

Disabled artists experiences during the cost-of-living crisis: 2023-2024

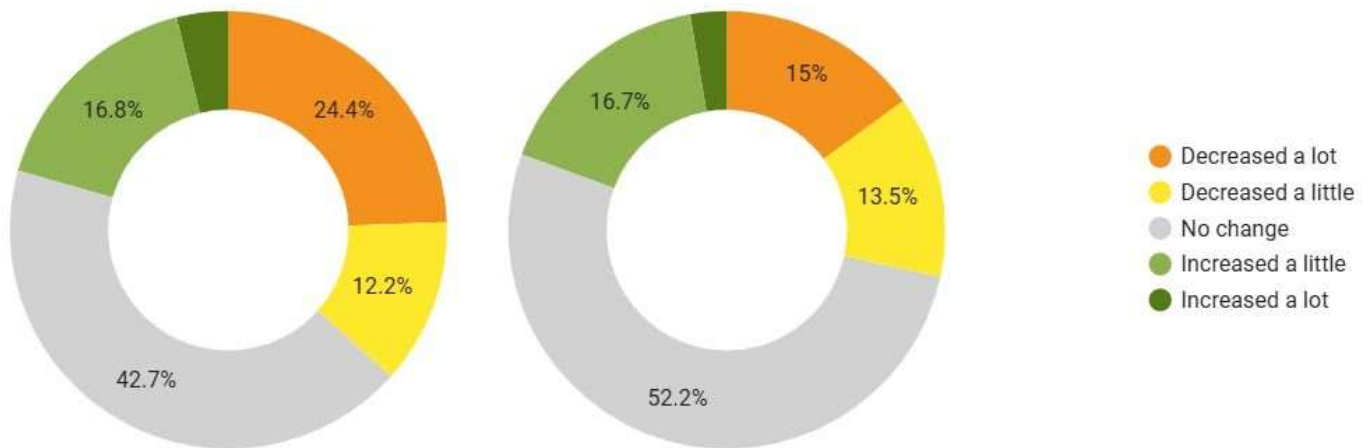
Disabled artists experience poorer mental health, less income and savings, more debt and fewer opportunities. While all artists experience precarious careers (lack of savings, drops in income), disabled artists are particularly badly hit.

Key Findings

- The cost-of-living crisis is having more of an impact on disabled artists.
- 9% more disabled than non-disabled artists experienced a significant drop in income from practice.
- 14% more disabled than non-disabled artists also experienced a drop in income from other sources.
- This has led to increased debt amongst disabled artists. 19% more disabled than non-disabled artists have taken on debt.
- 7% more disabled than non-disabled artists had to spend some savings to replace income with 7% more disabled artists having no savings to spend.
- There are fewer artistic opportunities for disabled artists. 12% more disabled than non-disabled artists reported a drop in exhibiting and other professional projects.
- This has had a greater negative impact on the mental health of disabled artists. 48% of disabled artists accessed mental health / wellbeing support, with 35% of non-disabled artists doing the same.

