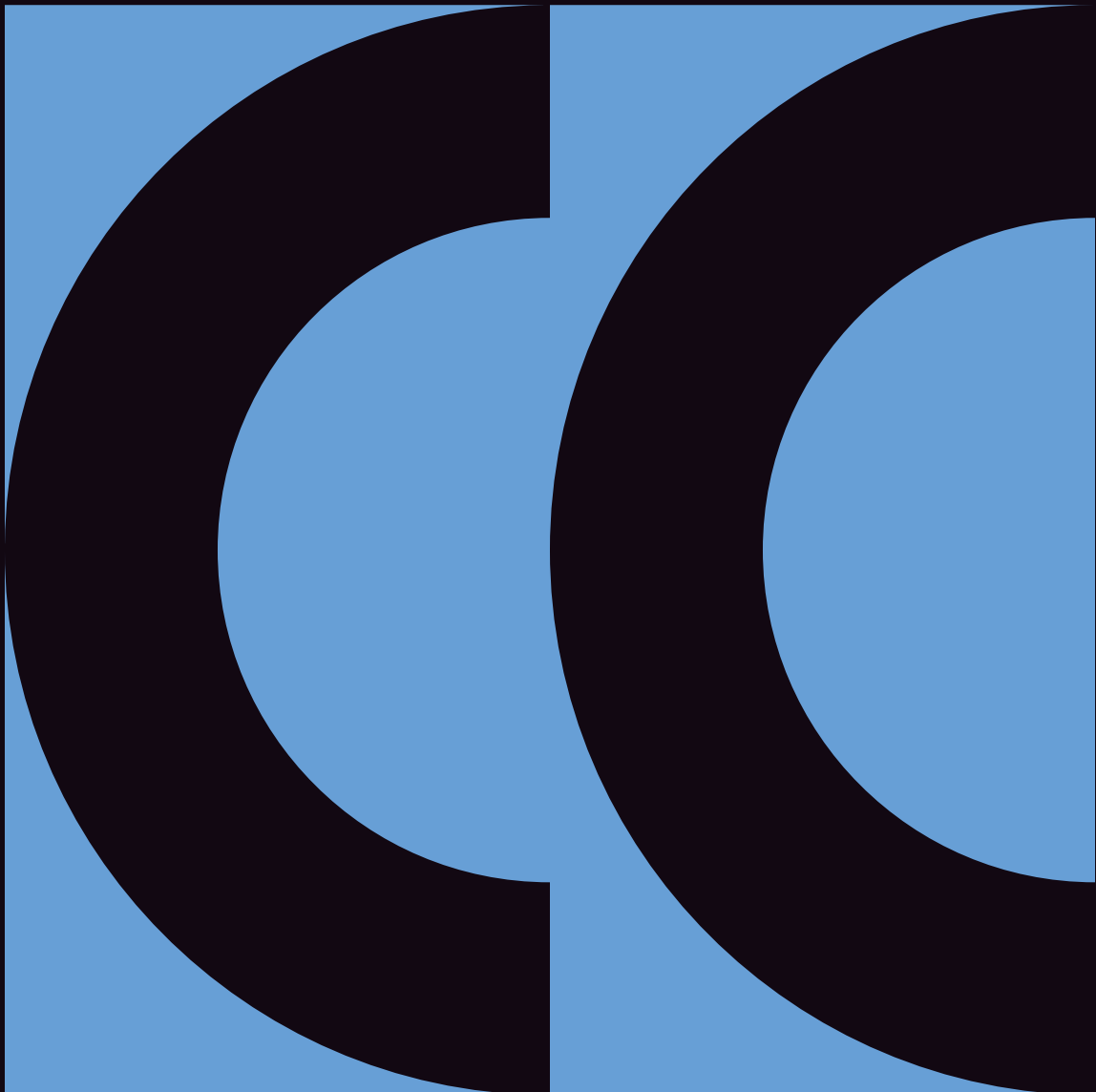


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Introduction

This briefing describes some of the ways we can measure the value of craft. It includes government and other approaches, signposting where to find out more.

