

Data Report: Emergency Response Funds for Individuals and Organisations outside of the National Portfolio

Arts Council England

June 2020



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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the Covid-19 crisis and the devastating impact it has had on people's lives in England, and across the world, the Arts Council announced that its number one priority for the coming months would be to provide urgent support to people working in the cultural sector and to England's arts, museums and libraries.

On Monday 23 March, England went into lockdown to combat the pandemic. Members of the public were no longer able to attend public events, exhibitions, museums and shows. Offices were closed, and the public were asked to stay at home where possible.

While many organisations quickly adapted to support their communities, lost revenue had an immediate and devastating impact on the people and organisations that make up the arts and culture sector in England.

Emergency Response Funds

With support from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and HM Treasury, on Tuesday 24 March the Arts Council announced it would make a £160 million Emergency Response Package available through three Emergency Response Funds designed to help alleviate the immediate pressures faced by artists, arts organisations, creative practitioners, museums, and libraries over the summer – supporting them as they continue to serve their communities during this crisis and affording them the time to stabilise and plan for the future. Almost 90% of this investment was made up of National Lottery funding, and was made possible thanks to National Lottery players.

The three funds were:

- £20 million available for individual practitioners, including £4 million distributed by seven benevolent funds supporting individuals who work in arts and culture
- £50 million available for organisations outside of our National Portfolio
- £90 million available for our National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) and Creative People and Places (CPP) Lead Organisations

On Thursday 9 April, the first two funds for individuals and independent organisations opened to applications. A first round was open for one week, in order to get funding to applicants as quickly as possible. A second round followed immediately after, for a period of two weeks, giving some more time to apply for those who needed it.

How we invested

We made funding decisions on a rolling basis across four weeks, with 354 decision meetings taking place. In order to achieve fair decisions and consistent offer rates, we set parameters to ensure investment was made appropriately across both rounds of these funds. This meant that in the end, we spent £21.1 million on individuals (including the benevolent funds) and £47.7 million on organisations outside our National Portfolio. We wanted to support as many applications as possible, but due to exceptionally high demand and as responsible stewards of public funding, we did not offer grants to every applicant.

We are now reporting on how many applications we received, where they came from and where we invested money through these first two funds for individuals and organisations. This report presents the headlines of the data, and some specific reflections on the diversity of our investment and the

geographical spread, along with some considerations about our process.

All data in this report is accurate as of 9 June 2020. A full data set can be found on our website, and a report on our third Emergency Response Fund for NPOs and CPP Lead Organisations, which is still underway, will follow soon.

HEADLINES

This headline data represents the investment we made across both Emergency Response Funds for Individuals and for Organisations (outside the National Portfolio).

Applications received

We received a total of 13,688 applications:

- 10,295 from individuals
- 3,393 from organisations

A total of 86 applicants withdrew their applications after submitting, before a decision was made (73 individuals, 13 organisations).

Funding awarded

We awarded a total of 9,666 grants, with 71.1% of applicants offered funding totalling £64.8 million:

- 7,484 for individuals
- 2,182 for organisations

Investing in areas of low engagement

England's cultural ecology is rooted in the places where organisations operate in and from, where creative freelancers live and work, and where audiences and visitors engage with culture.

It's crucial that people have access to cultural opportunity no matter where they live. We know we need to work hard to ensure provision in areas of low cultural engagement, and we incorporated this into the balancing criteria for these funds.

1,128 awards were made to individuals or organisations based in the 20% of Local Authority areas that have the lowest engagement¹ with arts and culture. 71.3% of applicants from these areas were offered funding totalling £8.1 million.

Investing in diverse applicants

The Arts Council's commitment to supporting greater equality, diversity and inclusion across the creative sector was a key consideration as we assessed applications to our Emergency Response Funds.

The guidance and funding priorities recognised the significant impacts of Covid-19 on protected characteristic groups. We also took steps to address any barriers to access for D/deaf or disabled applicants, to ensure fair access to our support.

