



Affordable Studios Survey 2024

Scottish Artists Union

Executive Summary

The **Scottish Artists Union (SAU)** was formally constituted in 2001, becoming the first new trade union of the 21st century. Our membership has grown to over 2500 professional working artists and makers, and the union has a small part time staff team, and a voluntary executive committee made up of members. The union's key activities are lobbying on behalf of artists; protecting and extending artists' rights; and negotiating a wide range of benefits and services. We aim to improve the working conditions of visual and applied artists practising in Scotland, and to raise awareness of their contribution to public life and the economy.

The Affordable Studios Survey 2024 was undertaken in response to a high number of emails and enquiries received from SAU members, unhappy with high rent increases and energy surcharges over consecutive years. To develop a strategy for a robust 'Affordable Studios' campaign, we needed to gain a greater insight and realistic overview of artists and makers studio and workshop provision across Scotland.

The survey was live for four weeks from May to June 2024 and consisted of twenty-five questions relating to studio and workshop provision as experienced by artists and makers in Scotland. It was not a requirement to be a member of SAU as the survey was shared to the wider community. It was also not necessary to currently have a studio as we realised that many artists have had to give up their studios and we hoped to gauge this information.

Key Findings of This Survey

- 56% of responders were renting a studio or workspace, 7% were in a 'Meanwhile' or temporary space; 28% had a home studio; 3% own their studio space; and 3% were subletting.
- Over 25% of respondents have recently given up renting or downsized.
- 38% would like to rent a space but don't have that option.
- 40% are currently sharing a space with other artists.
- 17% deliver workshops from their studio.
- 44% of responders (with a studio) pay extra charges or fees in addition to their rent, generally these are for utilities (electric/gas) although 25% stated that they were not sure what these extra charges were for.
- 54% don't consider their rent to be appropriate for the space that they rent.
- Only 35% of respondents feel confident that they will be able to pay their rent over the next year, with 65% not confident or not sure if they will be able to pay their studio/workshop rent over the next year.
- Many of the respondents told us about the challenges that they faced with unsuitable or temporary spaces and the uncertainty caused by lack of affordability or availability, along with the personal and career costs of these challenges.

Actions by the Scottish Artists Union

The SAU intend to use the information gained in this survey to help campaign for more affordable and accessible studios and workspaces for artists and makers in Scotland, and to highlight the crisis within the sector due to the increasing expense, and what we regard as a chronic lack of affordable studio spaces.

We believe that this crisis in affordable studio provision is having a hugely detrimental effect on our members and their ability to maintain sustainable, productive careers. This in turn affects the wider creative community and inevitably undermines and erodes the cultural integrity of Scotland as a creative nation.

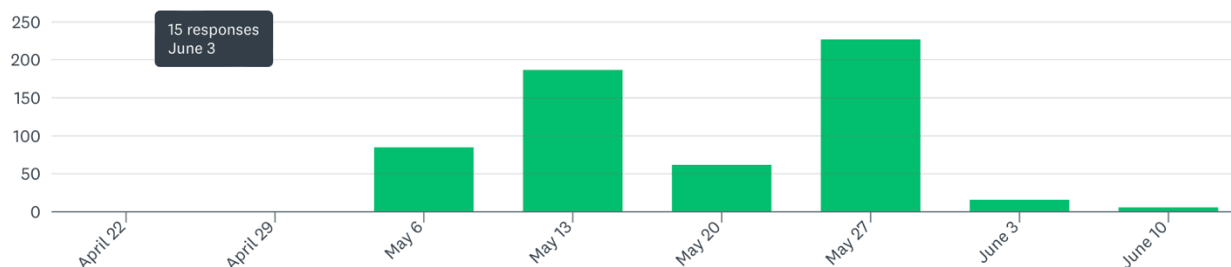
If you would like more information about this survey or SAU, contact us at office@artistsunion.scot.

More information about the Union and how to join is available on our website at www.artistsunion.scot

Survey Responses

Methodology

This survey was designed, conducted and analysed by SAU, and was aimed at our members, and also artists and makers who are non-members, from the wider arts community. We circulated the survey through our regular monthly Members Newsletter, blog posts on our website, and social media over a period of four weeks during May/June 2024.



We received what we consider to be a good response to this survey with 577 people taking part over the four-week period that it was live. This illustrates the high level of interest and importance of the issue of affordable studio provision for many artists and makers living and working in Scotland.

Some respondents skipped some questions, and only around half got right through to the end. Analysis is based on response to individual questions, and the number of respondents is detailed for each question.

There were 577 responses in total. 407 were SAU members (71%), with 167 non-members (29%). Of membership responses 48 % were aged 51 or over with 29% under the age of 40.

There were responses from every local authority area apart from West Dunbartonshire although only 1 response from Falkirk, Shetland Isles and Clackmannanshire. The cities dominated with Glasgow providing the largest number of responses 31%; 14% from Edinburgh; 5% Dundee; 6% Aberdeen.