What are we measuring?

When we measure craft, we may be talking about, for example:

- The value to the economy of professional craft activities, such as makers' businesses or craft sales
- The size of the sector, for example, the number of people and businesses
- The cultural value of craft
- The value of craft participation for mental health and wellbeing.

There are a number of approaches and sources for doing this, as well as different ways you can cut the data. Let's look at some of the ways of measuring craft in more detail.

How can we measure the economic value of craft?

Governments across the globe use a set of standard economic measures to understand changing trends in industries and occupations. The benefit is that they can be compared nationally, internationally and between business sectors. The disadvantage is that they may not be a full reflection of an industry or a set of occupations, as is the case for craft.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS – the government department responsible for craft) and other government bodies use the international

- [Standard Industrial Classifications \(SIC\) for industries; and](#)
- [Standard Occupational Classifications \(SOC\) for occupations](#)

to classify the economic activities of businesses and individuals in its [Economic Estimates](#).

To construct these estimates the Office for National Statistics (ONS) assigns codes to jobs based on surveys in which people are asked to describe their industry and occupation in, for example, the [Census](#) or the Labour Force Survey. ONS gives each role its own four-digit SOC code and [Companies House](#) keeps a list of SIC codes for businesses to search and identify the most appropriate industry description for their work. But it's often difficult for businesses to know exactly how to code themselves in returns to government as the codes express economic activity and are not always a clear match to an individual's skills or job.

For example:

- If you're designing and producing machine knitwear, are you working in 'textiles, garments and related trades' (SOC 5419) or are you a 'knitter, power' (SOC 8146)?
- If you run a pottery studio, do you 'manufacture [of] ceramic household and ornamental articles' (SIC 23401) or do you offer 'cultural education' (SIC 85520)?

DCMS's [Economic Estimates](#) are intended to show the economic contribution of the creative industries in the UK¹. But even though DCMS recognises craft as one of those creative industries, the department never used to publish any data on craft or reflect craft's contribution in official statistics. In response, Crafts Council decided in 2013 to commission a review of how craft was measured and the scope for the sector to be included by DCMS in its revision of estimates for the creative industries². We were pleased when DCMS accepted and used some of the SIC and SOC codes we recommended in its subsequent economic estimates for the creative industries, so DCMS estimates now include a partial figure for craft. This is a step forwards, but these estimates are still not a reflection of the full breadth of jobs we would call craft. (DCMS has noted that its figures are a significant under-estimate of the scale of the full craft sector.³)

¹ See the Policy and Evidence Centre's briefing on [National Statistics on the Creative Industries](#) for more background on this.

² See [Measuring the Craft Economy](#) and the preceding [Defining and Measuring Craft](#) reports [one](#) and [two](#).

³ See DCMS [Creative Industries Economic Estimates methodology](#) pp 6, 15 & 19

Following our review, Crafts Council published its own estimates which show that craft was worth £3bn to the UK economy in 2014. The same data showed us that 43,250 people were employed in craft industries in 11,620 businesses the UK.

In 2018, the Crafts Council commissioned an analysis of the occupations involved in craft, [Who Makes? An Analysis of People Working in Craft Occupations](#). This described the demographic characteristics of people working in craft occupations, using the full set of SOC codes we see as relevant to craft. The analysis was based on those using craft skills not only in craft businesses, but also in creative businesses and in the wider economy. (For example, a glassblower working in a scientific instruments manufacturer is a creative worker employed in what is seen as a non-creative industry.) This is a broader definition than DCMS uses, that reflects the importance of particular self-employment and part-time employment patterns of working, including the predominance of women makers in these modes of working.

