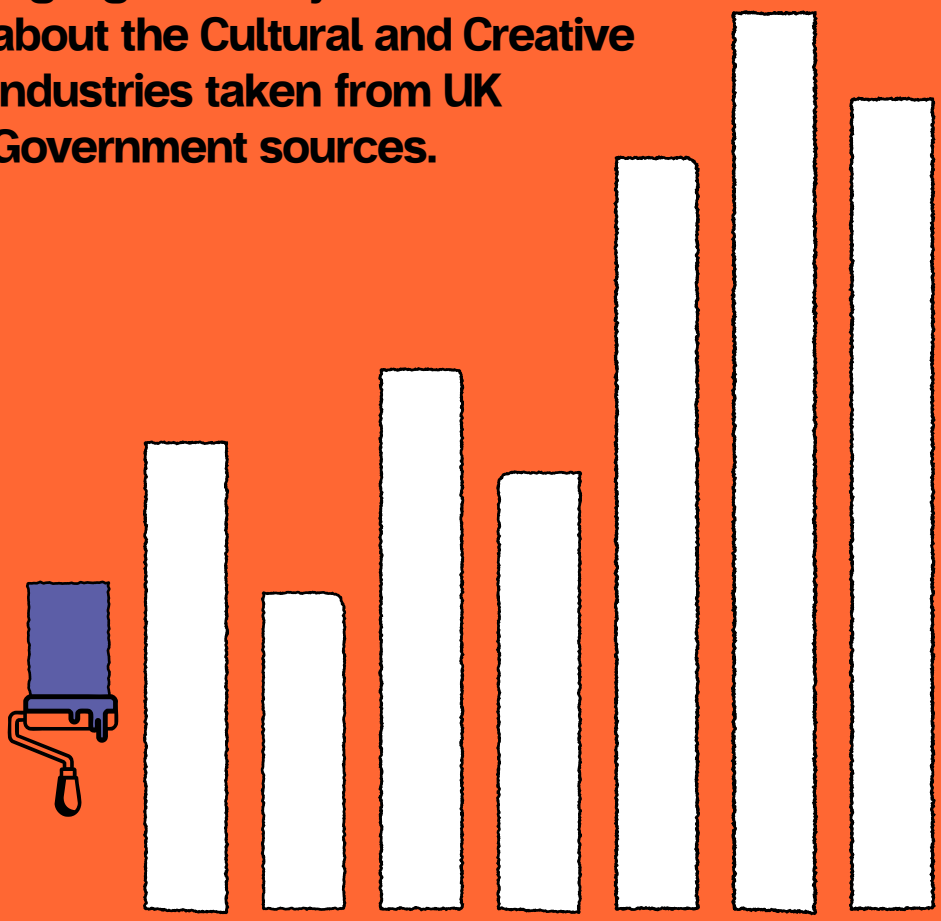
2026 Q3

Creative UK

Cultural and Creative Industries Quarterly Statistical Bulletin

Highlights of key statistics about the Cultural and Creative Industries taken from UK Government sources.



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UPDATED STATISTICS RELEASED SINCE LAST PUBLICATION AND INCLUDED IN THIS BULLETIN

- GVA, and GVA Growth, for the Cultural and Creative Industries
- Number of Cultural and Creative Businesses in the UK
- Socio-Economic Representation within Employment across the Cultural and Creative Industries
- Enrolment in Creative T Levels

This bulletin highlights key statistics about the Cultural and Creative Industries taken from UK Government sources.

This bulletin is updated with the most recent versions of each dataset each quarter. The date for each expected update is also highlighted for each statistic.

Sector definitions of the Cultural and Creative Industries are taken from definitions provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).[1] Figures are generally reported separately, and there is significant overlap between the two sectors.

