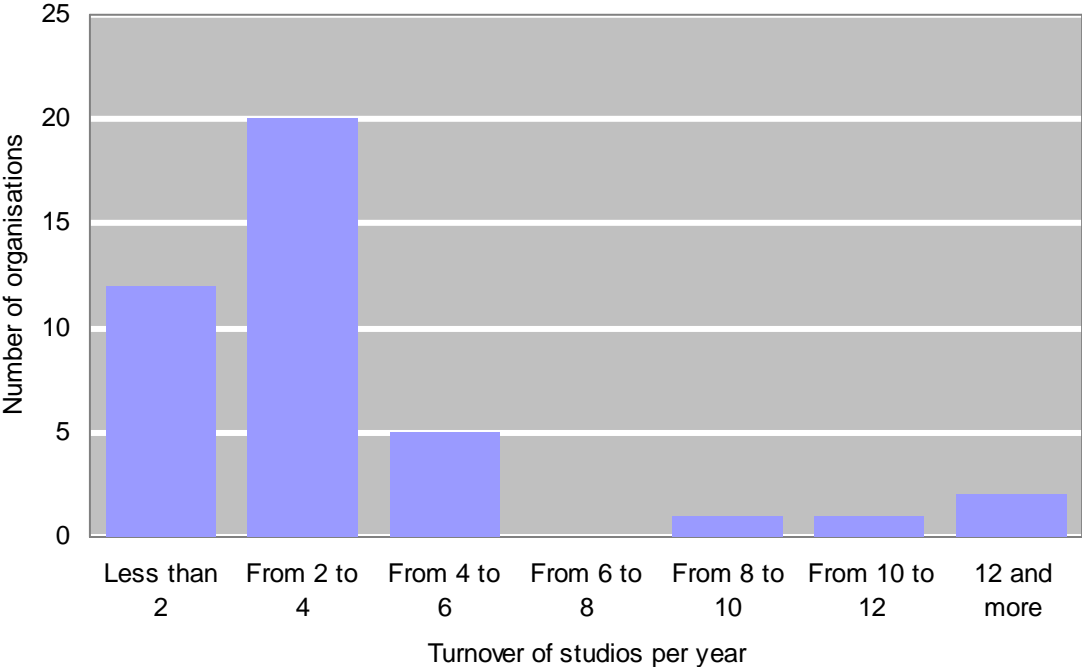


Figure 6.2 – Voids

To make sure that affordable rents are sustained, it is important that studio providers are efficient at keeping buildings fully let. If studios fall empty the loss of rent from these ‘voids’ may have to be made good by increasing the rents to the artists in occupation.

Respondents were asked: ‘What is the percentage of the total rent receivable that is lost through voids (average of last three years)’.

39 per cent had voids of less than one per cent. A one per cent void for an average studio organisation (that is managing a building with 25 studios, averaging 341 square feet each, at a rent of £7.54 per square foot per year) would mean £643 rent loss in a year. In other words a one per cent void for an average studio organisation would mean that one studio would have been empty for nearly four months.

The average of all responses was four per cent. (This would mean that each studio building on average had the equivalent of nearly one studio unit permanently empty. This should not necessarily be read as indicating a lack of demand to fill the space. A lack of management capacity to re-let spaces or undertaking repair work would be other reasons for studio units being unoccupied).

Figure 6.2 shows the percentage of annual rent lost through voids.

