



Arts Council Bridge organisations briefing

Introduction and background

Arts Council England has long supported art and arts organisations that work with children and young people in order to improve access and increase participation.

In November 2010 Arts Council published its 10-year strategic framework, *Achieving Great Art for Everyone*, (available on our website, www.artscouncil.org.uk) which included the goal that 'Every child and young person should experience the richness of the arts'.

This goal has two priorities: to improve the delivery of art opportunities in a more coherent way; and to raise the standard of art being produced for, with and by children and young people.

To help achieve this, Arts Council England will invest in 10 organisations (plus four associate organisations) to create a network of Bridge organisations. Between them, they will receive £10m in 2012/13 and in each of the subsequent years of this funding round. Their purpose is to make a step change in improving the delivery of arts opportunities for children and young people, acting as a bridge between the arts and education sectors.

From 2012 the Arts Council will distribute grant in aid through 695 National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) for the first time. 2011–12 is a transitional year for the current portfolio of Regularly Funded Organisations. It is also the last year in which we will fund the Creative Partnerships programme, which is delivered by Culture, Creativity & Education. We will use this transitional year to work with Bridge organisations to ensure that they will be ready to work with the new NPOs and build upon the legacy of Creative Partnerships from April 2012.

Bridge Organisations

Bridge organisations will help us to develop consistency and coherence across an often complex arts and education landscape to help more young people, families and communities benefit from high quality creative and artistic experiences.

The Bridge network will help us to create a coherent and focused arts and culture offer for young people, by connecting the high quality work and opportunities already offered by the cultural sector, and identifying where new opportunities can add value for children and families.

All Bridge organisations have been selected for their wealth of expertise and experience in working with children and young people in the arts. The majority of Bridge organisations were also high performing regional delivery organisations for Creative Partnerships, and have developed valuable expertise and experience.

Creative Partnerships and programmes such as Cultural Hubs and Find Your Talent, provided valuable learning about how to ensure that all young people have access to rich arts experiences and we will build on this legacy.

The new Bridge organisations will focus on connecting schools and communities with the full National portfolio network and other high quality arts and culture organisations, getting more art into schools and communities and tapping into co-commissioning opportunities for NPOs, other arts organisations and artists.

Each region will have a dedicated Bridge organisation (there are two Bridge organisations in the East, and four associate Bridge organisations in London.).

The organisations and the funding they will receive to deliver this work are:

East: Norfolk and Norwich Festival (£500,000)

East: Royal Opera House (£730,000)

East Midlands: Mighty Creatives (£900,000)

London: A New Direction (£1,100,000), working with four 'Associate Bridge organisations':

Sadler's Wells (£75,000)

Roundhouse (160,000)

Apples and Snakes (£55,000)

Lyric Hammersmith (£160,000)

North East: The Sage Gateshead (£483,000)

North West: Curious Minds (£1,351,000)

South East: Artswork (£1,526,000)

South West: RIO (£880,000)

West Midlands: BCCSIP (£1,124,000)

Yorkshire: Cape UK (£1,018,000)

We expect Bridge organisations to build on the legacy of previous programmes to ensure that knowledge and existing networks are not lost. They will work with other local organisations to conduct a quick audit of local provision, identify best practice and existing opportunities and the potential of arts organisations to fill gaps in provision that better meet the needs of local authorities, schools, children and young people and families.

They will build long term relationships between the arts and the education sectors, acting as a first point of contact for schools, responding to their needs and securing their commitment to supporting arts organisations and artists. The Bridge organisations will also ensure that Arts Award and Artsmark are maximised as key tools with schools, arts organisations, local authorities and other partners.

Importantly, Bridge organisations will play a key role in identifying commissioning opportunities from local authorities, local businesses, trusts and foundations on behalf of NPOs and other arts organisations, to enhance the arts offer for children and young people and families.

They will also support the Arts Council to work across the sector to raise the quality of arts experiences for with and by children and young people. They will support the development of a set of shared principles and values that underpin the quality of work for children and young people and benchmark the quality of artists working with children and young people.

Arts Council will play a facilitation role, consulting and working through NPOs and the wider sector to develop a shared understanding of how the quality of experience for children and young people and families can be judged. We do not primarily expect Bridge organisations to directly deliver arts opportunities for children and young people. Our wider portfolio of NPOs and other arts organisations will achieve this. However, Bridge organisations may help deliver opportunities for children and young people in partnership with other agencies and arts organisations. They may also model or pilot ways of working that directly benefit other arts organisations or groups of arts organisations, which will help increase the capacity and long term sustainability of the sector.

There are a small number of Bridge organisations that also receive NPO funding to produce and present art (Royal Opera House, Sage Gateshead, Norfolk & Norwich Festival and Associate Bridges), and they will continue to deliver arts opportunities to children and young people as part of their core business.

Wider context

National Portfolio organisations

As well as the Bridge organisations, 460 arts organisations in our new National portfolio indicated that they will play a significant role in the delivery of great art for children and young people over the next four years. We therefore expect the NPOs to deliver great art for children and young people, and make a substantial

and significant contribution towards children and young people experiencing the richness of the arts.