Responders were asked to describe their practice and there were a wide range of responses across the fine arts and applied arts, but the largest proportion described their practice as painting, with sculpture and printmaking also heavily featured.

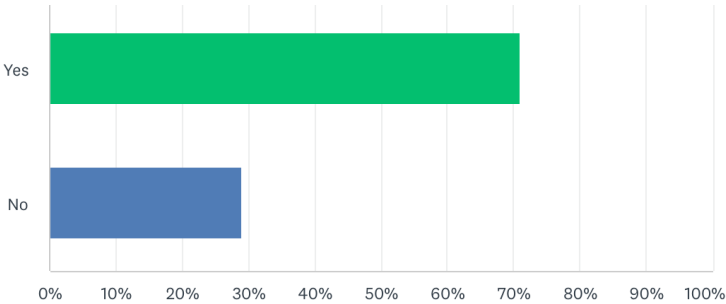
The most predominant landlord was WASPS, with others mentioning Outer Spaces, and Glasgow Sculpture Studios, and private landlords.

Questions and Responses

Here are the results with answers to the twenty-five Survey questions, from 577 people who replied. As stated in all our correspondence about this survey, all information that might identify respondents from their responses has been removed to make it confidential.

About The Respondents

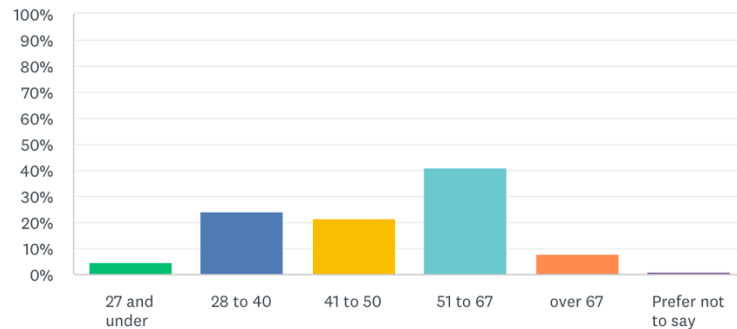
Question 1. Are you a member of Scottish Artists Union?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	70.91%	407
No	29.09%	167
TOTAL		574

The survey was shared to the wider arts community as well as our membership, so we asked respondents to confirm if they were a member of the Scottish Artists Union or not. We received an answer from 574 respondents, with 3 people missing out this section, and the results show that 407 (71%) were members and 167 (29%) were non-members.

Question 2. What is your age?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ 27 and under	4.86% 28
▼ 28 to 40	24.13% 139
▼ 41 to 50	21.70% 125
▼ 51 to 67	40.80% 235
▼ over 67	7.64% 44
▼ Prefer not to say	0.87% 5
TOTAL	576

We asked our responders what their age was, with results showing that the largest age group of respondents was between 51 to 67, with over 48% aged 51 or over, with 29% under the age of 40. Five people preferred not to say, and one person skipped this question.

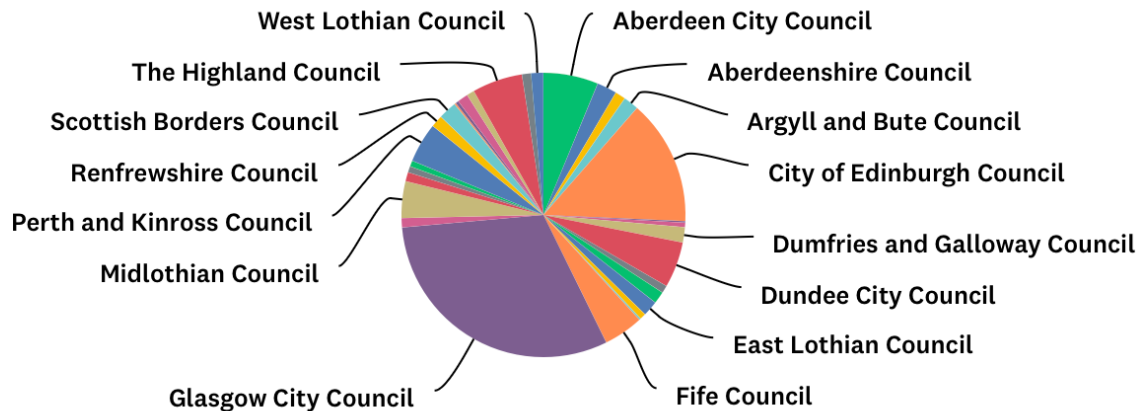
Question 3. What is your area of practice?



572 people responded to this question with 88 different responses and with 21% using the words 'painter' or 'painting' to describe themselves: with sculpture (11%), textiles (8%), ceramics (8%), illustration (4%) and printmaking (5%) also heavily featured.

Question 4. Please tell us where you are based in Scotland.