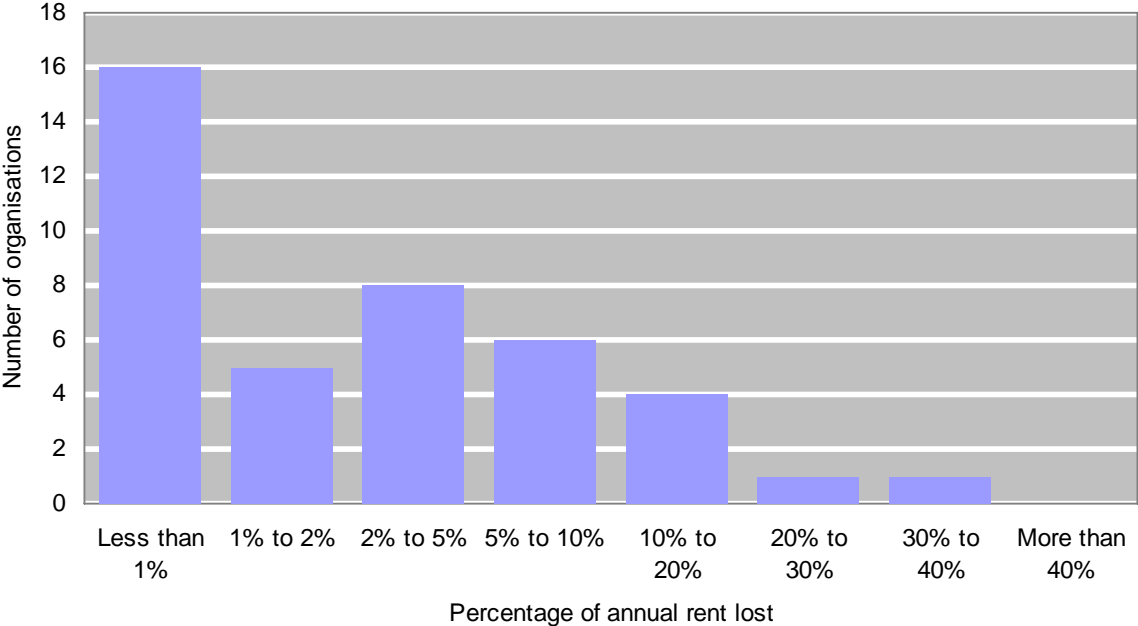


Figure 6.3 – Arrears

Of similar importance to ensuring that buildings are fully let, studio providers also need to be efficient in collecting rent.

Respondents were asked: ‘What is the percentage of the total rent receivable in arrears at 31 March 2004 or at the end of the groups/organisation’s financial year (if different)?’

An average of 3.5 per cent was recorded. This represents nearly two week’s (1.8 weeks) rent in arrears overall. While some groups and organisations undoubtedly faced problems with arrears – two London organisations recorded rent arrears of over 20 per cent of their annual rent roll – two week’s arrears would be a manageable figure.

Generally, artists tended to pay regularly, with some of the largest organisations recording very low rental arrears figures. This is particularly surprising given what we know, anecdotally, of the low and uncertain nature of most artists’ incomes.