In addition, we want NPOs to work more closely and successfully with schools and local authorities. We want NPOs to increase their offer of high quality arts opportunities for children and young people, in and outside of school, to match our ambitions for children and young people, whilst at the same time meeting the needs of schools and resonating with the demands of the national curriculum.

Artsmark

Artsmark recognises schools and other learning environments that have put in place a significant cultural offer. It is a key tool with which the Arts Council engages with schools and children and young people. It remains a popular scheme with 20% of all schools having gained Artsmark.

We have spent the past year revisiting Artsmark to ensure it meets the needs of changing school demands. We have successfully piloted a digitised application process and introduced an important quality dimension including peer support from 'Gold' schools.

The scheme now requires schools to use National Portfolio Organisations and other arts organisations to deliver high quality arts experiences. We have worked with DfE as we revised the scheme, which will launch in September 2011 with endorsement from DCMS, DfE and Ofsted.

We have set ourselves challenging targets for increased uptake of the scheme from 20% of the country's 25,000 schools to 50% by 2015 and we believe Artsmark is more important than ever in a climate of potential reductions to the arts in schools through changes to the curriculum and funding.

Arts Award

Arts Award supports young people to develop as artists and arts leaders. It supports children and young people who want to deepen their engagement with the arts, build creative and leadership skills, and to achieve a national qualification.

This collaboration also increases young people's access to the Arts Council's National portfolio of arts organisations and strategic partners, while they work towards their qualification.

Arts Award is now in its sixth year and continues to show significant growth with 16,751 young people achieving the award in 2010-11, which represents a 45% increase on 2009/10. It is now managed under license by Trinity College London in association with Arts Council England.

The Arts Council is now working with Trinity to develop two new levels. Arts Award Discover and Explore will be primarily aimed at 7-11 year olds. A pilot with 60 lead centres is running until October 2011, involving clusters of schools, NPOs and other organisation.

Take It Away

Take it away is an Arts Council initiative designed to help more people get involved in learning and playing music. The scheme allows individuals to apply for a loan of up to £2,000 for the purchase of any kind of musical instrument, and pay it back in nine monthly installments, completely interest free.

Take it away loans are available through a network of over 330 participating musical instrument retailers across England. Since April 1, the focus of the scheme has changed, and it is now only open to people between 18 and 25. We will shortly be relauching the Take It Away website, which will provide specialist information about accessing music tuition and how to pursue careers in music.

Henley Review

The government has undertaken a review of music education, jointly commissioned by the DfE and DCMS and led by Darren Henley, Chief Executive of Classic FM. It took place in autumn 2010 and the report and recommendations were published in March 2011.

We welcome the review, in particular the recommendation that we work with the DfE and DCMS to develop the National Music Plan. We see the potential for Bridge organisations and NPOs to create the 'Music Education Hubs' that Henley recommends be created, and of NPOs in providing live music making opportunities. We also see a potential for Artsmark to be used as a tool in the auditing of schools music education.

In April, Darren Henley was commissioned by the DCMS and DfE to undertake a wider review of Cultural Education (5-19) with recommendations expected by October 2011 and publication by December. Set within the context of The Importance of Teaching - The Schools White Paper 2010 which states 'that every child should experience a wide variety of high quality cultural experiences', the

review aims to determine how this can be realised, ensuring both quality and best use of public investment.

We are supporting the review by seeking the views of NPOs, and the wider cultural sector. We are also working closely with both Departments to shape their thinking and to position Arts Council as the key strategic body in advance of the Henley recommendations.

Q&A on Bridge Organisations

Q. Will they distribute grants?

Bridge organisations will not distribute grants from their Arts Council allocations or be involved in the distribution of other forms of Arts Council support. The money they receive will enable them to facilitate more opportunities for children and young people and families through our portfolio of NPOs and other high quality arts and culture organisations.

A significant portion of the new NPOs have identified the Arts Council's goal to improve the arts for children and young people as something that they will contribute to and these expectations will be built into funding agreements. Bridge organisations will play a key role in identifying additional funds through commissioning opportunities from schools, local authorities and others. They will also support potential Grants for the Arts applications to enhance the offer of NPOs and other arts and cultural organisations.

Q. How will they 'replace' Creative Partnerships?

Bridge organisations are not intended to be a replacement for Creative Partnerships which aimed to increase creativity across the school curriculum. We valued Creative Partnerships, and there are important lessons from the Creative Partnerships programme that Bridge organisations will be expected to build upon. Our aim now is to focus explicitly on maximising opportunities for children and young people to make, produce and experience the richness of the arts. Bridge organisations will ensure that a larger number of schools, and other children's services, can access artists and arts organisations to work directly with children and young people in and out of schools; and will work more directly with arts organisations to improve their offer to schools.

Q. Wouldn't it have been better for you to continue funding Creative Partnerships/ CCE?

We were unable to continue funding the £38m Creative Partnerships programme when we received a 30% reduction in our grant in aid. With our reduced funding we judge that we must now focus more explicitly on increasing arts opportunities for children and young people both in and out of school.

We are investing £10m in Bridge organisations that will work to support partnerships that will build upon the legacy of Creative Partnerships and ensure that we can continue to support a significant arts offer for children and young people.