At the time it revealed a working craft population that was more likely to be:

- Male – around four fifths were male (compared to just over half of employment across all occupations) but more likely to be female if self-employed and part-time;
- Older than those across all occupations (40 per cent were over 50);
- From white ethnic groups than those employed across all occupational groups – 96 per cent compared to 88 per cent across all occupations.

However, as Nicola Dillon⁴ comments,

‘the desire to fit the report [to the DCMS approach] seems to undermine other work of the Crafts Council.’ Dillon notes that, ‘the narrow classification of craft hides the true information of diversity in craft.’

The approach to what is counted in official statistics is also at risk of not reflecting the full size of the sector. Business that are not registered to pay VAT because they earn under the VAT threshold (currently £85,000) are not counted in the ONS Annual Business Survey. At the same time, where figures for numbers of businesses within individual SIC or SOC codes are very low, they are not published in case the individual businesses might be identifiable. Consequently, a number of craft businesses are not reflected in official statistics.

Anyone can decide to count craft businesses in the UK or internationally on the basis of occupations they consider are using craft skills. They might choose to include in their representation of craft businesses, for example:

- Horologists, watch makers and repairers (SOC 5224/03)
- Model makers (SOC 5316/04)
- Leather workers (SOC 5412/03); or
- Embroiderers and sewers (SOC 5419/01).

But if, for example, a craft organisation publishes

⁴ Nicola Dillon is a PhD student at the University of Kingston, working in partnership with Crafts Council. She blogs [here](#) about what is being made visible in the report and for whose benefit.

figures for the craft economy based on these SOC codes instead those used by DCMS, then other people may not accept that the craft organisation's estimates are valid. And researchers that make their own decisions about which figures to include then won't be able to make comparisons with other available data that don't include these codes.

So, there are some difficulties in using official statistics to measure craft –

- One is that the huge numbers of people and organisations who refer to government statistics will not be sourcing information about craft that fully reflects the sector
- Another difficulty is that it is not always possible to reach agreement on a commonly held approach to counting craft.

Can we change the system of measurement?

There is an international review process for industrial and occupational codes about every ten years, the last being in 2020. Many new occupations emerge during this time as industries change, innovate and evolve.

[ISIC](#) is the United Nations' International standard industrial classification of all economic activities and [NACE](#) is the European Union system.

DCMS and ONS consult with industry bodies in the UK to try and represent the sector's activities as accurately as possible. They invite comments and requests on the demographic information to be used from sector organisations in order to propose new or changed codes for both the creative occupations (SOC) and the creative industries (SIC) list.

In order for ONS and DCMS to accept a new occupational code into the list of creative occupations in the UK it must satisfy five criteria based on the nature and novelty of the function and its creative contribution⁵.

Crafts Council has argued that, for example, smiths, horologists, milliners, weavers and knitters should be included. But in 2020 DCMS instead narrowed down the list further, as shown in Table 1.

⁵ See Nesta's [A Primer on Measuring the Creative Economy](#) for more on this.

Table 1

Creative Occupations 2010		Creative Occupations 2020	
5211	Smiths and forge workers	5212	Metal plate workers, smiths, moulders and related occupations
5411	Weavers and knitters	5419	Textiles, garmets and relates trades n.e.c
5441	Glass and ceramic makers	5441	Glass and ceramics makers, decorators and finishers
5442	Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers	5442	Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers
5449	Other skilled trades not elsewhere classified	5449	Other skilles trades not elsewhere classified
		8115	Metal making and treating process operatives

In the most recent review of SICs, Crafts Council worked with partners (The Royal Warrant Holders Association, The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust, The Heritage Craft Association and The World Crafts Council) to try and frame a new definition of contemporary and heritage craft/artisan businesses.

Our proposed definition was:

‘Contemporary and heritage craft/artisan businesses rely on a creative process about making, often, but not always, through the intelligence of the hand. It involves technical skill and design capability, along with a deep understanding of materials and may involve mechanical and/or digital manufacture on a small scale. These industries are typically, but not exhaustive of: ceramics, design, furniture, glass, jewellery, metalwork, textiles, wood, consumables such as artisan food and drink, and heritage cultural artefacts. Occupational entry routes are likely to be vocational (sometimes through apprenticeships) but may include higher education.’

