

## Hannah Berry – Comics Laureate

### UK Comics Creators research report



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## Executive summary

*“It’s a hell of a way to make a living, but a great storytelling medium”*

### Who took part in the research?

- Participation was open to all UK-based makers of comics or cartoons for public consumption aged 16 or over.
- The survey was live between April 18th and May 19th, 2020 and generated a sample of 623 respondents.
- A higher proportion of respondents (60%) identified as male compared to the 2011 UK population census profile (49%)
- The respondent profile is younger (68% under 44) than that found in the 2011 UK population base (47% under 44)
- The results indicate that comic creators are less likely to identify as heterosexual (69%) compared to the ONS 2018 UK population baseline (95%).
- A slightly lower proportion of respondents identified as being from a Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic background (10%) compared to the 2011 UK population base (13%).
- A slightly higher proportion of respondents identified as being

D/deaf or disabled (21%) than is found in the 2011 UK population base (18%).

- Respondents largely self-identified as either Middle class (50%) or Working class (31%).

### How do they feel about comics and the comics industry?

- The respondents expressed an overwhelming love for comics, but high levels of frustration regarding the comics industry.

*“Love comics the medium, love comics the community, not as fond of comics the industry”*

### What sort of work are they producing, and who for?

- Most respondents are involved in Writing (85%) and Art (79%)
- The most common formats are One-shot/Single issue comics (56%) and Graphic Novels (52%)
- Science Fiction was the most prominent genre
- 67% of respondents said their work regularly features socio-political topics and/or traditionally underrepresented people or groups
- 90% of respondents said that their work is primarily aimed at an adult audience

### Do they make a living from creating comics?

- The average overall income from sources directly or indirectly related to comics production in 2018/19, was £10,299
- 66% of respondents made less than £5,000 from their comics production in 2018/19
- 10% earned between £20,000 and £50,000, and 5% made over £50,000
- The average total income in 2018/19, from any source, was £24,223

### What challenges do they face?

- ‘Lack of financial income, or expectation of it in future’ and ‘Lack of time to create’ are the main challenges respondents face in their comic production life

### What support do they need and what changes would they like to see?

- ‘Effective Selling’, ‘Pricing for your work’, and ‘Legal rights in creative industries’ were identified as the areas where respondents would find training and development most useful
- Respondents most frequently identified greater financial security, more time to produce, and better regulation and transparency within the comics industry as the things they would like to change in their comics production life

### How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on comic creators?

- The key areas where the pandemic has affected comics creators are the time spent on production, increased financial insecurity, and negative mental health impacts.

*“Every problem has become magnified”*

## Foreword

*If you wanted to change the comics industry, where would you even begin?*

You're right, 'industry' is a bit strong; it's more of a collective endeavour, willed into being by the enthusiasm of its participants. A vast, nebulous cloud. However, nestled within that cloud is my life's work, and my friends' life's work, and my proudest achievements and my bitterest failures and my boldest ambitions and my fiercest jealousies. I cannot quit you, nebulous cloud.

Comics is hands down the most exciting and accessible storytelling medium. The sheer magnitude of possibilities - in the text, the art, the style, the content, the juxtaposition, the timing, the pacing, the silence, the noise, the subtleties: the way every element works together in intricate combinations to build meaning, moments, narratives, that can be immediately accessed by every human on the planet with even the barest understanding of visual literacy. It's the purest form of storytelling, in that a single author can speak to a single reader on a level so personal that it supersedes verbal language. It's also damn good fun.

And the ecosystem here in the UK is unique: we don't have the production and retail infrastructures of the US; we don't have the social and cultural acceptance of France; we don't have the nation-wide readership of Japan. What we do have is a flourishing scene that has regrown of its own accord in the last couple of decades, following almost no conventions and with very little precedent, shaping itself around its own interests and blazing its own artistic trail. The sense of community and belonging that has grown from this - as you'll see in this report - is a dizzying, Disney level of heart-warming.

The downside of the blazed trail, unfortunately, is that this glorious medium seems forever on the brink of being taken seriously while never quite making it. Always the bridesmaid, never the celebrated art form.

Despite its growing audience and increased sales figures, the scrappy, rough-and-ready frontier of comics is not a reliable source of income. There is barely enough of an industry for more than a handful of creators to sustain a career in comics alone. According to the survey, 87% of creators rely on income from at least one other source outside of comics, and of those who said comics was their primary occupation, only 62% said it was their main source of income. Much as we love comics, having an actual career in it is like pulling teeth. Specifically, it's like pulling teeth and then standing behind a tooth convention table, smiling gummily at passing tooth fairies in the hope they'll give you money for them.

Historically, comics creators have regularly been exploited by those who profit from their work, and we've grown accustomed to accepting appalling terms in order to keep doing what we love. While the multi-billion-dollar industries of film and TV continue to draw on comics as their source material, their progenitors are neglected. These issues and the others inextricably linked to them affect every single person working in comics today, and ultimately have a say in who gets to tell their story and to whom.

So. If you wanted to change the comics industry, where would you even begin?

It's time to quantify the cloud. Poke it, prod it, survey it, and learn more about those working within it: who they are, how they're doing, what obstacles they're facing and what they need to be able to continue making comics.

If there's one thing this survey has shown unequivocally it's how much the community LOVES comics but wishes things were better. This report is the most accurate snapshot of the UK comics scene to date, and with it we can finally start a discussion about the steps we need to take to support ourselves, each other, and our fledgling industry.

*Hannah Berry FRSL*

*July 2020*

## Acknowledgements

This project was supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and was also kindly funded by the British Council and the University of Dundee.

Thanks to Lancaster University and the Lakes International Comic Art Festival for my grand post of comics laureate (which certainly opened some doors on this project) and to Richard Foster, Simon Moreton, Emma Cosh, the good folks at Thought Bubble, Molly Rosenberg of the RSL and Ren Renwick of the AOI for all their help and advice, and to everyone in the comics scene who took the time to fill in the survey and help spread the word. You absolute gems.

Extra special thanks are due to Sara Kenney and Charlotte Bailey for their expert advice and socially distanced handholding throughout the creation of this survey, and to the good people of the Audience Agency who were so patient in the face of my blundering enthusiasm.

## Background

The Comics Laureate is an ambassadorial and educational role for the comic genre which aims to raise awareness of the impact comics can have in terms of increasing literacy and creativity. The Comics Laureate appointment is made biennially to a distinguished comics creator, writer, or artist in recognition of their outstanding achievement in the genre.

Funded by Lancaster University, and working closely with the Lakes International Comics Art Festival, the purpose of the Comics Laureate is to champion the role of comics in improving literacy through a programme of educational visits, workshop events, guest appearances and conferences. A key focus is working to increase the acceptance of comics as a creative artform in schools, libraries, and throughout the education system.

In line with her role as the 2019-21 UK Comics Laureate, and in support of building greater awareness and understanding of the comics sector to inform advocacy and development, Hannah Berry commissioned The Audience Agency to undertake primary research with comics creators, to inform a better understanding of who is working in the sector, their career paths and motivations, and the barriers they face. This report sets out the results of the research, in the context of wider population comparators where relevant.

### Research aims

The overall aim of the research was to find ways to support comic creators, and strengthen the industry, through building an informed understanding of:

- Who the writers and artists involved in producing comics are (in terms of demographics and geography)
- How comic creators feel about the sector
- What comic creators need to support their work
- The balance of income generated compared to how much is spent by writers and artists on the material production of comics
- The barriers faced by people working in the comics sector in accessing the resources they need
- Differences in needs and access to resources with regard to career stage.

Due to the Coronavirus outbreak in early 2020 the scope of the research was extended to include an understanding of the impacts of the virus and related changes to everyday life on comics production.



## Methodology

An e-survey was created according to the research aims and distributed via social media, online articles, and/or direct communications from partners and stakeholders including: ALCS; Arts Foundation; Association of Illustrators; Avery Hill; Bleeding Cool; British Council; Broken Frontier; Cartoon County; The Cartoon Museum; Cartoonists Rights; Network International; Comic Scene Magazine; The Convention Collective; DACS; Down the Tubes; Gosh Comics; Graphic Medicine; Lakes International Comic Art Festival, Lancaster University, LD Comics, Myriad Editions, New Writing North; Page 45; Pipedream Comics; Rebellion Publishing; the Royal Society of Literature; Scottish Book Trust; SelfMadeHero; the Society of Authors; Soaring Penguin; Thought Bubble Festival; Tripwire; the University of Dundee; and The Valkyries.

The survey was incentivised in order to achieve as large and unbiased a sample as possible, and featured an introduction from the Comics Laureate, Hannah Berry, to describe the target research participants, the purpose of the research, and what would be done with the results. Specifically, the introduction included the following directives:

- The survey is for UK-based makers of comics or cartoons for public consumption, regardless of level of activity, role, experience, or medium: “If you make comics then you are a part of the UK comics community and this survey is for you”
- In line with research safeguarding standards, the following survey is only for respondents over the age of 16
- The findings will be drawn up into a full report and made freely available online
- The underlying anonymous data may also be made available to organisations working within comics, literature and the arts for funding and research purposes if it will benefit the comics community
- On completing the survey respondents can enter into a prize draw to win one of three £50 vouchers for either Page 45, Travelling Man or Gosh Comics.

The survey was live between April 18<sup>th</sup> and May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and received 623 responses during this time.

## Sample and margins of error

The sample size of 623 respondents gives an overall margin of error of  $\pm 4\%$  at the 95% confidence level. This means that for questions which all respondents answered, the results given are within 4% of the ‘true’ value we would have seen if all those in the population (i.e. UK-based self-identified adult makers of comics or cartoons for public

consumption) had responded to the survey. This assumes a representative sample, i.e. that all members of the UK comics community had equal opportunity to take part in the survey, and were equally inclined to do so; the breadth of the invitation and the incentive were intended to maximise the representativeness of the sample.

The sample size will be smaller for questions which were not asked of all respondents or not all respondents answered, and for analyses of subsets of respondents. Where this is the case, the margin of error will also be larger. The maximum margin of error for each analysis is given under the relevant chart; margins of error greater than  $\pm 5\%$  at the 95% confidence level appear in red. Results which are more conclusive (i.e. where a particularly small or large proportion tick a given box) will have a smaller margin of error.

## Key findings

What follows are the key results from the survey, presented thematically in the context of the aims for the research.

Illustrative quotes from responses to open questions in the survey are used where relevant; the full literal responses are available in the appended report.

### How do comic creators feel about comics and the industry?

- In describing their feelings about comics and the comics industry, the respondents expressed an overwhelming love for comics, but high levels of frustration regarding the comics industry.

*“Love comics the medium, love comics the community, not as fond of comics the industry”*

- The majority of respondents described a deep love for comics as a medium, both as creators and consumers, and for the support they find in creator communities.

*“It is such an exciting medium to work in with so many creative possibilities and a supportive community. I've also written for screen and prose literature, but find the comics community the warmest and most interesting”*

*“I feel like it's family. A sometimes wildly dysfunctional family but one I don't want to leave”*

- Alongside this positivity, a number of recurrent themes emerged from critical comments regarding the comics industry:

- Comic production does not pay a **living wage**

*“I have largely come to terms with the fact that it would be impossible/incredibly stressful to attempt to make comics my primary source of income”*

- The established industry appears **cliquey, discriminatory, and difficult to access**

*“To this day it still feels like a bit of a boys club in some areas ... I have yet to find a way to open that door effectively without getting extremely lucky”*

- There is a need for **strategic development of audiences and markets**

*“What’s it all for? If you’re not reaching new audiences and readerships, what’s the point?”*

*“The mainstream industry in the UK is very timorous and lacking in vision re marketing and distribution”*

- The comics industry needs to be **more professional**

*“Despair of the industry - general lack of business planning and professionalism and regular ethical pratfalls”*

*“I love the medium, but find the industry mired in amateurish practices”*

### Who is producing comics?

- 60% of respondents identified as male, 33% as female, and 6% as non-binary. In the context of the 2011 UK census data<sup>1</sup>, where 49% identified as male and 51% identified as female<sup>2</sup>, males are overrepresented in the comic creators’ profile.
- 69% of respondents identified as being heterosexual, and 16% as bisexual. This may be compared to 95% of people aged over 16 who identified as heterosexual in the [ONS 2018 UK population survey](#); in this same survey, 1% identified as Lesbian/Gay, and <1% as Bisexual.
- 68% of respondents were aged 44 or under. This is a significantly younger profile than is found in the 2011 census UK population profile, where 47% of the UK population were aged 44 or under.
- 90% identified as being from a White ethnic background, 4% as being from a Mixed ethnic background, 3% as Asian or Asian British, and 1% as Black or Black British. This is reflective of the 2011 census, where 87% identified as being from a White ethnic background, 3% as Black or Black British, 7% as Asian or Asian British, and 2% as being from a mixed ethnic background.
- 21% of respondents identified as a D/deaf or disabled person or as having a long-term health condition. This is slightly higher than the UK population profile, in the context of the 2011 UK census data<sup>3</sup>; where 18% identified as being limited in their day-to-day activities by a disability or long-term health condition.

<sup>1</sup> Direct comparisons cannot be made as the question is asked differently in the Census.

<sup>2</sup> Census data does not currently include non-binary or other gender identities.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1 above

- 50% of respondents self-identified as being Middle class, 31% as Working class, and 16% as Lower-Middle class.
- The mapping indicates that most respondents are based in urban or suburban areas of the country, with a large concentration of respondents in the London area; further clusters appeared around Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee.
- 35% of respondents characterised their current comics creator status as ‘Emerging Career’, 22% characterised themselves as ‘Intending to have a career’, and another 22% characterised themselves having an ‘Established career’.
- 13% characterised themselves as being an Amateur/Hobbyist, and 3% as an ‘Other’ non-career status.
- These characterisations were grouped to support cross-comparisons between different career status groups: 63% were grouped as ‘Current Career’, 22% as ‘Seeking Career’, and 15% as ‘Amateur/Hobbyist’.
- 51% of respondents in the ‘Career’ groups have been actively working or seeking a career in comics production for between two and ten years.
- Of the two career groups, the ‘Current Career’ respondents were much more likely to have been working in comics production for longer; 21% having done so for between ten and twenty years, and 16% for more than twenty years.
- Those in the ‘Seeking Career’ group were more likely to have started their comics production more recently, with 20% having done so within the last 12 months.
- 27% of those in the ‘Amateur/Hobbyist’ group have been producing comics for between ten and twenty years. Overall, producing comics has been a part of this group’s lives for a long time, with 15% having done so for more than twenty years.

### How and what sort of work are they producing?

- 48% of respondents produce comics only in their spare time.
- 20% spend more than 36 hours a week on their comics production.
- Most respondents are involved in Writing (85%) and Art - all production (79%).
- The formats most commonly produced by the respondents are One-shot / Single issue comics (56%) and Graphic Novels (52%); most respondents focus on one or two formats in their work.

- Science Fiction emerged as the most prominent genre covered by respondents' work; Fantasy and Horror also featured highly.
- 67% of respondents said that their work regularly features one or more of the largely socio-political themes listed in the survey<sup>4</sup>.

### Who is it for, and how are the audiences being reached?

- 90% of respondents said that their work is primarily aimed at an adult audience.
- Work for Young Adults and Children is more often produced alongside work for other audiences, rather than being a primary area of production.
- Overall, the use of digital channels for publishing and sharing work is more widespread than print.
- The two most prominent channels for publishing or sharing work are social media and self-published print.
- Twitter and Instagram are the most used social media channels.
- 57% of respondents attend events as a seller, and 51% of these do so 3-5 times a year.
- 51% of respondents have worked internationally, and 64% have work available in print outside of the UK; the main international markets for print are Europe and North America.

### To what extent do they make a living from their work in the comics industry?

#### Overall income levels

- The average overall income, from sources directly or indirectly related to comics production in 2018/19, was £10,299.
- Most respondents (66%) made less than £5,000 from their comics production in 2018/19; 44% earned £1,000 or less, and 22% earned between £1,000 and £5,000.
- 10% earned between £20,000 and £50,000, and 5% made over £50,000 from their comics production in 2018/19.

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<sup>4</sup> Displaced people/refugees; Post-conflict storytelling; Environmental/climate change issues; Marginalised/traditionally underrepresented people/groups (e.g. LGBTQ, BAME, D/deaf or disabled, homeless, socially excluded etc.)

- Taking expenditure into account, 59% of respondents made a net income from their comics production in 2018/19; including both direct and indirect sources.
- The average total income in 2018/19, for respondents who recorded income from any source including those unrelated to comics production, was £24,223.

#### Income breakdown

- 84% of respondents receive income from one or more sources directly related to their comics production; two sources on average.
- The most prominent sources of income directly related to comics production are self-publishing (print), traditional publishing (print), and commercial commissions.
- 60% of respondents receive income from one or more sources indirectly related to their comics production; two sources on average.
- The most prominent sources of indirectly related income are private commissions, in-person workshops, and sales of merchandise.
- 87% of respondents receive income from one or more sources unrelated to their comics production; on average, this is from a single source.
- The most prominent sources of unrelated income are freelance/temporary/or fixed term employment, full-time permanent employment, and part-time permanent employment.
- For respondents who attend events as a seller, 63% earn £500 or less per day of attendance from this activity.

#### What challenges and barriers do they face?

- The main challenge respondents face in their comic production life is the 'Lack of financial income, or expectation of it in future'. 55% of respondents identified this as a challenge they face, and 26% said it was their main challenge.
- 'Lack of time to create' emerged as the second most prominent challenge; 51% of respondents cited this as a challenge, and 20% identified it as their main challenge.
- 'Lack of information about financial support available' and 'Lack of opportunities to generate income' also featured highly.

- 36% of respondents have been asked to sign away their intellectual or moral rights to their work as part of a contract agreement; of these, 60% have sometimes agreed to do so.
- Barriers to attending festivals and conventions as a seller were both practical (costs, travel, lack of work for selling, and lack of time to produce it) and personal (a lack of confidence, and issues with anxiety related to the hectic atmosphere common at such events).

### What do they need to overcome these challenges, and what changes would they like to see?

#### Training and development needs

- Training and development opportunities related to the commercial side of the comics industry emerged as those which respondents would find most useful.
- The top three most useful areas of development were 'Effective Selling', 'Pricing for your work', and 'Legal rights in creative industries'.

#### Desired changes

Although many respondents noted more than one, often interlinked, change, six key themes emerged from their responses overall in terms of the changes they would like to see:

- **More time to produce** - including more realistic deadlines and being supported to achieve a better work/life balance.

*“To have more time and to not have to choose between being able to have my own life and being able to make art for a living”*

*“Deadlines that actually keep in consideration artists' needs and lives, instead of being forced to work every day all year round, including weekends”*

- **Greater financial security** - including better and standardised rates of pay within the comics industry, and more recognition and support from funding bodies.

*“Earn enough not to have to work my part time job to pay rent”*

*“It would be nice if publishers and (some) companies would offer better payments to reflect the time it takes to create comics”*

*“Standardised pricing and timescales for pages which are public throughout the industry, so creators have a baseline from which to negotiate”*



- **Increased access to market opportunities** - including access to new audiences, commercial markets, agents, publishers etc and opportunities to build a professional profile.

*“An approach to distribution that does not favour large book chains and large distributors that insist on heavy discounts that wipe out much income for creators”*

*“A go-to website where publishers would list comic art jobs to find/different talent, rather than the secrecy and nepotism that exists in a lot of mainstream comics today”*

- **Increased support from creator communities and the industry** - including more active creator communities to share professional best practice, and effective support from the industry to grow networks and increase access.

*“Access to a community ... with folks at various career stages who are willing to foster and support one another”*

*“Support from a union or independent advisory body that aims to improve creator rights and income”*

- **Skills development** - particularly in professional development areas such as pitching and costing work, developing a portfolio etc

*“Knowledge on how best to pitch to publishers and grow an audience”*

*“Right now, a better understanding of the business side. Some online courses would be super helpful”*

- **Better health and well-being** - especially around increasing confidence and safeguarding for creators living with mental or physical health issues.

*“To be more focused and confident, better at networking”*

*“Having more confidence to know it’s a level playing field”*

### How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on comics creators?

*“Every problem has become magnified”*

The key areas where the pandemic has affected comics creators are related to the time spent on production, increased financial insecurity, and negative mental health impacts.

- Around two-fifths of respondents said they have been spending more time on creating work than they did pre Covid-19. The most common reasons for this were: being furloughed, having reduced hours, a reduction in time spent commuting, and the cancellation of festivals and conventions.

*“As I am on furlough ... I am spending a bit more time on it”*

*“More time to produce comics as international travel and comic events have been mostly cancelled for 2020”*

- Just over a third said that their time spent on comic production had decreased. The main reasons for this were increased childcare and home-schooling, and the negative impacts on creativity of increased levels of anxiety and uncertainty.

*“As a parent it has been almost impossible to create comics & home school. Without genuine time & space it’s very hard to concentrate”*

*“Due to the anxiety and stress I’m not able to work as much as I usually do - I’ve been averaging about 20 hours, but I suffer from ADHD and it’s been particularly bad since the announcement”*

- Most respondents who make some level of income from their comics production said that their income has been considerably reduced by the impacts of the pandemic. The main reasons for this are: delays to projects already scheduled, a halt to serial productions, the cancellation of conventions and workshops, and a reduction in commissioned work.

*“Conventions where I’d be exhibiting have been cancelled. This has dropped my primary source of income directly related to production - in person comic sales”*

*“Projects being paused, mostly, so a sudden halt to cash flow”*

*“I haven’t had any commissions”*

- Many creators have also seen a reduction in income from employment not related to their comics production; largely due to a reduction in hours, being furloughed, or job loss.
- In addition to the immediate effects of the pandemic, many respondents indicated concerns over the long-term impacts on the industry.

*“The narrowing of opportunities post-Covid will create a more competitive environment”*

*“There’s always an anxiety over there not being future projects to work on, but this has increased due to the pandemic. Will people be funding comics when everything else is potentially falling apart?”*

- The impact of festivals and conventions being cancelled was both a reduction in income and a loss of opportunity for networking; in addition many respondents identified a more personal sense of loss in not being able to interact directly with other makers in their communities, and connect with their audiences.

*“A lot of my income comes from selling, promotion and networking at zine fairs. These are no longer happening due to the pandemic”*

*“A huge means of my income and networking and promotion has been cut off”*

*“No comic fairs! so I am missing that sense of community and connecting with fans in person”*

- 26% of respondents indicated that their need for ‘self-care and wellbeing’ support was directly related to the impacts of the pandemic.

*“Am stuck inside for 3 months. Mental and physical health is a daily upkeep and to keep it met I am not able to engage with creating”*

*“Mental health issues have become much worse, impacting my enthusiasm and the amount of art I create”*

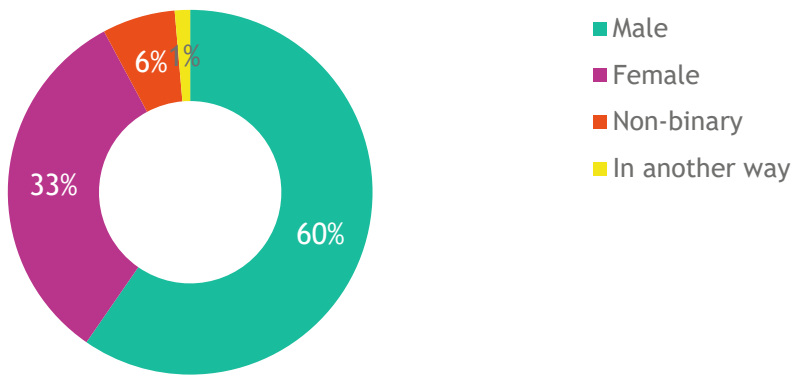
*“Self-care & mental health are more important than ever during this time”*

## Creator profile

### Demographics

- 60% of respondents identified as male, 33% as female, and 6% as non-binary. Although direct comparisons cannot be made as the question was asked differently, this may be seen in the context of the 2011 UK census data, where 49% identified as male and 51% identified as female; the census data does not include non-binary or any other gender identities.
- 69% of respondents identified as being heterosexual, 16% as bisexual, 4% as Lesbian/Gay, 4% as Queer, 3% as Asexual, 3% as Pansexual. The closest data for population comparisons are the [ONS 2018 UK sexual orientation statistics](#), in which 95% of UK-resident adults identify as heterosexual, 1% as Lesbian/Gay, and <1% as Bisexual.
- Over two thirds (68%) of respondents were aged 44 or under. 33% fell into the 35-44 age group, 29% into the 25-34 age group, and 6% into the 16-24 age group; a further 21% were aged 45-54. This may be compared to the 2011 census data, where 15% of the UK population were aged 35-44, 14% were aged 25-44, and 14% were aged 16-24.
- 90% identified as being from a White ethnic background; 76% as White British and 14% as White other. 4% identified as being from a Mixed ethnic background, 3% as Asian or Asian British, and 1% as Black or Black British. 2% identified as being from an Other ethnic background. This may be compared with the 2011 census, where 87% identified as being from a White ethnic background, 3% as Black or Black British, 7% as Asian or Asian British, 2% as being from a mixed ethnic background, and 1% as from an Other ethnic background.
- 79% of respondents did not identify as a d/Deaf or disabled person or as having a long-term health condition. Although direct comparisons cannot be made with the 2011 UK census as the question was asked differently, this may be seen in the context of the census data where 82% did not identify as being limited in their day-to-day activities by a disability or long-term health condition.
- 50% of respondents identified themselves as being Middle class, 31% as Working class, and 16% as Lower-Middle class. These results were grouped from literal responses to the question, “How would you describe your class identity?”. The full responses to this question may be found in the appended report.

*Which of the following options best describes how you think of your gender identity?*

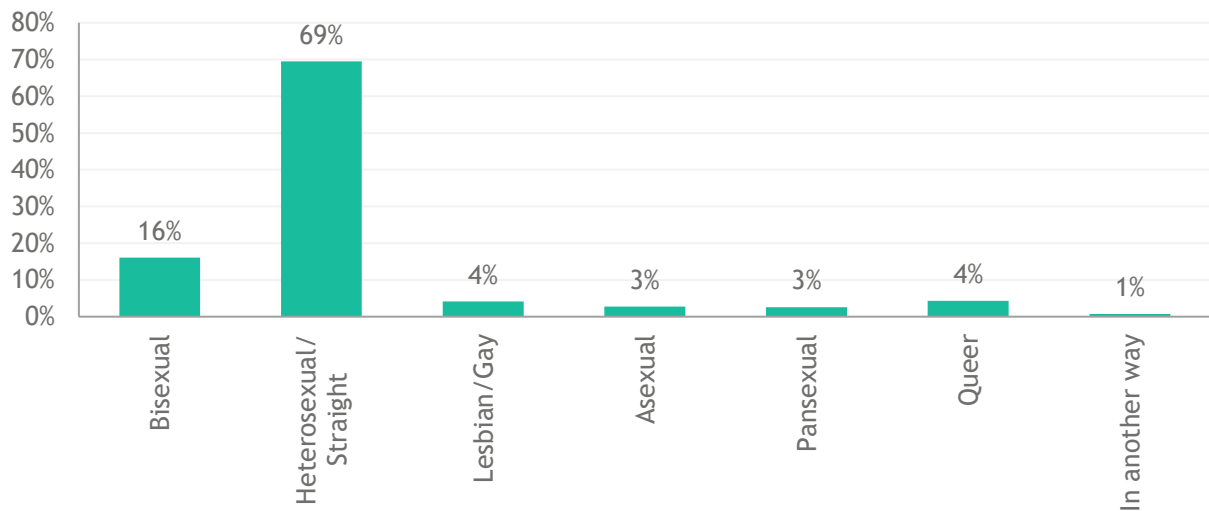


Base: All respondents - 587

Margin of error: ±4%

Of those respondents who described their gender in another way, most identified as transsexual (full literal responses may be found in the appended report)

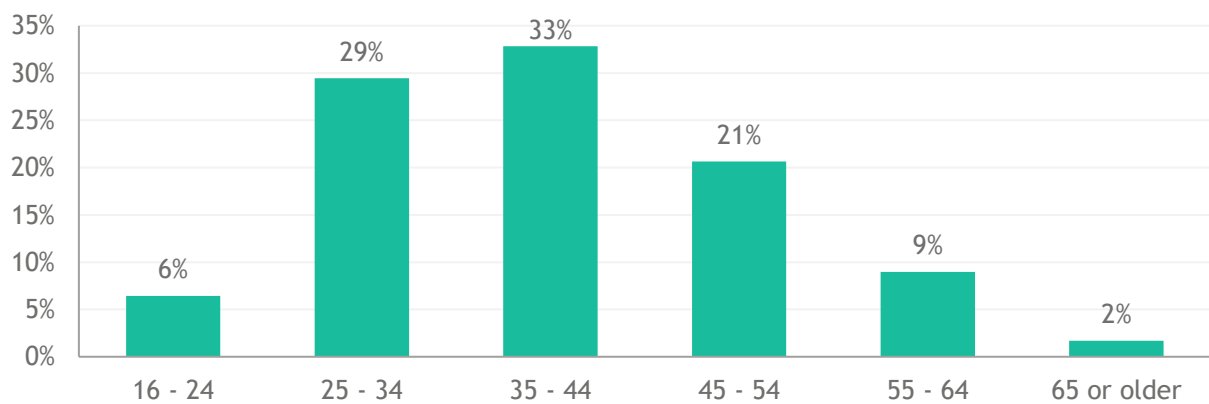
How would you describe your sexuality?



Base: All respondents - 554

Margin of error: ±4%

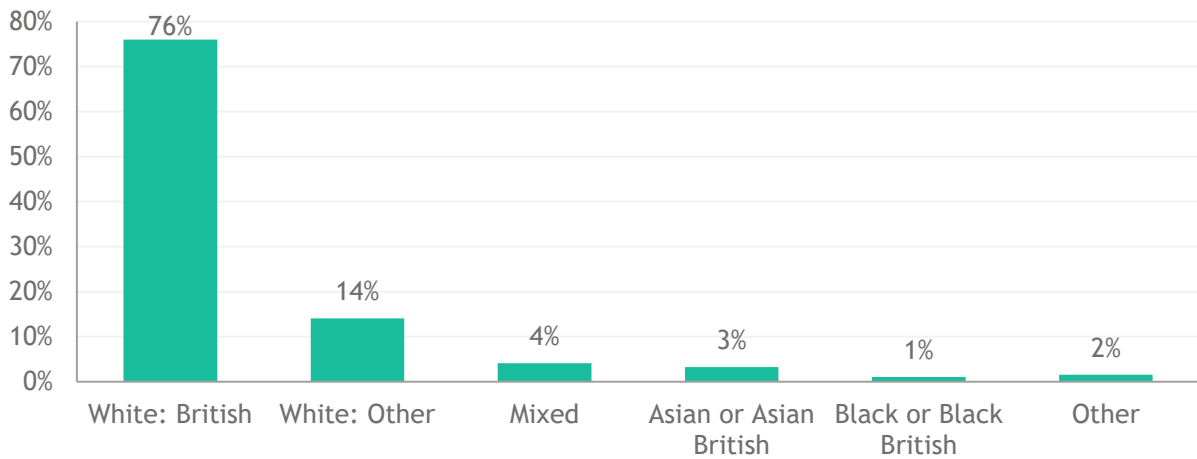
What is your age?