Changes in income

Income from arts practice: Disabled vs non-disabled artists



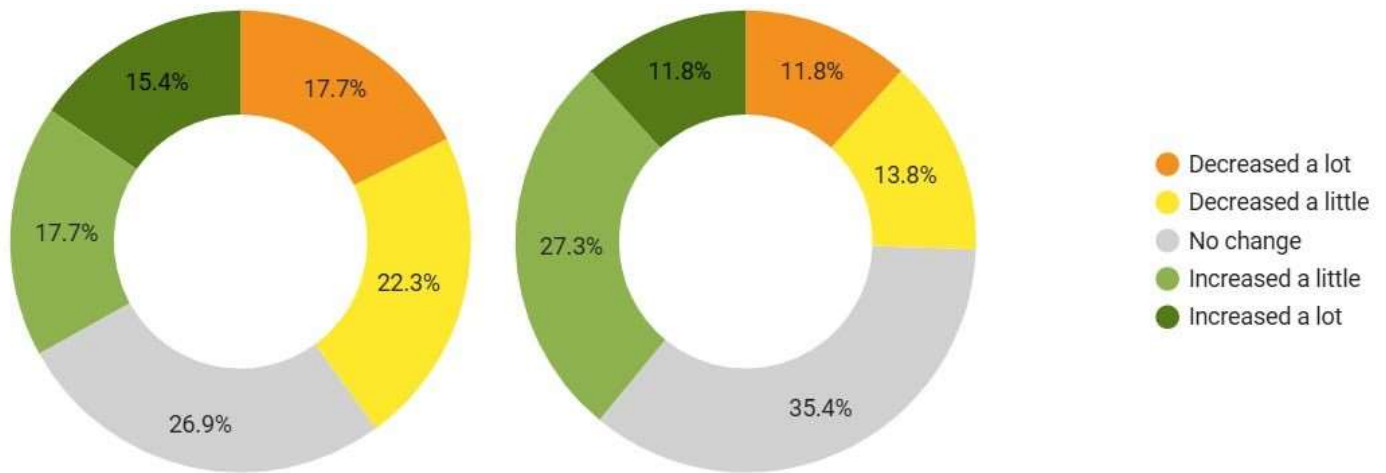
Disabled artists

Non-disabled artists

9% more disabled than non-disabled artists reported a major drop in income from their practice.

- **37% of disabled artists overall reported a drop in their practice-related-earnings** with 24% reporting a major decrease
- Still concerning, 29% of non-disabled artists reported a drop in earnings, with 15% reporting a major decrease
- About the same number of disabled and non-disabled artists report an increase in their earnings

Income from other sources: Disabled vs non-disabled artists



Disabled artists

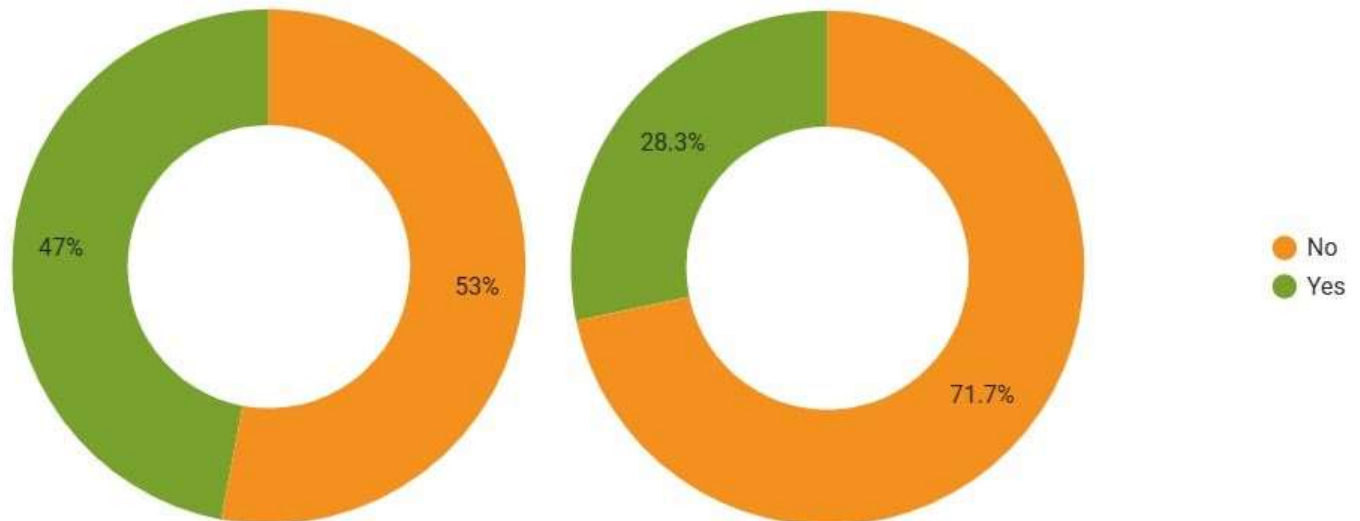
Non-disabled artists

Income from all sources outside of their art practice has dropped for 11% more disabled than non-disabled artists. This includes freelance and other employment, benefits, loans and finance, sales, commissions and funding.