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1 DCMS (2022) DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates Methodology. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-sectors-economic-estimates-methodology. N.B. definitions of the Creative Industries may vary across the devolved nations; for example, Creative Wales excludes 62.02 (computer consultancy); see Creative Wales (2025) Creative Sectors. Available at: https://www.creative.wales/creative-sectors. The DCMS criteria are used to allow for standardised comparisons to be made across variables and against third-party research, such as: Fodor, M.M., Komorowski, M. and Lewis, J. (2023) Clwstwr Creative Industries Report No 1.3: Report Update: The Size and Composition of the Creative Industries in Wales in 2022. Available at: https://clwstwr.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-09/Creative%20Industries%20Report%20No%201_3_Final.pdf.

01 Creating Growth

The Cultural and Creative Industries continue to occupy a notable share of the UK economy. The Creative Industries grew at roughly double the rate of the wider economy through 2025–2026.

GVA (Gross Value Added to the UK economy) for the Cultural and Creative Industries

Source: **DCMS Economic Estimates: Monthly GVA (to June 2026)** | Published: 19 August 2026 | Next Update: November 2026 (expected).

According to the latest provisional DCMS Economic Estimates:

- The GVA of the Creative Industries was estimated at £152.1bn, or 5.94% of total UK GVA, between July 2025 and June 2026.
- The estimated GVA of the Cultural Sector was £44.2bn, or 1.73% of total UK GVA, in the same period.
- The entire GVA of the UK economy was estimated to be £2.56tn in the same timeframe.

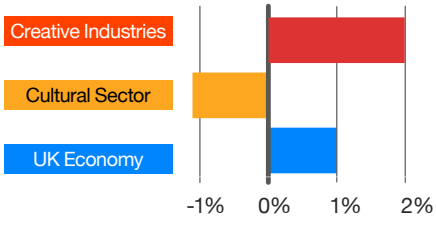
GVA growth for the Cultural and Creative Industries

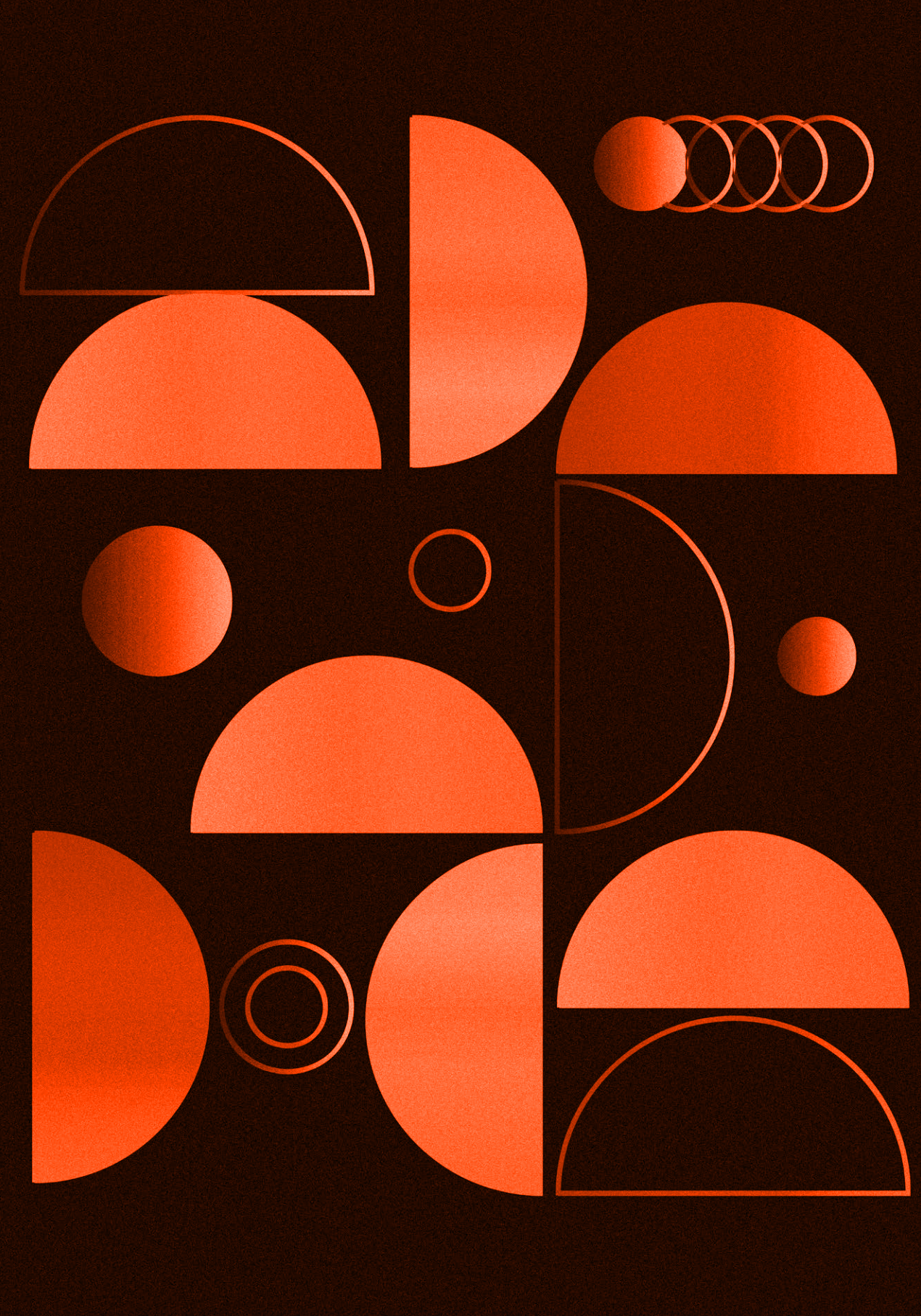
Source: DCMS Economic **Estimates: Monthly GVA (to June 2026) | Published: 19 August 2026** | Next Update: November 2026 (expected).