Awards made to Black or minority ethnic applicants

2,020 awards were made to Black and minority ethnic (BME) individuals or Black and minority ethnic-led organisations, totalling £13.1 million, with 74.3% of applicants offered funding.

Awards made to D/deaf and disabled applicants

1,285 awards were made to D/deaf or disabled individuals or disabled-led organisations, totalling £8.5 million, with 79.4% of applicants offered funding.

Awards made to female applicants

9,670 awards were made to female applicants or female-led

¹ Informed by the most recent Active Lives survey, measuring public engagement in activities including those related to arts and culture <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/participating-and-attending/active-lives-survey#section-1>

organisations, totalling £35.3 million, with 75.2% of applicants offered funding.

Awards made to LGBT applicants

1,763 awards were made to LGBT applicants or LGBT-led organisations, totalling £10.2 million, with 77.2% of applicants offered funding.

Benevolent funds

We contributed £4 million to seven arts and culture benevolent funds, to further provide grants to individuals affected by Covid-19. Each organisation is responsible for the administration of the funds, and they are all working to their own timetables to best support the creatives they serve. Once all funds have been awarded, we will publish data about the awards that were made.

Funds and eligible applicants	Contribution – £
Help Musicians UK Professional music performers, composers, creators, teachers, engineers, producers – across all music sectors and genres	900,000
Equity Charitable Trust Actors, circus, aerialists, puppeteers, variety performers and stage managers	850,000
Dance Professionals Fund Professional dancers across genres including contemporary, ballet, hip hop, Black and Asian dance and choreographers who perform	500,000
The Theatrical Guild Stage technicians, engineers, company and stage managers, stagehands,	550,000

designers, set makers, ushers, box office staff and hair, makeup or costume workers	
Outdoor Arts UK Freelancers who make the majority of their income over the summer months, including street artists, project directors, riggers, pyrotechnicians, programmers and bookers	500,000
Society of Authors Storytellers, scriptwriters, literary journalists, producers, poets, translators and book illustrators	400,000
a-n The Artists Information Company Self-employed artists and organisers who support the production of exhibitions and art work, including handlers, installers, restorers and technicians	300,000
Total	4,000,000

DATA FROM BOTH FUNDS

Combined data by discipline				
Discipline	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded – £	Offered funding
Combined arts	1,778	1,380	13,066,480	77.6%
Dance	821	682	4,514,086	83.1%
Film	286	85	254,302	29.7%
Libraries	19	9	143,783	58.3%
Literature	517	411	2,463,882	79.5%
Museums	261	165	2,471,822	63.2%
Music	2,639	1,598	9,489,009	60.6%
Not discipline specific	1,027	700	5,215,357	68.2%
Other/ Not Known	299	114	428,000	38.1%
Theatre	2,717	2,149	15,089,478	79.1%
Visual arts	3,238	2,373	11,666,911	73.3%
Total	13,602	9,666	64,803,110	71.1%

Understanding the data:

Discipline – the discipline shown refers to the main work of the applicant in general, not the nature of the activity applied for as part of this emergency funding programme.

Not discipline specific – this means that an applicant's main work is not specific to any one of our supported art forms or disciplines (for example, an arts centre or a community worker).

Other/not known – discipline information was not provided in the applicant profile, which means we are not able to categorise them in the same way as other applications. Any activity we funded falls within our supported disciplines.

Film – this is how applicants categorised themselves in their profile. However, the activity or programme of work they applied for still fell within our supported disciplines.