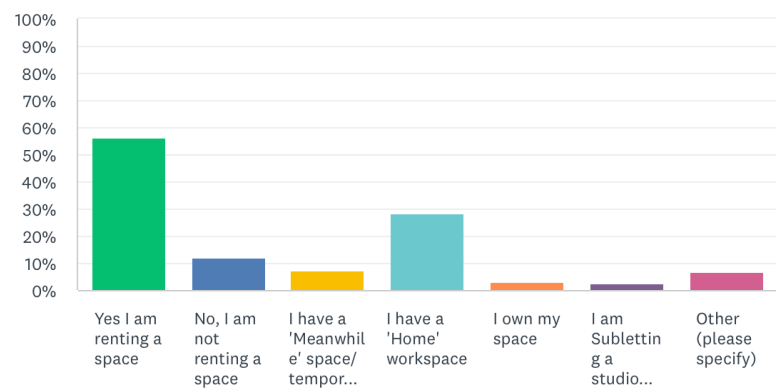
We received responses from artists and makers from every local authority area in Scotland apart from West Dunbartonshire, although only one response each came from Falkirk, Shetland Isles and Clackmannanshire. The cities dominated with Glasgow providing the largest number of responses at 31%; with 14% from Edinburgh; 5% from Dundee; and 6% from Aberdeen.



N.B. Please go to end of report to see this graphic as a list on page 25 – Appendix 1.

Current Workshop/Studio Circumstances

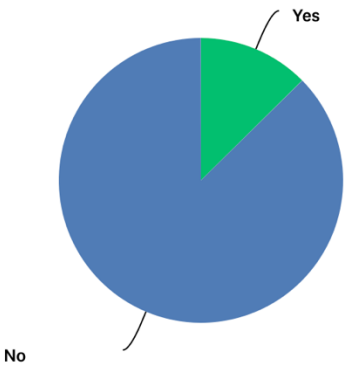
Question 5. What is your current workshop/studio situation? (please answer all that apply)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes I am renting a space	56.07%	314
No, I am not renting a space	12.14%	68
I have a 'Meanwhile' space/ temporary space	7.32%	41
I have a 'Home' workspace	28.21%	158
I own my space	3.39%	19
I am Subletting a studio/workspace	2.68%	15
Other (please specify)	6.79%	38

We had 560 responses to this question with 17 skipping it. 56% of responders were renting a studio or workspace, 7% were in a ‘Meanwhile’ or temporary space; 28% had a home studio; 3% own their studio space; 3% were subletting. Many of the 38 ‘Other’ responses mention working at home, in garages or other domestic spaces; in between spaces or searching for a space to work.

Question 6. Have you recently given up renting a workshop/studio space?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	12.64%	70
No	87.36%	484
TOTAL		554

We received 554 responses to this question with 70 respondents saying that they had given up renting a workspace, over 12% of those surveyed.

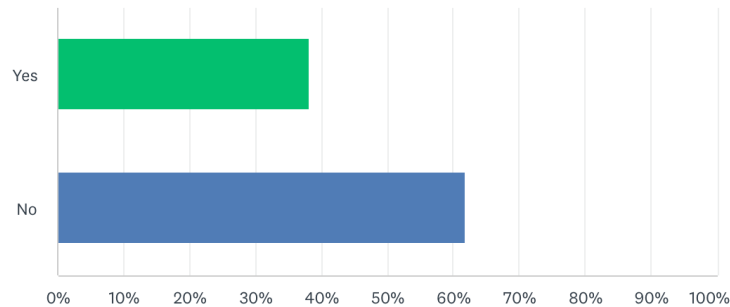
We also received an additional 96 responses that outlined why artists have given up renting, often because of the sharp rise in rental costs, or the inability to justify the cost for the time able to use it. There are also comments about buildings being sold for re-development, and concerns about gentrification.

“I share with 3 other artists; we all cannot afford the rent anymore”.

“I just couldn’t afford my space anymore; I was renting from WASPS but had to give it up last year.”

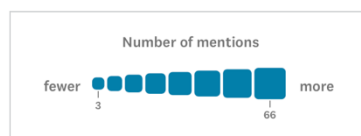
“The building was sold to be redeveloped into housing”.

Question 7. I would like to rent a studio/workspace, but I do not have that option.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	38.11% 194
No	61.89% 315
TOTAL	509

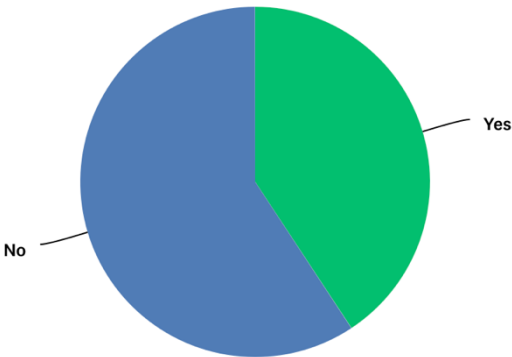
We received 509 answers to this question and over 38% of respondents said that they would like to rent a studio or workspace but don't have that option, with 196 respondents leaving a comment illustrated in this word cloud below, that outlines recurring frustrations with lack of availability, and affordability, high fuel costs for heating and travel especially for rurally situated artists.