Base: All respondents - 591

Margin of error: ±4%

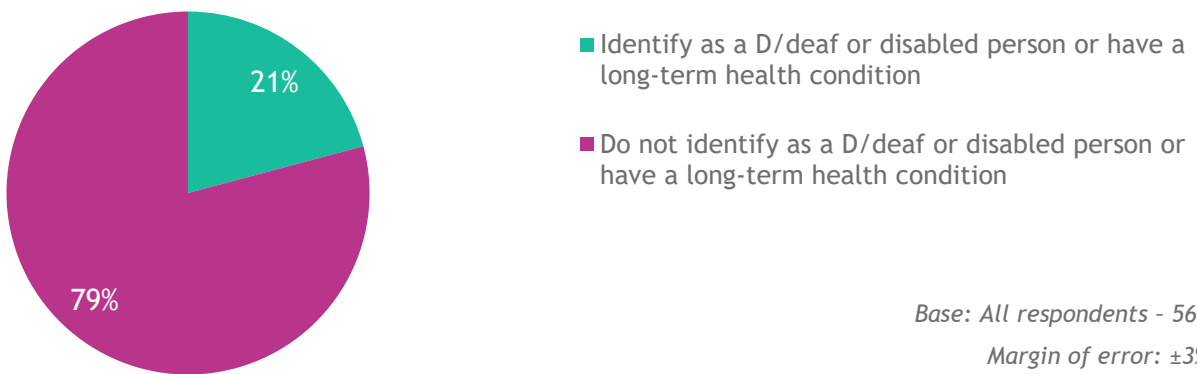
What is your ethnic group?



Base: All respondents - 583

Margin of error: ±4%

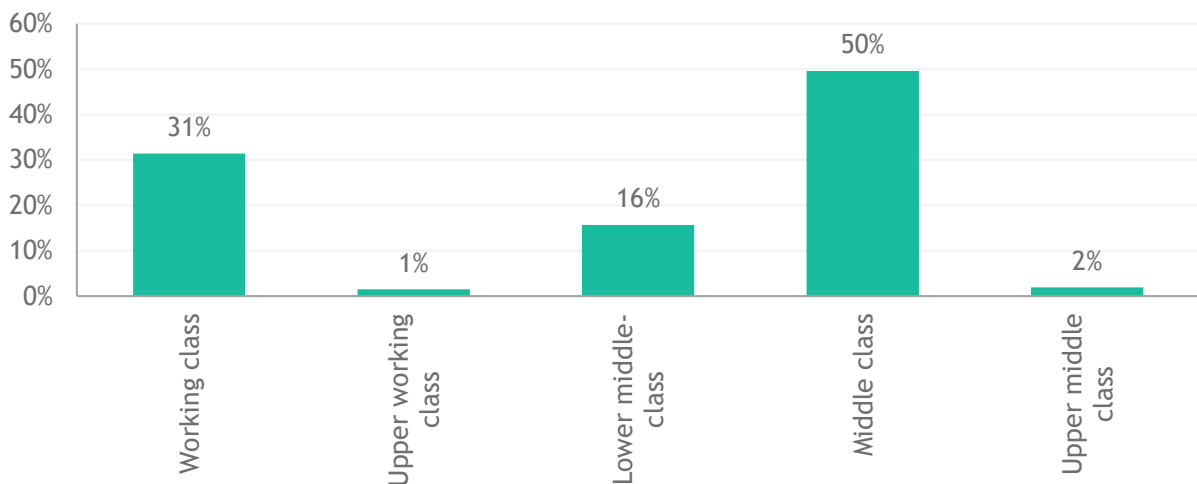
Do you identify as a D/deaf or disabled person or have a long-term health condition or disability?



Base: All respondents - 566

Margin of error: ±3%

How would you describe your class identity? (Grouped from literal responses)



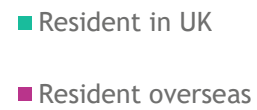
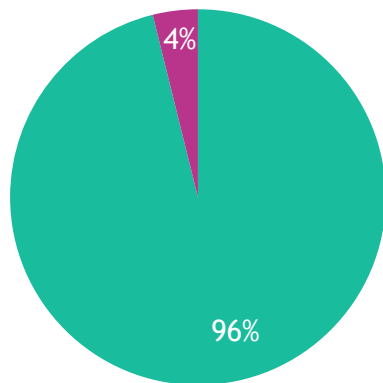
Base: All respondents - 472

Margin of error: ±5%

## Geography

- In line with the criteria for the research, 96% of respondents were resident in the UK.
- The mapping indicates that respondents were generally based in urban or suburban areas of the country. Most respondents were resident in England, with a large concentration in the London area and a smaller cluster around Leeds. There were some respondents from Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, with further small clusters around Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee.

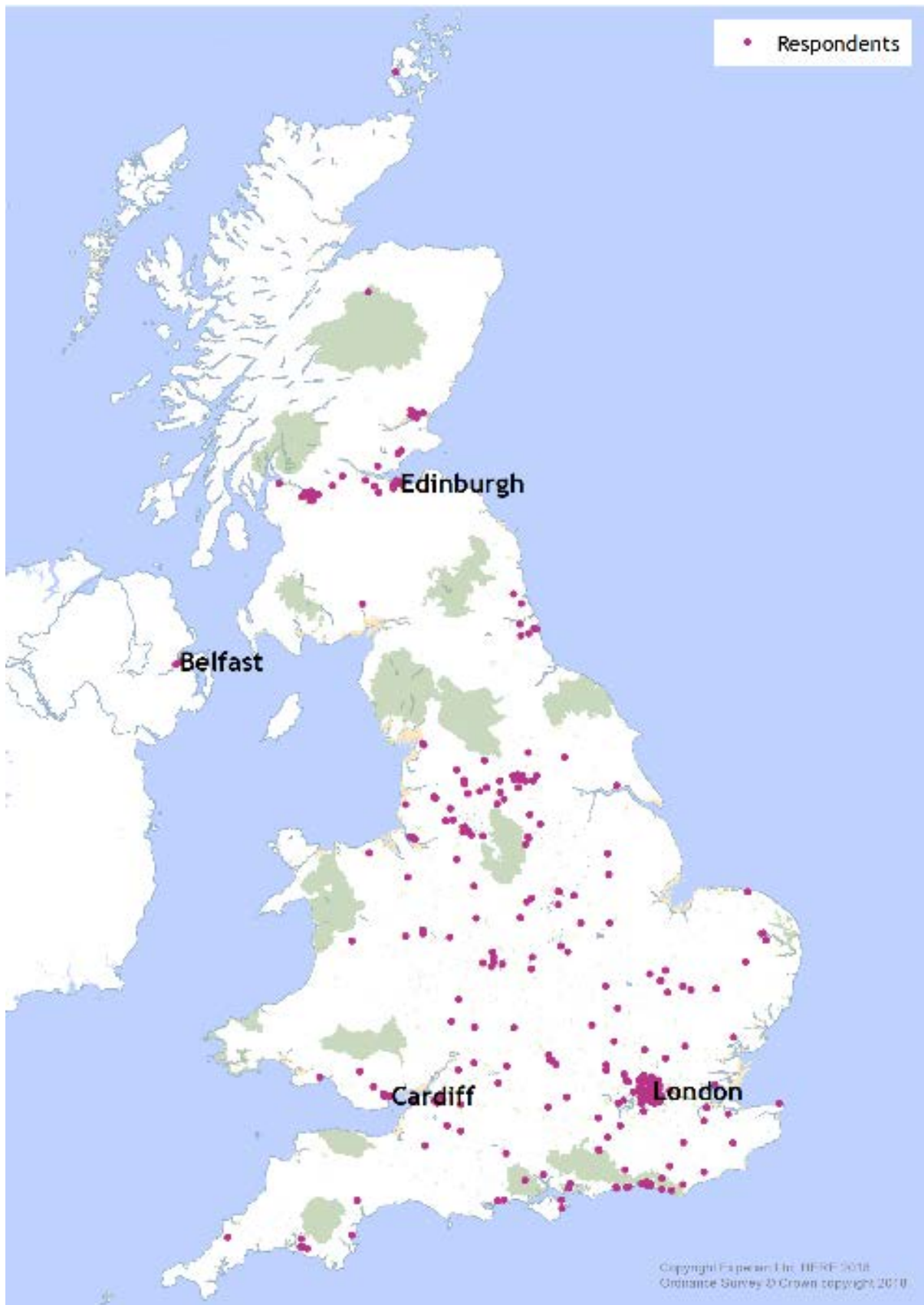
*Do you live in the UK?*



*Base: All respondents - 595*

*Margin of error: ±2%*

Pinpoint map - UK



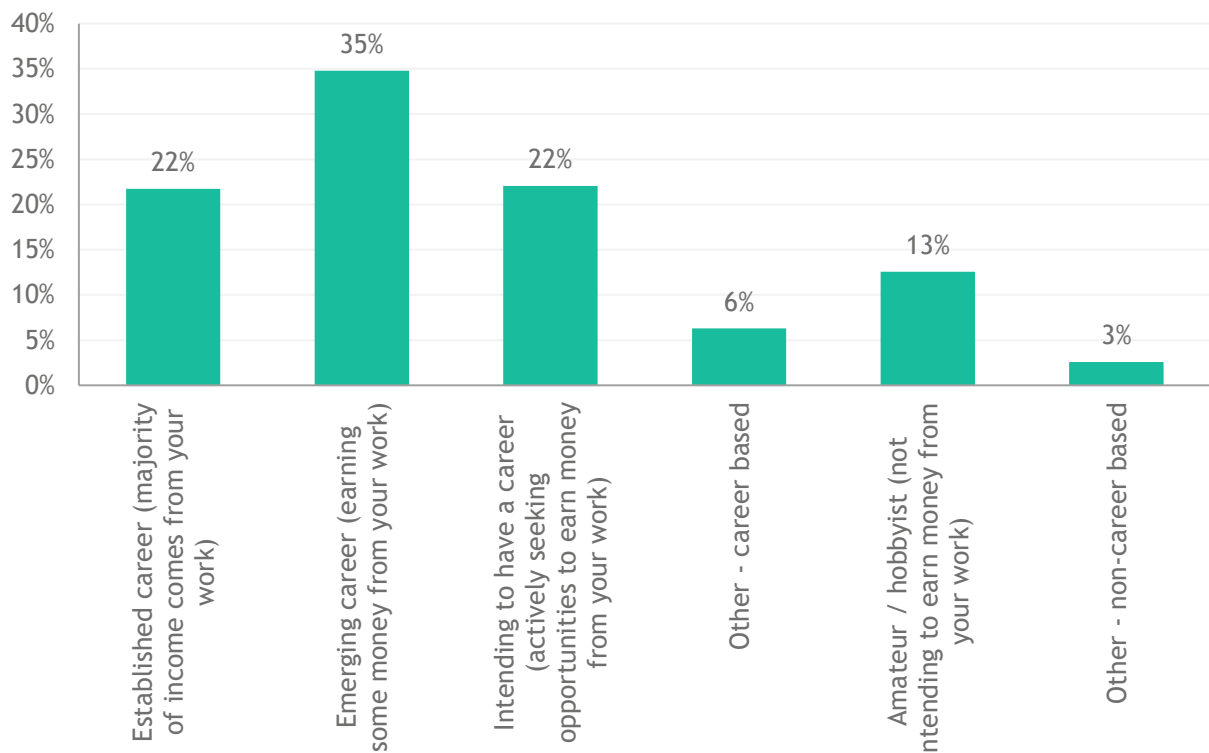
Base: All valid UK postcodes - 337



## Career stage and longevity

- 22% characterised themselves having an ‘Established career’; they make the majority of their income from their work.
- 35% of respondents characterised their current comics creator status as ‘Emerging career’; that is, they are earning some money from their work.
- 22% characterised themselves as ‘Intending to have a career’, actively seeking opportunities to earn money from their work,
- 13% characterised themselves as being an Amateur/Hobbyist, not intending to earn money from their work.
- These characterisations, along with “Other” career and non-career classifications, were grouped to support cross-comparisons between different career status groups: 63% were grouped as ‘Current Career’, 22% as ‘Seeking Career’, and 15% as ‘Amateur/Hobbyist’.
- 27% of respondents in the ‘Career’ groups said they had been actively working or seeking a career in comics production for between two and five years. A further 24% said they had been doing so for between five and ten years.
- Those in the ‘Current Career’ group were much more likely to have been working in comics production for longer, with 21% having done so for between ten and twenty years and 16% for more than twenty years.
- Those in the ‘Seeking Career’ group were more likely to have started their comics production more recently, with 20% having done so within the last 12 months, and a further 20% within the last one to two years.
- The largest proportion of those in the ‘Amateur/Hobbyist’ group (27%) said they had been producing comics for between ten and twenty years. Overall, the results indicate that, for a significant proportion, producing comics has been a part of these respondents’ lives for a long time; 15% have been doing so for more than twenty years.

How would you characterise your current status as a comics producer?



Base: All respondents - 621

Margin of error: ±4%

The respondents who chose ‘Other - career based’ as their status largely described this as being an academic or lecturer, or that they are established in their career but do not earn the majority of their income from their work.

Respondents who chose ‘Other - non-career based’ as their status referenced a creative career linked to their comic production, with some describing their comics work in non-commercial terms. Some typical responses included:

*Other - career based:*

*“Academic - Comics PhD - lecturing on the subject”*

*“Creator lecturer”*

*“I am an academic who makes comics and works with others to make comics”*

*“Main income from other design/graphics-based activities but career wise established”*

*“Established career, but only a small part of my income”*

*“Established but not able to use as main income source”*

*Other - non-career based:*

*“I still make and occasionally earn from comic creation in parallel to my illustration gigs”*

*“I do it for me, and to be part of the community”*

*“Non-commercial artist. I think 'hobbyist' is pejorative”*

Full literal responses may be found in the appended report.

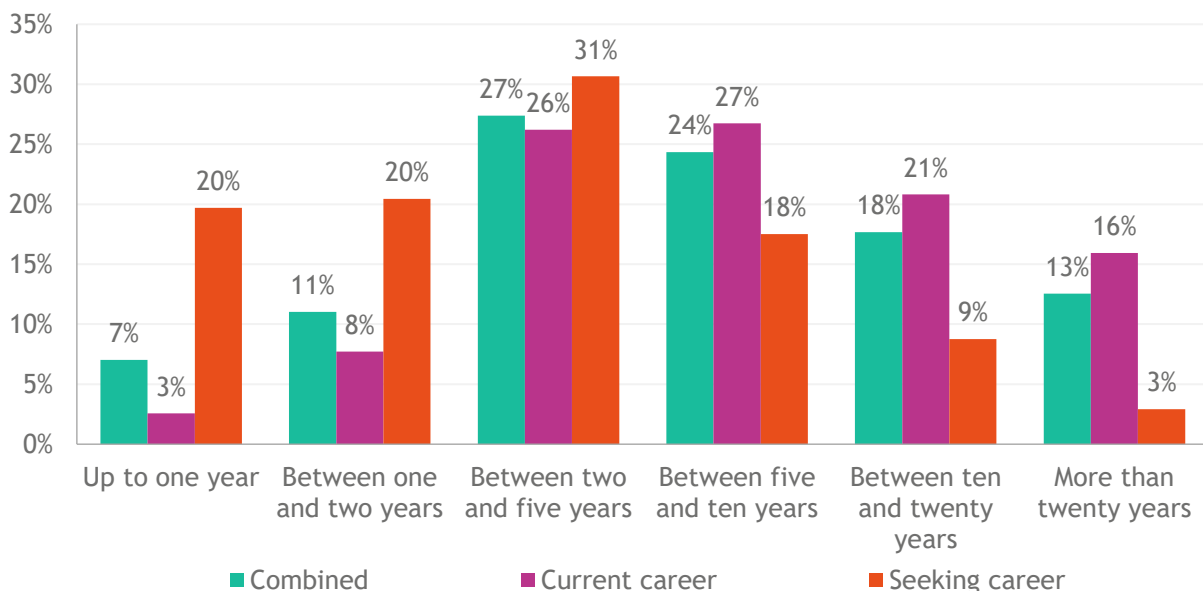
*Career status (derived from: How would you characterise your current status as a comics producer?)*



Base: All respondents - 621

Margin of error: ±4%

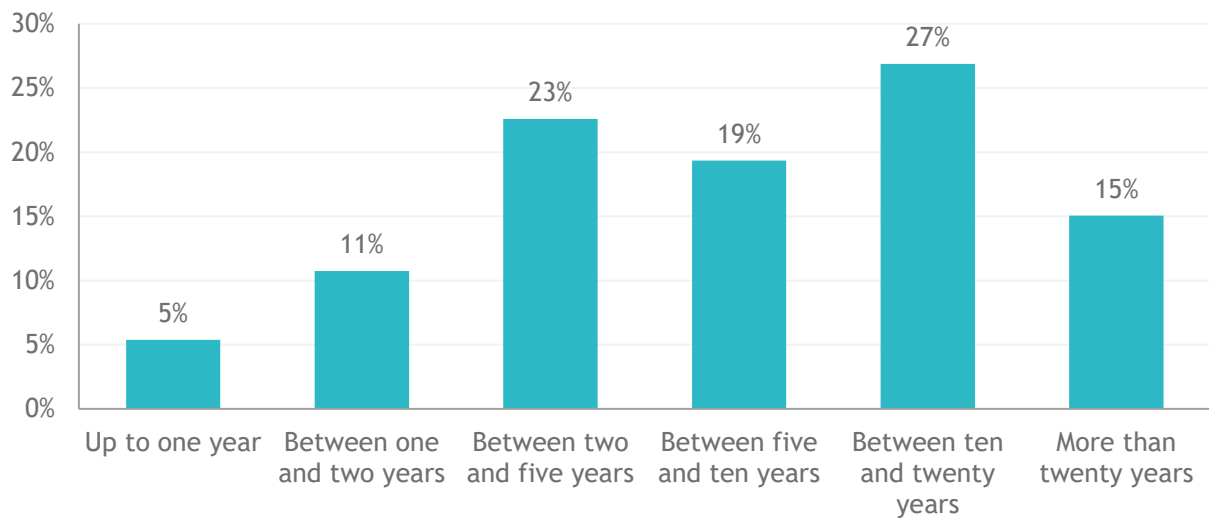
*How long have you [had/been actively pursuing] a career in comics production? (derived from Current career and Seeking career status descriptions)*



Base: Combined - 526 / Current career - 389 / Seeking career - 137

Margin of error: ±4% / ±4% / ±8%

How long have you been producing comics? (derived from Amateur/Hobby status descriptions)



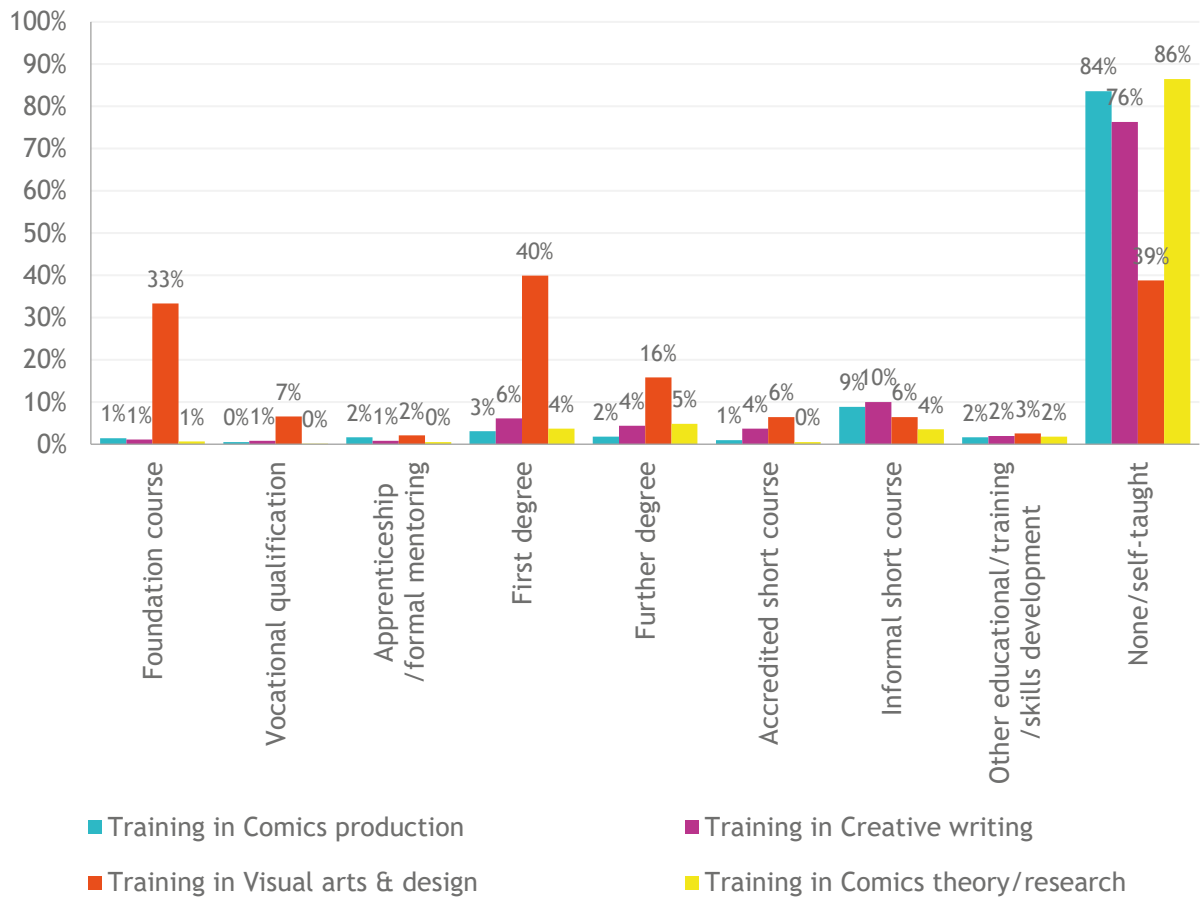
Base: Amateur/Hobby - 93

Margin of error: ±9%

### Training and skills development

- Visual arts and design emerged as the area where the respondents were most likely to have received some level of formal education or training.
- 40% said they held a first degree in Visual arts and design, and 33% that they had completed a Foundation course; a further 16% held a further degree in this area of study.
- For Comics production, Creative writing, and Comics theory/research, most respondents (84%, 76%, and 86% respectively) said they had no training/were self-taught.

What relevant post-school education, training and/or skills development have you received in the following areas?



Base: Production - 621 / Creative writing - 621 / Visual arts & design - 621 / Theory/research - 621  
 Margin of error: ±2% / ±2% / ±4% / ±2%

Where participants cited ‘Other’ education, training, or skills development they largely described academic studies which included an area of art practice, or courses where the topic of comics was included in a broader area of study such as English Literature or Film. Some typical responses included:

*“Art & Archaeology postgrad course taught documentary illustration skills, also life drawing classes”*

*“I studied English Literature and touched on the literary criticism of graphic novels in my Contemporary Literature module”*

*“MA Art Psychotherapy, where comics have informed part of my research”*

*“My English and Film degree had some modules on creative writing and comics”*

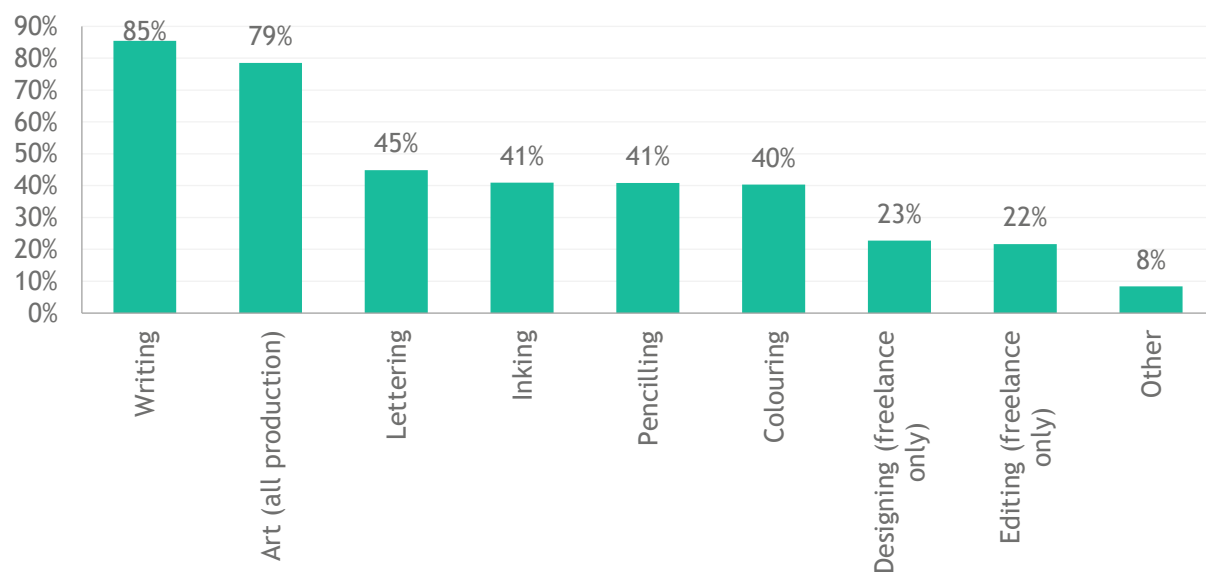
Full literal responses may be found in the appended report.

## Production activities

### Range of activities and time spent

- The most prominent comic production activities that respondents said they were involved in were Writing (85%), and Art - all production (79%).
- Around two-fifths of respondents said they were specifically involved in Lettering (45%), Inking (41%), Pencilling (41%), and Colouring (40%).
- Freelance editing and Freelance designing were the least prominent activities; with 23% and 22% citing these, respectively. 'Other' areas included Marketing, Production, and Publishing.
- Nearly half of respondents (48%), produce comics only in their spare time.
- 28% of respondents spend less than 7 hours a week on comics production, and 22% spend 8-14 hours a week.

Which of the following comic production activities are you involved in?

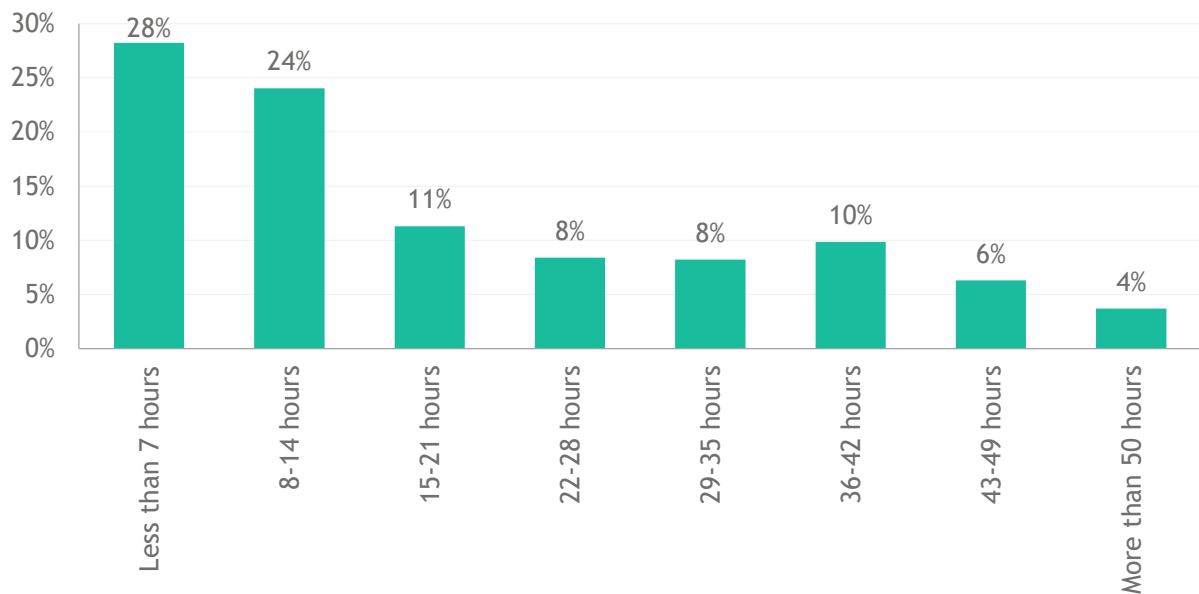


Base: All respondents - 620

Margin of error: ±4%

The 'Other' areas of comics production cited by respondents largely fell into two main categories: Marketing and Promotion, and Publishing. Full literal responses may be found in the appended report.

On average, approximately how many hours per week do you spend on comic production?



Base: All respondents - 620

Margin of error:  $\pm 4\%$

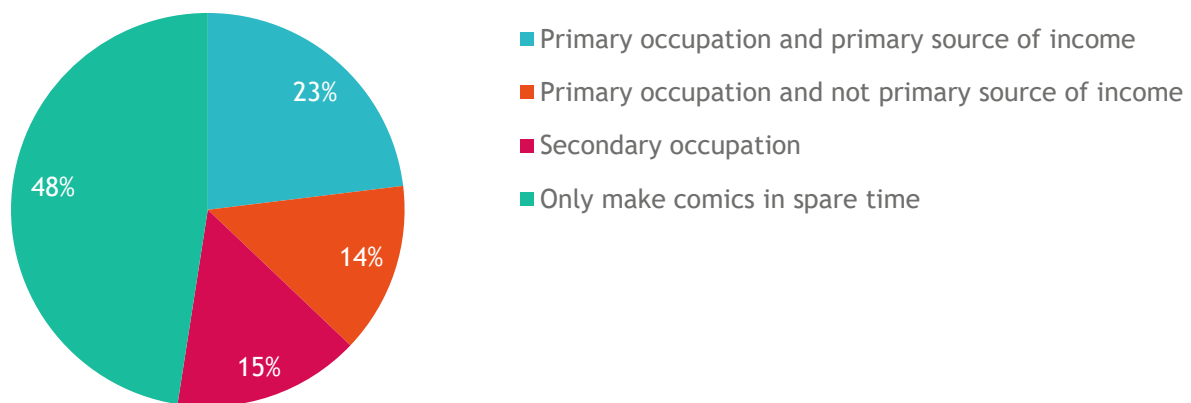
The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the time spent on comics production may be summarised overall as around half of respondents indicating an increase, and around a third indicating a decrease.

The reasons for these changes, and how it differs according to career status, are explored in more depth in the [Covid-19 section](#) of this report.

### Occupation and income

- For 23% comics production is both their primary occupation and their primary source of income; for 14% it is their primary occupation, although not their primary source of income and for 15% it is their secondary occupation.
- 20% work what may be considered as ‘full-time’ on their comics production, spending more than 36 hours a week.

Occupation status (derived from “Is comic production your primary occupation?” / Is comic production your primary source of income?” / “Do you only produce comics in your spare time?”)



Base: All respondents - 620

Margin of error: ±4%

Respondent comments indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic has had the most significant impacts on those for whom comic production is their primary occupation, with most current career respondents saying that their income has reduced; largely due to a drop in commissioned work, cancelled or delayed projects, cancelled events, and serial productions halted.