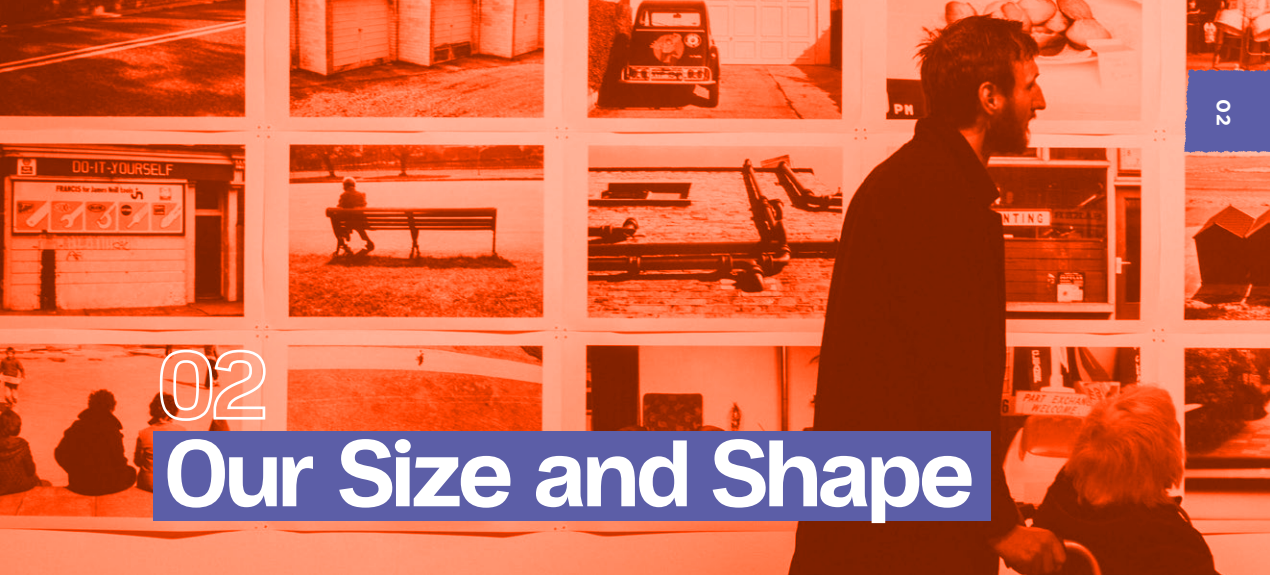
The latest DCMS Economic Estimates show that:

- The GVA of the Creative Industries grew by 1.99%, up from £149.1bn, in the year to June 2026 compared to the year to June 2025.
- The GVA of the Cultural Sector shrank by an estimated 1.1%, down from £44.7bn, in the same period.
- Total GVA of the UK economy is estimated to have grown by 0.98% in the same timeframe, up from £2.54tn.