"There are none available on the island where I live."

"Money/ location. It's hard to find affordable studios in my area, and I currently can't justify the commute cost to a studio further away."

Question 8. Do you share your studio/workspace with other artists?



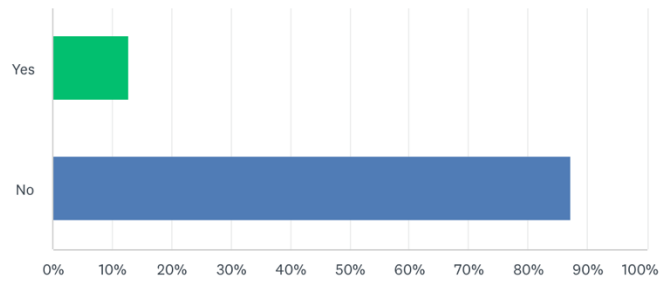
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.72%	147
No	59.28%	214
TOTAL		361

We asked if respondents shared their workspace and received 361 responses. 41% replied that they did share, while 59% did not, with 117 respondents leaving a comment, many of which describe how they have had to share due to rising studio costs.

“I previously had a studio on my own but for the last few months have been sharing the space with another artist due to the recent rent increases. “

“I share with 3 artists. Makes our spaces small & cramped but affordable.”

Question 9. Have you recently downsized?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	12.78%	46
No	87.22%	314
TOTAL		360

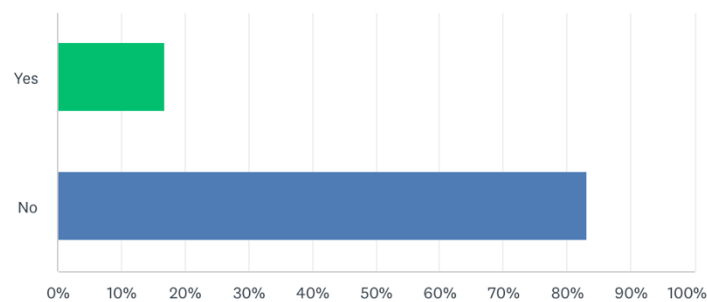
We asked if respondents had recently downsized and the responses show that 13% had downsized, we also received 55 comments that explain the reasons why and highlight that many respondents are currently considering downsizing because of increasing studio costs.

“Considering it but Wasps have introduced a new policy that mean when you move within the organisation, they put the rent up so it could actually cost more to downsize”.

“We're in the process of looking for a smaller space or finding someone else to share with us.”

“I am finding it increasingly hard to make my studio rent - and am taking on extra work to cover the costs - so it is becoming prohibitive to have one.”

Question 10. Do you usually deliver workshops from your studio or workspace?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	16.76%	58
No	83.24%	288
TOTAL		346

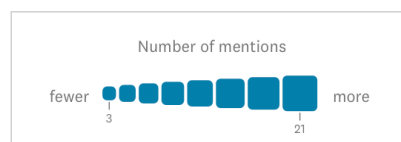
We asked if respondents usually deliver workshops from their studio or workspace and the response was 17% said that they did, although we also had 44 comments many of which voiced that the respondent would like to but was not currently able due lack of space or the unsuitability of their current studio situation. Many artists run workshops to supplement their income and the lack of affordable workspace available to artists and makers hampers creative peoples’ ability to improve their income and share their skills. This question emphasises how important an appropriate space is, to generating income.

“I don't have enough space in my small studio for this.”

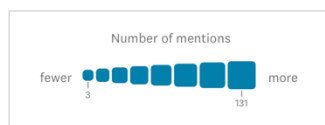
“I would if I had a bigger space but had to give it up due to lack of funds.”

Question 11. If you are currently renting a studio/workspace, what is the address of your building?

We had 291 responses to this question about the location of the studio or workspace, creating the word cloud illustrated, showing 80 different locations, predominantly in the cities and with the largest numbered mentioned being WASPS (Workshop & Studio Provision (Scotland), others include the Glasgow Sculpture Studios, also known as the Whisky Bond; Crownpoint, Govan Workspace, and Many Studios, Glasgow; Out of the Blue Drill Hall and Summerhall, Edinburgh; Deemouth Artists' Studios and Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen. Other places mentioned included independent spaces and various business centres reflecting the use of "Meanwhile" spaces provided by organisations like Outer Spaces.