- **40% of disabled artists saw income from outside their practice drop**, with 18% reporting a major decrease
- 26% of non-disabled artists said their earnings outside of practice dropped, with 12% reporting a major decrease
- Unlike practice-related income, where those disabled and non-disabled artists who saw an increase were about the same, 27% of non-disabled artists other earnings increased a little, compared to 18% of disabled artists

Debt & savings

More debt: Disabled vs non-disabled artists



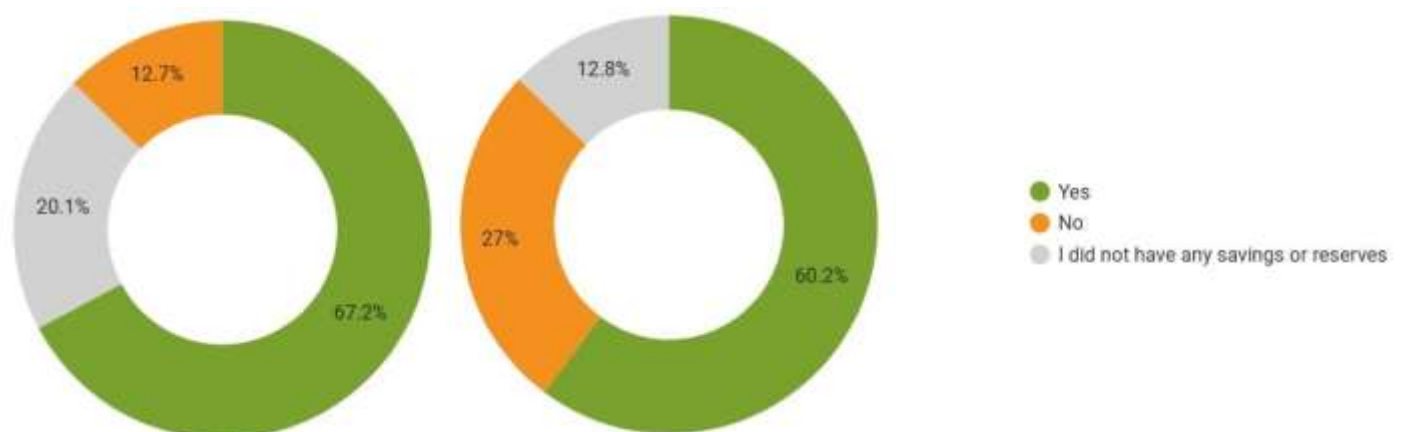
Disabled artists

Non-disabled artists

19% more disabled than non-disabled artists have taken on more debt to support their art practice. This includes commercial and personal debt, such as from friends or family.

- 47% of disabled artists have taken on more debt, with only 28% of non-disabled artists having to do so.