Fewer respondents who are seeking a career or are amateur/hobbyist creators noted a change in income from their comic work, but those that did said that it had reduced; the main reasons for this were convention cancellations and a fall in online sales.

These findings are explored in more depth in the [Covid-19 section](#) of this report.

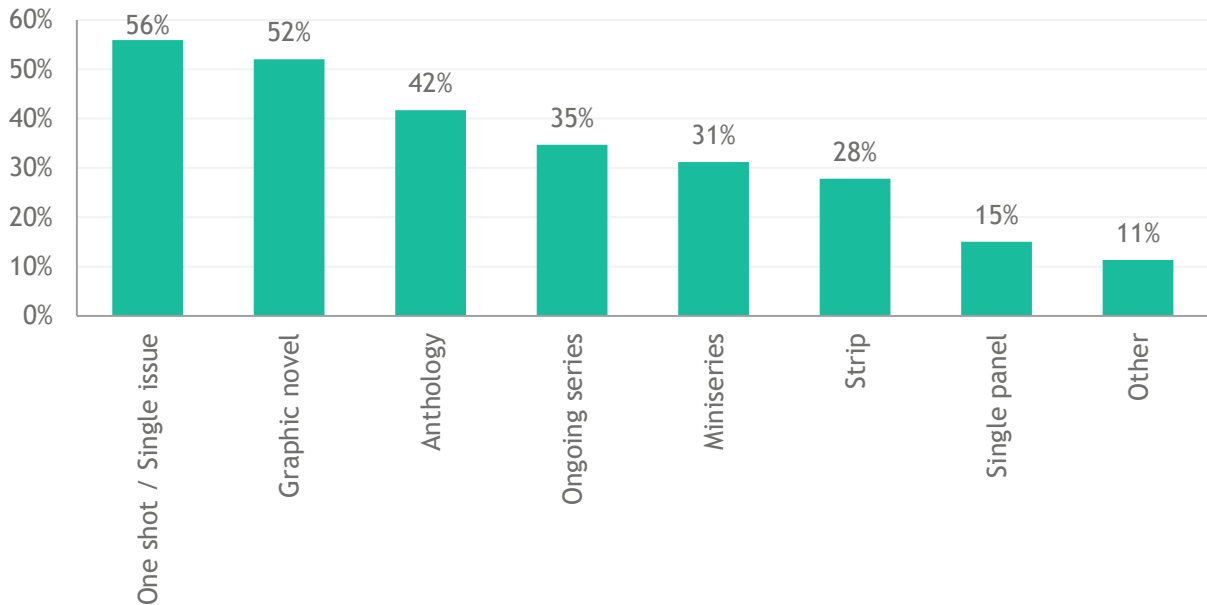
## Formats

- The results indicate that creators work across a range of different formats, albeit with a focus on one or two.
- The most prominent formats for the respondents' work are One-shot / Single issue comics, and Graphic Novels; 56% and 52% gave these as the formats they regularly work in, respectively.
- A further 42% cited Anthologies as a regular format, and 35% said they regularly work on an Ongoing Series.



- Single panels were the least prominent format, with 15% of respondents citing this as something they regularly produce. Of the 11% who cited an ‘Other’ format, many gave Cover Art as something they regularly work on.

Which formats do you regularly work in?



Base: All respondents - 620

Margin of error: ±4%

Cover art was the format most commonly cited by respondents who described ‘Other’ formats. A number of responses also included production or publishing formats such as Zines and Webcomics. Full literal responses may be found in the appended report.

### Subject matter and themes

- From the literal responses, Science Fiction emerged as the most prominent genre covered by the respondents’ work; this was consistent across the three career status groups.
- Fantasy and Horror also featured highly; Slice of Life and Comedy were frequently mentioned.
- Although the main genres remained consistent across the different career status groups, there were differences in emphasis. Current Career creators, for example, tended to indicate a wider range of subjects and genres covered by their work; whilst Amateur/Hobbyists appear to focus on specific genres.

- 67% of respondents said that their work regularly features one or more of the, largely socio-political, themes listed in the survey. Of these:
  - 52% of respondents said that their work regularly features marginalised or traditionally underrepresented people or groups<sup>5</sup>.
  - 27% said their work regularly features environmental or climate change issues.
  - 20% that they regularly feature post-conflict storytelling, and 18% that they regularly feature displaced people or refugees in their work.

*How would you describe the subject area(s) / genre(s) your work covers?*

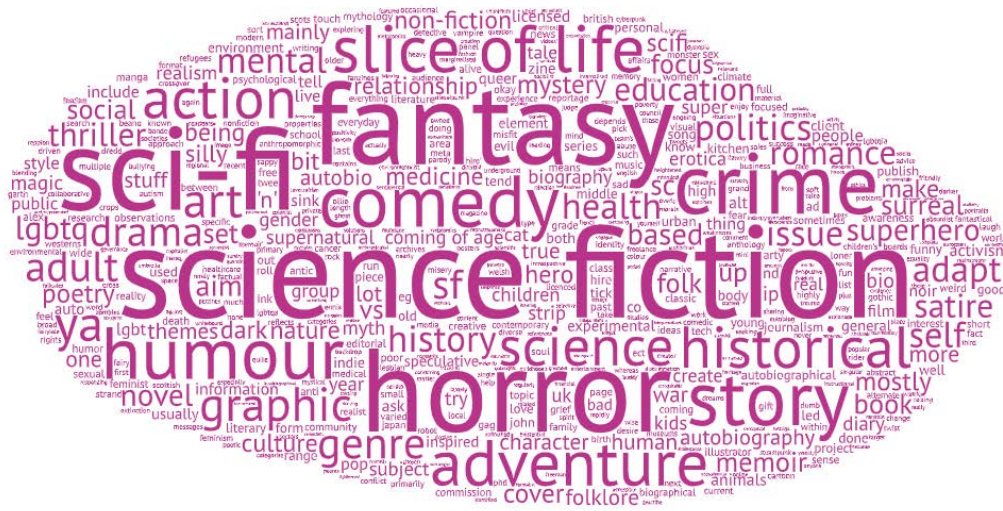


Most respondents indicated that they work across a range of different subjects and genres, with Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror featuring most prominently in the descriptions of their work; Slice of Life and Comedy were also frequently mentioned.

Although these subject areas remained the most prominent regardless of career status, there were some differences between the different groups. Current career creators, for example, tended to indicate a wider range of work whilst amateur/hobbyists appear to focus more on specific genres.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. LGBTQ, BAME, D/deaf or disabled, homeless, socially excluded etc

Current career respondents



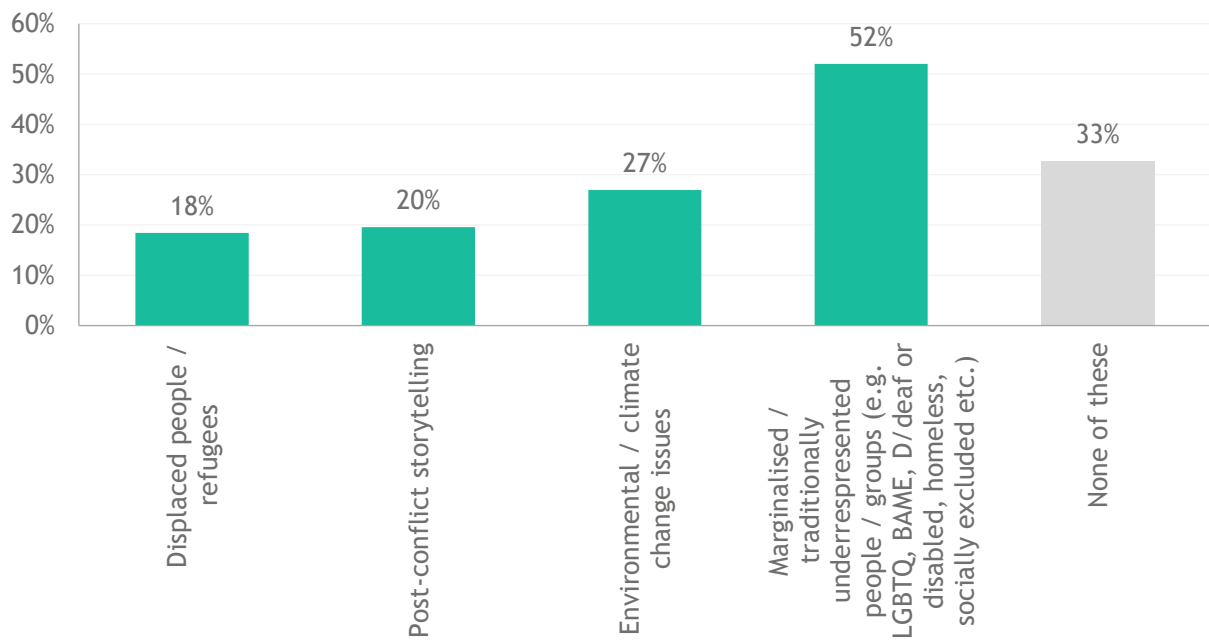
Seeking career respondents



Amateur / hobbyist respondents



Does your work regularly feature any of the following themes through its core topics, narratives, or characters?



Base: All respondents - 598

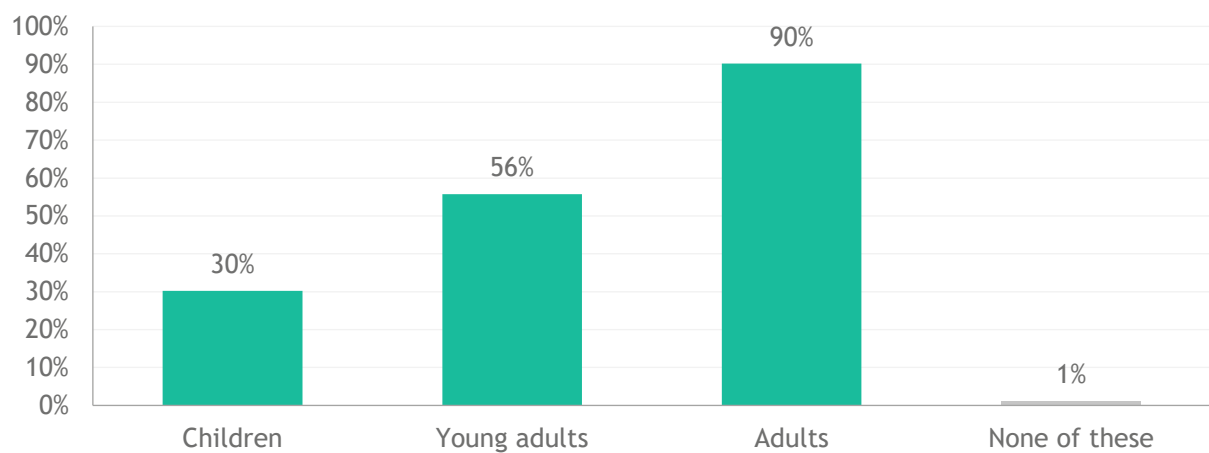
Margin of error:  $\pm 4\%$

## Audiences and routes to publication

### Target audiences

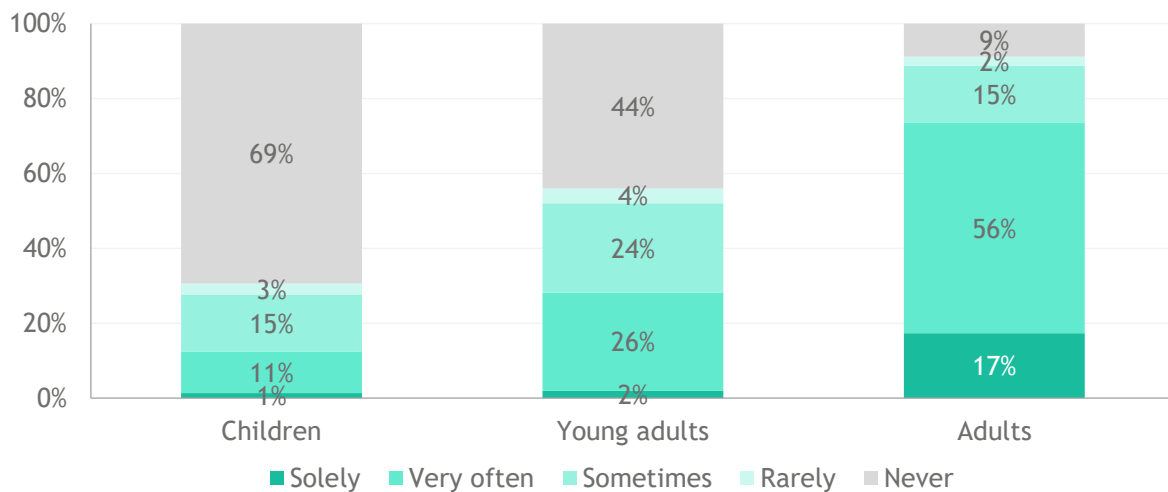
- Adults emerged as most prominent audience for most creators, with 90% saying this was a primary audience for their work.
- 56% said that Young Adults were a primary audience, and 30% cited Children as such.
- Of those who produce work for adults, 73% either solely (17%) or very often (56%) produce work for this audience.
- The results indicate that work for Young Adults and Children is more often produced alongside work for other audiences.
- 28% produce work solely (2%) or very often (26%) for Young Adults, and 12% do so for Children; 1% solely and 11% very often.

*To which audience is your work primarily aimed?*



*Base: All respondents - 621  
Margin of error: ±4%*

How often do you produce work aimed at children / young adults / adults?



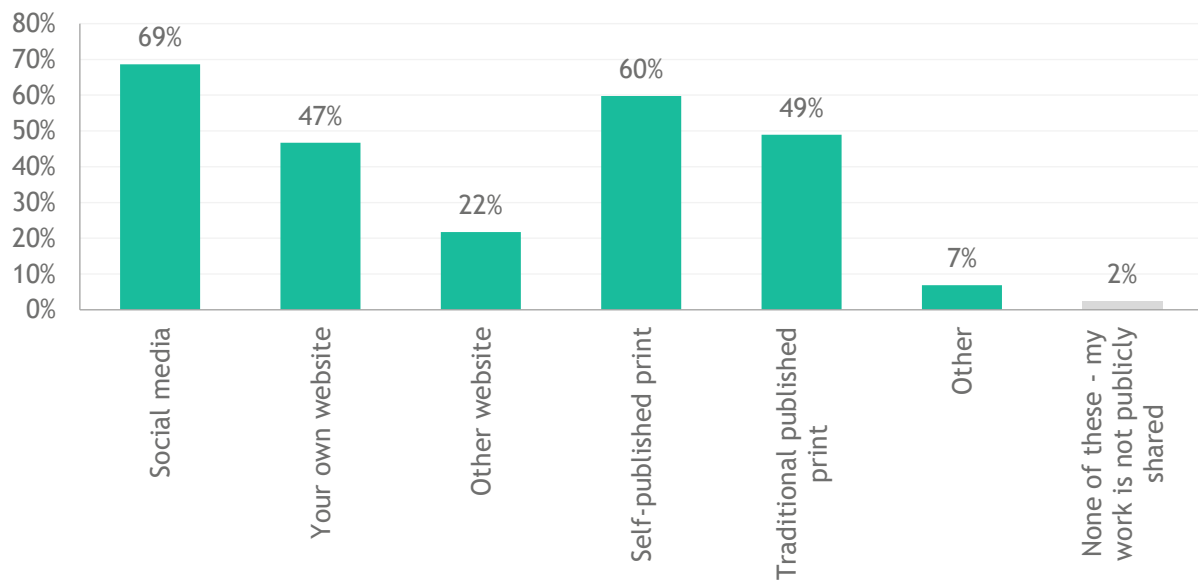
Base: Child audience - 614 / YA audience - 611 / Adult audience - 612

Margin of error: ±4% / ±4% / ±4%

Routes to publication and sales

- Overall, digital channels emerged as being more prominent for publishing and sharing work than print.
- The two most prominent channels through which respondents publish or share their work are social media and self-published print; 69% and 60% of respondents cited these, respectively.
- 49% publish through traditional print, and 47% through their own website.
- The most prominent social media channels through which creators primarily share their work are Twitter and Instagram; 81% and 79% of respondents cited these channels, respectively.

Through which channels is your work primarily published/shared?

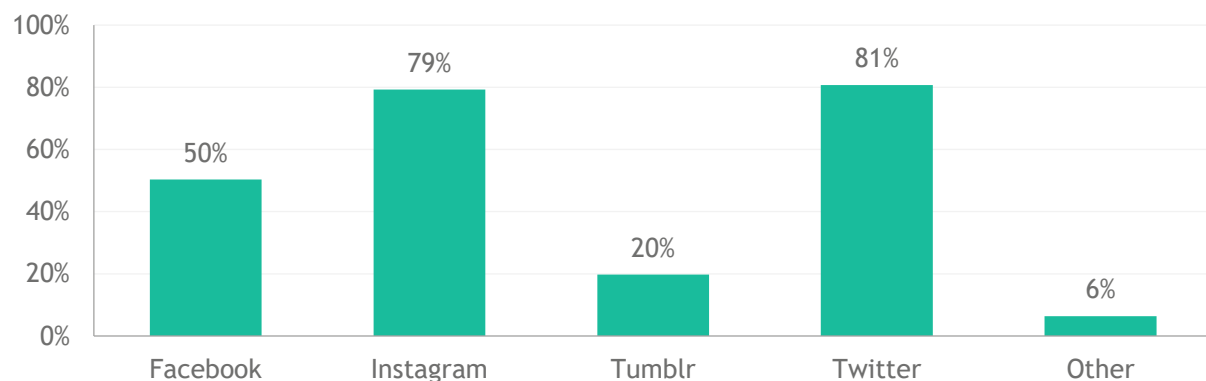


Base: All respondents - 621

Margin of error: ±4%

The websites most frequently mentioned by respondents who gave ‘Other website’ as their primary channel were [Acesweekly](#), [Comichaus](#), [Comixology](#), [Tapas](#), and [Webtoons](#). Full literal responses may be found in the appended report.

Through which social media channels is your work primarily shared? (asked of respondents who indicated social media as a primary channel)



Base: All respondents - 425

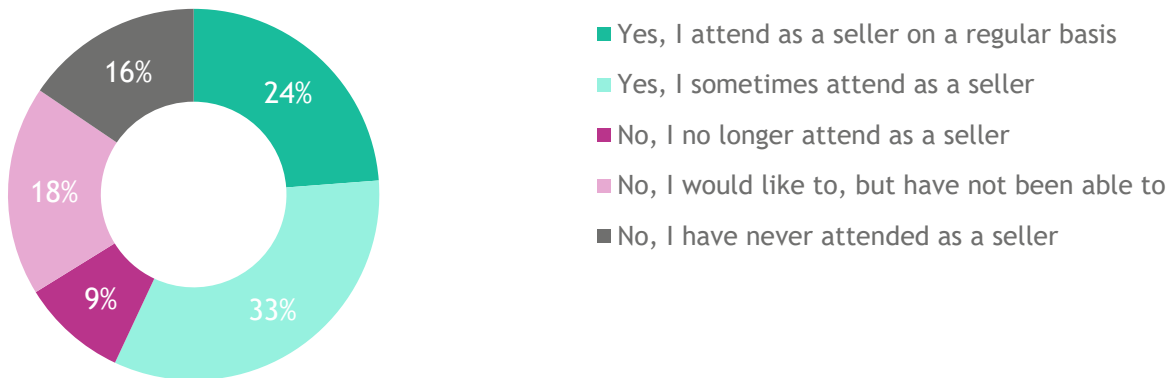
Margin of error: ±5%

YouTube and Deviant Art were most frequently mentioned by respondents who cited ‘Other’ social media channels. Full literal responses may be found in the appended report.

## Festivals and conventions

- 57% of respondents attend festivals/conventions as a seller, 24% do this regularly and 33% on an occasional basis.
- 51% of respondents who attend events as a seller do this 3-5 times a year; 32% attend as a seller 1-2 times a year.

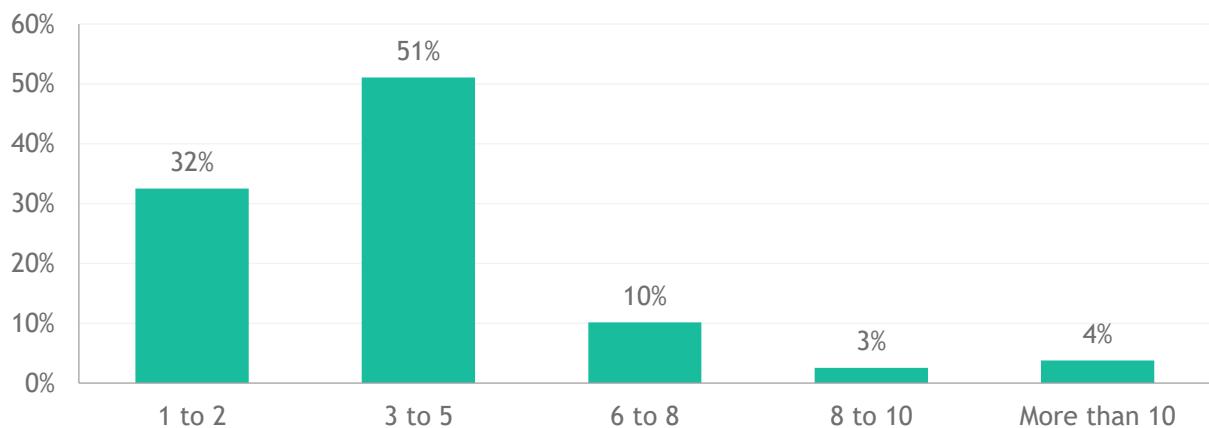
Do you attend comic festivals / conventions as a seller?



Base: All respondents - 618

Margin of error: ±4%

How often do you attend as a seller? (derived from literal responses)



Base: All respondents - 237

Margin of error: ±6%

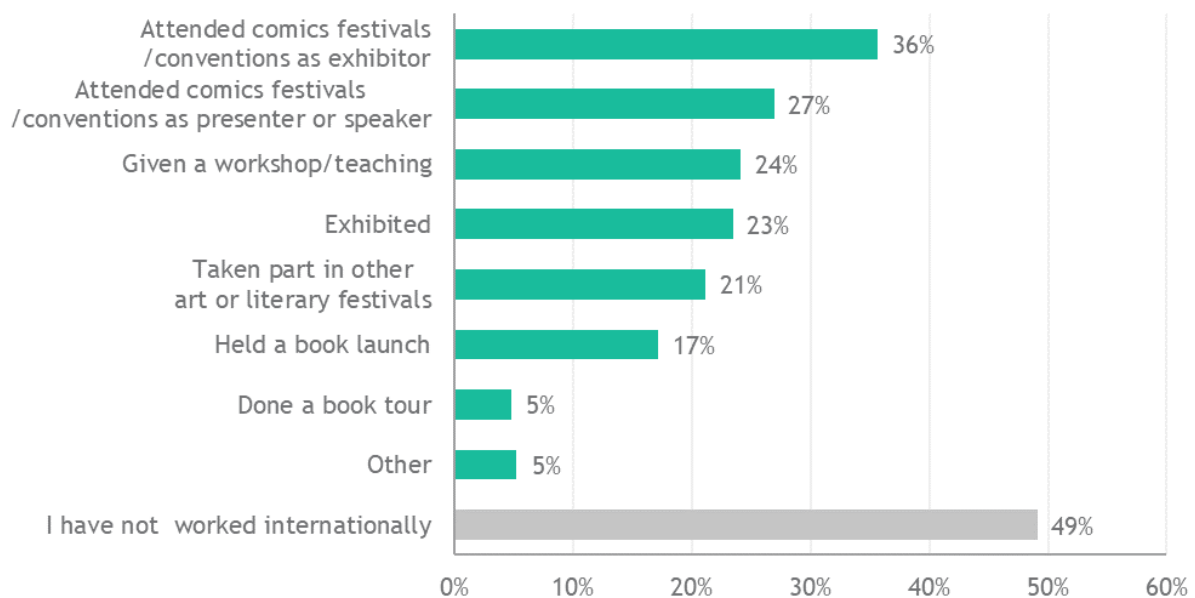
Reasons for non-attendance are explored in the section of this report which looks at challenges for comic creators; changes caused by Covid-19 are covered in the [dedicated section](#) on impacts of the pandemic.



## International reach

- Participation in international events was quite high, with over half of respondents (51%) having worked internationally.
- 36% have attended events as an exhibitor, 27% as a presenter or speaker, and 24% as a teacher or workshop leader; these were the top three activities undertaken at international events.
- The level of international print availability was also high, with 64% of respondents saying their work is available in print in markets outside of the UK.
- 54% have work in print available in Europe and 53% in North America; these were the two most prominent international markets for printed work.

Which of the following comics-related work have you ever undertaken internationally?

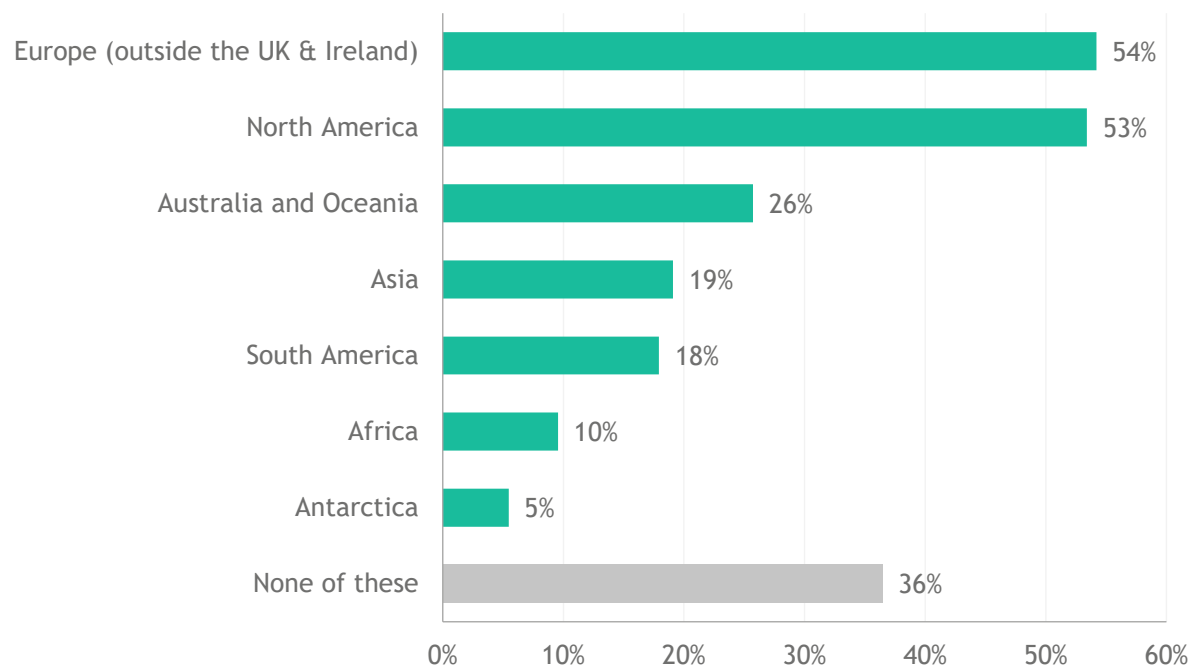


Base: All respondents - 605

Margin of error:  $\pm 4\%$

Respondents who cited 'Other' most frequently mentioned producing work for international clients or exhibiting work overseas. Full literal responses may be found in the appended report.

Where is your work available in print internationally?



Base: All respondents - 513

Margin of error: ±4%

## Income and expenditure

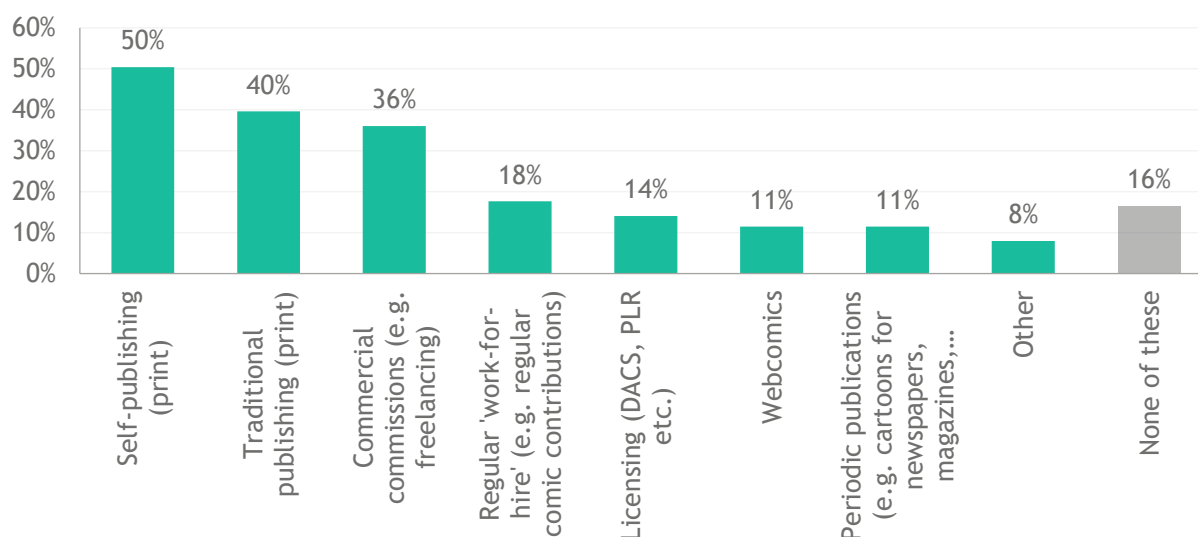
### Income directly related to comic production

- 84% of respondents indicated that they received income from one or more sources directly related to their comics production; on average, respondents cited two direct sources of income.
- 54% who recorded direct income for the 2018/19 financial year earned £1,000 or less from any single source. A small proportion of respondents (8%) earned more than £20,000 from any one direct source of income in the 2018/19 financial year.
- The three most prominent sources of income directly related to comics production were self-publishing (print), traditional publishing (print), and commercial commissions; 50%, 40%, and 36% of respondents cited these as direct sources of income.
- Of the three most prominent sources of direct income, traditional publishing generated the highest average for those that recorded income from this source for the 2018-19 financial year - £9,602. However, it should be noted that this was due to a smaller proportion of respondents who earned higher levels of income from this activity; for example, 5% of respondents who cited this as a source of income in 2018/19 earned £50,000 or more, compared to 31% who earned £1,000 or less.
- Self-publishing generated an average income of £1,422 in 2018/19 and was a source of direct income during this period for the largest proportion of respondents (44%). However, 60% of those who cited it as an income source in 2018/19 earned £500 or less from this activity. 9% earned over £5,000, with the highest income bracket being £20,000-£50,000; earned by 1% of these respondents.
- Commercial commissions generated an average income of £4,278 for those that cited this as a source of income in the 2018/19 financial year; this accounted for 32% of all respondents. 45% of those respondents who recorded income from this activity in 2018/19 earned £1,000 or less; the highest income bracket was £50,000+, earned by 1% of these respondents.
- For the relatively small proportion (18%) of respondents who recorded some income from regular 'work for hire' in 2018/19, this generated the highest average income compared to other direct sources - £11,295.  
Although fewer respondents recorded income in the lowest brackets, compared to other sources, the levels of income for this activity appear highly variable; with 34% having earned between £500 and £2,000, and a further 33% having earned

between £10,000 and £50,000. The highest income bracket was £50,000+, earned by 5% of those who recorded income for this activity in 2018/19.