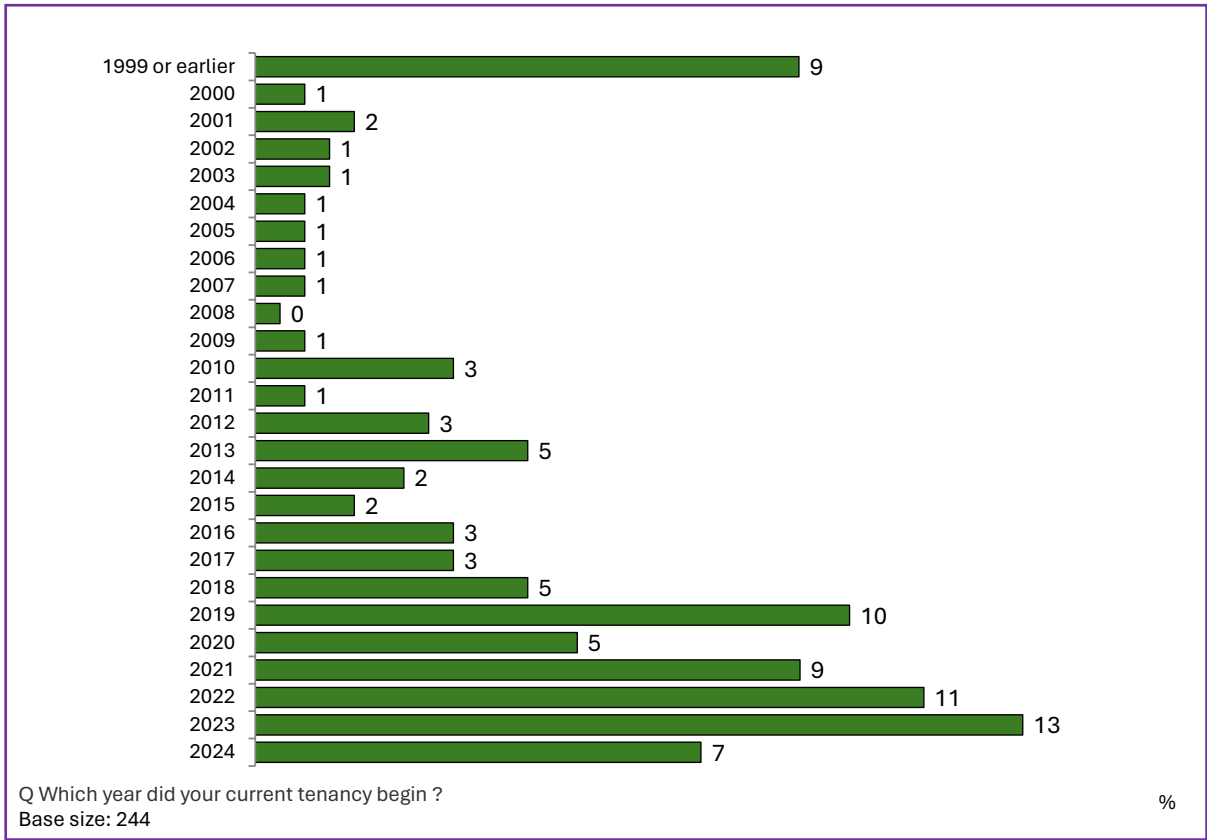


Question 12. Who is the landlord for your studio or workspace?



We had 293 responses to this question, with over 45% of respondents replying that WASPs was their landlord. Other organisations such as Glasgow Sculpture Studios, Edinburgh Printmakers and Outer spaces were also featured.

Question 13. Which year did your current tenancy begin?



We asked when did the current tenancy begin, and this was answered by 244 of the respondents who currently rent a space. This highlights that 31% of the respondents who currently rent a space took on their studio/ workspace within the last 3 years and 45% within the last 5 years. More than three in ten respondents who rent a space (32%) have been in their studios more than ten years (32%) and 14% more than 20 years (including two who have been in their studio since 1987) showing a long-term commitment or loyalty to their studio provider.

Question 14. If you know what size your studio is, please tell us (floor space in square metres not including cupboards)?

We asked about the size of the artist's studio/ workspace, and this was answered by 245 respondents with a wider range of answers: from desk size to others who needed a large space to accommodate equipment for ceramics, sculpture, textile work, or framing equipment. The overall average size was 41 m square metres.

Question 15. How much monthly studio rent were you paying in May 2021?

We asked how much respondents were paying for their studios in May 2021 and received 282 responses with a wide range of amounts ranging up to £1212.

We found the average monthly rent from the figures supplied was £205, this figure stayed consistent even when we filtered out the 'Meanwhile' or temporary spaces, people with home studios or owning their own studio, leaving 235 respondents renting or subletting.