FIGURE 1 Year on Year GVA Change (Year to June 26 versus June 25)







02 Our Size and Shape

Creative and Cultural businesses are largely concentrated in London and South East England, and the corresponding sectors contain a higher proportion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) than the wider UK economy.

Overall Number of Creative and Cultural Businesses in the UK

Source: **ONS IDBR (Inter-Departmental Business Register) Activity, Size and Location (as of March 2026)**[2] | Published: 24 September 2026 | Next Update: September 2027 (expected).

- **Creative Industries (2026): 277,575 businesses (9.96% of all UK enterprises).**
- **There are 2.94% more creative businesses operating in the UK in 2026 than in 2025 (up from 269,655).**
- **Cultural Sector (2026): 87,990 businesses (3.16% of all UK businesses).**
- **There are 4.00% more cultural business operating in the UK in 2026 than in 2025 (up from 84,595).**

Number of Creative and Cultural Businesses in the UK by Size

Source: **ONS IDBR (Inter-Departmental Business Register) Activity, Size and Location (as of March 2026)**[3] | Published: 24 September 2026 | Next Update: September 2027 (expected).

Creative Businesses

- **Creative micro-businesses (0-9 employees): 259,810 (or 93.60% of all creative businesses).**
- **Creative SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises; 0-249 employees): 277,030 (or 99.80% of all creative businesses).**

2 Data is sourced from HMRC VAT and PAYE registers which may exclude micro-businesses below the VAT turnover threshold: ONS (2024) UK business; activity, size and location QMI. Available at: **https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/methodologies/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocationqmi**. Consequently, these figures may disproportionately underestimate figures for the Creative and Cultural Industries compared to other sectors.

3 Employee count bands used to define business size: DBEIS (2021) Business population estimates for the UK and regions 2021. Available at: **https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/business-population-estimates-2021/business-population-estimates-for-the-uk-and-regions-2021-statistical-release-html#definitions-and-terminology**.

- Large creative businesses (250 employees or more): 545 (or 0.20% of all creative businesses).

Cultural Businesses

- Cultural micro-businesses (0-9 employees): 84,010 (or 95.48% of all cultural businesses).
- Cultural SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises; 0-249 employees): 87,840 (or 99.83% of all cultural businesses).
- Large cultural businesses (250 employees or more): 150 (or 0.2% of all cultural businesses).

All UK Businesses

- All micro-businesses (0-9 employees): 2,484,365 (or 89.14% of all businesses).
- All SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises; 0-249 employees): 2,775,525 (or 99.59% of all businesses).
- All large businesses (250 employees or more): 11,460 (or 0.41% of all businesses).

Number of creative businesses in the UK by region

Source: **ONS IDBR (Inter-Departmental Business Register) Activity, Size and Location (as of March 2026)** | Published: 24 September 2026 | Next Update: September 2027 (expected).

Creative Businesses

- There are 145,285 creative businesses in London and South East England (or 52.34% of all creative businesses).
- There are 110,760 creative businesses in England outside of London and South East England (or 39.90% of all creative businesses).
- There are 21,530 creative businesses in the devolved nations (or 7.76% of all creative businesses).