Less savings: Disabled vs non-disabled artists



Disabled artists

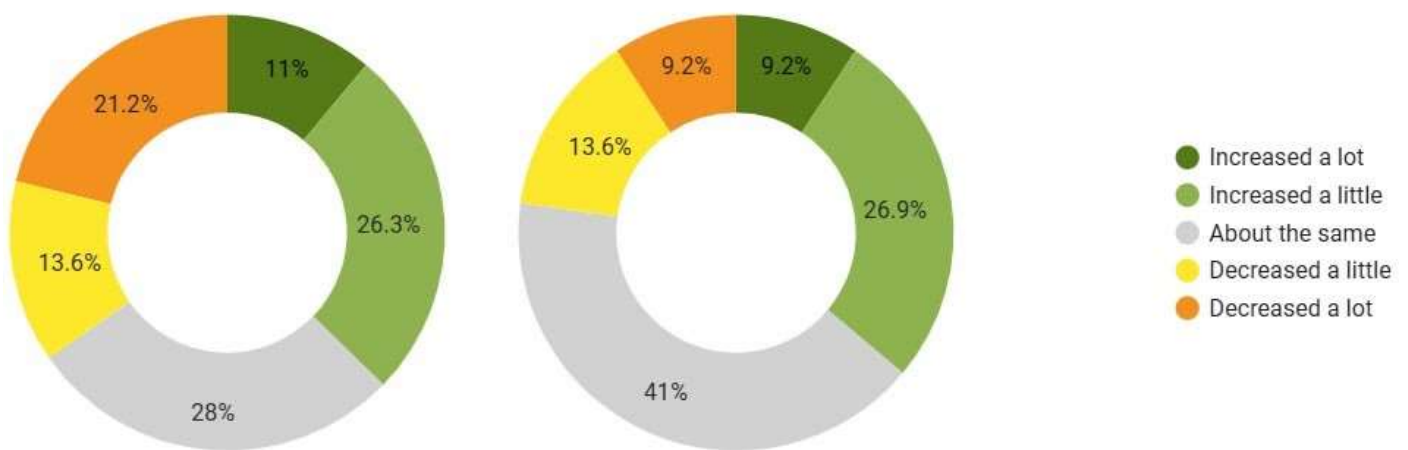
Non-disabled artists

7% more disabled than non-disabled artists had to spend some savings to replace income.

- 67% of disabled artists had to spend savings to replace income, with 60% of non-disabled artists reporting the same
- **Many disabled (20%) and non-disabled artists (13%) already reported having no savings at all.**

Career markers and wellbeing

Exhibitions and projects



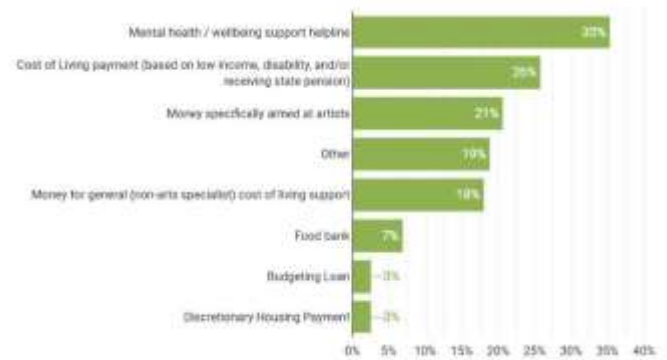
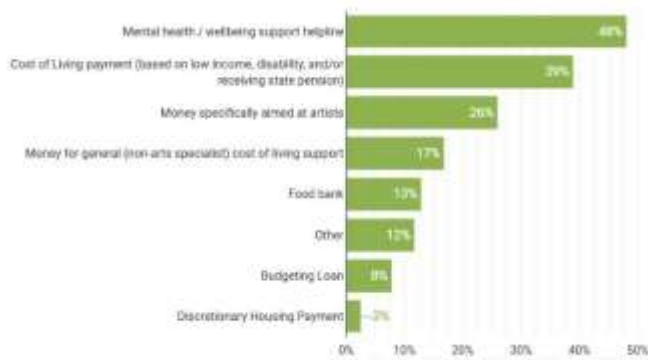
Disabled artists

Non-disabled artists

12% more disabled than non-disabled artists reported a drop in exhibiting and other professional projects.

- 35% of disabled artists saw exhibitions and projects drop, with 21% reporting a major drop
- 23% of non-disabled artists saw a drop in exhibitions and projects, with 9% reporting a major drop

Mental health and other emergency support



Disabled artists

Non-disabled artists

48% of disabled artists accessed mental health / wellbeing support, with 35% of non-disabled artists doing the same. 13% of disabled artists accessed a foodbank, with almost 40% getting a cost-of-living payment.

Final Thoughts

While the cost-of-living crisis is having a negative effect on the practices, livelihoods and wellbeing of all artists, disabled artists are particularly badly impacted. In this context the [proposed benefit cuts to Personal Independence Payments](#) is especially damaging and ill-considered. Sustaining a career and practice is getting harder, and it is Government's and the arts sectors responsibility to support artists who need it the most by providing more targeted professional opportunities and financial support to plug the gaps created by increasing costs and falling incomes. Failure to do so will further embed privilege in cultural sector and marginalise and exclude important creative voices.