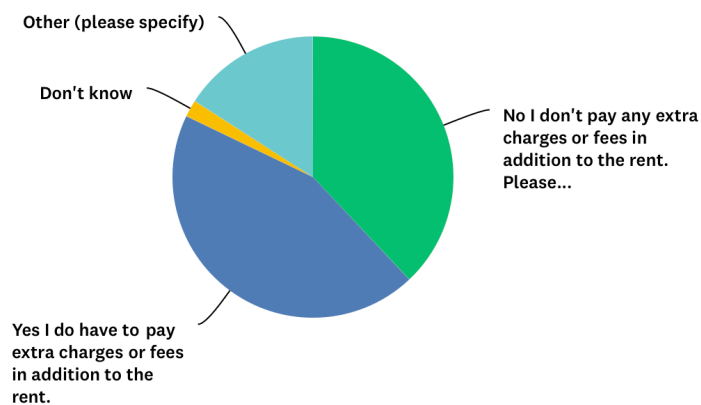
Question 16. How much monthly studio rent were you paying in May 2024?

We asked how much monthly rent respondents were paying for their studios/workspaces in May 2024, and we received 290 responses with again a wide range of amounts ranging up to £2070. We took an average of these figures, and the average monthly rent was £256.

This figure remained consistent when we filtered out the 'Meanwhile' or temporary spaces, people with home studios or owning their own studio leaving 241 respondents renting or subletting.

The information gained from Q15 and Q16 implies that the average rise in studio cost over the last three years has been over £50 per respondent.

Question 17. Are you required to pay any additional charges or fees on top of the rent for your studio?

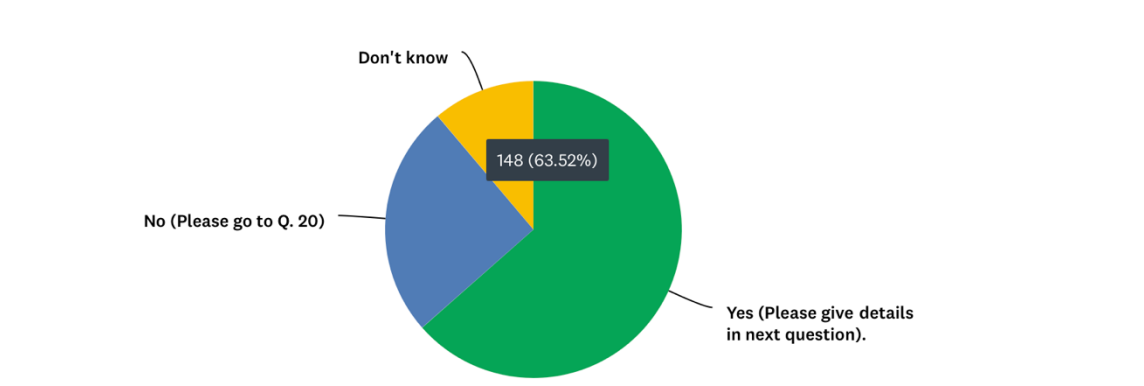


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No I don't pay any extra charges or fees in addition to the rent. Please go to Q. 21.	37.99%	117
Yes I do have to pay extra charges or fees in addition to the rent.	44.16%	136
Don't know	1.95%	6
Other (please specify)	Responses 15.91%	49
TOTAL	308	

We asked if respondents were required to pay any additional charges or fees on top of their studio /workshop rent and received 308 responses, with 44% stating that they did have to pay additional charges.

When this question just applied to those renting and subletting (246 respondents) the figures were higher, with 53% stating that they had to pay additional charges and fees on top of their studio rent.

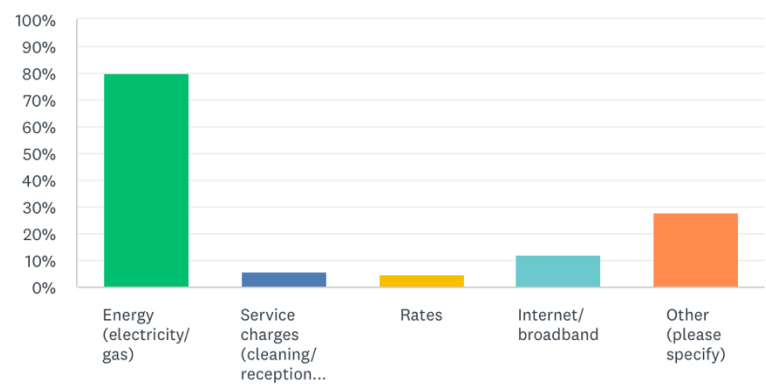
Question 18. If you pay any additional charges or fees, is it transparent what they are being used for?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes (Please give details in next question).	63.52% 148
No (Please go to Q. 20)	25.32% 59
Don't know	11.16% 26
TOTAL	233

We asked respondents if there were paying additional charges or fees, if it was transparent what they are paying for, with 233 people replying to this question. 148 responded (64%) saying that they did know what the charges were for and 25% saying that they were not transparent, while 11% said that they didn’t know.

Question 19. If you are required to pay any additional charges or fees on top of your rent for your studio, what are they for? (Choose all that apply.)