Combined data by Arts Council area				
Area	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded - £	Offered funding
London	5,186	3,720	21,179,852	71.7%
Midlands	1,516	1,099	7,920,104	72.5%
North	2,966	2,061	14,307,038	69.5%
South East	2,277	1,612	12,919,561	70.8%
South West	1,657	1,174	8,476,555	70.9%
Total	13,602	9,666	64,803,110	71.1%

Access the full data set

Please visit our website here:

artscouncil.org.uk/covid19/data to review the full data set of our Emergency Response Fund investment. This includes a list of all of the organisations we have offered funding, but only presents aggregate data for the individuals we have funded. When we publish data from the third and final fund, for NPOs and Lead CPP Organisations, this data will also be found here.

FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS

Headlines:

- 10,295 applications were made to this fund. 73 applicants withdrew leaving 10,222
- 7,484 grants were awarded, totalling £17.1 million
- 73.2% of applicants received funding
- Applicants could apply for grants of up to £2,500 (with an addition of up to £500 available for access support). An average of £2,285 was awarded to applicants.
- The data in this section does not include the £4 million investment made to benevolent funds. With this figure, our total investment towards individuals stands at £21.1 million (see page 8 for more information)

Round 1		Round 2	
Applications	4,233	Applications	5,989
Grants awarded	3,028	Grants awarded	4,456
Overall amount awarded - £	6,965,594	Overall amount awarded - £	10,133,950
Offered funding	71.5%	Offered funding	74.4%

Area breakdown				
Area	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded - £	Offered funding

London	4,234	3,109	7,156,825	73.4%
Midlands	1,078	809	1,844,868	75.0%
North	2,136	1,553	3,499,186	72.7%
South East	1,585	1,141	2,603,031	72.0%
South West	1,189	872	1,995,634	73.3%
Total	10,222	7,484	17,099,544	73.2%

The number of applicants to our Fund for Individuals per Arts Council Area broadly reflects the level of self-employed people working in those areas². For instance, the highest number of applicants are based in London, which was expected given that 38.8% of self-employed people working in the cultural sector are based in the capital. Similarly, the lowest number of applicants are based in the Midlands, and only 8.8% of the sector's self-employed workforce are based in this Area.

Discipline breakdown				
Discipline	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded – £	Offered funding
Combined arts	1,102	895	2,085,272	81.2%
Dance	636	531	1,223,883	83.5%
Film	251	82	183,807	32.7%
Libraries	5	2	5,000	40.0%
Literature	401	328	746,226	81.8%
Museums	78	62	137,063	79.5%
Music	2,149	1,291	2,973,131	60.1%

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882078/2019_D

Not discipline specific	705	533	1,228,655	75.6%
Other/ Not Known	176	107	243,928	60.8%
Theatre	1,980	1,624	3,616,903	82.0%
Visual arts	2,739	2,029	4,655,676	74.1%
Total	10,222	7,484	17,099,544	73.2%

Understanding the data:

Discipline – the discipline shown refers to the main work of the applicant in general, not the nature of the activity applied for as part of this emergency funding programme. For individuals, the discipline is taken from their applicant profile.

Not discipline specific – this means that an applicant’s main work is not specific to any one of our supported art forms or disciplines (for example, a community worker).

Other/not known – discipline information was not provided in the applicant profile, which means we are not able to categorise them in the same way as other applications. Any activity we funded falls within our supported disciplines.

Film – this is how applicants categorised themselves in their profile. However, the activity or programme of work they applied for still fell within our supported disciplines.

Total investment – £16 million was initially made available for this fund, and we invested £17.1 million. To support the level of demand and strength of applications received, we added an additional £1.1 million from our reserves to this budget.

Diversity breakdown

Protected characteristics	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded – £	Offered funding
Black and minority ethnic	2,099	1,625	3,779,943	77.4%
D/deaf or disabled	1,277	1,040	2,535,872	81%
Female	5,317	4,140	9,377,523	77.8%
LGBT	1,830	1,464	3,334,869	80.0%

FUND FOR ORGANISATIONS (OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL PORTFOLIO)

Headlines:

- 3,393 applications were made to this fund. 13 applicants withdrew leaving 3,380
- 2,182 grants were awarded, totalling £47.7 million
- 64.6% of applicants were offered funding
- Applicants could apply for grants of up to £35,000 (with an addition of up to £5,000 available for access support). An average of £21,862 was awarded to applicants.

