



Triennial Review of The Big Lottery Fund (BIG)
Response from Arts Council England
January 2014

Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England. Our mission is 'great art and culture for everyone' and we work to achieve this by championing, developing and investing in arts and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

Between 2011 and 2015, we will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government and an estimated £1 billion from the National Lottery in order to make the arts, and the wider culture of museums and libraries, an integral part of everyday public life, accessible to all, and understood as essential to the national economy and to the health and happiness of society.

On a national level we engage with BIG as a partner lottery distributor through the lottery forum. Like BIG, many of the projects we fund also engage and empower communities, and provide volunteering opportunities in the arts, museums and libraries.

The Arts Council has a specific responsibility for the support and development of public libraries in England. We recognise the importance of a strong partnership with BIG who, like The Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund are a highly relevant lottery distributor for public libraries. We welcome continued discussions with BIG to ensure the strategic alignment of our investment in shared priority places and projects. The Community Libraries programme was very valuable for the library sector. We believe that the new Power to Change programme can also empower communities who want to become more involved in the design and delivery of their local library services, and enable libraries to assume their valuable role of building communities and contributing to social cohesion.

Beyond public libraries' development, we have raised the potential for alignment in 'place based investment' at a local level which could enrich both our Creative People and Places programme, as well as BIG's Talent Match scheme and our Creative Employment Programme. It is important that BIG has the capacity to proactively engage with us at both a national and local level to ensure more effective and efficient outcomes through aligned and coherent funding.

Operationally, The Arts Council shares a legal services team with BIG. This is a good arrangement which has served us well for a number of years. From October 2013, BIG have been providing us with procurement advice. This new agreement will be reviewed after a sixth month trial.