- For the respondents who attend events as a seller, most (63%) earn £500 or less, per day of attendance, from this activity. 14% just about break even, and 7% often make a loss.
- 74% of respondents do not receive more than 50% of their directly related income from international markets outside of the UK. For those that do, most cited the USA as the source of their international income.
- 87% of respondents do not receive any other financial support directly related to their comic production. Of those that do, 8% cited a public body as the source of this support; 70% of these receive support from Arts Council England.

*From what sources do you receive income directly related to your comic production?*



*Base: All respondents - 619*

*Margin of error: ±4%*

On average, respondents cited two income sources.

The most frequently cited 'Other' sources of directly related income were Patreon and private / personal commissions.

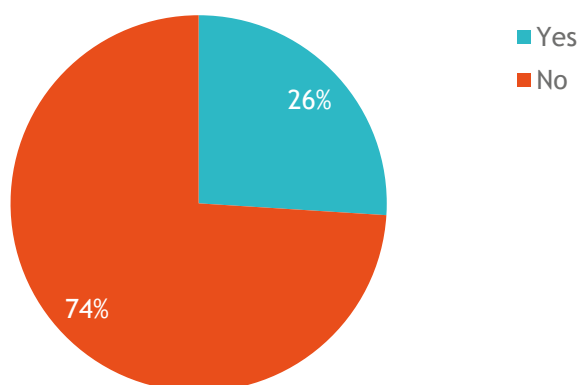
What was your income for financial year 2018-19 from [listed direct sources]?

2018/19 income directly related to comic production activity	Traditional publishing (print)	Self-publishing (print)	Webcomics	Commercial commissions	Regular 'work-for-hire'	Periodic publications	Licensing	Other
None	67%	56%	92%	68%	85%	91%	87%	94%
Up to £100	3%	12%	3%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
£100-£500	5%	15%	2%	8%	0%	1%	6%	1%
£500-£1,000	3%	6%	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%	0%
£1,000-£2,000	4%	5%	0%	5%	3%	2%	1%	0%
£2,000-£5,000	5%	3%	1%	5%	2%	1%	1%	0%
£5,000-£10,000	5%	2%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%
£10,000-£20,000	4%	1%	1%	3%	3%	1%	0%	1%
£20,000-£50,000	4%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%
£50,000+	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Approximated mean</i>	<i>£3,217</i>	<i>£622</i>	<i>£252</i>	<i>£1,377</i>	<i>£1,749</i>	<i>£309</i>	<i>£202</i>	<i>£370</i>
<i>Base</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>603</i>	<i>618</i>	<i>606</i>	<i>620</i>	<i>617</i>	<i>619</i>	<i>622</i>

2018/19 direct income - only respondents who received income from directly related sources

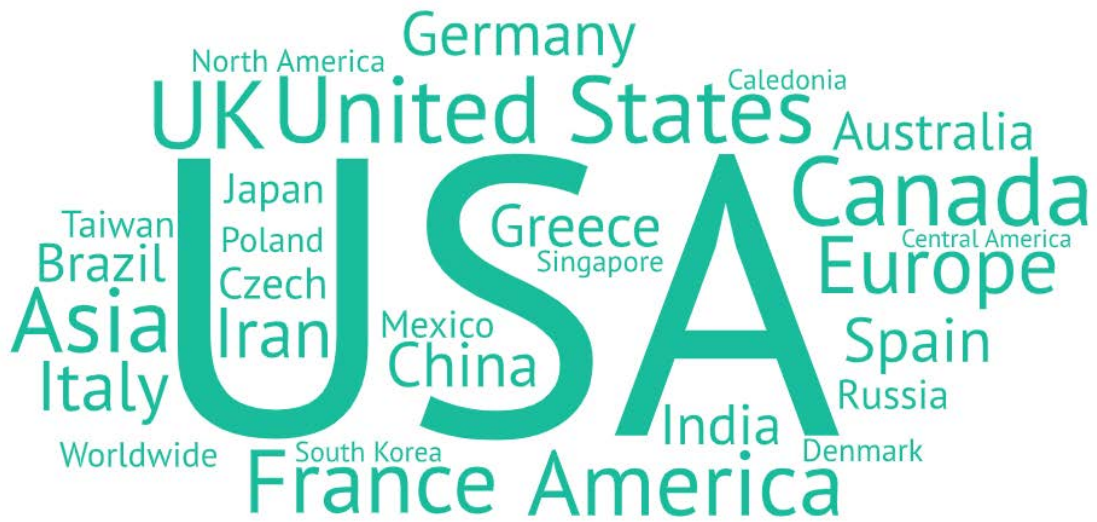
2018/19 income directly related to comic production activity	Traditional publishing (print)	Self-publishing (print)	Webcomics	Commercial commissions	Regular 'work-for-hire'	Periodic publications	Licensing	Other
Up to £100	7%	27%	39%	5%	4%	9%	21%	23%
£100-£500	15%	33%	24%	25%	3%	15%	47%	23%
£500-£1,000	9%	14%	10%	15%	16%	25%	14%	8%
£1,000-£2,000	11%	11%	2%	16%	18%	19%	5%	8%
£2,000-£5,000	15%	8%	10%	16%	13%	17%	7%	8%
£5,000-£10,000	15%	5%	4%	10%	9%	2%	1%	13%
£10,000-£20,000	11%	2%	8%	8%	17%	9%	4%	10%
£20,000-£50,000	11%	1%	4%	3%	16%	4%	1%	10%
£50,000+	5%	0%	0%	1%	5%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Approximated mean</b>	<b>£9,602</b>	<b>£1,422</b>	<b>£3,050</b>	<b>£4,278</b>	<b>£11,295</b>	<b>£3,601</b>	<b>£1,545</b>	<b>£5,754</b>
Base	201	264	51	195	96	53	81	40

Do you receive over 50% of your income directly related to your comic production from countries outside of the UK? (respondents whose primary occupation and source of income is comics production)

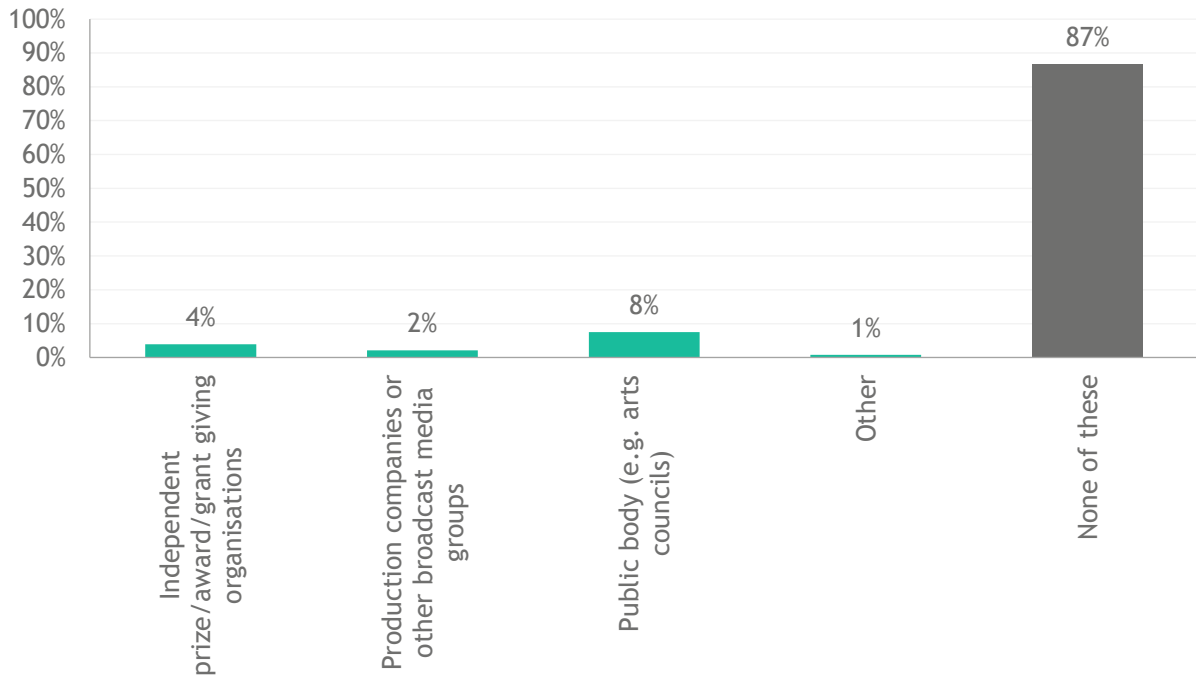


Base: All respondents - 143  
Margin of error: ±7%

From which countries do you receive income directly related to your comic production?



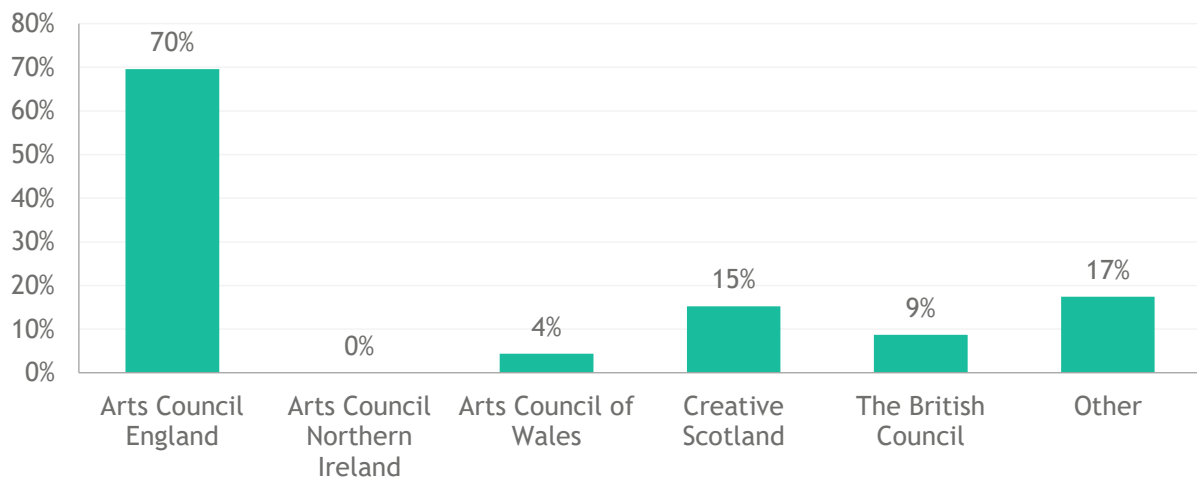
Do you receive any other financial support related to your comic production?



Base: All respondents - 612

Margin of error: ±3%

*From which public body have you received financial income?*

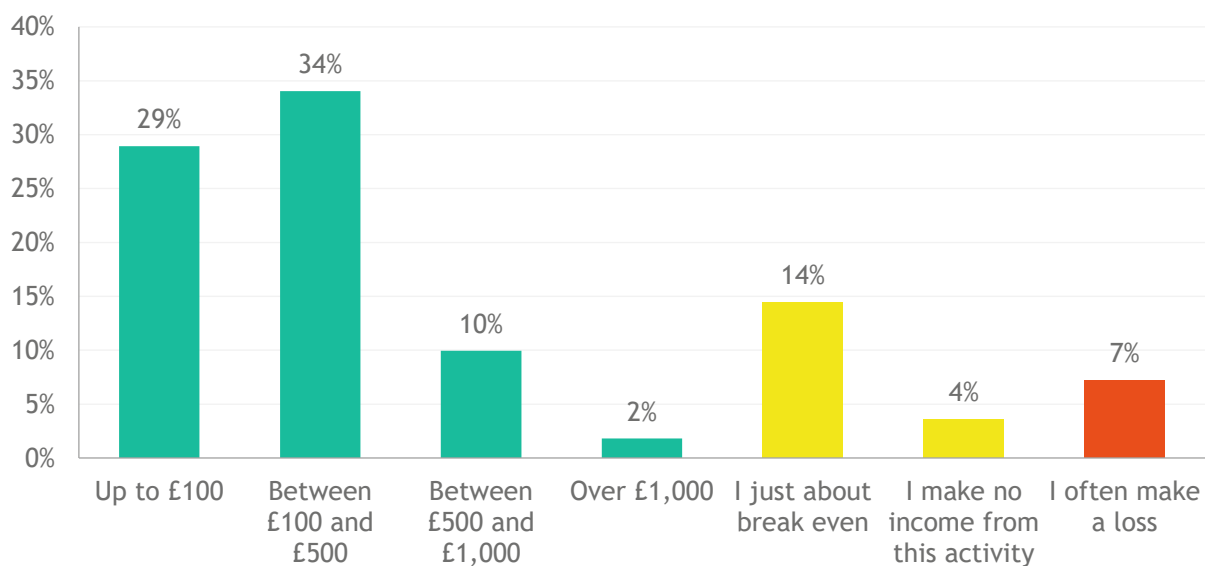


Base: All respondents - 36

Margin of error:  $\pm 13\%$

**Income from festivals/conventions**

*On average, what income does this activity generate per day? (respondents who attend festivals/conventions as a seller)*



Base: All respondents - 332

Margin of error:  $\pm 5.1\%$

Comments from respondents indicate that attendance and income from festivals/conventions is one of the areas where the Covid-19 pandemic has had the most significant impacts, due to widespread cancellations. These impacts are explored in more detail in the Covid-19 section of this report.

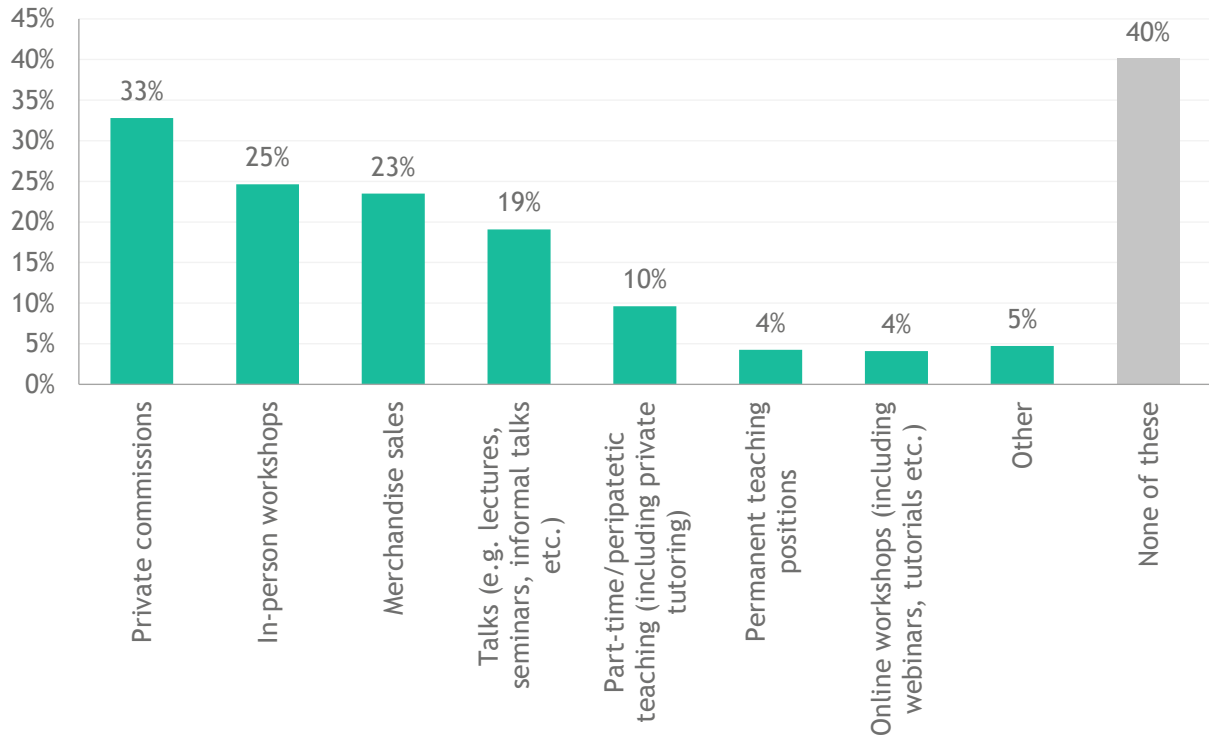


## Income indirectly related to comic production

- 60% of respondents indicated that they received income from one or more sources indirectly related to their comics production; on average, respondents cited two indirectly related sources of income.
- 56% who recorded indirectly related income for the 2018/19 financial year earned £1,000 or less from any single source. A small proportion of respondents (6%) earned more than £20,000 from any single indirectly related source of income in the 2018/19 financial year.
- The three most prominent sources of income indirectly related to comics production were private commissions, in-person workshops, and sales of merchandise; 33%, 25%, and 23% of respondents cited these as indirectly related sources of income.
- Of the three most prominent sources of indirectly related income, in-person workshops generated the highest average return for those that recorded income from this source for the 2018-19 financial year - £2,055. As with the results for the direct sources of income however, it should be noted that this was again due to a smaller proportion of respondents who earned higher levels of income from this activity; for example, 4% of respondents who cited this as a source of income in 2018/19 earned £10,000 or more, compared to 68% who earned £1,000 or less.
- Private commissions generated an average income of £1,168 in 2018/19 and this was a source of indirectly related income for the largest proportion of respondents (29%) during this period. 56% of those who cited it as an income source in 2018/19 earned £500 or less from this activity. 5% earned over £5,000, with the highest income bracket being £10,000-£20,000; earned by 2% of these respondents.
- Merchandise sales generated an average income of £387 for those that cited this as a source of income in the 2018/19 financial year; this accounted for 21% of all respondents. 54% of those respondents who recorded income from this activity in 2018/19 earned £500 or less, and a further 28% earned between £500 and £2,000. The highest income bracket was £50,000+, earned by 1% of these respondents. For the relatively small proportion (4%) of respondents who recorded some income from a permanent teaching position in 2018/19, this generated the highest average income compared to other indirectly related sources - £15,206.82.
- Compared to other indirect income sources, fewer respondents recorded income in the lowest brackets with most (54%) earning between £2,000 and £20,000; a

further 27% earned £20,000-£50,000. The highest income bracket was £50,000+, earned by 5% of those who recorded income for this activity in 2018/19.

*From what sources do you receive income indirectly related to your comic production?*



Base: All respondents - 613

Margin of error: ±4%

On average respondents received income from two sources indirectly related to comic production.

What was your income for financial year 2018-19 from [indirect sources]?

2018/19 income indirectly related to comic production activity	In-person workshops	Online workshops	Talks income	Permanent teaching positions	Private commissions	Part-time/peripatetic teaching	Merchandise sales	Other
None	79%	98%	84%	96%	71%	93%	79%	97%
Up to £100	2%	0%	1%	0%	4%	0%	6%	0%
£100-£500	7%	1%	8%	0%	12%	2%	6%	0%
£500-£1,000	6%	0%	4%	0%	5%	2%	3%	0%
£1,000-£2,000	3%	0%	2%	0%	4%	1%	2%	1%
£2,000-£5,000	2%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%
£5,000-£10,000	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
£10,000-£20,000	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
£20,000-£50,000	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
£50,000+	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Approximated mean</i>	<b>£428</b>	<b>£11</b>	<b>£128</b>	<b>£540</b>	<b>£339</b>	<b>£181</b>	<b>£387</b>	<b>£235</b>
<i>Base</i>	615	618	615	620	607	612	610	617
<i>Margin of error (max)</i>	3%	1%	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	1%

2018/19 indirect income - only respondents who received income from indirectly related sources

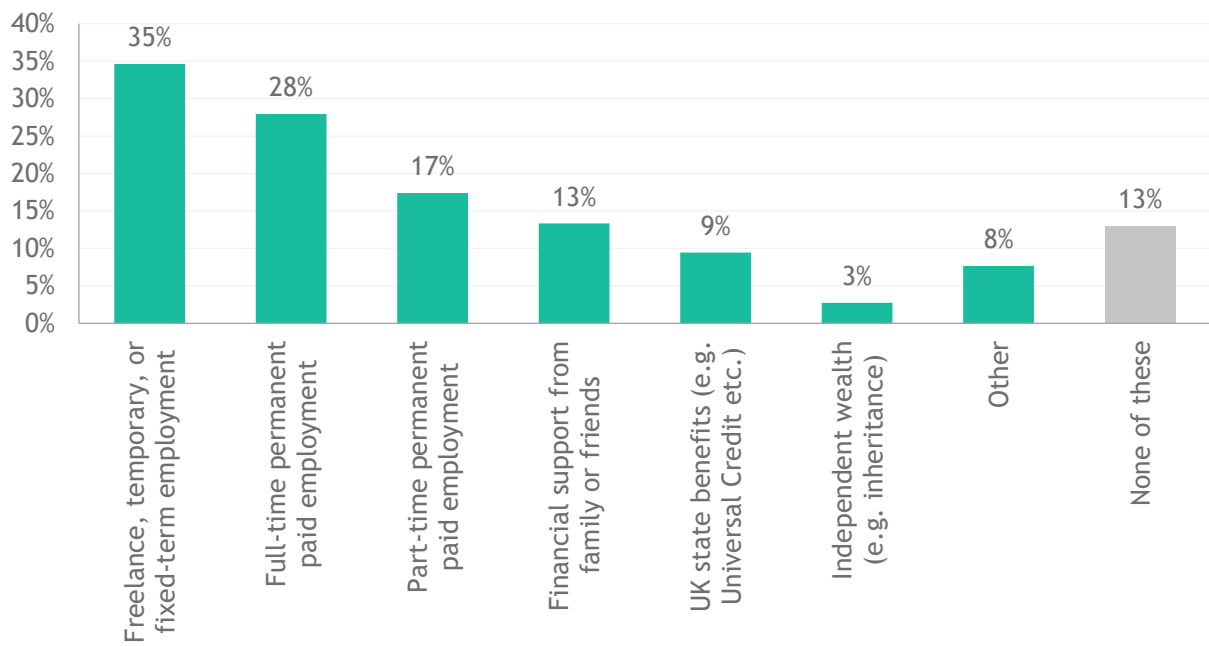
2018/19 income indirectly related to comic production activity	In-person workshops	Online workshops	Talks	Permanent teaching positions	Private commissions	Part-time/peripatetic teaching	Merchandise sales	Other
Up to £100	10%	27%	7%	0%	15%	5%	27%	5%
£100-£500	31%	36%	50%	0%	41%	26%	27%	14%
£500-£1,000	27%	9%	23%	5%	18%	23%	16%	5%
£1,000-£2,000	13%	27%	10%	9%	14%	19%	12%	24%
£2,000-£5,000	10%	0%	8%	18%	9%	14%	12%	10%
£5,000-£10,000	5%	0%	1%	18%	3%	5%	3%	19%
£10,000-£20,000	2%	0%	0%	18%	2%	9%	2%	14%
£20,000-£50,000	2%	0%	0%	27%	0%	0%	1%	10%
£50,000+	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	1%	0%
<i>Approximated mean</i>	£2,055	£594	£820	£15,207	£1,168	£2,574	£1,873	£6,898
<i>Base</i>	128	11	96	22	176	43	126	21
<i>Margin of error (max)</i>	8%	28%	10%	19%	7%	13%	8%	18%

### Other sources of income

- 87% of respondents indicated that they received income from one or more sources unrelated to their comics production; on average, respondents cited a single unrelated source of income.
- Compared to other income sources, more respondents recorded income in the higher brackets for unrelated sources. In the higher income brackets, however, a wider range of income levels emerged with a higher proportion of respondents earning more from these sources compared to income generated directly or indirectly from their comics production.

- 55% who recorded income from sources unrelated to their comics production for the 2018/19 financial year earned between £5,000 and £20,000 from any single source. A further 23% earned between £20,000 and £50,000 and a small proportion (2%) earned £50,000+ from any single unrelated source of income in 2018/19.
- The three most prominent sources of income not related to comics production were freelance, temporary, or fixed term employment, full-time permanent paid employment, and part-time permanent paid employment; 35%, 28%, and 17% of respondents cited these as indirectly related sources of income.
- 21% of respondents cited unrelated income from sources other than paid employment; 13% financial support from family or friends, and 9% UK state benefits.
- Of all the sources of unrelated income, full-time permanent employment generated the highest average return for those that recorded income from this source for the 2018-19 financial year - £27,334. 72% of those who recorded income for 2018/19 from full-time permanent employment earned between £20,000 and £50,000.
- Part-time paid employment generated an average income of £13,247 in 2018/19. 36% of those who cited it as an income source in 2018/19 earned between £10,000 and £20,000 from this activity, and a further 21% earned between £5,000 and £10,000. 21% earned between £20,000 and £50,000, which was the highest income bracket for this source.
- Freelance, temporary, or fixed-term paid employment generated an average income of £13,150.05 for those that cited this as a source of income in the 2018/19 financial year; this was a source of unrelated income for the largest proportion of respondents (31%) who recorded income from these sources during this period. Respondents recorded a wide range of income levels from this source, from 15% who earned less than £1,000 to 3% who earned £50,000+.

From what sources do you receive financial income other than your comic production?



Base: All respondents - 615

Margin of error: ±4%

On average, respondents had one source of income unrelated to comic production.

What was your income for financial year 2108-19 from [listed unrelated sources]?

2018/19 income not related to comic production activity	Financial support from family or friends	Independent wealth	Freelance, temporary, or fixed-term employment	Part-time permanent paid employment	Full-time permanent paid employment	UK state benefits	Other
None	91%	99%	69%	85%	75%	94%	94%
Up to £100	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
£100-£500	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
£500-£1,000	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	0%
£1,000-£2,000	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%	0%
£2,000-£5,000	2%	1%	4%	2%	0%	1%	1%
£5,000-£10,000	1%	0%	5%	3%	1%	2%	2%
£10,000-£20,000	1%	0%	7%	5%	5%	1%	2%
£20,000-£50,000	1%	0%	7%	3%	18%	0%	0%
£50,000+	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
<i>Approximated mean</i>	£441.76	£199.35	£4,046.17	£1,982.73	£6,743.05	£314.31	£821.80
<i>Base</i>	598	617	598	608	604	608	617
<i>Margin of error (max)</i>	2.3%	0.9%	3.7%	2.8%	3.4%	1.9%	1.9%

2018/19 income unrelated to comic production - only respondents who received income from unrelated sources

2018/19 income not related to comic production activity	Financial support from family or friends	Independent wealth	Freelance, temporary, or fixed-term employment	Part-time permanent paid employment	Full-time permanent paid employment	UK state benefits	Other
Up to £100	4%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
£100-£500	20%	0%	7%	3%	0%	5%	3%
£500-£1,000	15%	0%	7%	3%	0%	11%	5%
£1,000-£2,000	15%	0%	8%	3%	1%	16%	8%
£2,000-£5,000	17%	44%	14%	12%	0%	16%	13%
£5,000-£10,000	15%	11%	17%	21%	3%	41%	28%
£10,000-£20,000	9%	11%	22%	36%	19%	11%	28%
£20,000-£50,000	6%	33%	22%	21%	72%	0%	8%
£50,000+	0%	0%	3%	0%	5%	0%	8%
<i>Approximated mean</i>	£4,892.04	£13,666.67	£13,150.05	£13,247.25	£27,334.23	£5,164.86	£13,001.28
<i>Base</i>	54	9	184	91	149	37	39
<i>Margin of error (max)</i>	11%	33%	6%	10%	7%	16%	14%

## Expenditure

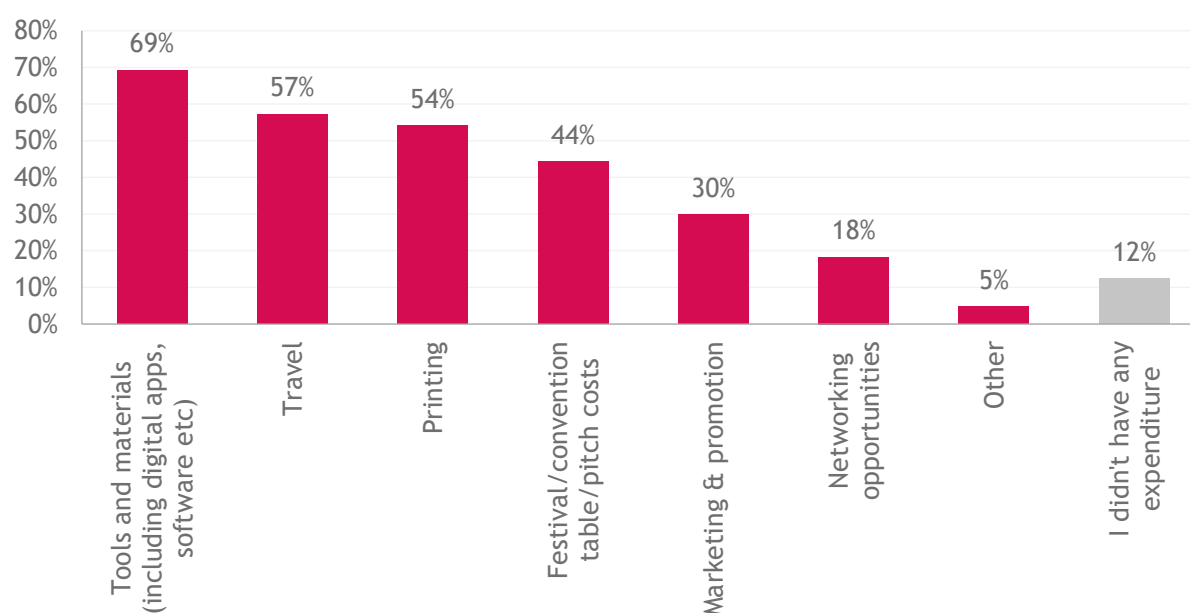
- 88% of respondents indicated one or more areas of expenditure related to their comics production, not including their time. On average, respondents identified 3 areas of expenditure.
- The three most prominent areas of expenditure directly related to comics production were tools and materials, travel, and printing; these were cited by 69%, 57%, and 54% of respondents, respectively.
- Of the three most prominent areas of expenditure, travel incurred the highest average costs for the 53% of respondents that recorded expenditure on these



sources for the 2018-19 financial year - £1,518. It should be noted, however, that this is due to a small proportion of respondents spending more on travel costs, as 56% of those who recorded travel expenses in 2018/19 spent £100 or less. 6% spent £2,000 or more, with 1% spending £5,000-£10,000.

- 50% of respondents recorded printing expenditure, at an average expense of £1,035.15 for 2018/19. 62% spent £100 or less, and the highest level of expense was £5,000-£10,000; incurred by 2% of respondents.
- Tools and materials incurred an average cost of £691.11, with 66% of respondents recording expenditure in this area for 2018/19. 62% spent £100 or less, and the highest level of expense was £2,000-£5,000; incurred by 1% of respondents.

What were your expenditures for financial year 2018-19 related to your comic production?



Base: All respondents - 618

Margin of error: ±4%

On average, respondents cited 3 areas of expenditure related to their comic production.

