

Creative & Cultural Winchester

Where creativity, heritage and ambition come together.

Access to a skilled and creative workforce is a key factor in location decisions, the Winchester district offers a distinctive mix of heritage, infrastructure, talent and ambition. With a vibrant creative and cultural economy, spanning internationally recognised venues and grassroots spaces, it is a place where creativity thrives, collaboration is encouraged and new ideas are shaping the future.



A strong and growing sector



1,987

businesses within a culture or creative SIC code.



881

of these are high growth businesses.



16%

Creative businesses represent 16% of all the district's businesses.



2.2%

of the district's population work in architecture, compared to the national average of 1.6%.

Source: Winchester District Cultural Strategy 2024



The sector spans a broad range of activities, from museums, theatres and galleries through to architecture, digital marketing, design, video production, games development and publishing.



The district is home to 350 design companies, 100 architecture firms and around, 300 organisations working in film, TV, photography and radio production and distribution with a similar number offering specialist design activities.



A strong community of graphic designers operate locally, with expertise ranging from web design and branding to industrial design and surface pattern design.



Designer-makers produce bespoke jewellery, hats, glassware and furniture adding to the district's reputation for high-quality craftsmanship.



Film and television crew are regularly attracted to the area.



Creativity makes the district thrive.

A vibrant cultural sector enriches lives, strengths our economy and makes our district a place where people want to live, work and invest.



A thriving creative landscape

Winchester district boasts an impressive range of cultural venues and organisations who host performances from touring productions, in house theatre groups and young performers. Some attract nationally and internationally renowned operatic and classical performances, while other venues contribute to a lively music scene, hosting live music events most evenings. The district also supports a strong network of shared and affordable creative workspace and studio spaces.



Alongside this infrastructure, many practising artists reside in the district, delivering workshops, classes and creative experiences that support wellbeing, skills development and community engagement for both residents and visitors.



Festivals and events

The district has a varied programme of festivals, and events with around **30** medium to large scale festivals taking place each year.

These range from Boomtown, the UK's largest theatrically led festival to Hat Fair, the UK's longest continually running outdoor festival.



The district's heritage



2,271
listed
buildings



110
scheduled
monuments



37
conservation
areas



11
historic parks
and gardens



1
historic
battlefield



Major attractions such as **Winchester Cathedral** and the **Watercress Line** welcome approximately 100,000 visitors a year.



Skills and education

The district benefits from a strong education and skills pipeline that supports the creative and cultural industries.

University of Winchester

Offers courses in fashion, fine art, graphic design textiles, media and film, as well as drama and musical theatre courses.

Winchester School of Art

Specialist higher education in art and design, fashion, inspiring creative talent and innovation.

Peter Symonds college

Offers courses in music, art history, art, textiles, photography, dance, music and lots more. They are also the only state sixth form in the UK with [All-Steinway](#) status!

Open access music studio

Provides studio recording and mixing services.



Music education is well supported with choirs, orchestras, rock schools and even a handbell team operating across the district.



More than 25 dance groups, deliver tuition across multiple styles.



Hat Fair plays a key role in supporting the development and profile of outdoor arts.



Be part of Winchester district's creative future

From design and performance to digital innovation and craftsmanship, the creative and cultural sector continues to shape the district's identity, attract investment and improve quality of life for all.



Winchester
City Council