But it was not possible to reach agreement across a wider group of partners without a risk of undermining the one existing SIC code that relates to craft (SIC 32.12 Manufacture of jewellery and related articles).

Following the European level review (NACE), a new division of codes was agreed (9000 Arts creation and performing arts activities), with a number of new sub-codes. 90.12 is ‘visual arts creation’. This is useful, but as none of these new sub-codes specifically reference craft it may be difficult for makers to decide which to use.

We would therefore still make the case for the introduction of a new craft SIC code. Only this change would reflect fully and more clearly the range of craft disciplines currently scattered across the existing SIC coding system.

Are there other ways of measuring the craft economy?

Here are some examples of other ways to measure the craft economy:

The Market for Craft

In 2020 Crafts Council and partners published the biggest survey on the market for craft in over a decade, [The Market for Craft](#). Our purpose was to help craft businesses, makers and support organisations to understand how best to stimulate, support and grow the craft market. The findings highlighted a significant shift in patterns of consumption, as craft has become more mainstream. They pointed to the need for a different approach to rebuild the market for craft.

For this report measuring the craft economy, we needed to understand patterns of consumption. The best way to achieve this was to ask our consultants, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, to undertake a sample survey (more than 5,000) of craft consumers' behaviour in the UK (and in two cities in the USA) and a survey of makers' experience of the market. By using surveys focused on market behaviours we were able to analyse this aspect of the craft economy and to make comparisons with those aspects of our earlier surveys that were conducted in the same way.

Craft in an Age of Change

The aim of our earlier report, [Craft in an Age of Change](#), was to understand the full range of activity in the contemporary craft sector, and its economic impacts. The evidence for this report came from a large phone survey of 2,000 respondents across the UK.

Maker Needs Survey

Another approach is to survey makers to find out about their sales (including exports), their turnover and their support needs. Crafts Council publishes findings from our annual [Maker Needs Survey](#) to help support organisations and makers to understand more about business needs.

Mapping Heritage Craft

Other organisations have also grappled with how to measure and represent the craft economy. The [Heritage Crafts Association](#), for example, created a database of makers, practitioners and businesses for their report [Mapping Heritage Craft](#), using data from associations, guilds, membership bodies and online directories. Businesses and their economic activity were then identified using key word searches. Following sample survey work, HCA used SIC data to create models of GVA (gross value added) and workforce demographics, alongside historic trend data to estimate a likely future employment footprint.

The report acknowledges that ‘standard sources of secondary data used to measure other sectors are not appropriate because the Standard Industrial Classification/ Standard Occupational Classification (SIC/SOC) systems are not detailed enough.’(p30)

All of these examples produce valuable information about the craft economy that is useful context. Even though government figures do not reflect these data, they may be compared against findings from earlier versions of the same surveys and used to inform work to help strengthen maker businesses.

How do we measure the cultural value of craft?

There are a number of researchers exploring cultural value, who express this mostly through an understanding of the quality of cultural experience, rather than seeking a numerical value or quantity for this.

Here we explore some examples:

Why do arts and culture matter?

In 2012 the Arts and Humanities Research Council launched the [Cultural Value Project](#) which took a fresh look at cultural value. It explored the question of why arts and culture matter, and how we capture the effects that they have. Two research reports were published and the recommendations of the second led to the creation of the collaborative [Centre for Cultural Value](#). Focused on the need to broaden our definition of culture, the studies identified two dimensions to understanding cultural value:

- We need to solidify our evidence base about the effects of arts participation, looking, for example at the relationship between cultural engagement and empathy, and the ability to reflect and imagine; and
- We need to continue to interrogate how conversations around cultural value are framed – how research and inquiry are conducted and how value decisions are made. (p18, Cultural value scoping report)

One conclusion of the studies is that the answer is ‘not more and better facts alone’ but ‘more active learning and mutual-understanding of how facts are used and how understanding is produced – how the discussions and decisions about cultural value are framed.’ (p35) So, this is a much more fluid and evolving debate about how cultural value in general can be measured.

