

Crafts Council

Maker needs survey 2020: Findings

Introduction

Maker needs survey

June 2021

Crafts Council conducted their fifth annual Maker Needs survey throughout December 2020 with our largest ever number of completed surveys - 850.

Alongside our standard annual maker needs questions, we included additional questions linked to the pandemic, the impact of Brexit and, following the market for craft report, the impact and growth of the experience economy.

Since our first survey in 2016 there has been a shift in maker needs with funding and marketing advice priorities and working with galleries remaining important to the sector. A significant percentage (48%) export, this survey, and the discussions we have with craft businesses demonstrate the sector needs support to navigate the complexities of with trading with Europe.

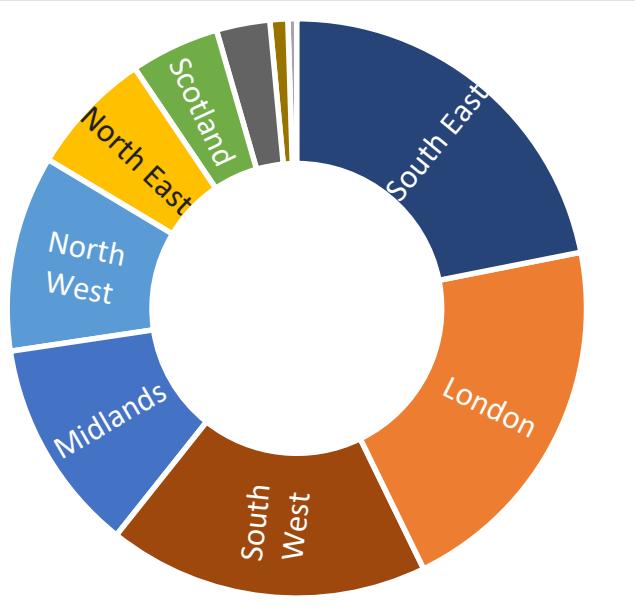
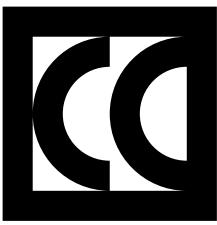
Recommendations for sector support organisations to focus on

- Provide access to marketing resources, relevant to post COVID-19 advice.
- Provide comprehensive guide for craft businesses to navigate Brexit trade implications.
- Provision of more accessible business resources.
- Develop new resources around funding and mental health awareness, particularly advice on managing stress.

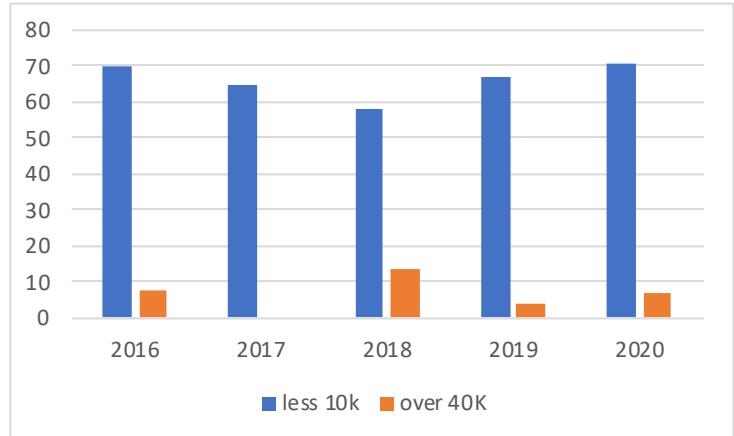
About our respondents

The majority of those completing our survey classed themselves as 'emerging' makers* and were majority white (75%) and female (85%).

- 22% stated they had health diagnosis or disability that impacted their day to day activities.
- Those working in ceramics or textiles made up 43% of the survey respondents.
- *45% in business less than 4 years, 42% 5 years +, 13% not started a business.
- 8% stated employing staff.



Participants based across the UK, with small numbers replying from Wales, Ireland and further afield.



Those earning less than £10k, whilst improved in 2018 (58%) has now increased to 2016 figures of 71%.

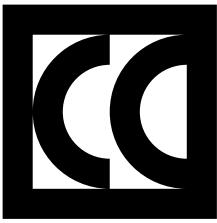
What respondents told us

- 32-40% requested support with mental health and time management.
- 28% of survey respondents are still in need of financial support and 75% ask for advice on funding, and 60% need support with business planning and understanding finances.
- 21% requested more access to business training.
- There is still a large desire to work with galleries and 69% asking for advice and support on this theme, though marketing advice at 67% remains high.

The impact of COVID and Brexit

In 2020, there were many support initiatives:

- 31% benefited from local authorities or government grant schemes.
- 6% benefited from Arts Council support grants and less than 5% benefited from other hardship grants.
- 28% of survey respondents are still in need of financial support.



Sales for makers

- 22% took advantage of Matthew Burrows initiative #artistsupportpledge, of which 26% said this was their first online selling experience.
- 64% said they were able to sell during March – August 2020, sales which were driven by channels such as personal websites (28%), social media (32%) and private commissions (25%).

Challenges of the pandemic

- The biggest impact from COVID (65% responses) on craft businesses has been the cancellation of fairs and markets.
- Closures of shops/galleries also significant (57%) and cancellation of teaching/workshops (46%).
- 46% are concerned over further restrictions and further 35% predicting further financial losses.

Positive stories from the pandemic

'Realised what was possible to do online both in terms of courses and connecting with people'

'A huge increase in online training resources, seminars etc. meant that these were more accessible to me than ever - as I previously found these difficult to attend due to family childcare responsibilities. I was also encouraged to finally set up my own online shop in a much shorter time frame than I would have if other selling outlets had still been open.'

'Taking part in various online digital craft fairs did result in my first online sale.'

Brexit

- 48% of respondents have/do export.
- 36% think Brexit will affect their business, with 42% not sure.