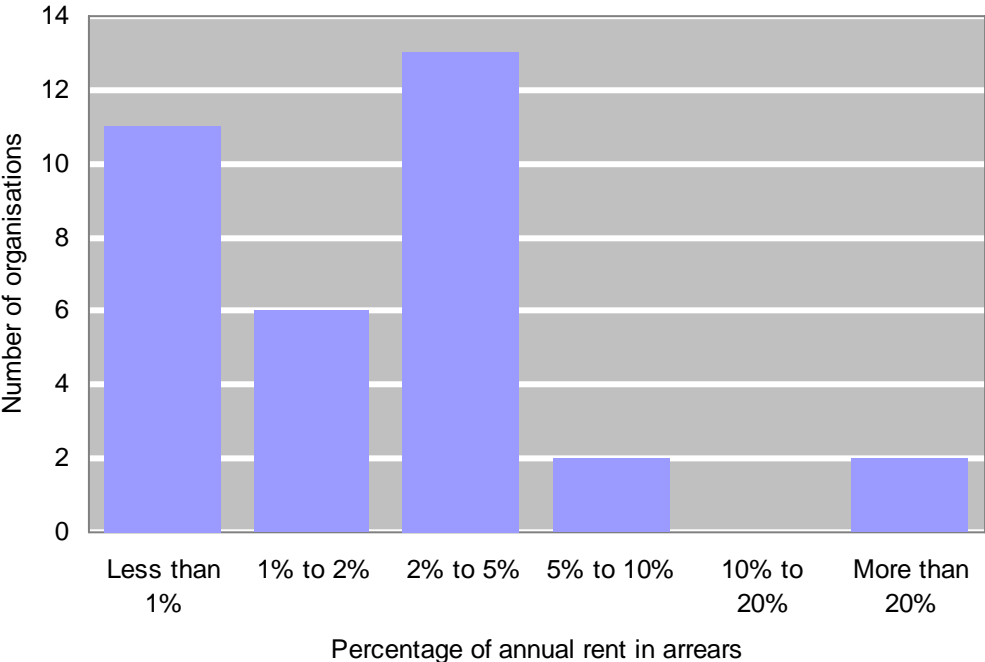


Figure 6.4 – Waiting list and allocation policy

Respondents were asked whether they operated a waiting list. Not surprisingly, given artists' need for affordable studio space 23 organisations (85 per cent) indicated that they did.

Those responding positively were asked how it was operated and provided a number of choices and could tick all those that applied. The responses are represented in the chart below:

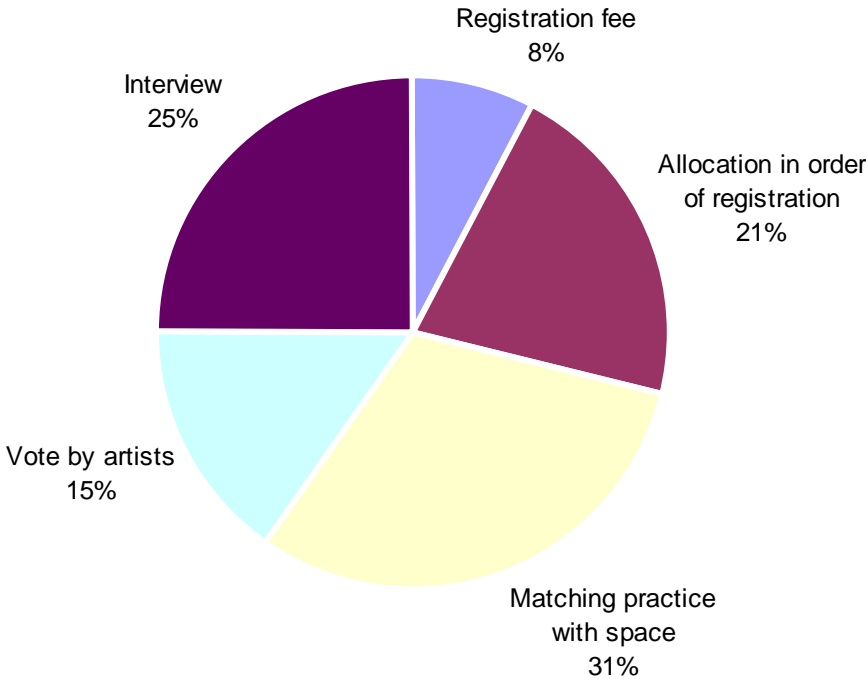


Figure 6.5 – Demand

Respondents were asked how many artists were currently registered on the group or organisation’s waiting list. Twenty-six organisations responded to this question although only 23 had a formal waiting list.

London has the largest demand of any region in England where two organisations had waiting lists between 500 and 1,000 and one a list over 1,000. Only two other regions had waiting lists of between 100 and 200.

The total number of registered artists nationally was 4,516 with an average of 46 per organisation. In London the total number was 3,553 being 79 per cent of the total national demand, and with an average of 132 per organisation.

However this does not provide a true picture of the level of demand because some artists will be registered on more than one list. On the other hand, artists who would like to become tenants may not see any point in registering unless there is an expectation of being offered space within a certain period of time, or they are able to afford the rents being charged.