The 'Other' related areas of expenditure cited by respondents were consumables (printing, postage etc), outsourcing (colourists, lettering etc), and research/training.

What was your other expenditure for the financial year 2018-2019 related to your comic production (not including your time)?

2018/19 expenditure related to comic production activity	Travel	Marketing and promotion	Festival/convention table/pitch	Printing	Tools and materials	Networking opportunities	Other
None	47%	73%	59%	50%	34%	85%	96%
Up to £100	7%	11%	8%	9%	13%	5%	0%
£100-£500	23%	11%	24%	23%	28%	7%	2%
£500-£1,000	10%	2%	6%	8%	12%	1%	1%
£1,000-£2,000	7%	1%	2%	5%	8%	2%	0%
£2,000-£5,000	4%	1%	1%	4%	4%	0%	0%
£5,000-£10,000	3%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
£10,000+	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
<i>Approximated mean</i>	<b>£614</b>	<b>£150</b>	<b>£210</b>	<b>£523</b>	<b>£456</b>	<b>£62</b>	<b>£66</b>
<i>Base</i>	598	607	606	604	589	611	618
<i>Margin of error (max)</i>	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	2%

2018/19 expenditure related to comic production - only respondents who spent on comic production

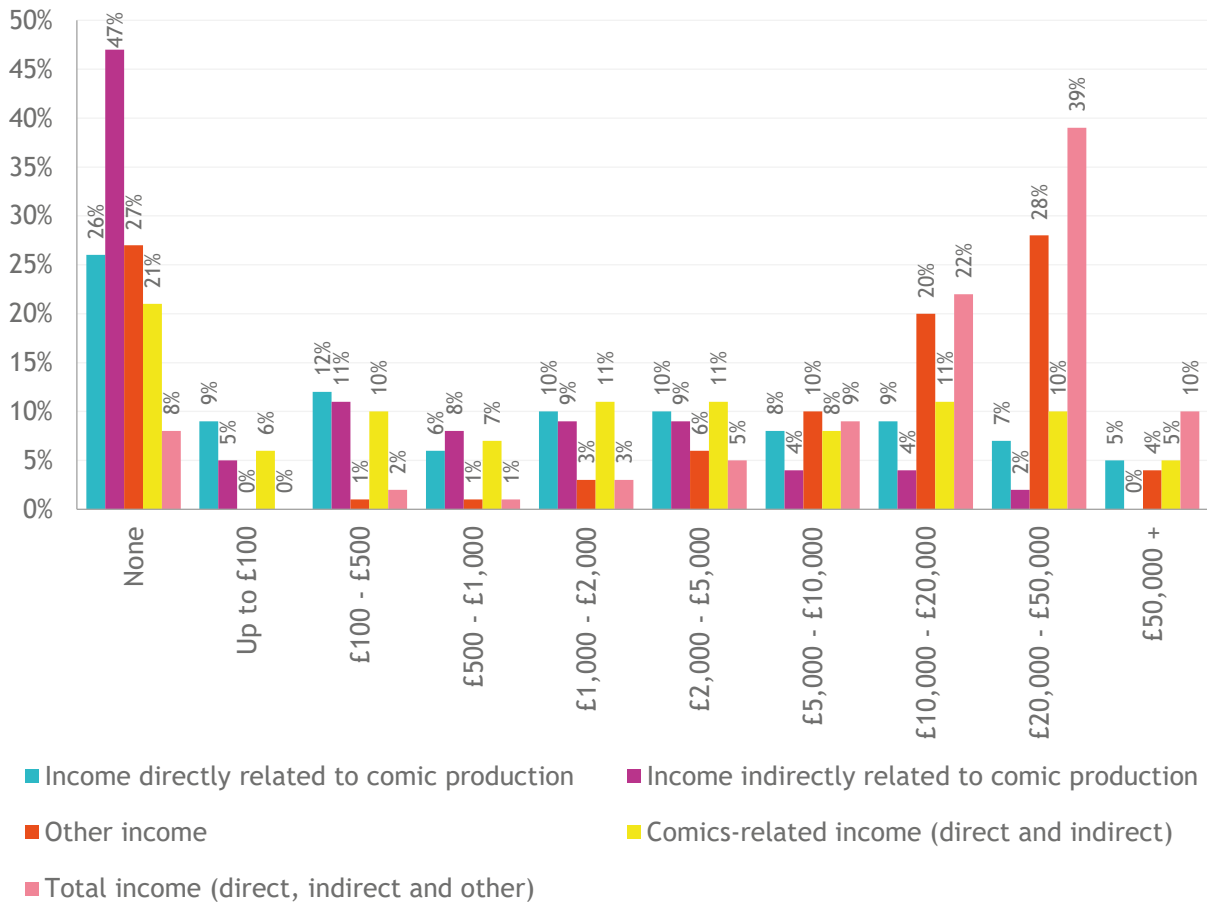
2018/19 expenditure related to comic production activity	Travel	Marketing and promotion	Festival/convention table/pitch	Printing	Tools and materials	Networking opportunities	Other
Up to £100	13%	40%	20%	17%	20%	33%	13%
Up to £100	43%	40%	58%	45%	42%	46%	42%
£100-£500	18%	8%	15%	16%	19%	10%	25%
£500-£1,000	13%	6%	4%	11%	12%	11%	4%
£1,000-£2,000	7%	5%	2%	8%	5%	1%	4%
£2,000-£5,000	5%	1%	0%	2%	1%	0%	8%
£5,000-£10,000	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	4%
<i>Approximated mean</i>	<i>£1,158</i>	<i>£564</i>	<i>£512</i>	<i>£1,035</i>	<i>£691</i>	<i>£410</i>	<i>£1,699</i>
<i>Base</i>	<i>317</i>	<i>161</i>	<i>249</i>	<i>305</i>	<i>389</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Margin of error (max)</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>6%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>20%</i>

### Overall and net incomes

- The average overall income related directly or indirectly to comics production, for the 79% of respondents who recorded income from these sources for 2018/19, was £10,299; within a scale of £0-£180,100
- 44% of these respondents earned £1,000 or less from their comics production; a further 22% earned between £1,000 and £5,000. 5% earned £50,000 or more.
- For respondents who recorded income directly related to their comics production in 2018/19, the average income was £7,958; within a scale of £0-£179,000.
- For respondents who recorded income indirectly related to their comics production in 2018/19, the average income was £2,251.
- The average total income, for respondents who recorded income from any source for 2018/19, was £24,223; within a scale of £0-£180,100.

- With expenditure considered, 59% of respondents made a net income from their comics production in 2018/19; including both directly and indirectly related sources. 13% broke even, with a net 0 income/expenditure balance, and 29% made a net loss.
- 13% of respondents made a net income from their comics production of £1,000 or less in 2018/19, whilst 9% made a net income of £20,000-£50,000; at the top end, 5% made a net income of £50,000 or more.
- Net losses tended to be at the lower end of the scale, with 13% of respondents making a net loss of £100 or less. 12% made a net loss of between £500 and £2,000, and 1% recorded the highest level of loss at £10,000-£20,000.

Overall income by source

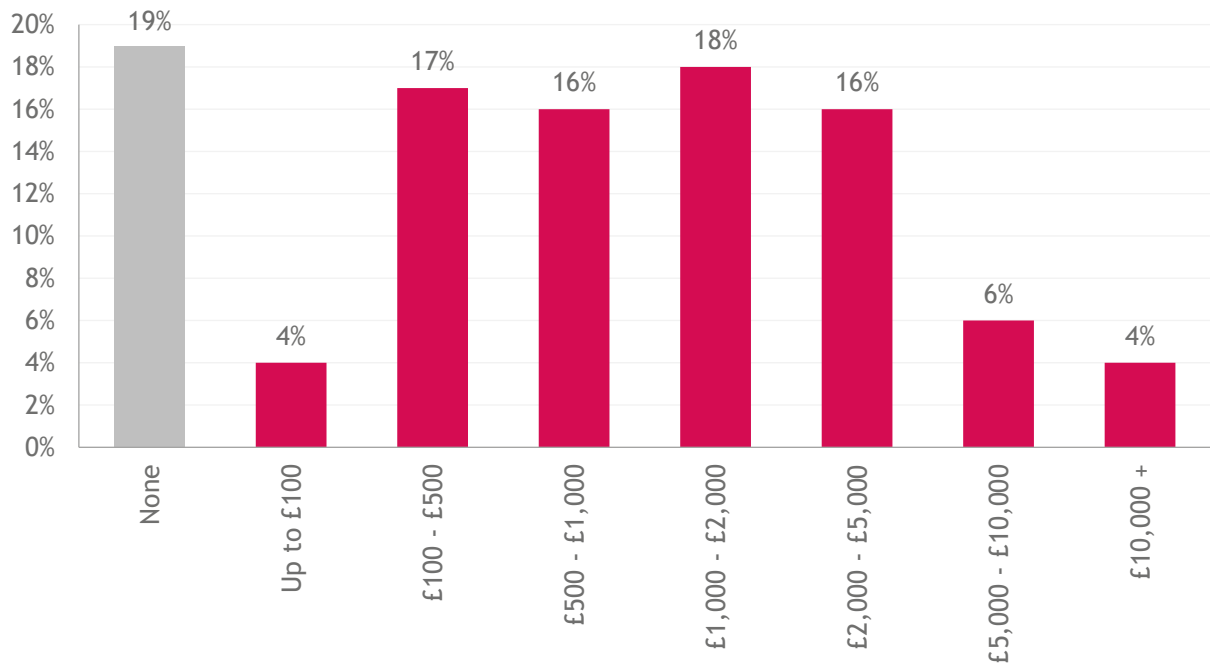


Base: All respondents - 612

Margin of error: ±4%

	Income directly related to comic production	Income indirectly related to comic production	Other income	Comics-related income (direct and indirect)	Total income (direct, indirect, and other)
Mean	£7,958	£2,251	£14,282	<b>£10,299</b>	<b>£24,223</b>
Median	£750	£60	£14,000	<b>£1,460</b>	<b>£19,100</b>

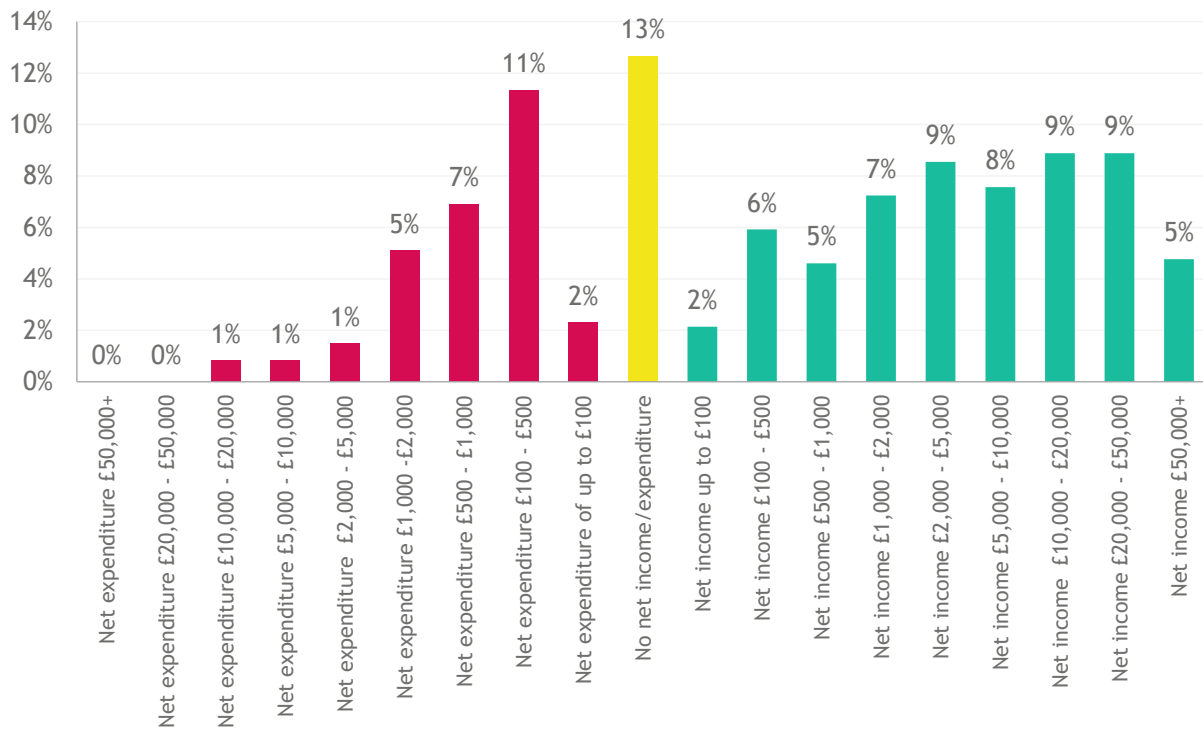
*Overall expenditure on comic production activity*



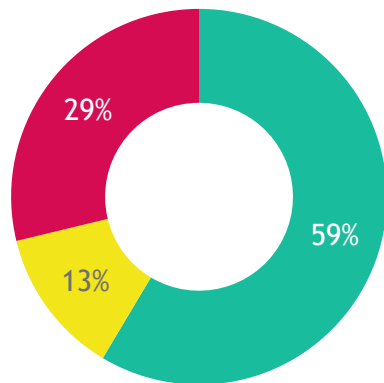
Base: All respondents - 618

Margin of error: ±4%

Net comics income (direct and indirect income minus expenditure)

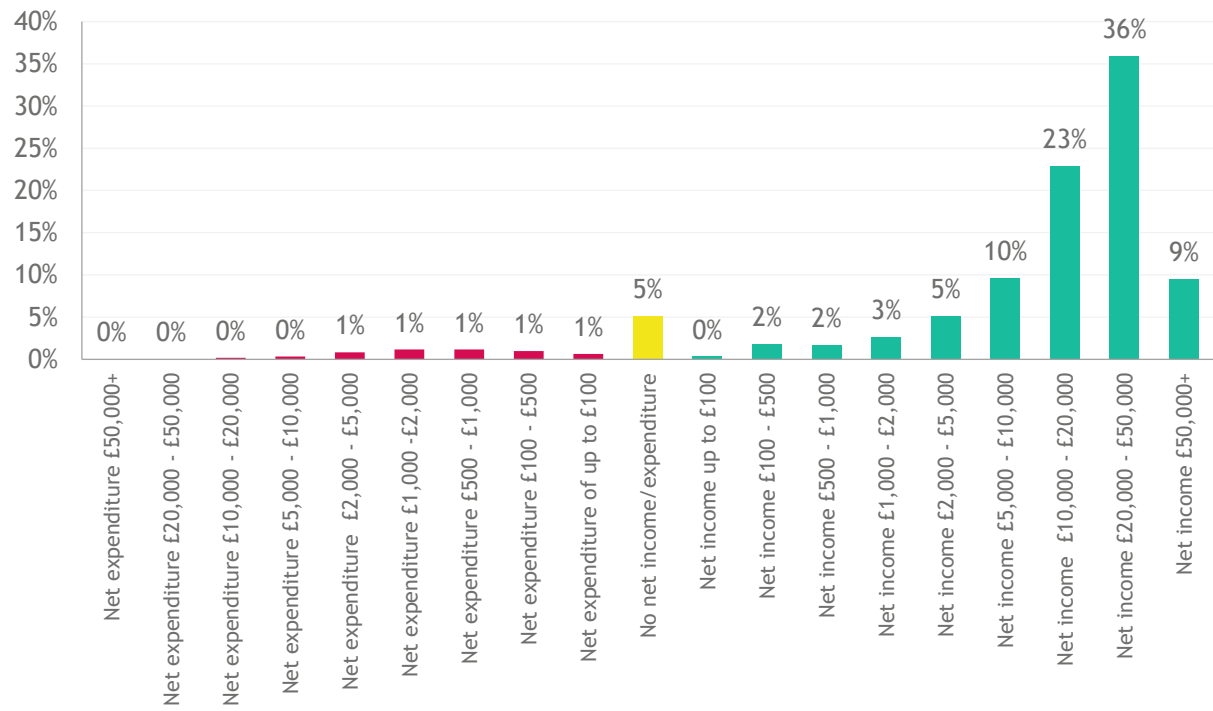


- Net income
- Net even
- Net expenditure

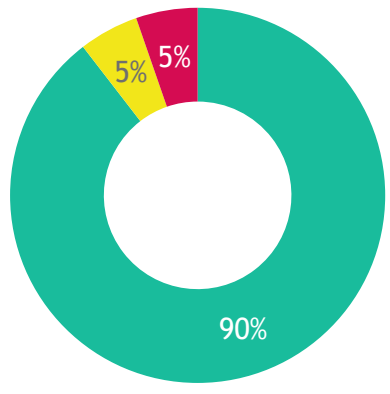


Base: All respondents - 608  
Margin of error: ±4%

Net total income (direct and indirect and other income minus expenditure)



- Net income
- Net even
- Net expenditure



Base: All respondents - 602  
Margin of error: ±4%

## Perceptions of the sector

### Personal reflections

- On being asked to describe their feelings about comics and the comics industry, the responses to the two elements of this question were largely polarized between an overwhelming love for comics, and high levels of frustration regarding the comics industry. In short, they could be summarised as *“I love comics but...”*

*“Love comics the medium, love comics the community, not as fond of comics the industry” (CC)*

- The majority of respondents used the opportunity offered by this question to express their deep love for comics as a medium, both as creators and consumers, and for the grassroots, indie, communities that they have found themselves welcomed into or have developed for themselves.
- Despite many respondents noting concerns regarding issues of bias and discrimination in the industry as a whole, it is in their own communities that creators find the support, representation, and inclusiveness that may be lacking elsewhere in the industry.
- Alongside this positivity, a number of recurrent themes emerged from critical comments regarding the comics industry. These may be summarised as falling into four broad categories:
  - **Comic production does not pay a living wage** - including considerations of the labour-intensive nature of the work, a lack of consistency in rates of pay across the industry, and comparisons with higher rates elsewhere in the creative industries.
  - **The established industry appears cliquy, discriminatory, and difficult to access** - including perceptions of a ‘gatekeeper’ culture, which maintains an unrepresentative status-quo.
  - **There is a need for strategic development of audiences and markets** - to be sustainable and resilient the industry must recognise, develop, and reach new markets and audiences.
  - **The comics industry needs to be more professional** - including the development of more transparent and regulated approaches to production and distribution, for example.





*“Some freelancers doing badly paid, sporadic work for massive corporations. Self-publishing is just pocket money and cannot support you for a 40-year career” (CC)*

*“I have largely come to terms with the fact that it would be impossible/incredibly stressful to attempt to make comics my primary source of income. From a high-level perspective, the economic system, cultural perceptions, and access to comics in the UK feel like barriers to the industry developing” (CC)*

*“I like to make comics as a passion that feeds into my main practice as an illustrator. It's the only way I can think of it that doesn't upset me or make me feel like I'm wasting my time making comics. They help me to get work, and it's integrated into my work, but standing on its own, I'd never make enough money to survive on” (CC)*

*“I love comics. I think they are super valuable. I think they take a lot of work and I think that publishers should pay fair advances so that comic makers can actually live well and make comics” (SC)*

*“I like making comics anyway, but I wish it were easier to make a living from it or from art in general” (SC)*

### **Routes into the industry**

Another key theme to emerge from the responses to this question was the perception of the industry as being cliquey, with a small number of powerful ‘gatekeepers’ which make it all but impenetrable without having the right connections and networks. The established industry was often described as being unrepresentative, and discriminatory against creators who identify as being from marginalised groups. This perception was consistent across all career status groups.

*“I love comics and love making them and publishing other people's work, but I find the industry in the UK especially to be often insular and full of cliques” (AH)*

*“Comics are for every single type of person made by every type of person, but the industry can be a clique, risking overly praising and promoting one another as friends, and not lifting up incredible talent out there because they're not “in the network”. There is clear division by countries, culturally, tastes, marketing which is interesting and needs to be talked about more” (AH)*

*“Currently impossible to break into substantially due the extremely close quarter stance taken by those in the ‘star’ clique. Understandably, the audience for comics*

*being pretty small, those 'stars' seem to be reticent in spreading the audience to others. There seems to be no real broadening of the industry as a whole” (CC)*

*“I used to be more enthusiastic, but as a trans artist who is an immigrant in the UK, I can't say working in comics has been easy. Networking has (and still is) challenging and I suppose I never had the potential of being a good comic artist. At least that's what the circumstances have led me to believe. I have made friends and friendly acquaintances in the industry but, even if I am now working more, I don't feel part of the industry” (CC)*

*“I would love to expand my comic creation abilities to work in the industry, but I don't feel I produce work the industry would be interested in. I feel the scene is vibrant for those with existing contacts in the industry” (CC)*

*“I think the only stories that are commissioned are the ones which continue the status quo. this means people from different backgrounds, or have different point of views don't have the same probability of getting commissioned” (CC)*

*“Frustrated. I have dreams of not being an indie self-publisher any more but, so far when I've made some tentative steps in that direction, I've been met with some rather dubious-looking contracts, some good old-fashioned sexism ... and I've struggled a bit to find advice on how to negotiate these situations” (CC)*

*“Conservative and cliquy” (CC)*

*“I think the industry could be a lot better, especially in outreach to new creators or minorities, instead of focusing the majority of its interest and aid around straight, cis white men who are established and don't need the opportunity as much as others” (CC)*

*“It's intimidating, and feels very unfriendly to people who don't fit a certain art style or who want to write queer/minority stories” (SC)*

*“The comics industry seems geared towards superheroes and specific art styles. If you are outside of these "norms" you tend to get pushed to the side” (SC)*

*“I feel like you have to know someone who knows someone just to get any info about opportunities or resources” (SC)*

*“I love comics, but feel the industry is very hushed up with regards to ways to get in, and pricing and pay” (SC)*

*“I find it kind of a boys club sometimes” (SC)*

## *Market and audience development*

The need to develop new markets and effective marketing strategies to engage new audiences emerged as a key concern for many respondents, particularly the Current Career group. The need to engage new readers was often put in the context of a vibrant creative scene, which is struggling to find the readership it needs to be financially sustainable.

Linked to this, there was a sense that comic production does not receive critical attention or recognition and is often disregarded as an artform; particularly in the UK arts sector. In addition, the media and market focus on mainstream superhero content was widely seen as having a stultifying impact on the wider recognition of comic production as an artform, and the cultivation of potential new audiences.

*“A shrinking professional market and an overwhelmed indie market, both choked at the distribution point” (AH)*

*“There seems to be more support and publishing opportunities these days for issue-based, reality-based stories than the wacky weird comics of old” (AH)*

*“As a consumer, it’s great to see fresh content we find in the indie scene. As a creator, the industry feels at a crossroads where hobby meets business, neither truly knows how to deal with the other as yet” (AH)*

*“Disheartened, perhaps. There’s so much exciting work...and so small a response from outside the community. The same two publishers getting press coverage, the same critical voices over and over and yet no one being vocal about actual bad behaviour within comics publishing” (CC)*

*“I wish the UK comics industry got more attention from the media and the general public!” (CC)*

*“I feel that there is an overwhelming pool of talent and great work which is not reaching the wider reading public. Large UK comics publishers do not exist as such anymore. IPC may have been less than ideal, but they had a wide distribution for 2000AD. There isn’t any similar company that is effectively reaching the lucrative teen market” (CC)*

*“Opportunities to spread one’s work and improve the health of the scene at conventions are limited by the way every customer has become a seller, spending events designed to grow the community effectively running a jumble sale” (CC)*

*“I still think it’s an industry that is looked down upon, like it’s a throwaway entertainment. Not taken seriously by the arts” (CC)*

*“Despite all the journalism promoting the medium the general public still views comics as just superheroes or inferior to film or books, the Direct Market is terribly outdated” (CC)*

*“Comics and GNs should be getting reviewed properly in newspapers and magazines, and displayed prominently in bookshops ... I think comics should be being marketed to people who like books and stories, rather than just constantly being sold to its existing market of comics fans” (CC)*

*“I think the fixation on the Superhero genre, while lessened (in comics at least) over the last couple of decades, hurts the medium as a whole. There is always a place for escapism, but when that’s all people outside of the indie world know it makes it hard to find new audiences” (CC)*

*“The set up for my corner of the industry needs to escape the strangle hold of ... a single entity that controls nearly all distribution in the US/UK. The fans are diminishing and there’s no way, with this current set up, to re-engage old fans and engage new ones” (CC)*

*“It’s the greatest storytelling medium, but I think it the industry has never been able to shake the stigma of it being something aimed at ‘nerds’, to the point of even being mildly embarrassed about it - and that holds us all back” (CC)*

*“Comic needs to be for working people and especially for youth and should be traded with a very affordable price for them. The reason it is so huge, for example, in Japan is because it always belongs to working class and young people and nowhere near high art categories” (CC)*

*“I love comics, there is still so much untapped potential in the medium ... factors related to audience take up alongside alt entertainment, the distribution stranglehold, the difficulties of approaching LCS vendors ... the attitudes of wider audiences to the idea of comics” (CC)*

*“It feels like it’s in a state of flux, with quite a divide between small press self-publishers-- which feels like the future, but having to do everything on a shoestring-- and work for hire artists working for the big publishers on super-heroes and licensed characters-- which feels like it’s in decline as the traditional audience gets older, despite the success of the Marvel movies, etc” (CC)*

*“We're in a period of comics realising their full potential with more diverse stories and styles but the mainstream needs to find more ways to engage the general public” (CC)*

*“I love the medium, in places like France and Belgium its taken seriously, and as such some incredible artists emerge, some of which are now exhibited permanently in the Louvre and museums in Europe. There is a lot of value in the industry if it is given a place to be heard outside of the conventions” (SC)*

*“Comics are a great medium (you can do anything and cheaply) but the audience isn't there in the current model. They just want marvel movies and funko pop figures. At the other end it's ... coffee table hardback autobio comics about navel gazing comics artists being introspective. I'd love to get some cheap real mass market British comics out there for working class kids that are relevant and have substance” (SC)*

*“Pretty grim at the moment. A lot of Good work being produced but not sure if any of it makes the cultural impact it should or if it sells enough to provide creators with a livelihood” (SC)*

*“There is a great deal of potential out there. My attempts at selling in comic stores have been pitiful. My work seems extremely niche. I would love to find more buyers, more people interested in my style and humour. I feel like an invisible woman (and not in a good way)” (SC)*

*“Seems very middle class and left wing. Not really seen any working-class voices ... I think comics have a tremendous potential to engage and enthuse reluctant readers, hopefully guiding them towards a life-long love of literature” (SC)*

*“I feel the industry is happy to play a background tune to the main books market. The fact that comics are pigeon-holed into selective shops and markets bothers me and allows 'others' to think of them as childish. I really wish they were more mainstream and understood as the story-telling mediums they are and not assumed to be superhero junk, as most people think they are” (SC)*

Echoing their thoughts about the need to nurture new audiences, a number of respondents expressed the feeling that comics are the perfect medium for storytelling and offer a uniquely accessible format for both consumers and creators.

*“I feel sad at how on the periphery comics are. Its feels as though those of us that fall in love with them, stay in love, but it's very hard for newcomers to come the*

*table. I would really like to see comics taken in as just another form of storytelling - they are no different to other books and do not need to be a sub-genre” (CC)*

*“The most cost effective and inclusive method to tell diverse stories in an accessible way to people who want to listen” (CC)*

*“Have always considered them [comics] an art form in their own right, capable of telling a story and creating space for a reader's imagination and visualisation in a unique way” (CC)*

*“Great storytelling medium. Keeps itself smaller than it could be for various reasons - direct market instead of mainstream, over-politicised material, movie deal mentality” (CC)*

*“Comics are an incredible medium and offer something very unique from TV or books. I wish everyone read them” (SC)*

*“Comics are just the best way to express some things, to get messages across, to make things understood. They're somewhere between prose and film where anything that can be imagined is possible. I grew up with some favourite newspaper comic strips and always admired how political points etc could be made with humour” (SC)*

### **Reform of industry practices**

The industry as a whole was widely criticised for being unprofessional and in need of more protections, perhaps including some form of regulation, for creators. Echoing the concerns about shrinking markets, a recurring theme in comments about the industry was the lack of effective, accessible, production and distribution routes. Linked to this was a sense that a few companies have a monopoly over essential processes within the industry, which is effectively stifling the market; limiting its sustainability and potential growth.

*“Lots of talent hampered by distribution monopoly” (CC)*

*“The UK comics industry, such as it is, has always been beset by problems of lousy distribution, limited vision, poor public profile, lack of resources and a general state whereby a bubbling fannish enthusiasm and love for the form was doing a hell of a lot of work compensating for a dearth of professional competence and reliable financial investment” (CC)*

*“It needs a complete overhaul I'm hoping that this time will enable us to rebuild the infrastructure in the UK to best serve inclusivity training opportunities and*

*infrastructure for production and distribution channels and a more outward looking worldwide view rather than UK and US centric” (CC)*

*“I adore the medium, but the industry itself is a nightmare. I feel that most publishers are deeply alienated from what the contemporary generation of readers and creators are interested in - not entirely their fault, the publishing industry is itself a dinosaur that largely doesn't grasp comics” (CC)*

*“An amazing body of people and creatives fighting within a failing system of retail and distribution. An industry desperately in need of an upgrade and more transparency/balancing of income across publishers/roles. The pay gap even as one individual across different jobs is crazy” (CC)*

*“I think there's a great community, many of my best friends I've met through making comics. I also think there are monsters in the industry ... Preying on an indie scene to enrich themselves and weasel into positions of respect and authority” (CC)*

*“I have been massively burned by legal issues in the past, and I feel that many indie comics people (including myself) are naive about legal and business issues, especially as big publishers etc are increasingly looking to indie comics to acquire IPs to develop. There has also been a lot of talk about unfair pay and contracts ... and I think it's great people are talking about it now, but I would love to see a cultural change” (CC)*

*“Comics as a medium only continues to go from strength to strength, but I'm concerned that the industry isn't being supported by those at the top of it - we'll continue to make comics in the small press and underground scene, but if there are no paths to grow and develop out of that scene it could lead to stagnation” (SC)*

*“The comics industry itself feels sluggish and behind the times despite the fact that there's a lot of very obvious routes to take to expand the market and be more innovative with their production” (SC)*

### **Supportive communities**

Underlying these concerns about the industry, however, was an overwhelming sense of feeling part of a supportive creative community; particularly within the grassroots, independent, production scene. This was particularly noticeable in responses from Current Career and Seeking Career respondents, who often expressed their positivity about the community in a context of this being despite the issues with the wider industry and lack of financial security.