Cultural Businesses

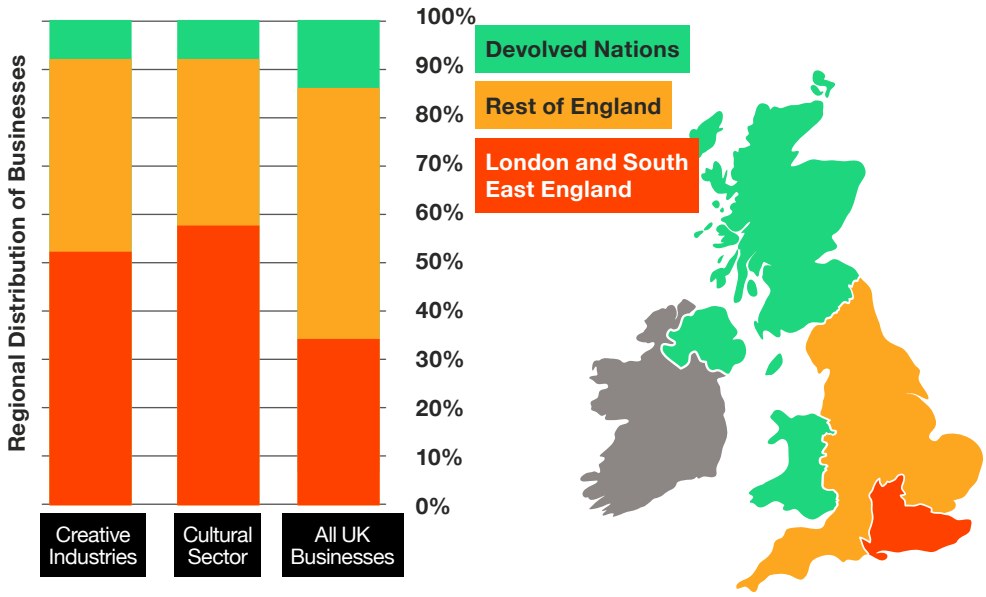
- There are 50,855 cultural businesses in London and South East England (or 57.80% of all cultural businesses).
- There are 30,145 cultural businesses in England outside of London and South East England (or 34.26% of all cultural businesses).
- There are 6,980 cultural businesses in the devolved nations (or 7.93% of all creative businesses).

All UK Businesses

- There are 964,590 businesses in London and South East England (or 34.61% of all businesses).
- There are 1,458,565 businesses in England outside of London and South East England (or 52.33% of all businesses).
- There are 363,830 businesses in the devolved nations (or 13.05% of all businesses).

FIGURE 2 OVERLEAF

FIGURE 2 Regional Distribution of Businesses by Sector





03 Cultural and Creative Exchange

In contrast to the wider UK economy, the Cultural and Creative Industries are net exporters.

Creative Industries Trade – Goods and Services

Sources: **DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates: Trade (2023)** | Published: 26 June 2025 | Next Update: November 2026 (expected).

- **In 2023, the Creative Industries registered a net export figure of £23.26bn.**
- **In 2023, the Creative Industries made a total of £69.57bn of exports, or 7.81% of total UK exports.**
  - » This figure includes £10.17bn in goods (or 14.62% of Creative exports) and £59.39bn in services (or 85.38% of Creative exports).
- **In 2023, the Creative Industries imported a total of £46.31bn of goods and services, or 4.97% of total UK imports.**
  - » This figure includes £8.06bn of goods (or 17.40% of Creative imports) and £38.27bn of services (or 82.60% of Creative imports).

Cultural Sector Trade – Goods and Services

Sources: **DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates: Trade (2023)** | Published: 26 June 2025 | Next Update: November 2026 (expected).

- **In 2023, the Cultural Sector registered a net export figure of £7.18bn.**
- **In 2023, the Cultural Sector made a total of £21.44bn of exports, or 2.41% of total UK exports.**
  - » This figure includes £7.96bn in goods (or 37.12% of cultural exports) and £13.48bn in services (or 62.88% of cultural exports).
- **In 2023, the Cultural Sector imported a total of £14.26bn of goods and services, or 1.53% of total UK imports.**
  - » This figure includes £6.97bn of goods (or 48.91% of cultural imports) and £7.28bn of services (or 51.09% of cultural imports).

Creative UK members can view the full stats bulletin

report.wearecreative.uk/q3-2026-cultural-and-creative-industries-statistical-bulletin-creative-uk to see:

Cultural and creative exchange stats
Innovation and investment stats
Employment stats
Creative education stats

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