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Energy (electricity/gas)	80.21%	154
▼ Service charges (cleaning/ reception services)	5.73%	11
▼ Rates	4.69%	9
▼ Internet/ broadband	11.98%	23
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 28.13%	54
Total Respondents: 192		

We asked what the additional charges were for, with 192 responses to this question. 80% were required to pay additional charges for utilities with internet /broadband services, cleaning/reception services, rates with an additional 54 respondents highlighting other charges. These include building insurance, repairs & maintenance, water charges, PAT testing, access to workshop facilities, shared workshop space, communal production facilities, participation in a shop, gallery or retail space, additional kiln costs /heating costs. These results show that respondents are often paying for multiple additional costs in addition to their rent.

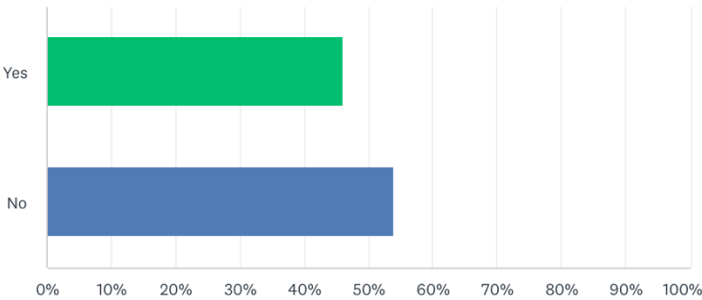
Question 20. As of May 2024, what is your total studio charge including rent and additional charges and fees?

We had 233 respondents for this question with charges ranging up to £1580, and the average cost working out as £296. Like previous similar questions, we discounted those answers by respondents paying for ‘Meanwhile’ or temporary spaces, or where the artist made a donation of less than £75, rather than paying actual rent.

Question 21. Do you know what the percentage increase is this year, compared with 2023?

We asked what the percentage increase had been this year, and this was answered by 138 of the respondents who currently rent a space. Of these, 36 respondents (26% of those that responded to this question) reported that they had not received any increases to their rent this year. 102 respondents (74% of those that responded to this question) reported that they had received any increase to their rent this year, with a range from a 3% to a 47% increase. The average increase was 15% with 51% of the respondents who had received any increase reporting a 14-16% increase. At time of writing the UK inflation rate is currently 2% so many have faced rises far exceeding inflation.

Question 22. Do you consider the studio rent that you are charged to be an appropriate rent for the space you get?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.03%	116
No	53.97%	136
TOTAL		252

We asked respondents if they considered the rent that they pay is appropriate for the space they get and received 252 responses, with 100 comments added.

More than half (54%) of respondents do not consider their studio rent to be appropriate for what they get. The comments we received further illustrate artists concerns about how the increases might affect their ability to afford a studio in the future. If we only consider the responders who are paying rent or sub-letting, then that rises to 58%.

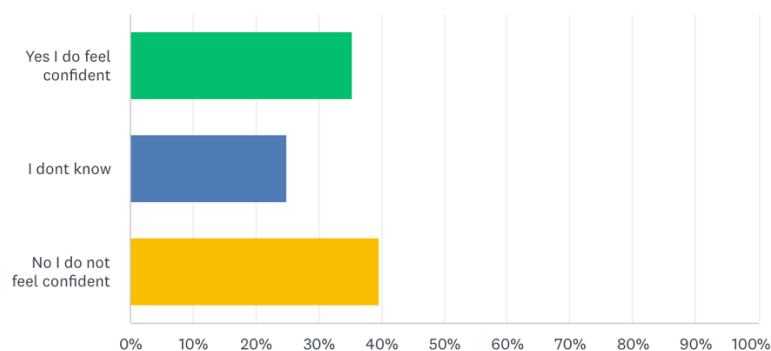
“My rent has almost doubled since I took the studio on in 2017.”

“It's a lovely space but I'm worried about the rising costs and my ability to continue to afford it. If it keeps going up, I will have to leave.”

“I'm happy to have a studio, but I feel the increase is not a reasonable increase. And when energy prices drop. The rent doesn't.”

Impact of Current Workshop /Studio Circumstances

Question 23. Do you feel confident that you will be able to pay your studio/workshop rent over the next year?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes I do feel confident	35.38%	98
I dont know	24.91%	69
No I do not feel confident	39.71%	110
TOTAL		277

We asked respondents if they felt confident that they will be able to pay their studio rent over the next year, we had 277 responses for this question. The results show that 35% said that they did feel confident that they will be able to pay their rent over the next year, 40% did not feel confident and 25% did not know, making a total of around two thirds (65%) who are not confident or don't know if they will be able to pay their studio rent over the next year.

We also received 72 comments many of which highlight the concerns people have about the precarity of the sector.

"I feel nervous about the rent increase. As a self-employed artist for 3 years, this has meant that my profits have hardly ever increased since I began. I am forced to increase the prices of my work and services. Meaning that I am losing clients. It's very worrying."

"I have been funded this year, hence why I can afford the rent, funding from different projects largely pays for it. In one way I'm confident that I'll be able to get more funding as I value what I do but also feel the precarity that nothing is certain and that has a lot to do with the stability of the sector which I am not feeling confidence in."