*“I'm not a fan of the term "Comic Industry" personally. I realise that it is a fair term to use for professionals and amateurs alike but just "comics" in general suits me just fine. Comics is something I am extremely happy to be involved with. Having been an avid fan for years and to have found a community in amongst it, it feels good to be involved (at some level) within it creatively” (AH)*

*“The small press bit is a great thing to be a part of. I've met some great people. Work wise; narrative gives a good structuring and accessibility to creative exploration” (AH)*

*“Scottish comics is a key community in my life. I hold up the indie press community of the UK as an example to other creative communities. What I have managed and made is due to the support of my peers and friends in comics. Small press comics is a special world to me. The larger comics industry seems to wildly sway from a pretty cool place to a terrifying landscape for women (especially young, queer, poc etc) and that gives me the heebie-jeebies a bit” (CC)*

*“Really friendly, supportive and welcoming (at least, the independent aspect of the industry in the UK). Other creators have shared advice and support willingly” (CC)*

*“As someone who fell into this line of work by accident, it is a mysterious and confusing industry to an outsider. I am hugely indebted to the community of artists who have provided advice and support to help me make a success of it” (CC)*

*“Generally positive in the field of DIY/Grassroots comics production; a supportive environment. It is distinct from larger, more established forms of comics industry ... Income is small, though I have a day job to ameliorate costs; creative networks and ecosystems are vital for the sector's survival” (CC)*

*“I love working on comics, and the people in the industry are largely a really lovely bunch. I especially enjoy collaborative work which I have so far been lucky enough to do on quite a few occasions” (CC)*

*“There is a lot of great energy and wonderful people working in comics, and when we share information and actively work to form communities is when we are at our best” (CC)*

*“I love the community - I am only really active in the small press community but feel welcomed and at home” (CC)*

*“The feeling of mutual support is often extremely strong, and I rely on this in my working life. I'm concerned that it can be a bit 'cliquey', and that emerging creators*

*or others who may feel like outsiders in other ways do not have the same sense of belonging. And I just wish we all got paid more” (CC)*

*“I love being part of the independent comic creating scene, it's really full of a lot of great people who have amazing ideas. In the greater industry I think there's a lot of great talent rising up to the public face of comics and I like that we're seeing more and more ideas and people being represented, but I also think there's a lot of culture issues that comics still needs to overcome to be a healthy and safe industry for all creators” (SC)*

*“The UK (and Scotland in particular) have a thriving independent scene where people are generous to each other and keen to spend time helping and nourishing each other's creative endeavours” (SC)*

*“I enjoy the sense of community I find in alternative/indie comics and amongst female comic artists. At large though I feel excluded from the commercial/mainstream industry. I also feel demoralised by the lack of money ...There is something beautiful about creating in an environment where everyone is doing it for the joy of it rather than for the money, but it's not sustainable” (SC)*

*“I love comics, and I love the comics industry. As with any group of people, there are loudmouths and bigots, but there are also some of the kindest and most generous people I've ever met” (SC)*

*“I love comics, and while the industry has it flaws like any other industry (lawsuits, negativity, jealousy etc), I think it's one of the most inclusive and creative industries out there” (SC)*

### **Personal identity**

Overall, many respondents indicated that, whatever issues they may have with the industry, comic consumption and production is a part of who they are, a part of their identity; and that this sustains them and gives them the motivation to continue producing work.

*“I still love comics. Creating and reading. Always been a big part of my life” (AH)*

*“I have loved comics all my life, and always wanted to be part of it” (AH)*

*“I've spent 32 years working in all aspects of comics from being a writer, editor, and publisher and I LOVE this industry! I can't imagine working in any other kind of business” (CC)*

*“Love the medium. One of the greatest creative joys of my life. Have worked, sacrificed, and studied hard to get where I am” (CC)*

*“Lifelong love, tinged by fear for its future” (CC)*

*“I \*love\* comics and can't imagine dedicating my life to anything else. It's such an amazing and accessible medium! As for the comics industry... I often feel like I'm on the outside looking in, as I work 100% in the self-published indie scene” (CC)*

*“I am hugely positive about comics and their value/purpose. They are a lifelong passion” (CC)*

*“Comics are still the art form I care most about, and the one I am drawn to create, but the lack of a viable comics industry, at least in this country, means it's hard to elevate it above a time consuming, labour-of-love hobby” (CC)*

*“It's what I want to do with my life- make the next big superhero universe for everyone to love, and I know there's an effective way to do it right in the comics industry” (SC)*

*“They changed my life and make me forget the bad things when I read them and make them” (SC)*

*“I love comics, and what they're capable of - I'm excited to finally be making a go of telling my own stories. But I'm aware that I'm going to have to work incredibly hard if I'm going to make any kind of income out of them” (SC)*

*“It feels like an absolute mess most of the time, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. I fell in love with comics as a medium and I intend to stick with it. :)” (SC)*

### Changes that comic creators would like to see

Although many respondents noted more than one, often interlinked, change, six key themes emerged from their responses overall:

- **More time to produce** - not only in terms of simply having more time, but also in consideration of more realistic deadlines, being more productive as a personal goal, and achieving a better work/life balance.
- **Greater financial security** - linked quite closely to the time issues, this included better and more standardised rates of pay within the comics industry, a more consistent and stable workflow, and more recognition and support from funding bodies; both public and private / philanthropic.



were the most prominent; with greater self-confidence in their work also featuring highly. Respondents falling into the Amateur/Hobbyist group were most likely to indicate that they would like more time to create, along with greater market access.

### *More time*

Many comments about wanting more time to create were linked to financial issues; echoing responses to how they felt about the comics industry not paying a living wage. Responses largely centred on simply wanting sufficient time to focus on their comic production without worrying about their 'day-job'.

*"I'd have five days a week to dedicate to it" (AH)*

*"To make more work. To be able to dedicate at least a day a week to comics" (AH)*

*"Have more time - or the financial freedom - to do it" (CC)*

*"Have more time to produce and more support - financial and general peer support" (CC)*

*"More time to produce more exciting work, rather than having to keep one eye on the money/time differential to make ends meet. WFH projects - superhero stuff/licensed work - often feels like production-line shift work rather than something truly creative" (CC)*

*"More time, more money, more security" (CC)*

*"More time to work on my own projects rather than working on other people's" (CC)*

*"Ability to work full time on it without something in my daily life being more important even for a short while. There's nothing like bills to drain the life from an idea I would love to throw myself into" (SC)*

*"I wish I could change my working hours to 4 days a week in order to spend the 5th on comics, but financially and professionally it does not seem like an option for now" (SC)*

*"I'd have more time to work on comics, so I could focus on getting my name out there, and getting to work on cool stuff" (SC)*

*"Being able to spend more time on my art and having more confidence going forward" (SC)*

*"Being able to control my schedule with my part time job to allow the maximum time for art and comics making" (SC)*

*“If finances allowed, I would like to work a day or so less in my day job and focus on building a comics career” (SC)*

*“I need more time to draw in quiet and peace. But I have 3 kids and a mortgage, and I do my other job instead. I'd love if some benevolent deity would come down from above and wave his or her magic wand give me the financial cushion to get going in the business...” (SC)*

Concerns about unrealistic deadlines, and personal struggles with productivity / time management, were also frequently mentioned in relation to wanting more time to work on comics.

*“Better time management to get work done. Better ability to create in demand when time to create arises” (AH)*

*“Be faster! Make enough money to not have to have a real job” (AH)*

*“Deadlines that actually keep in consideration artists' needs and lives, instead of being forced to work every day all year round, including weekends, while the 99% of editors, publishers and the rest of management gets weekends and evenings off and holidays” (CC)*

*“Negotiating deadlines, balancing work/life. A pay that matches or at least better matches the level of work” (CC)*

*“Being able to work on one project, start to finish without having to get side-tracked doing other freelance work” (CC)*

*“Be more productive! I've got ideas but I tend to get in my head about actually putting stuff on paper. I would like to attend more fairs and build up a good self-published portfolio so I can hopefully eventually approach publishers” (SC)*

*“I would be doing a LOT more. Just personal issues, really - I need to learn to focus more, keep the momentum of my work going, not get derailed by illustration jobs...” (SC)*

*“To manage my time better. I feel like I get stuck too much in my research and development stage that I tend to rush out the final outcome. There is always a time where I get nervous and second guess myself on "officially" starting the pages, so I need to overcome that better” (SC)*

### **Greater financial security**

Strongly linked with comments about having more time and achieving a better work/life balance, and with how respondents said they felt about the low rates of pay within the comics industry, the issue of financial security was a common thread throughout the responses to this question.

*“To be free from the need to work for a living - in order to simply make comics full-time” (AH)*

*“Earn enough not to have to work my part time job to pay rent” (CC)*

*“Ideally, I'd be making enough money off of this to make it my job, but I really don't see that happening” (CC)*

*“To start making a regular income from the work I love most - comics!” (CC)*

*“Can I choose two? Better pay, better work/life balance” (CC)*

*“I'd like to be offered more better paid commissions, so as not to feel constantly harried and worried about getting more work” (CC)*

*“I'd earn a fair wage” (CC)*

*“Go full time if money wasn't an issue” (SC)*

*“I would quit my main job so I could work more on comics” (SC)*

*“Making some money from it and having an audience” (SC)*

*“I would love to be able to make a better income from comics production so that I could actually develop more time to developing my skills and producing work” (SC)*

Respondents reflected not only on wanting higher rates of pay, commensurate with the level of work they have to put into comics production and being able to make a living wage, but also on access to regular paying jobs and greater standardisation of pay rates for different areas of production; for example, standard page or day rates.

*“I'd like it if I earned a normal wage, it would be nice if publishers and (some) companies would offer better payments to reflect the time it takes to create comics. I have found private companies and commercial illustration pays much better” (CC)*

*“I'd love a regular paid strip so I could afford to go part time in the day job and spend more time making comics” (CC)*

*“More security - knowing what work I'm doing over a longer - 2-3-year period” (CC)*

*“Standard contracts for work for hire that could be used by publishers and creators alike would be extremely helpful. Setting a minimum page rate that could function as at least sort-of-official would also be a massive help to creators starting out”* (CC)

*“Having a liveable base page rate as standard across the industry”* (CC)

*“Increase the base level of pricing for work so I can do less but better work without worrying about financial stability”* (CC)

*“Have a steady stream of work coming in, so I wasn’t swinging from highs to lows”* (CC)

*“I wish there were greater opportunities to work on larger projects which paid well, as opposed to lots of little jobs which pay small amounts”* (CC)

The idea of creative freedom, linked to better pay, also emerged as a common theme in responses about pay and finances.

*“Being able to work on more personal led comics and still being able to pay the bills!”* (CC)

*“I’d like the financial stability to enable me to work on my own comics without worrying about whether they’ll make money”*

A number of respondents commented on changes they would like to see in other funding streams, such as public funding from the national Arts Councils and other grant bodies, in terms of more recognition and support for comics production.

*“Support to the arts in general (as well as other small-scale activities) would have to change substantially. Something on the lines of a Universal Basic Income would be the best, in my opinion. I don’t think the problem with comics production, in its source, only concerns comics, I think it’s a more universal problem inherent to our economic system that doesn’t allow for small non-profit activities to exist unless they are supported by working other, more profitable, jobs”* (AH)

*“I would like to receive funding from a public body to make time for my work - or even believe that Creative Scotland would take the work seriously enough to consider funding it”* (CC)

*“Financial backing would be amazing. I find myself 90% of the time taking on jobs that take up most of my free time just to make ends meet... especially with my current lack of employment”* (SC)



### *Increased access to market opportunities*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, comments about greater access to markets and opportunities to sell work were most prominent amongst the Seeking Career group. However, greater accessibility in routes to market and fairer access for independent creators was a change that respondents across all career status groups said they would like to see.

*“I would want to work part time and sell my comics etc if I knew how to” (AH)*

*“Having an agent to guide me/help sell my work. I would give a fairly high percentage for someone to take that side of the work away from me. I hate selling books and I hate selling myself. I’m terrible at both” (AH)*

*“More understanding of how to get my products seen” (CC)*

*“I’d quite like my work to be more popular and sought-after. More money would be nice too” (CC)*

*“I’d want to make my work more visible. As a writer, it’s very hard to promote yourself” (CC)*

*“The possibility that I could find a market for my work in the UK” (CC)*

*“One website which clearly compiles resources and links to other helpful sites in an organised and up-to-date fashion would make things easier for people in the industry” (CC)*

*“That there were paid publicised opportunities to make comics” (SC)*

*“To get to a wider audience, achieve a ‘name’ for myself. I constantly question my validity and the point of my trying to get into the industry, especially after 30 years of trying. Many high-profile creators like my work and have expressed interest in working with me, but nothing ever materialised” (SC)*

*“I would love to figure out a way to sell more. The positive feedback would be great for my confidence. I am in a catch 22 situation: unable to find the confidence to sell things because my work isn’t selling. Am I that rubbish?” (SC)*

*“I would love to know that I have an audience out there. It’s always good to have support from your partner or mum, but they aren’t out there buying your comic so I do wonder if my subject matters or in fact my drawing style is pleasing enough for people to want to pay for my comics. I would also love to get commissions for illustrations and stories, but I honestly don’t really know how to achieve this. Any help and advice welcome!” (SC)*

*“I'd love it if I could make money or gain some form of recognition - meaning people liking my stuff who don't already know me. Preferably both of those things, but either of them would be better than where I am now. I can't complain too much though because I'm still happy doing what I do regardless of money or people caring - at this point in time at least” (SC)*

Whilst for some respondents this was more focussed on understanding how the industry works, and how to find opportunities to show and their sell work, others, likely to be the more established creators, expressed a sense of frustration that they are not supported by current industry infrastructures and processes; particularly in the areas of publishing and distribution.

*“An approach to distribution that does not favour large book chains and large distributors that insist on heavy discounts that wipe out much income for creators - or any distribution model that does the same” (AH)*

*“A go-to website where publishers would list comic art jobs to find/different talent, rather than the secrecy and nepotism that exists in a lot of mainstream comics today” (CC)*

*“Better avenues for publication, especially creator owned work” (CC)*

*“More mainstream publishers being open to the Manga style/format” (CC)*

*“I would love to go through more traditional routes to publication. Self-publishing has its own advantages, but as someone who works full time and has to cover every aspect of comic creation alone, I think that I'd find having a publisher would enable me to focus more on comics creation, publicity and outreach” (CC)*

*“Add-on fast way to reach audience between creating stage to distribution” (CC)*

*“Distribution. Difficult to get into the shops” (CC)*

*“Better distribution and a better reach beyond my twitter bubble” (CC)*

*“There needs to be more partnership amongst creators and a network put together where more content can be shared across more distribution channels. A fair arrangement between shops and independent creators for tracking sales and fair remuneration of those sales to creators. Every book/sale counts. With conventions a consistent and fair table price with independent creators put to the forefront and not seen as cash cows to fill tables. Potentially a network where someone from Aberdeen can have an opportunity” (SC)*

*“More structured guidance on what to focus on from places to which I apply. In between submissions or work I find myself “following my nose” and doing things which I’m passionate about which is artistically satisfying but can sometimes feel like treading water” (SC)*

*“To know where to take it and get it published, to have more support/ network” (SC)*

*“Make it easier to connect with editors and publishers” (SC)*

Related to market access and raising the profile of their work, an interest in developing new audiences for comics also featured strongly; both in the context of respondents’ own work but also for the industry more broadly.

*“Opportunities to share work with wider audiences outside of comics people” (AH)*

*“Go full-time obviously! But in reality, I’d like to build my audience and my profile, which I’m working to do” (CC)*

*“More income and a wider audience base. We need to encourage more people to read comics” (CC)*

*“More weird people around to buy my shit” (CC)*

*“More readers, any which way how” (CC)*

*“More opportunities to reach a broader audience than the existing community who attend fairs and events. I feel like I sell more of my work to other comic creators than I do to the actual public. To some extent I feel there is too much emphasis on comics still being a niche medium even by our own community, rather than it being seen as something everyone can and should enjoy” (CC)*

*“The publishing industry, arts councils and festivals investing in producing, promoting and platforming more Graphic Novels that tell necessary stories to a whole new audience” (SC)*

### **Support from creator communities and the industry**

A strong sense of community emerged from the descriptions of how respondents feel about comics and the comics industry. The comments about what respondents would like to change offer an indication of how important this support is for creators, with many saying that they would like to be able to access more support; both from creator communities and from trusted professionals within the wider industry.

*“I would like more opportunities to actually speak with other creators, just to chat about things” (AH)*

*“Bigger peer support group of like-minded creators, with time to nurture it” (AH)*

*“A bigger, local, more accessible network of working professionals for support and networking” (CC)*

*“Be part of a supportive collective of like-minded individuals” (CC)*

*“I would like a community to share work and get feedback from, but I have not built that yet” (SC)*

*“I would love to be part of a peer group of fellow artists” (SC)*

*“To be more connected to other creators, and potential audiences” (SC)*

*“Access to a community ... with folks at various career stages who are willing to foster and support one another” (SC)*

*“More regular contact with other comics makers at a similar stage of career to me - preferably in real life, but online would be OK” (SC)*

*“Access to more honest feedback and advice from industry professionals” (CC)*

*“For publishers to be more responsive to ideas, to be more willing to have a discussion” (CC)*

*“Support from a union or independent advisory body that aims to improve creator rights and income, access to comics - e.g. grants to set up shops that appeal beyond traditional audiences - and visibility within UK culture” (CC)*

*“I’d like editors to always respond, and never be silent” (CC)*

*“I wish there was an organisation/ charity that specifically represented the interests of comics people. Like 'The Film & TV Charity' or 'Directors UK' or any of the other charities that support certain industries. Perhaps it could be started through philanthropy and grant funding and help to support and encourage those voices who are less well represented? Could it be part of an extension of a festival that already exists or cartoon museum? It needs to feel national and inclusive” (CC)*

Linked to this, greater opportunities to work collaboratively with other creators also emerged as a key change that respondents would like to see in their comic production life; particularly when the cost of hiring other makers to work on a project is not feasible.

*“More opportunities to work collaboratively” (CC)*

*“Easier to find other creators in the same space, style, etc to collaborate and co-promote” (CC)*

*“I would get help from other creators to lessen the burden of tasks on me. Doing everything myself all the time is overwhelming, and it is harder to do with poor mental health and a day job as well! It makes it feel like my goal of finishing and publishing my graphic novel is unachievable” (CC)*

*“Make it easier to collaborate with artists, etc., when you have no money to hire” (CC)*

### **Skills development**

For those respondents who identified personal skills development as the change they would like to see, most identified a need for more professional training in how the industry works; how to respond to a brief, how to approach and pitch to publishers, how to find an agent etc.

*“Knowledge on how best to pitch to publishers and grow an audience” (AH)*

*“Learn how/where to publish/self-publish digitally and grow an audience” (AH)*

*“I would like to educate myself and clients on realistic expectations and how to write and respond to briefs ... Comics is already quite a time-consuming thing, so to avoid re-doing, some knowledge around this would be great” (CC)*

*“A clear site offering support from financial aid to how to be market your work” (CC)*

*“More training in my skill and business” (SC)*

*“To learn how to write a script and pitch to publishers” (SC)*

*“Right now, a better understanding of the business side. Some online courses would be super helpful” (SC)*

*“More available information on getting published and the process of being picked up by a publishing house” (SC)*

A few also noted technical skills they would like to develop to improve their practice; for example, using digital drawing media.

*“I would like to learn how to do digital art but feel I’m getting on a bit and a bit slow to learn” (AH)*

*“Improved technical drawing skills” (AH)*

*“With working full time when I do draw comics, I tend to keep to drawing what I know, how I know to draw it, rather than spending time developing new skills” (CC)*

*“I would like just to focus on this and improve writing skills” (SC)*

### **Health and well-being**

A recurrent theme throughout the comments was that of the negative impact of living with mental health issues, and how this is a significant barrier to creativity and a more productive or rewarding comic production life; particularly in connection with anxiety and low self-esteem / lack of confidence.

*“Have the confidence to believe the work I’m producing is relevant and valued” (AH)*

*“Get the courage to make more comics again. I used to just spill them out, but I didn’t get much response, so I held back” (AH)*

*“Believing in myself more or being able to sit down and seriously work on some ideas” (CC)*

*“I’d like to get to a point with my mental health where I have more energy to devote to it” (CC)*

*“Reduce worry and procrastination” (CC)*

*“Less panic more making” (CC)*

*“Having more confidence to know it’s a level playing field (potentially) and that maybe not all the ideas have been created as yet” (SC)*

*“I’d be able to sit and work solidly like it was a ‘real job’ and spend less time dithering and being miserable, feeling like I was being a fool for taking my daft comics seriously” (SC)*

*“To be more focused and confident, better at networking” (SC)*

*“I wish I was more outgoing and could put myself out more in finding artists. I’ve been burnt a few times and go back and forth about how legitimate I am” (SC)*

*“Have the health and energy to pursue all my current projects” (SC)*

*“Be in a better headspace where I can spend more time on my comic” (SC)*

### **‘A Room of One’s Own’**

In addition to the key themes, another recurrent comment was the wish for a dedicated working space; largely to support a focussed approach to comics work, and provide

separation from other areas of life, but also to potentially provide a collaborative creative space. Cost was identified as the main barrier to making this possible.

*“I wish I had more opportunity to work with other artists collaboratively in a studio environment together. But it's not financially smart to travel to a rented studio when I can work from home” (CC)*

*“Space to work away from home so I feel like I'm working a real job (which I am) but I really need the headspace” (CC)*

*“A room or space of my own without distractions” (CC)*

*“Having a studio space outside my home or at least a regular paid gig rather than purely working alone” (CC)*

*“I'd love to have an actual workspace with a desk and such” (SC)*

*“It would be good to be able to have a studio space with some of my peers where we could work together” (SC)*

## Challenges and support needs

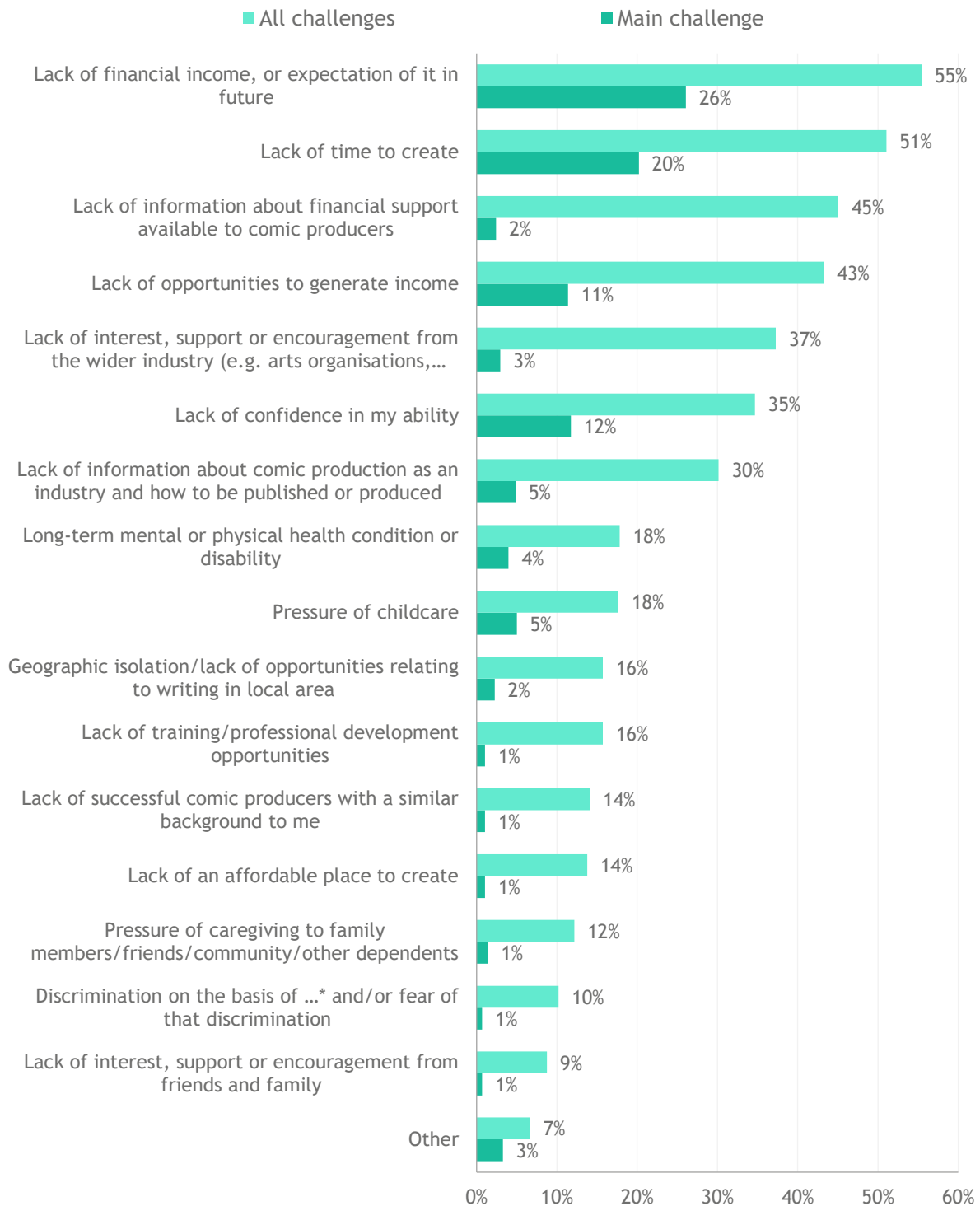
### Key challenges

- The main challenge respondents face in their comic production life is the ‘Lack of financial income, or expectation of it in future’. Over half of all respondents (55%) cited this as one of the challenges they face, and 26% as their main challenge.
- ‘Lack of time to create’ emerged as the second most prominent challenge, with 51% of respondents citing this as one of their challenges and 20% as their main challenge.
- ‘Lack of information about financial support available’ and ‘Lack of opportunities to generate income’ also featured highly. 45% cited the former, and 43% the latter as a challenge they face; 2% and 11% said this was their main challenge, respectively.
- Asked about the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the challenges they face, 45% of respondents said that this had impacted on the way they responded to this question.

The two main negative impacts were a reduction in time for comic production, due to increased childcare and other caring responsibilities, and increased financial insecurity; largely due to job loss, reduction in hours, or a decrease in commissions.



*In terms of your comic production, what are the key challenges you face? / And which is your main challenge?*



\*gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age, social class or other personal identification

Base: All respondents - 617 / 579

Margin of error: ±4% / ±4%

45% of respondents said that Covid-19 had impacted on the challenges they face, with many commenting that increased childcare and caring responsibilities had reduced the

time they have to spend on comics production. Increased financial insecurity and the negative impact of mental health issues on creativity and motivation also featured highly. These impacts are explored in more depth in the Covid-19 section of this report.

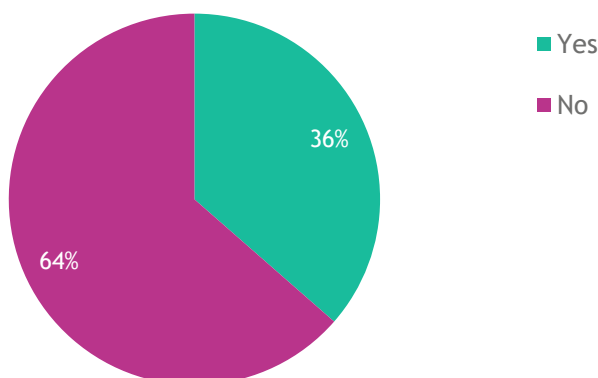
## Rights issues

- 36% of respondents have, at some time, been asked to sign away their intellectual or moral rights to their work as part of a contract agreement; of these, 25% have never agreed to it, 60% have sometimes agreed, and 15% have agreed every time they have been asked.
- The Current Career group are most likely to have been asked to sign away their rights in this way, with 51% saying they had been asked to do so; 21% said they were sometimes asked, 14% said they were rarely asked, and 13% said they were often asked.

Of those that had been asked, 23% had never agreed to it; 60% had sometimes agreed, and 17% had agreed every time.

- Those in the Seeking Career and Amateur/Hobby groups are less likely to have experienced such a request; with 13% and 12% having done so, respectively. Of those that had been asked, 39% of the Seeking Career respondents and 45% of the Amateur/Hobbyists had never agreed to it; 56% and 55% had sometimes agreed, respectively.

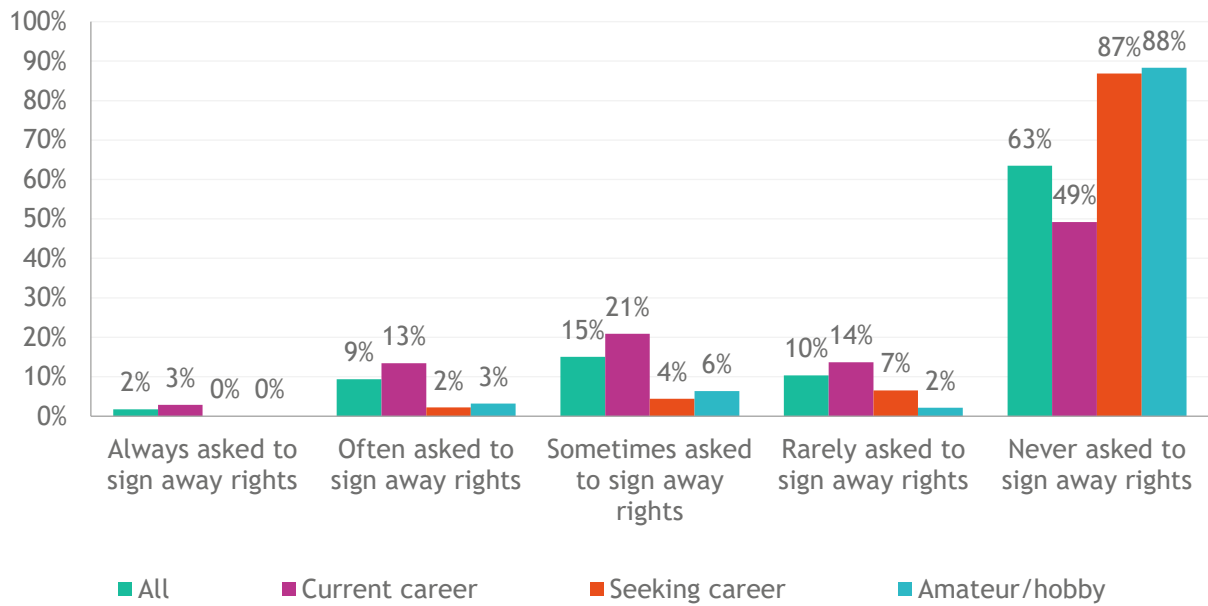
*Have you ever been asked to sign away your intellectual or moral rights to your work as part of a contract agreement?*



Base: All respondents - 601

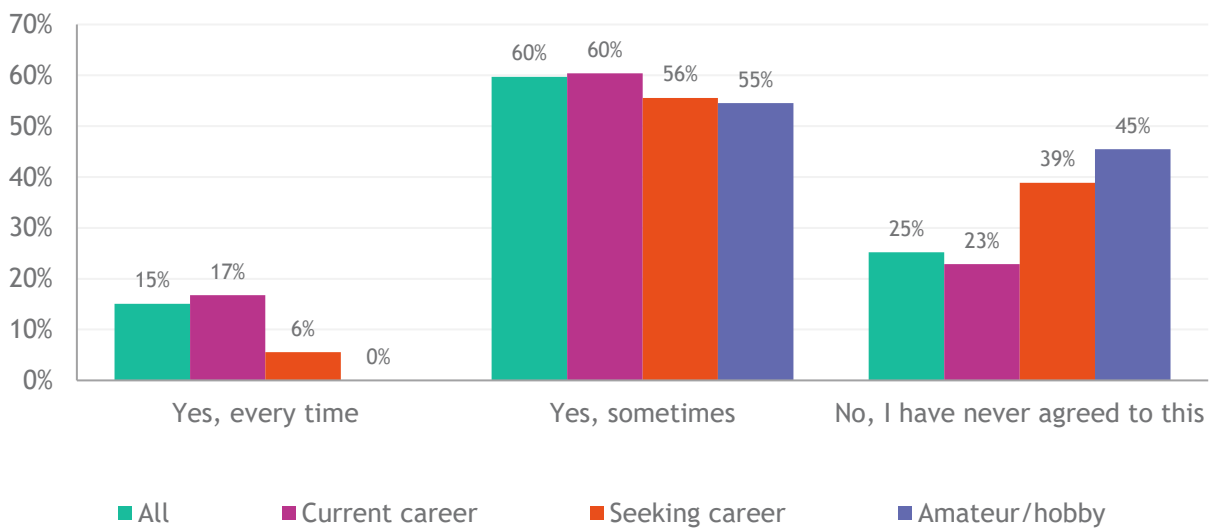
Margin of error: ±4%

How often has this been offered to / asked of you?