Round 1		Round 2	
Applications	1,340	Applications	2,040
Grants awarded	914	Grants awarded	1,268
Overall amount awarded - £	20,988,286	Overall amount awarded - £	26,715,280
Offered funding	68.2%	Offered funding	62.2%

Area breakdown				
Area	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded - £	Offered funding
London	952	611	14,023,027	64.2%
Midlands	438	290	6,075,236	66.2%
North	830	508	10,807,852	61.2%

South East	692	471	10,316,530	68.1%
South West	468	302	6,480,921	64.5%
Total	3,380	2,182	47,703,566	64.6%

Diversity breakdown

Protected characteristics	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded – £	Offered funding
Black and minority ethnic-led	621	395	9,273,360	63.4%
D/deaf or disabled-led	342	245	5,935,519	71.6%
Female-led	1,779	1,198	25,955,987	67.4%
LGBT-led	455	299	6,877,520	65.7%

Discipline breakdown

Discipline	Number of applications	Number of grants	Amount awarded – £	Offered funding
Combined arts	676	485	10,981,208	71.7%
Dance	185	151	3,290,203	81.6%
Film	35	3	70,495	8.6%
Libraries	14	7	138,783	50.0%
Literature	116	83	1,717,656	71.6%
Museums	183	103	2,334,759	56.3%
Music	490	307	6,515,878	62.7%

Not discipline specific	322	167	3,986,702	51.9%
Other/ Not Known	123	7	184,072	5.7%
Theatre	737	525	11,472,575	71.2%
Visual arts	499	344	7,011,235	68.9%
Total	3,380	2,182	47,703,566	64.6%

Understanding the data:

Discipline – the discipline shown refers to the main work of the applicant in general, not the nature of the activity applied for as part of this emergency funding programme. For organisations, this is taken from the organisation applicant profile. Where this information is not held, it's based on Arts Council's broad classification of the work of the organisation.

Not discipline specific – this means that an applicant's main work is not specific to any one of our supported art forms or disciplines (for example, an arts centre or a community group).

Other/not known – discipline information was not provided in the applicant profile, which means we are not able to categorise them in the same way as other applications. Any activity we funded falls within our supported disciplines.

Film – this is how applicants categorised themselves in their profile. However, the activity or programme of work they applied for still fell within our supported disciplines.

Total investment – £50 million was initially made available for this fund, and we invested £47.7 million. As decisions were made on a rolling basis, we modelled our budget across the

whole decision-making period – in order to ensure a fair chance of success for all applications, which were considered against a range of programme and balancing criteria. In some meetings the full budget was not spent, leading to the £2.3 million underspend; this will be reallocated to National Lottery Project Grants, which we aim to re-open as soon as possible.

REFLECTIONS

Recognising the need to provide support to our sector as quickly as possible, the development and turnaround time for our Emergency Response Package was unprecedented for the Arts Council. Here we reflect on that process and what we've learnt.

Diversity

During this crisis we wanted to make sure our funding went to those who needed it most. We took measures to ensure fair and equitable access to our funding, and crucially simplified the application process to open our support to as wide a group of people as possible.

We recognised that disabled people and people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds are some of the hardest hit by Covid-19, and we're glad to note that on average, applicants from these groups were offered funding at a higher rate than the averages for both funds. We're also pleased that many applicants from underrepresented groups, particularly through our Fund for Individuals, received Arts Council funding for the first time.

To support applicants, we:

- Provided a word template of the application form for all three funds, so applicants could work offline at their own pace before moving onto our application portal, Grantium.
- Produced three videos that were spoken, subtitled and BSL interpreted on the general aim of the funds, and how to use Grantium, as well as producing Easy Read, BSL and large print versions of the guidance documents for applicants.