Addressing racism in craft

Crafts Council took the view that to address racism in craft we need further research that identifies and recognises the value of the knowledge, experience and cultural heritage of makers of colour in professional, community or other crafts spaces. Building on our earlier work with Dr Karen Patel at Birmingham City University⁶, we partnered with Glasgow Caledonian University London to explore, develop and test measures of the cultural value and wellbeing attached to craft by racial majority/ minority communities who are excluded from the cultural space of craft. [Our study *Disrupting the Craft Canon*](#) – the Cultural Value of Craft is funded by the [Centre for Cultural Value’s Collaborate Fund](#).

Hosting two [Living Lab](#)⁷ workshops, we tested these measures with groups of people participating in a craft activity. Our first was in partnership with [Oitij-Jo Collective](#) who run craft workshops with women and young people based in east London, engaging with people to explore aspects of the British-Bangla narrative. The event was structured around a Shibori indigo dyeing workshop shown in the pictures below.

⁶ See [Making Changes in Craft](#), Patel, 2021, Crafts Council and Birmingham City University

⁷ Based on the European Network of Living Labs

Credit: Fariyah Chowdhury
Caption: Crafts Council and
Glasgow Caledonian University
(London) Living Lab with Oitij-jo
Community, funded by the
Centre for Cultural Value, March
2023.



The second Lab took place with partner [Legacy West Midlands](#) that has its roots in celebrating the heritage of post-war migrant communities in Birmingham. Their work highlights those communities' relationship to the industrial, architectural, and cultural heritage of the city. The workshop introduced participants to mark making on vegetable tanned leather.

Credit: Gene Kavanagh
Caption – Crafts Council and Glasgow Caledonian University (London) Living Lab with Legacy West Midlands, funded by the Centre for Cultural Value, March 2023.



The research topics in this project address a wide range of issues relating to craft and race, for example:

- Migration
- Cultural heritage and cultural exchange
- Participation in individual craft activities
- Participation in community craft activities
- Inter-generational craft learning
- Participation in UK craft sector
- Discrimination and race
- Cultural appreciation/appropriation reappropriation of craft
- Societal value of craft
- Creativity as expressed through making
- Personal wellbeing in relation to craft.

The project reports later in 2023. We will share learning from the study about potential measures of the cultural value and wellbeing attached to craft by racial majority/minority communities who are excluded from the cultural space of craft. The intention is to pursue further research funding to test such measures more widely.

Exploring how arts and culture contribute to improved mental health

University College London's [March mental health network](#) explored how social, cultural and community assets prevent the development of health conditions. They help people manage and treat their symptoms, and promote health through aiding health communication, affecting determinants of health, and supporting the work of healthcare professionals. Drawing on cohort studies (a type of longitudinal study that follows research participants over a period of time), the study points to the substantial and rigorous literature showing that community engagement can positively impact on physical health, mental health and wellbeing.

Crucially, these benefits are felt by people regardless of factors such as their demographics, socio-economic status, and other health conditions and behaviours.

In a University of Oxford study researchers examined the impact of online engagement with arts and culture on depression and anxiety in young people aged 16-24. See [Engaging with arts and culture online can improve mental health in young people.](#)

National Centre for Creative Health and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, is exploring evidence and examples of the powerful influence of creative health and the benefits that the arts can bring to health and wellbeing.

[The Art of the Workplace Report](#) shows how art and cultural activities in offices have a positive impact on worker creativity, engagement and mental wellbeing and their relationships with employers. The report from Brookfield Properties and The School of Life demonstrates how it also provide a vital means to support our creative communities.

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