Base: All respondents - 619 / Current Career - 388 / Seeking Career - 137 / Amateur/Hobby - 94  
 Margin of error: ±4% / ±5% / ±6% / ±7%

And have you agreed to this?



Base: All respondents who had been asked to sign away rights - 226 / Current Career - 197 / Seeking Career - 18 / Amateur/Hobby - 11  
 Margin of error: ±6% / ±7% / ±23% / ±29%



For Amateur/Hobbyist creators the main reason for not selling at festivals / conventions was a sense that their work is not yet sufficiently developed to do so; either in quality or quantity.

Childcare, lack of opportunity due to the location of events, and a sense that less-established creators are less likely to have their applications to sell accepted were also frequently mentioned as barriers to attending events as a seller.

### **Cost**

*“Not financially worth it in my opinion” (AH)*

*“Too expensive to travel, pay for prints and table. Sales are break even, so it's not worth it” (CC)*

*“I find the money you make sitting behind a table all day is not worth the time spent doing so. I'd much rather run a workshop or do a talk for an hour or 2 and spend the rest of the time chatting to friends and enjoying the festival” (CC)*

*“Pointless, not enough sales” (SC)*

*“There are more shows than ever and the table & ticket prices at all the shows go up every year. However, the number of people attending, and their disposable income remains relatively static so the same spending power has to be spread over more and more creators” (SC)*

### **Lack of work to sell**

*“I don't have enough product to have a worthwhile presence at a convention” (AH)*

*“Work has primarily been for anthologies, so I don't have copies to sell. Plus, the pivot to digital means I have no physical copies” (CC)*

*“My regular comic work takes up all my time, so I have no new self-published work to sell” (CC)*

*“Most of my work is work for hire these days, rather than small press, so I no longer exhibit off my own back” (CC)*

*“Not right mix of comics and material to sell” (CC)*

*“They only select established comic makers, I don't have a long track record, so I guess I have to build up my portfolio of work” (CC)*

*“Lack of a product to sell. Honestly” (SC)*

*“Never had enough material in terms of comics to print or sell” (SC)*

*“I’m trying to build up a range of published work before approaching festivals” (SC)*

### **Lack of time**

*“Having had to make the move to full time (non-comic) work for financial reasons, I no longer have time” (CC)*

*“Time, never enough time to prepare materials for attending an event as a seller” (CC)*

*“Time commitments because of work and family” (CC)*

*“Time in booking and showing my work” (SC)*

### **Anxiety and lack of confidence**

*“I’m not a good salesman” (AH)*

*“Work primarily but confidence and anxiety too” (AH)*

*“Lack of self-confidence” (AH)*

*“Hard to believe anyone would buy what I do” (AH)*

*“Stressful” (CC)*

*“I can’t sell myself and I hate it!” (CC)*

*“Confidence, Lack of information on how to make that leap from home produced for associates and friends to a wider market” (SC)*

*“Anxiety, organisation of printing things to sell” (SC)*

*“Lack of confidence” (SC)*

*“Social anxiety + children with additional needs” (SC)*

*“I haven’t had a finished product to sell, also have anxiety which makes going out sometimes difficult” (SC)*

*“Lack of know how really” (SC)*

### **Childcare**

*“I have a complicated family life, so I cannot travel easily” (AH)*

*“I used to sell at conventions regularly but there are fewer in the NE of England and I have a young family” (AH)*

*“Babies” (CC)*

*“Childcare for disabled son” (CC)*

*“Having a young family drew my attention away from comics production for a while” (SC)*

### **Location**

*“Things being far away (I live in the dangly tip of Cornwall) and not currently having much work to sell” (AH)*

*“I live in Orkney” (CC)*

*“I live in a remote location, and until recently hadn't been able to travel regularly to conventions” (CC)*

*“I live in a remote area and travelling to conventions and accommodation is extremely expensive. I usually only travel for local fairs, and send books by post from my shop, or wholesale to stores” (CC)*

*“I live in a very rural area, so there were already very few near me - it's a little less accessible” (SC)*

### **Rejections**

*“Applied to a couple of local things to get started but rejected on the basis my work is too pop culture” (CC)*

*“Comics fairs didn't accept my work (ELCAF, Lakes) for a couple of years running so I stopped applying and now just do web comics” (CC)*

*“Getting a table at a London comic fair seems impossible for newbies like me. It's the one area which upsets me the most, that you have to of been around for years and years to get in with the people doing the bookings. I am mum with not a lot of spare time to connect and socialise like the younger crowd so feel like I miss out here” (SC)*

*“I have applied to a couple of fairs but have not been successful. I don't have enough stock to fill a whole stand of just comics” (SC)*

*“I applied for a couple of festivals as a seller but was not selected to have a table. I believe this is because I had not sold at a festival before, which seems a catch 22” (SC)*

## Multiple reasons

Many respondents indicated a combination of these factors, particularly the time and cost elements.

*“Time and money constraints/childcare” (CC)*

*“I am a single parent and the festivals are too far for me to travel with my children from where I live in terms of costs and time” (CC)*

*“I live in a remote rural area and suffer from social anxieties - I don't have a car and live away from reliable public transport links” (CC)*

*“Lack of money. Fear about restrictive benefit conditions regarding what's considered work or earnings. Feel I wouldn't be chosen as I'm not an established name. Stress of being in a busy, noisy environment” (CC)*

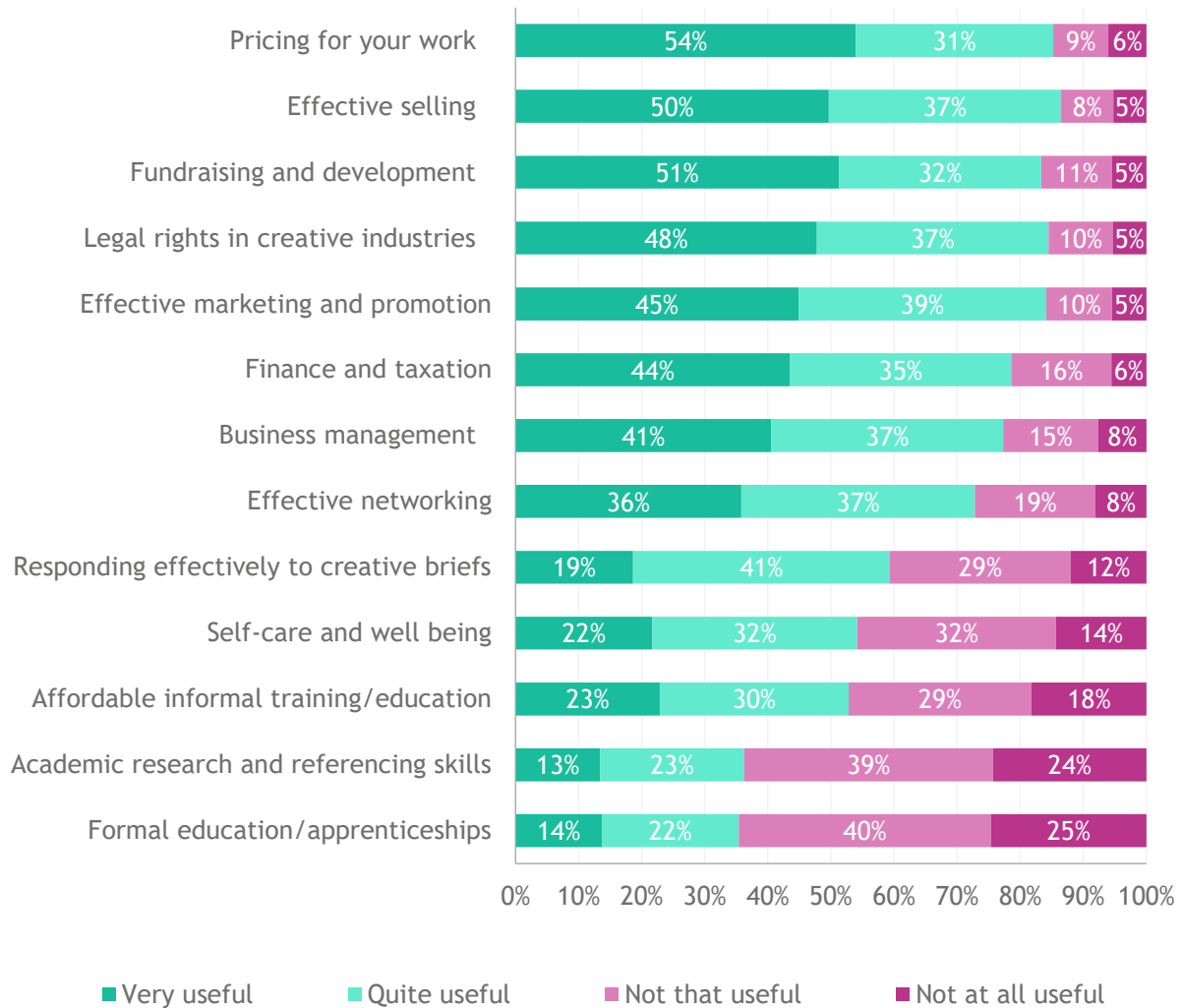
## Support needed

- In line with the challenges identified by respondents, training and development opportunities related to the commercial side of the comics industry emerged as those which respondents would find most useful.
- The top three most useful areas of development were 'Effective Selling', 'Pricing for your work', and 'Legal rights in creative industries'.
- 87% of respondents said that training in effective selling would be 'Very useful' (50%) or 'Quite useful' (37%).
- 85% of respondents said that learning how to price their work would be 'Very Useful' (54%) or 'Quite useful' (31%).
- 85% of respondents said that learning about their legal rights as creators within the creative industries would be 'Very useful' (48%) or 'Quite useful' (37%).
- 'Effective marketing and promotion', and 'Fundraising and development' also featured highly; 84% and 83% of respondents said these would be useful, respectively.
- The opportunities seen as least useful to the respondents were those in more formal or academic training areas. 'Formal education/training' and 'Academic research and referencing skills' were cited as useful by 14% and 13% of respondents, respectively.



- These findings were consistent across the different career status groups, with the same development areas appearing as most prominent for all three groups; albeit with slight differences in emphasis.

*How useful would the following training / development areas be to you in relation to your comic production?*

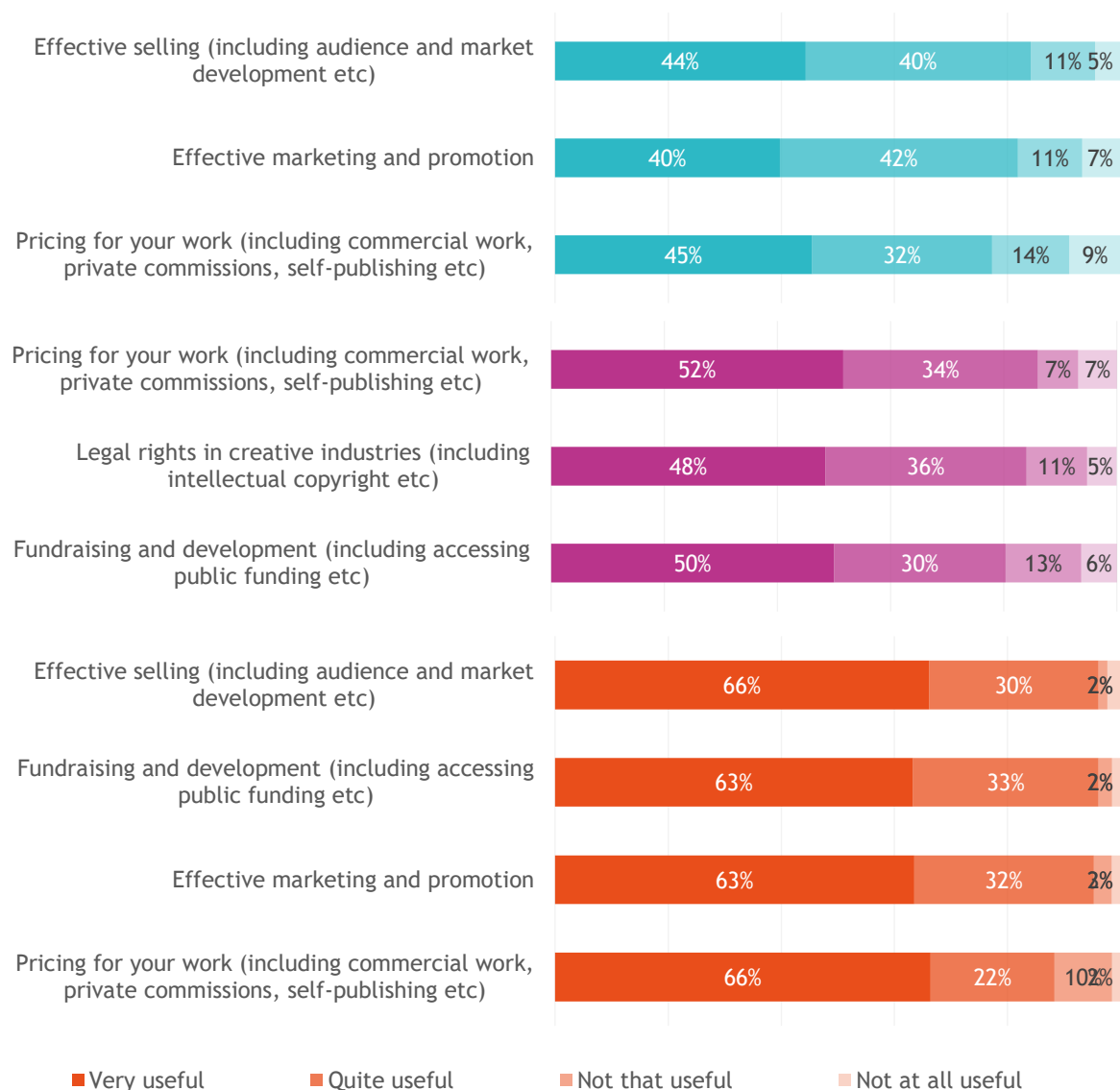


*Base: All respondents - 569*

*Margin of error: ±4%*

Some slight differences emerged in the responses from the different career status groups, although the overall top 5 areas remained consistent.

### Top three most useful areas by career status



Base: Amateur/Hobby - 88/ Current Career - 366 / Seeking Career - 127  
 Margin of error: ±10% / ±5% / ±8%

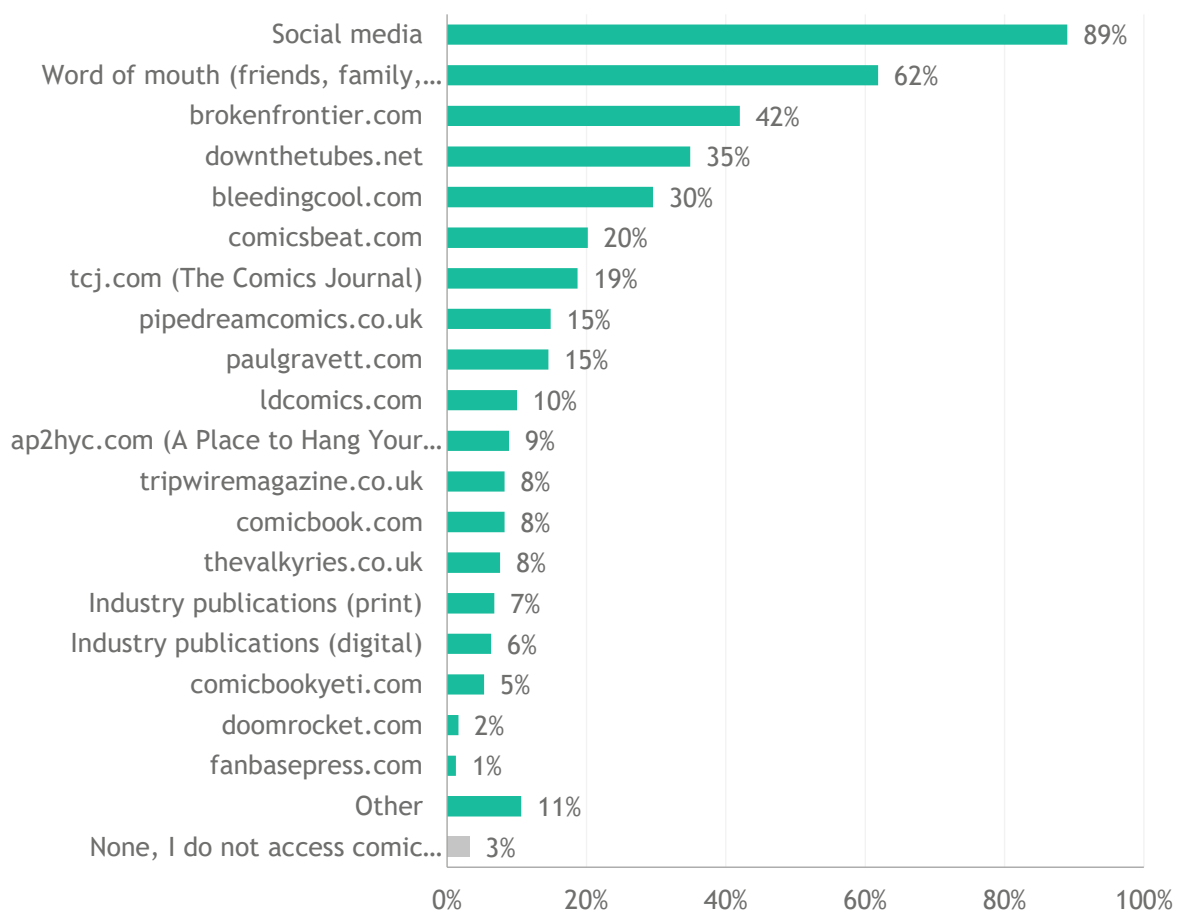
Of the listed training / development areas, the one most directly related to the impacts of Covid-19 was Self-care and wellbeing; 26% of respondents said that this need was directly related to impacts of the pandemic. These impacts are explored in more depth in the [Covid-19 section](#) of this report.

# Professional support networks

## Networks

- The listed sources of comic sector news and support are widely used by most of the respondents, with 97% citing one or more.
- The most prominent sources are social media and word of mouth; 89% and 62% of respondents cited these, respectively.
- Twitter and Instagram are the most used social media platforms; cited by 85% and 58% of respondents, respectively.
- Digital channels were more prominent than print sources, with [brokenfrontier.com](#), [downthetubes.net](#), and [bleedingcool.com](#) being the most frequently cited; by 42%, 35%, and 30% of respondents, respectively.

From which sources do you currently access comic sector news and support?

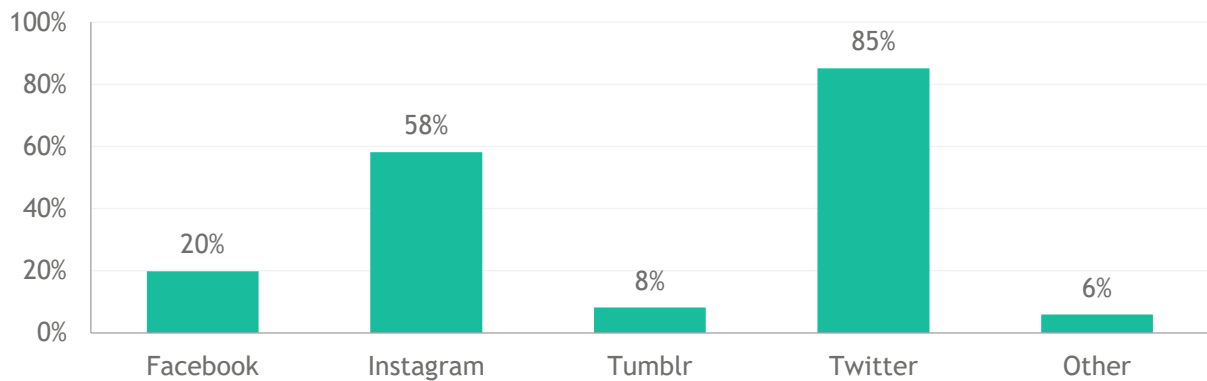


Base: All respondents - 619

Margin of error: ±4%

Of those respondents who cited 'Other' most gave podcasts as a source, with *Awesome Comics* frequently mentioned by name; the *Laydeez do Comics* newsletter was also mentioned by a number of respondents.

#### Which social media channels?



Base: All respondents who gave Social Media as a source - 538

Margin of error: ±4%

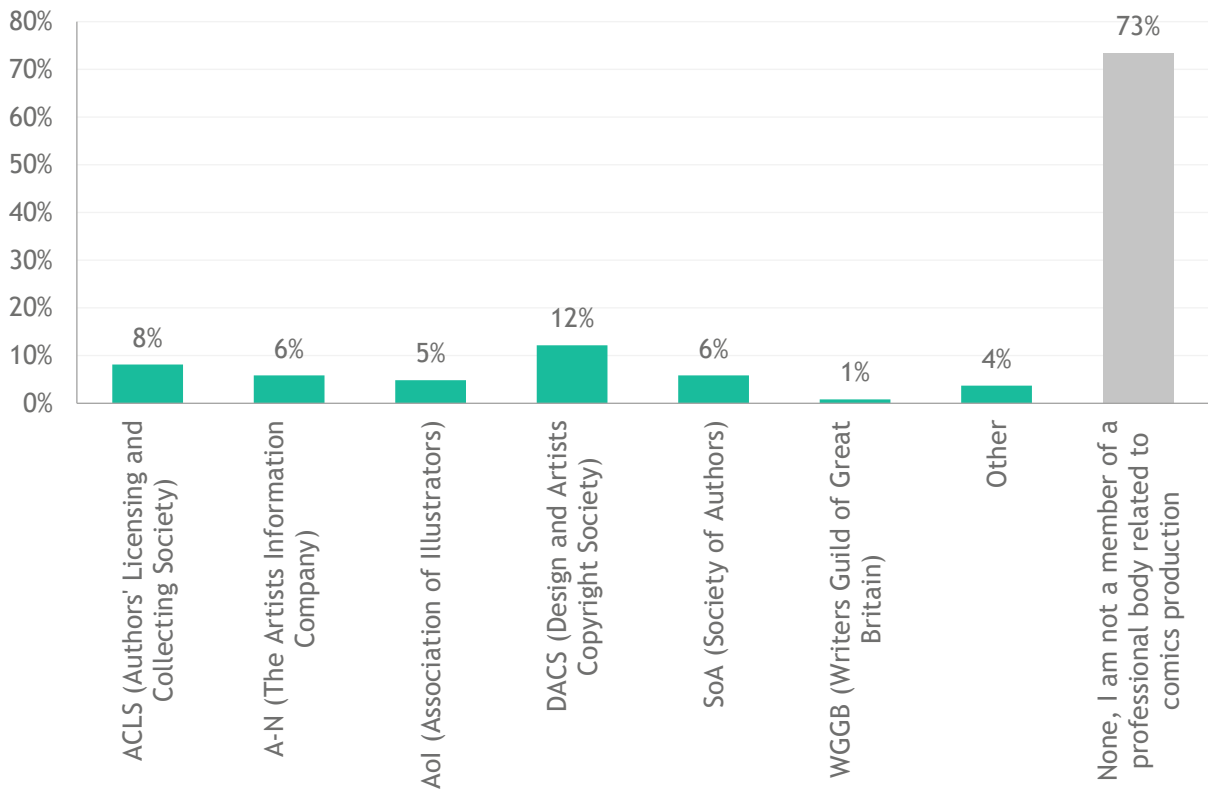
The 'Other' social media channels most frequently cited by respondents were YouTube and LinkedIn, with Discord and Slack group chat channels also frequently mentioned.

*Comics Journal* and *Comic Scene* magazine were most frequently given as industry publications in print, with *PanelXPanel* most frequently cited as a digital industry publication.

#### Professional memberships

- 73% of respondents are not members of any of the listed professional bodies.
- Of those that are, 12% are members of DACS (Design and Artists Copyright Society) and 8% are members of ACLS (Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society); these two societies had the highest levels of membership amongst respondents.

*In relation to your comics production, which professional bodies are you a member of?*



Base: All respondents - 617

Margin of error: ±4%

## Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic reached its peak during the data collection period. As such, the extent to which responses to questions relating to the impacts of the pandemic are lesser or greater may have been influenced by the point at which the respondent completed the survey between mid-April and mid-May.

### Impacts on time spent on comics production

- Overall, the literal responses indicated an increase in time spent; with around two-fifths of respondents saying they have been spending more time on creating work than they did pre Covid-19.

The main reasons for this were being furloughed from their day jobs, having reduced hours, reduction in time spent commuting due to working from home, or the cancellation of festivals and conventions.

- However, just over a third said that their time spent on comic production had decreased.

The main reasons for this were increased childcare and home schooling responsibilities taking up time that would otherwise have been spent on comics production, and the negative impacts on creativity of increased levels of anxiety and uncertainty.

- A fifth of respondents recorded no impacts from Covid-19 on the time they spent producing comics.
- An overall theme of changeability emerged from many of the responses; that the impacts of the pandemic on comics production were shifting from day to day, or week to week.

Overall, the literal responses indicated an increase in time spent; with around two-fifths of respondents saying they have been spending more time on creating work than pre-Covid-19. For many of them this is due to being furloughed from their day jobs, or having reduced hours, reduction in time spent commuting due to working from home, and also due to the cancellation of festivals and conventions.

*“Currently furloughed from my paying gig so have more time to work on projects. Also privileged to have space, living conditions and relative financial security to do so”*

*“As a furloughed worker now not receiving enough pay to live I am having to refocus all my creative energy into commissions so I can afford rent, meaning my own solo comic projects are on hold”*

*“More time to produce comics as international travel and comic events have been mostly cancelled for 2020”*

*“I now work from home so I can fit in more drawing time around my usual work admin tasks”*

*“As I am on furlough ... I am spending a bit more time on it”*

*“Due to all workshops, cons, exhibitions are cancelled, I spend more time on creating actual comics & do more promotion on social medias”*

*“I have been furloughed from my full-time job during the pandemic and have been able to spend more time on comic production. I have spent closer to 22-28 hours per week on comic production”*

Just over a third said that the time spent on comic production had decreased, with the main reasons for this being increased childcare and home schooling responsibilities for those with children who would usually be in school, and also that the anxiety and uncertainty caused by the pandemic having a negative impact on creativity.

*“Made it impossible with childcare and FT job”*

*“Less spare time due to home schooling”*

*“As a parent it has been almost impossible to create comics & home school. Without genuine time & space it's very hard to concentrate. Comics & storytelling requires a deep dive into your subconscious & that has requirements”*

*“My mental state has not been great since the start of the pandemic, and that decreased the number of hours I can work on my own GN. I also have 3 children at home and do my other jobs from home, which takes up all my time”*

*“Feeling distracted and tired. Less motivation as work feels more trivial”*

*“Due to the anxiety and stress I'm not able to work as much as I usually do - I've been averaging about 20 hours, but I suffer from ADHD and it's been particularly bad since the announcement”*

*“Honestly, anxiety has definitely made focus harder. So, thought-intensive stuff like layouts has definitely slowed a bit”*

*“Stress and mental health issues. Not knowing if conventions are happening is impacting on work production”*

A fifth of respondents recorded no impact from Covid-19 on the time they spent producing comics, and a theme of changeability emerged from many of the responses overall; that the impacts of the pandemic on productivity were shifting from day to day, or week to week, depending on changing conditions for individuals and in the wider world.

*“It hasn’t changed too much- my schedule is a bit more scattered because I am working from home and not in my studio”*

*“Same amount of time, but erratic hours due to children home from nursery”*

Some slight differences emerged in the responses according to career status, with those in the Seeking Career group indicating the highest level of increased production time; around two thirds said they were spending more time on their comic production work during the lockdown. Around half of Amateur/Hobbyist respondents said their time on comics had increased, and a third have seen a decrease, whilst for Current Career creators there was a fairly even split; with just over a third indicating an increase and a similar proportion saying their time spent on comic production had decreased.

### Financial impacts on income and expenditure

- Those most affected by the pandemic in terms of income from their comic production were respondents in the Current Career group; the majority of respondents from this group said that their income had decreased. The main reasons for this were delays to projects already scheduled, a halt to serial productions, the cancellation of conventions and workshops, and a reduction in commissioned work.
- Those in the Seeking Career group who noted a drop in income mainly gave the cancellation of conventions and a reduction in online sales as the reasons for this decrease.
- The main impacts on other sources of income, not directly or indirectly linked to comics production, were reduction in pay due to reduced hours or furlough or a loss of pay due to being laid off or made redundant.
- Most respondents noted a reduction in expenditure related to their comic production.

This was largely related to the cancellation of events, as this has meant no travel



costs, a reduction in printing and production costs, and also the table or ticket entry costs.

- An area where costs had increased was in buying art materials. This was due to a combination of not having access to studio resources, experimenting with new techniques, or simply doing more work. Being limited to suppliers operating an online service for home delivery had also increased costs for some respondents.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, those most affected by the pandemic in terms of income from their comic production were the Current Career respondents; the majority of respondents from this group said that their income had decreased. The main reasons for this were delays to projects already scheduled, a halt to serial productions, the cancellation of conventions and workshops, and a reduction in commissioned work. Some had successfully applied for Arts Council England emergency grant funding to offset some of their losses.

*“All conventions cancelled so no opportunity to sell comics” (CC)*

*“Conventions where I'd be exhibiting have been cancelled. This has dropped my primary source of income directly related to production - in person comic sales” (CC)*

*“It has led to the cancellation of many comics festivals and fairs where I would have usually made 90% of my comics related income” (CC)*

*“The cancellation of comics festivals will put a sizeable dent into my income from self-publishing and workshops” (CC)*

*“I haven't had any commissions” (CC)*

*“Huge contraction of publishers' list of titles; new culture of severe risk aversion” (CC)*

*“Projects being paused, mostly, so a sudden halt to cash flow” (CC)*

*“The publisher who prints the miniseries I am currently writing has basically put production on hiatus as far as I can tell. So apparently no more cash instalments coming from that” (CC)*

Those in the Seeking Career group who noted a drop in income mainly gave the cancellation of conventions and a reduction in online sales as the reasons for this decrease.