- Streamlined our access support scheme to ensure we could assist as many D/deaf and disabled individuals and disabled-led organisations as possible – providing over 300 individuals and organisations with the assistance of a support worker.
- Partnered with twelve NPOs that are specialists in supporting individuals with access requirements, who were able to help us support individuals who didn't have access to a support worker.
- Double checked access requirements were covered for disabled-led organisations we offered funding to. This resulted in over 100 organisations taking additional funding to cover access costs in their work.

Having received very positive feedback from applicants about these measures, we are committed to exploring them for future funding programmes. We want to reduce barriers of entry as best we can and are always open to exploring new ideas and mechanisms to enable this.

We know there is more we need to do to support people who do not think Arts Council funding is “for them” – we want to reduce barriers of entry as best we can and are always open to exploring new ideas and mechanisms to enable this.

Geography

We know that the cultural ecology differs across the country; some places have fewer organisations and freelance creatives – and are already receiving lower levels of public investment, from the Arts Council as well as from others, like local government.

We believe this is reflected in the applications we received, where demand was highest from places with the most

significant scale of cultural organisations and freelancers but low in local authority areas with the lowest engagement with arts and culture.

Our balancing criteria considered whether applicants were based in areas of low cultural engagement, and it's positive to note that individuals and organisations based in those areas had a slightly higher success rate than others. However, we want to do more to help grow the scale and range of the cultural sector in these places, increase opportunity and raise engagement levels.

Our Creative People and Places programme is at the forefront of our efforts, investing in local partnerships that involve people and communities to develop new cultural opportunities. Our new strategy, Let's Create, commits us to a better spread of investment across the country, and the evidence provided by applicants to our Emergency Response Funds will help us make the right decisions to realise this ambition.

Keeping in touch

When our offices closed due to the Covid-19 lockdown, we made the decision to move our Customer Services team to email only.

- Between mid-March and the end of April, the team handled 16,000 emails about the emergency response funds – an average of 2,666 emails per week (compared to the usual average of 1,100 emails and calls a week).
- We are glad to have provided a critical service to applicants and answer so many queries with a dispersed team. However, we know that reducing the options applicants had to engage with us proved difficult for some.

We want to explore new ways that applicants can get in touch with us – whether we're working in lockdown, or back in the office. We'd like to set up a web chat function for applicants, and we're exploring how we can better use social media to provide support.

Our systems

Across a three-week period, we accepted 13,688 applications through our online application portal Grantium, which is the greatest number of applications ever held on the system at one time. To contextualise this, we receive approximately 14,000 applications a year for both National Lottery Project Grants and Developing Your Creative Practice.

Our data shows that around 20-25% of applicants submit in the last two hours a fund is open. We do encourage applicants to submit well before the last minute, and to ensure their applicant profile is up to date as soon they decide to apply for a fund (even before it's open for applications).

We're glad that the system managed the volume of applications, but also understand that there are aspects of Grantium that can make it difficult to use. All feedback is important to us, we take it very seriously and have been working closely with our supplier to re-vamp the user interface and make it more intuitive. A new version was due to launch later this year, but timescales have been impacted by Covid-19. We hope to be able to confirm a launch date soon.

We want to thank everyone who provided feedback on the funds and application process – we review all the feedback we get, which helps us take learning forward to improve the design of future funding programmes and make changes to Grantium where we can.

Our next steps

In July we will publish data from our third Emergency Response Fund, for NPOs and Lead CPP Organisations. We will also publish the data from the £4 million contribution we made to benevolent funds supporting individuals.

Over the summer we will move from the immediate 'Response' phase of work in light of Covid-19, towards 'Stabilisation', where we will continue supporting the sector on its road to recovery. This will include continued work with Government and other stakeholders, gathering evidence and making the strongest case of support for the people and organisations we serve. Get the latest on our work at artscouncil.org.uk/covid19