"Things are getting worse and worse. People just don't have funds for buying art or doing creative courses."

"I am finding it increasingly hard to make my studio rent - and am taking on extra work to cover the costs - so it is becoming prohibitive to have one."

Question 24. Please let us know of any other issues you are facing regarding your studio or workspace.

We received 204 responses about other issues that artists face regarding their studios or workspaces. Many of these outline problems with unsuitable or temporary spaces; the uncertainty caused by lack of affordability or availability.

"Overall, my rent has increased by 49% approximate since I moved in. The original price was reasonable at £185 per month. To have increased by nearly 50% in just 3 years is shocking and disappointing. Especially when there is nothing more on offer to us for the extra amount we pay."

Problems with unsuitable spaces

"Insecurity about the longevity of a building I have rented space in for over 30 years with a landlord that no longer seems to fulfil its charitable mission statement to support artists."

"Our studio regularly floods. The building isn't well maintained - with issues such as broken lights and blocked sinks not being fixed despite repeated reports of these to the landlords."

"The space is neglected and frequently leaks and there are problems with damp."

"It is not a well-kept building, the electrics are dodgy, the Internet is unreliable, and the structure of the building is very worn."

Problems with temporary spaces

"Not confident that how long the space will be available or where I can move or even store my materials after that."

"I cannot afford a studio out with my home, so I rely on the Outer Spaces studio offer. I am so grateful for it, but of course it is very unpredictable and probably temporary."

"My space is very much temporary with a short notice period."

Question 25. If you would like to, please contribute an anonymous quote about the impacts of un-affordable studio rent on you or your practice.

We received 247 quotes in response to this question, here are a small sample illustrating the personal cost of these challenges.

The uncertainty caused by lack of affordability.

"As an artist and mother, I have had to negotiate the stress of moving studio whilst caring for a young baby, because rising rents made my small space unaffordable. To maintain an art practice as a mother is a challenge in and of itself - exacerbated by a lack of support for artists at a time of exceptional economic hardship."

"As someone who has no space at home to work from, having my studio has been crucial to building up my practice over the last 20 years. I have been able to work as a full-time artist, even though my income is well below minimum wage level, because my studio space was affordable. With the increases in May 2023 and May 2024 however, and the general economic gloom - with a drop in customer spending, hence sales - it's looking increasingly like continuing my practice is unsustainable."

"I have to work at home now because of my disability and also because I can't afford to rent a studio space anymore."

"The above inflation rent rises, combined with the cost-of-living crisis and contracting (and increasingly competitive) opportunities to generate income are creating conditions where access to creativity is the preserve of those with other means and not a sustainable career for a range of diverse lived experiences."

"Working class artists need places to work and engage with their peers and the public. They need safe and affordable spaces. I am concerned about the recent trend in hot desking and manufacturing spaces for creative industries. I am also concerned that artists are being used as pawns in the gentrification of our communities. I feel developers exploit the needs of artists for their own gains."

The uncertainty caused by lack of availability.

"Living rurally often means that there are not many suitable spaces to rent and use as a studio space. Those spaces that do exist are rented at rates that aren't affordable, as landlords feel that they can charge what they want."

Appendix 1

Breakdown of respondents by local authority area

ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES ▼	
▼ Aberdeen City Council	6.25%	36
▼ Aberdeenshire Council	2.26%	13
▼ Angus Council	1.22%	7
▼ Argyll and Bute Council	1.74%	10
▼ City of Edinburgh Council	14.24%	82
▼ Clackmannanshire Council	0.17%	1
▼ Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	0.52%	3
▼ Dumfries and Galloway Council	1.74%	10
▼ Dundee City Council	5.21%	30
▼ East Ayrshire Council	0.87%	5
▼ East Dunbartonshire Council	1.39%	8
▼ East Lothian Council	1.74%	10
▼ East Renfrewshire Council	0.69%	4
▼ Falkirk Council	0.17%	1
▼ Fife Council	4.51%	26
▼ Glasgow City Council	30.90%	178
▼ Inverclyde Council	1.04%	6
▼ Midlothian Council	4.17%	24
▼ North Ayrshire Council	1.04%	6
▼ North Lanarkshire Council	0.69%	4
▼ Orkney Islands Council	0.69%	4
▼ Perth and Kinross Council	4.51%	26
▼ Renfrewshire Council	1.39%	8
▼ Scottish Borders Council	2.08%	12
▼ Shetland Islands Council	0.17%	1
▼ South Ayrshire Council	0.35%	2
▼ South Lanarkshire Council	1.22%	7
▼ Stirling Council	0.87%	5
▼ The Highland Council	5.73%	33
▼ The Moray Council	1.04%	6
▼ West Dunbartonshire Council	0.00%	0
▼ West Lothian Council	1.39%	8
TOTAL		576