*Cancelled all my convention exhibitions. That's where I make most of the money*

*A lot of my income comes from selling, promotion and networking at zine fairs.*

*These are no longer happening due to the pandemic*

*The more recent delays and cancellations of local conventions has limited the ways in which we can sell our book which has reduced the money we would make*

*"Sales of printed books on my webstore have fallen. Comics festivals being cancelled means I miss out on those too" (SC)*

Few of those in the Amateur/Hobbyist group noted a drop in income as a result of Covid-19, largely due to the fact that they do not generally make any income from their comics production work.

The main impacts on other sources of income, not directly or indirectly linked to comics production, were reduction in pay due to reduced hours or furlough or a loss of pay due to being laid off or made redundant.

Overall, most respondents noted a reduction in expenditure related to their comic production. This was largely related to the cancellation of events, as this has meant no travel costs, a reduction in printing and production costs, and also the table or ticket entry costs. A few respondents did note, however, that attendance costs they had already paid had not been refunded as the event creators are planning to reschedule.

*"No travel costs as cons are cancelled"*

*"I've been spending less on convention tables, travel and accommodation!"*

*"I am currently spending nothing on travel, convention pitches, and anything involving being somewhere that isn't home"*

*"Not spending money on conventions as they have been cancelled. Not spending money on printing as not made the work to print"*

*"I don't spend much because I am not doing much, no workshops, no pitches, no commission work, just personal"*

An area where costs had increased was in buying art materials. This was due to a combination of not having access to studio resources, experimenting with new techniques, or simply doing more work, and also having less opportunity to 'shop around'; being limited only to those suppliers operating an online service for home delivery.

*"I've had to buy more materials online and with usually slightly higher prices"*

*"I've been buying materials online, which adds a delivery cost"*

*“I’m spending more money on materials - I’m trying to use the time in isolation learning digital colouring techniques”*

*“A small increase as I buy materials to replace those in my studio - which I can’t access”*

Investment in software to support more effective homeworking was also mentioned by some respondents; particularly those in the Current Career group.

*“I am spending slightly more on software so I can communicate with clients, fans, and to generally be a presence on the internet”*

*“I will need to upgrade my computer and purchase Zoom package”*

*“I decided to invest as I had the time to do something, I bought a graphics tablet, some software and some online classes”*

### Impact of festival and convention cancellations

- The key impact of events being cancelled due to Covid-19 was the reduction in comic creators’ income.  
Those in the Current Careers group have been particularly badly affected, with many of them noting a significant reduction in income.
- There was also a sense of loss of opportunity, to have work seen by a larger audience and potentially raise the respondents’ professional profile.
- Linked to this, many respondents identified a more personal sense of loss in not being able to interact directly with other makers in their communities, and also connect with their readers.
- Those who derive income from delivering workshops and classes have also seen significant reductions in their income.

As noted previously, the key impacts of events being cancelled due to Covid-19 is the reduction on comic creators’ income. Those in the Current Careers group have been particularly badly affected, with many of them noting a significant reduction as selling at conventions and festivals represents a large proportion of their annual income.

*“I only sell in person - no one buys unknown comics from stores - so I am not making any sales right now”*

*“Conventions have been cancelled, so I have lost a lot of expected income”*

*“All cons are off, so all income is off!”*

*“I’ve had two conventions rescheduled. One in particular was my biggest earner”*

*“All my conventions for this year have been cancelled or pushed back, meaning I have lost a significant amount of income I would usually make in the first half of the year”*

There is also a sense of loss of opportunity, to have work seen by a larger audience and potentially raise the respondents’ professional profile.

*“Plenty, not only the loss of money for not attending the conventions, but the loss of project job/opportunities and networking that comes with them”*

*“A huge means of my income and networking and promotion has been cut off”*

Linked to this, many respondents identified a more personal sense of loss in not being able to interact directly with other makers in their communities, and also connect with their readers.

*“No comic fairs! so I am missing that sense of community and connecting with fans in person”*

Those who make much of their living from delivering workshops and classes have also seen drastic reductions in their income.

## Impacts on challenges and support needs

### Challenges

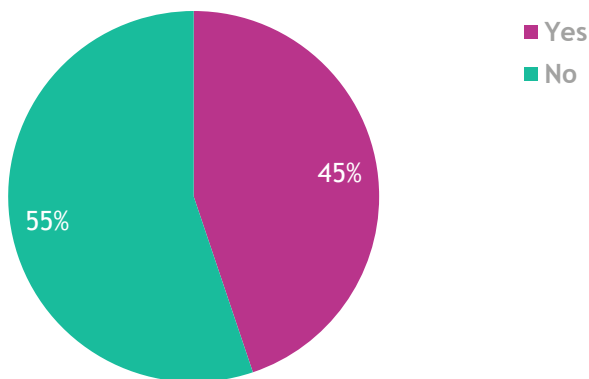
- 45% of respondents said that the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic had changed the way they responded to being asked about the challenges they face.
- The literal responses indicated that increased childcare responsibilities, and growing levels of uncertainty across all aspects of personal and professional life, have had the most impact on the challenges faced by comic creators as a result of the pandemic.
- The key themes to emerge were that:
  - The ‘lack of time to create’ has been exacerbated by an increase in childcare responsibilities.

- Challenges related to the ‘lack of financial income, or expectation of it in future’ have increased during the pandemic.
- Multiple factors related to access and information about market opportunities within the industry have been impacted by the pandemic; with concerns about the long-term effects on the industry as a whole, and increased competition in a shrinking market.

### Support needs

- 52% of respondents indicated that the support needs they cited are directly related to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The area most effected was ‘self-care and wellbeing’, with 26% of respondents indicating that their need for support in this area was directly related to the impacts of the pandemic.
- ‘Effective networking’ and ‘Effective selling’ also featured highly, with 20% and 18% of respondents, respectively, indicating that their need for support in these areas was directly related to the impacts of the pandemic.

*Have the challenges you face changed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic?*



*Base: All respondents - 600*

*Margin of error: ±4%*

The literal responses to a follow-up question which asked people why they answered as they did indicated that, likely in line with the UK population in general, increased childcare responsibilities and growing levels of uncertainty across all aspects of personal and professional life have had the most impact on the challenges faced by comic creators as a result of the pandemic.

Although the key impacts were consistent for all respondents, there were some slight differences in emphasis between the three career status groups.

The Amateur/Hobbyist group often commented that although they had more time, their production had decreased due to looking after children at home and mental health issues exacerbated by the pandemic.

*“Both my kids are now at home full time, and I have to teach the eldest. I have very little extra time or energy” (AH)*

*“I now have more time but a lot less mental energy” (AH)*

*“I have more time to make comics because I don't spent so much time commuting, now I work from home for my non-comics day job” (AH)*

*“I've almost completely given up trying while I look after myself mentally” (AH)*

For those in the Current Career group increased childcare was also a major issue in terms of time available for comics production. This group was also most likely to mention having fewer opportunities for paid work, and less income overall due to cancelled projects and events. Some commented that they had more time to work on their own projects, often due to the cancellations, but mental health and wellbeing issues related to the pandemic were also factors affecting their productivity.

*“Increased existing stresses. Feel like the progress made over the past few years is going to stagnate or worse go backwards. Extremely anxious and disheartened to have my career affected by two recessions in a decade” (CC)*

*“Children at home means a huge increase in childcare responsibilities. Can probably work 2-3 hours at most per day” (CC)*

*“Where there were already few jobs for comic creators, there are suddenly WAY fewer” (CC)*

*“The narrowing of opportunities post-Covid will create a more competitive environment” (CC)*

*“There has been an immediate change with the stopping of conventions and any social activities - workshops, talks, etc. The long-term effects are what I see as the bigger concern, which is a slowdown in the economy that leads to the knock-on effect of less money spent on comics and an overall decline in work” (CC)*

*“The industry has ground to a halt. I'm working on some existing stuff but even something that was “green lit” back at Christmas is awaiting contract signature. Plus, I've been told no new pitches being considered by most publishers” (CC)*

*“I have more time, but my income is in flux, and far less dependable - I have lost all the points in the calendar year that would have been opportunities to generate the income needed to print books, to network and publicise my new work” (CC)*

*“It’s more stressful. I’m unable to plan ahead for the future and get ahead and build a buffer for any problems I might encounter. I’m aware of how stressed other people are too. And that affects productiveness and sales” (CC)*

*“Just general anxiety over the whole situation, and being confined at home due to being in an at-risk group, has had a toll on mental health and creative output” (CC)*

Many of the Seeking Career respondents commented that they had more time but, in line with the other groups, increased levels of stress due to financial worries and other mental health issues have limited creativity and productivity for some.

*“I am now a full-time teacher to my kids, so I seem to have even less time and energy to make comics and promote them” (SC)*

*“There is much more time to create. However, there is more anxiety and isolation which sometimes makes getting down to creativity seem a struggle for me, anyway” (SC)*

*“With a lot more time to create our comic we’ve seen a big rise in how much work we’re able to put into comic production” (SC)*

*“I now have more time to create. Once my university hand in is finished I’ll have time to completely dedicate to making a comic” (SC)*

*“I was looking forward to the summer season this year as I have felt optimistic and more confident in myself & my abilities (last year struggled with anxiety a great deal). Cancelling all the festivals has stopped potential income unless I can find a new confidence in selling myself - a skill I find impossible” (SC)*

*“Am stuck inside for 3 months. Mental and physical health is a daily upkeep and to keep it met I am not able to engage with creating” (SC)*

*“Mental health issues have become much worse, impacting my enthusiasm and the amount of art I create” (SC)*

Full literals are available in the appended report.

How useful would the following training/development areas be to you in relation to your comic production? / Which of these, if any, are directly related to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic?



Base: All respondents - 564

Margin of error: ±4%

### Personal impacts

- In line with responses to other questions relating to the pandemic, the key themes to emerge from literal responses to being asked if there was anything else respondents would like to say about the impacts of Covid-19 were concerns about increased financial insecurity, damage to mental health and well-being, and concerns over long term impacts on the industry.

*Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic?*

Just over a third (248) respondents answered this question and, in line with responses to other questions relating to the pandemic, the key themes to emerge from the comments



were mental health and wellbeing, financial insecurity, and concerns over long term impacts on the industry.

### *Mental health and wellbeing*

*“It’s mentally super tough”*

*“I was feeling a lot more positive, creative and productive before the pandemic and I miss the spirit and inspiration derived from time with friends and at conventions”*

*“The pandemic had a bad effect on my mental health, and impacted on the time I have available to make comics”*

*“My life in quarantine simply isn’t enriching enough to foster creativity and my work is less enjoyable as a result”*

*“Depressing, the path of the artist is always risky. I’m slightly scared but knowing how obsessed I am with art I’ll stick to it. It’s easy to feel guilty about being stuck at home and not really getting much done”*

*“Comics people are often isolated in their work so cons, talks & regular the meet ups are vital for our mental wellbeing as well as socialising”*

### *Financial insecurity*

*“It’s overwhelming to have to worry about taking care of family then yourself and on top of that work and business and 80% of the ways you make income have been taken away”*

*“It’s a worrying time with huge economic and social consequences, plus the terrible impact of the death of friends and family members in isolation, but creativity flourishes in dark times and is able to alleviate things”*

*“I do worry about how that the loss of some cons and mainstream shift to digital will impact on smaller companies and individuals. It’s not a model that generates a huge amount of income for anyone ... meaning marginalised voices or people from less central areas / affluent backgrounds are likely to find it even harder to get a foothold”*

*“That it is uncertain how it will impact things like Patreon, comic sales, and people being able to afford mentorship and training long term”*

### *Long term impacts on the industry*

*“I’m extremely worried for the future of the comics industry when the pandemic is over, as it’s such an unstable source of income and (without getting too political) I doubt the social safety net will be able to support people effectively”*

# Appendix

## i. Survey question set

### Comic creators research – survey copy

#### Introduction

*Over the last couple of decades, the UK comics scene has exploded into the wild, experimental, thought-provoking and exuberant artistic frontier that we belong to today. To find ways to ensure that this level of creativity and growth can be encouraged, supported, and sustained, we need to get an accurate breakdown of the situation. I want you to tell me how you're doing, what you're doing, and what you need in order to thrive as a creator of comics. I want to know about your situation in general, as well as how it has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. (Please be assured it's actually The Audience Agency who will be handling, processing and safeguarding your data safely and responsibly; not me with a spreadsheet and a bumper pack of novelty biros.)*

*The survey has been designed to gather information and generate insights about comic producers across a range of creative practice, and at all levels of activity - if you are UK-based and make comics or cartoons for public consumption, I want to hear from you. Regardless of whether you are an internationally renowned comics legend or a newcomer working in secret on your long-form graphic novel or posting strips on Instagram: if you make comics then you are a part of the UK comics community and this survey is for you.*

*Hannah Berry - Comics Laureate 2019-21*

*PS I regret saying "I wish comics creators all had time and space to complete this survey" out loud whilst holding that cursed monkey paw last year. That was a mistake, and I apologise.*

The survey should take no longer than 15 minutes [tbc] to complete, and as a thank you for your time you can choose to enter a prize draw for to win one of three £50 e-vouchers to be spent in your choice of online comic shop - either Page 45, Travelling Man or Gosh Comics.

Your data will be securely stored and processed by The Audience Agency, who are administering this survey on behalf of the Comics Laureate, for the purposes of research and development. Everything you tell us will be kept confidentially and your responses will be anonymous and will not be used to identify you in any way without your specific consent. The Audience Agency operates within the General Data Protection Regulation and Market Research Society Code of Conduct.

**Note: In line with research safeguarding standards, the following survey is only for respondents over the age of 16.**

Please click 'Next' to start the survey...

#### Your comics production career and activity

This section is related to your relationship with comics production; essentially, what you do and how you do it. In addition, this section asks about your education and career.

**Q1. Which of the following comic production activities are you involved in? (tick all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Everything                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art (all art production) | <input type="checkbox"/> Editing (freelance only)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pencilling               | <input type="checkbox"/> Designing (freelance only) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inking                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colouring                | *What other [open text]                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lettering                |   |

**Q2. Which formats do you regularly work in? (tick all that apply)**

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One shot / single issue | <input type="checkbox"/> Single panel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Miniseries              | <input type="checkbox"/> Strip        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing series          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anthology               | *What other? [open text]              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic novel           |                                       |

**Q3. How would you characterise your current status as a comics producer? (tick one only)**

- Established career (predominantly earning money from your work)
  - Emerging career (earning some money from your work)
  - Intending to have a career (actively seeking opportunities to earn money from your work)
  - Amateur / hobbyist (not intending to earn money from your work)
  - Other - non-career based\*
- \*What other [open text]
- Other - career based\*
- \*What other [open text]

**Q3a. (Asked if Q3=career) For how long have you had, or have you been actively pursuing a career in comics production?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to one year               | <input type="checkbox"/> Between six and ten years       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between one and two years    | <input type="checkbox"/> Between eleven and twenty years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between three and five years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than twenty years          |

**Q3b. (Asked if Q3=amateur/hobbyist) For how long have you been producing comics?**

[routed from responses to previous question]

- Up to one year
- Between one and two years
- Between three and five years
- Between six and ten years
- Between eleven and twenty years
- More than twenty years

**Q4. What relevant post-school education, training and/or skills development have you received in the following areas?**

	Comics production	Creative writing	Visual arts & design	Comics theory research
Foundation course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocational qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apprenticeship/formal mentoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First degree (e.g. BA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further degree (MA, PhD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short course - accredited	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short course - informal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None/self-taught	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q4a. What other relevant post-school education, training and/or skills development have you received in either comics production, creative writing, visual arts and design and/or comics theory/research?**

[open text box]

**Where and how is your work shared?**

**Q5. Is your work primarily aimed at any of the following audiences? (tick all that apply)**

- Children       Young adults       Adults       None of these

[Asked when Q5=Children] **Q5a. How often do you produce work aimed at children?**

- I only do work aimed at children       Rarely  
 Very often       Never  
 Sometimes

[Asked when Q5=Young adults] **Q5b. How often do you produce work aimed at young adults?**

- I only do work aimed at young adults       Rarely  
 Very often       Never  
 Sometimes

[Asked when Q5=Adults] **Q5c. How often do you produce work aimed at adults?**

- I only do work aimed at adults       Rarely  
 Very often       Never  
 Sometimes

**Q5. How would you describe the subject area(s) / genre(s) your work covers?**

[open text box - too many options to list, but can be categorised from literal responses]

**Q6. Does your work regularly feature any of the following themes through its core topics, narratives, or characters? (tick all that apply)**

- Displaced people / refugees*
- Post-conflict storytelling*
- Environmental / climate change issues*
- Marginalised / traditionally under-represented people / groups (e.g. LGBTQ, BAME, D/deaf or disabled, homeless, socially excluded etc)*
- None of these*

**Q7. Through what channels is your work primarily published / shared? (Tick all that apply)**

Social media\*

\*Which channel?

Instagram

- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Other\*
- \*What other? [open text box]
- Your own website
- Other website

- Self-published print
- Traditional published print
- Other\*
- \*What other? [open text box]
- None of these - my work is not publicly shared

### International work

**Q8. Which of the following comics-related work have you undertaken internationally?**

- Attended comics festivals/conventions as exhibitor
- Attended comics festivals/conventions as presenter or speaker
- Taken part in other art or literary festivals
- Given a workshop/teaching
- Held a book launch
- Done a book tour
- Exhibited
- Other
- \*What other? [open text box]
- I have not worked internationally

**Q9. Where is your work available in print? (tick all that apply)**

- Africa
- Antarctica
- Asia
- Australia and Oceania
- Europe
- North America
- South America
- None of these

### How are you doing?

**Q10. On average, approximately how many hours per week do you spend on comic production?**

- Less than 7
- 8-14
- 15-21
- 22-28
- 29-35
- 36-42
- 43-49
- More than 50\*
- \*How many hours? [open number box]

**Q11. In what ways, if any, have the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic changed the time you spend on comic production?**

[open text]

**Q12. Is comic production your primary occupation?** (i.e. you spend at least half of your working time on comic production)

Yes  No

(If Yes) **Q12a. Is it your primary source of income?**

Yes  No

(If No) **Q12b. Do you only make comics in your spare time?**

Yes  No

**Q12c. In what ways, if any, has this been changed by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic?**

[open text]

[routed from Q12a - primary source of income - if Yes] **Q13. From what sources do you receive income directly\* related to your comic production?** (tick all that apply)

*\*Please don't include any income derived from related activities such as teaching / workshops etc - these are covered in a separate question*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traditional publishing (print)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Periodic publications (e.g. cartoons for newspapers, magazines, journals etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-publishing (print)                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Licensing (DACs, PLR etc)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Webcomics  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial commissions (e.g. freelancing)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> *What other [open text box]   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular 'work-for-hire' (e.g. regular comic contributions) |  |

[direct income, Q13 answered] **Q14. What was your income for financial year 2018-2019 from comic production, if any?** [linked to Q13 responses]

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £1,000 and £2,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £10,000 and £20,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to £100              | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £2,000 and £5,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £20,000 and £50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between £100 and £500   | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £5,000 and £10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over £50,000                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between £500 and £1,000 |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say           |

[routed from Q12a - primary source of income - if Yes] **Q15. Do you receive over 50% of your income directly related to your comic production from countries outside of the UK?**

Yes  No



[routed from Q12a - primary source of income - if Yes] **Q16. From which countries do you receive income directly related to your comic production?**

[open text box]

[direct income, Q13 answered] **Q17. In what ways, if any, have the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic changed your income sources directly related to your comic production?**

[open text]

**Q18. From what sources do you receive income indirectly related to your comic production?**

(tick all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-person workshops                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Private commissions  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online workshops (including webinars, tutorials etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time / peripatetic teaching (including private tuition) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talks (e.g. lectures, seminars, informal talks etc)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Merchandise sales  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent teaching position                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*   |
- \*What other [open text box]

[indirect income, Q18 answered] **Q19. What was your income for financial year 2018-2019 from comic production, if any?** [linked to Q17 responses]

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £1,000 and £2,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £10,000 and £20,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to £100              | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £2,000 and £5,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £20,000 and £50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between £100 and £500   | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £5,000 and £10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over £50,000                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between £500 and £1,000 |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say           |

[indirect income, Q18 answered] **Q20. In what ways, if any, have the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic changed your income sources indirectly related to your comic production?**

[open text]

[routed from Q12a - primary source of income - if No] **Q21. From what sources do you receive financial income other than your comic production?** (tick all that apply)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial support from family or friends       | <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time permanent paid employment           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent wealth (e.g. inheritance)          | <input type="checkbox"/> UK state benefits (e.g. Universal Credit etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freelance, temporary, or fixed-term employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time permanent paid employment            | *What other [open text box]  |

[related to Q21] **Q22. What was your income for financial year 2018-2019 from sources other than comic production, if any?**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £1,000 and £2,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £10,000 and £20,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Up to £100              | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £2,000 and £5,000  | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £20,000 and £50,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between £100 and £500   | <input type="checkbox"/> Between £5,000 and £10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over £50,000                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Between £500 and £1,000 |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say           |

[indirect income, Q21 answered] **Q23. In what ways, if any, have the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic changed your income sources other than your comic production?**  
[open text]

**Q24. From what sources do you receive other financial support related to your comic production?** (tick all that apply)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent prize/award / grant giving organisations | <input type="checkbox"/> Public body (e.g. arts councils) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production companies or other broadcast media groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*                           |
|   | *What other [open text box]                               |

[routed from Independent prize/award/grant giving organisations] **Q24a. From which independent prize/award or grant giving organisations have you received financial income?**  
[open text box]

[routed from public funding body] **Q24b. From which public body have you received financial income?** (tick all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts Council England          | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Scotland   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts Council Northern Ireland | <input type="checkbox"/> The British Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts Council of Wales         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*              |
|  | *What other [open text box]                  |

**Q25. What were your expenditures directly related to your comic production for financial year 2018-2019?** (not including your time)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Tools / materials (including digital apps, software etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing / promotion                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Networking opportunities                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Festival/convention table/pitch costs | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Printing                              | *What other?  |

None

[related to Q25] **Q26. What was your expenditure for financial year 2018-2019 directly related to your comic production, if any?**

None

Between £1,000 and £2,000

Over £10,000

Up to £100

Between £2,000 and £5,000

Prefer not to say

Between £100 and £500

Between £500 and £1,000

Between £5,000 and £10,000

[indirect income, Q25 answered] **Q27. In what ways, if any, have the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic changed your income sources other than your comic production?**  
[open text]

**Q28. Do you attend comic festivals / conventions as a seller?**

Yes, I attend as a seller on a regular basis

No, I have never attended as a seller

Yes, I sometimes attend as a seller

No, I would like to, but have not been able to

No, I no longer attend as a seller

**Q28a.** [If Q28=No] Could you tell us a bit about what has prevented you from doing so?

[open text box]

**Q28b.** [If Q28=Yes] *How regularly do you attend as a seller?*

[open text box]

**Q28c.** (If Q28=Yes) *On average, what income does this activity generate per day? (after costs)*

Up to £100

Over £1,000

I make no income from this activity

Between £100 and £500

I just about break even

Prefer not to say

Between £500 and £1,000

I often make a loss

**Q28d.** *In what ways, if any, has this been changed by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic?*

[open text]

**Q29.** *Have you ever been asked to sign away your intellectual or moral rights to your work as part of a contract agreement? (e.g. copyright etc)*

Yes  No

**Q29a. (If Q29=Yes) How often has been offered to/asked of you?**

- |                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Always    | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Often     | <input type="checkbox"/> Never  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes |                                 |

**Q29b. (If yes) And have you agreed to this?**

- Yes, every time  
 Yes, sometimes  
 No, I have never agreed to this

**What support do you need or want?**

**Q30. In terms of your comic production, what are the key challenges you face? (tick all that apply)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of an affordable place to create   | <input type="checkbox"/> Geographic isolation/lack of opportunities relating to writing in local area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time to create  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pressure of caregiving to family members/friends/community/other dependents  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of financial income, or expectation of it in future  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pressure of childcare  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information about financial support available to comic producers  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of confidence in my ability   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of information about comic production as an industry and how to be published or produced   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest, support or encouragement from friends and family           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest, support or encouragement from the wider industry (e.g. arts organisations, agents, theatres)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of successful comic producers with a similar background to me           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of training/professional development opportunities   | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-term mental or physical health condition or disability                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age, social class or other personal identification, and/or fear of that discrimination | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of opportunities to generate income                                     |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*<br>*What other [open text box]  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> None   |

**Q31. [routed from Q30] And which is the main challenge? (tick one only)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of an affordable place to create | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time to create |
|--|---|

- Lack of financial income, or expectation of it in future
- Lack of information about financial support available to comic producers
- Lack of information about comic production as an industry and how to be published or produced
- Lack of interest, support or encouragement from the wider industry (e.g. arts organisations, agents, theatres)
- Lack of training/professional development opportunities
- Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, age, social class or other personal identification, and/or fear of that discrimination
- Geographic isolation/lack of opportunities relating to writing in local area
- Pressure of caregiving to family members/friends/community/other dependents
- Pressure of childcare
- Lack of confidence in my ability
- Lack of interest, support or encouragement from friends and family
- Lack of successful comic producers with a similar background to me
- Long-term mental or physical health condition or disability
- Lack of opportunities to generate income
- Difficulty working due to childcare
- Other
- None

**Q32. Have the challenges you face changed due to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic?**

- Yes    No

**Q32a. Could you tell us a bit more about why you answered in the way you did?**  
[open text]

**Q33. How useful are the following training / development areas to you in relation to your comic production? (ranging from 'very useful', 'useful', 'not that useful', and 'not at all useful')**

- Responding effectively to creative briefs
- Pricing for your work (including commercial work, private commissions, self-publishing etc)
- Finance and taxation
- Legal rights in creative industries (including intellectual copyright etc)
- Effective networking
- Effective marketing and promotion
- Effective selling (including audience and market development etc)
- Self-care and wellbeing
- Business management (including self-employment)
- Fundraising and development (including accessing public funding etc)
- Formal education / apprenticeships
- Affordable informal training / education
- Academic research and referencing skills
- Other\*  
What other\* [open text box]

[related to answers on Q33, only training/development area that have received a rating of ‘very useful’ and ‘useful’ are shown] **Q33a. Which of these, if any, are directly related to the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responding effectively to creative briefs   | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-care and wellbeing  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pricing for your work (including commercial work, private commissions, self-publishing etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> Business management (including self-employment)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and taxation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising and development (including accessing public funding etc) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal rights in creative industries (including intellectual copyright etc)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Formal education / apprenticeships                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Effective networking  | <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable informal training / education                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Effective marketing and promotion   | <input type="checkbox"/> Academic research and referencing skills                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Effective selling (including audience and market development etc)                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these  |

**Q34. From which sources do you currently access comic sector news and support? (tick all that apply)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://ap2hyc.com">ap2hyc.com</a> (A Place to Hang Your Cape) | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth (friends, family, colleagues)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://bleedingcool.com">bleedingcool.com</a>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social media*                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://brokenfrontier.com">brokenfrontier.com</a>             | *Which channel?   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://comicbook.com">comicbook.com</a>                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://comicbookyeti.com">comicbookyeti.com</a>               | <input type="checkbox"/> Tumblr   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://comicsbeat.com">comicsbeat.com</a>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://tcj.com">tcj.com</a> (The Comics Journal)              | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://doomrocket.com">doomrocket.com</a>                     | *What other? [open text box]  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://downthetubes.net">downthetubes.net</a>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry publications* (print)                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://fanbasepress.com">fanbasepress.com</a>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> *Which publication(s)? [ open text box]            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://ldcomics.com">ldcomics.com</a>                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://pipedreamcomics.co.uk">pipedreamcomics.co.uk</a>       | <input type="checkbox"/> *What other? [open text box]                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://tripwiremagazine.co.uk">tripwiremagazine.co.uk</a>     | <input type="checkbox"/> None, I do not access comic sector news or support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://thevalkyries.co.uk">thevalkyries.co.uk</a>             |   |

**Q35. In relation to your comics production, which professional bodies are you a member of?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ACLS (Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society) | <input type="checkbox"/> SoA (Society of Authors)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A-N (The Artists Information Company)            | <input type="checkbox"/> WGGB (Writers Guild of Great Britain)                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aol (Association of Illustrators)                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other*  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DACS (Design and Artists Copyright Society)      | *What other? [open text box]   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> None, I am not a member of a professional body related to comics production |

**Q36. How would you describe your feelings about comics and the comics industry?**

[open text box]

**Q37. If you could change one thing about your comic production life, what would it be?**

[open text box]

**Q38. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on your production?**

[open text]

### About you

This final section is about you. It's a little more personal but it's really useful for us. The questions have largely been designed to align with the way the UK Government collects Census data\*, which enables us to compare how you identify with how the general population identifies.

If the options given do not allow you to identify in the way you prefer, please select 'Other' and, if you wish to do so, let us know how you identify. If there are any questions that you would rather not answer, please select 'Prefer not to say'.

\*Some questions differ from the Census, to support wider representation than is reflected in the current Census data set; which dates from 2011.

**Q39. Which of the following options best describes how you think of your gender identity?**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female     | <input type="checkbox"/> In another way*                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male       | *[If in another way] How would you describe your gender? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say               |

**Q40. How would you describe your sexuality?**

- Bisexual
- Heterosexual/ Straight
- Lesbian/Gay
- Asexual
- Pansexual

- Queer
- In another way\*
- \* How would you describe your sexuality?  
[open text box]
- Prefer not to say

**Q41. Which of the following age groups do you belong to?**

- Under 16
- 16 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 and older
- Prefer not to say

**Q42. What is your ethnic group?**

- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British: Chinese
- Asian or Asian British: Other Asian background
- Black or Black British: African
- Black or Black British: Caribbean
- Black or Black British: Other Black/African/ Caribbean background
- Mixed: White and Asian
- Mixed: White and Black African
- Mixed: White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed: White and Latinx
- Mixed: Other Mixed/multiple ethnic background
- White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- White: Irish
- White: Gypsy/Traveller
- White: Other White background
- Other: Arab
- Other: Latinx
- Other: Other\*
- \*[If other] What other ethnic background?
- Prefer not to say

**Q43. Do you identify as a D/deaf or disabled person, or have a long-term health condition?**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



[If Q43=Yes] **Q43a. Please tell us anything you want us to know about your long-term health condition or disability**

[open text box]

#### **SOCIAL CLASS IDENTITY**

**Q40. How would you describe your class identity?**

*This question asks for your own class identity - what term best represents how you think of your social class. This may be tied to your family background or, if you were born in one class and feel yourself to be in another now, it could be the class you feel now. What we want to know is how you identify.*

[open text box]

**Q44. Please let us know why you identify this way, if possible.**

[open text box]

**Q45. Do you live in the UK?**

Yes  No

[If yes] **Q45a. What is your full postcode? This will be used for research purposes only.**

[If no] **Q45b. What is your country of residence?**

*Data protection details: Your data will be stored and processed by The Audience Agency on behalf of the Comics Laureate for the purposes of research and development. Your contact details will only be used for the purpose indicated above and will not be passed on to any third parties without your consent.*

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!**

Please click 'Submit' below to record your responses.

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