

INCLUSIVITY & RELEVANCE



At the heart of our Inclusivity & Relevance Principle is a commitment to achieving greater fairness, access and opportunity across the cultural sector. We want England's diversity fully reflected in the individuals and organisations we support and the culture they produce.

The Inclusivity & Relevance Principle is based on three pillars that define the change we want to see.

COMMUNITIES

Our ambition:

We want to ensure the sector is actively listening to, and taking account of, the views of the local community. We want organisations to actively form relationships with under-served communities. As a result, publicly funded culture will matter more to more people.

Questions to ask and ideas to consider:

How can you build stronger and more meaningful relationships with your community? You can achieve this by:

- Recognising under-served communities and taking action to actively develop and grow relationships with them.
- Reaching out, listening to and involving local communities to inform your work and practice. For example, specific demographic or stakeholder groups such as children and young people or artists and creative practitioners.
- Working in partnership with creative practitioners and organisations who can help you build a meaningful relationship with those communities.
- Building trust and a sense of belonging for under-served communities through removing barriers and increasing access, opportunity, participation, and involvement.

WORKFORCE, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Our ambition:

The sector will create access and career opportunities for people from all parts of society. It will have a workforce, leadership and governance which fully reflects and represents all communities and organisations with inclusive cultures, who value and develop their people.

Our commitment to realising this ambition within the Arts Council itself is set out in our Equality Objectives.

Questions to ask and ideas to consider:

We want to ensure the opportunity to pursue and progress a career across the cultural sector is fair and open to everyone. We recognise that structural inequality (e.g. recruitment biases or access barriers) has meant that has not always been possible.

Collectively, we need to:

- Actively nurture inclusive organisational workplaces which value and develop the talent of all the people we work with, including freelancers and employees.
- Foster safer workplaces where harassment and discrimination are challenged and eliminated.
- Identify and remove biases and barriers in our organisational cultures and structures that reinforce inequality and block opportunity.

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- Adopt a data-led approach to identify and respond to under-representation across governing bodies, leadership roles and the workforce in relation to protected characteristic groups and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- Identify actions and set targets to drive and monitor change.

THE CREATIVE CASE FOR DIVERSITY

Our ambition:

The sector's programmes and activities reflect the culture and talent of creative practitioners drawn from all backgrounds.

Questions to ask and ideas to consider:

We remain committed to advancing our work on the Creative Case for Diversity. At the core of the Creative Case is the belief that arts and culture have greater vibrancy, innovation, richness and quality when they include stories and perspectives of artists and creative practitioners from all backgrounds. This commitment extends to supporting development for people from under-represented groups to ensure fairer access to creative roles in our sector. We want the cultural sector to:

- Recognise the creative value of diversity by committing to work that is representative of and relevant to more people.
- Commit to inclusion and better representation across all creative practitioner roles. For example, curators, directors, producers, writers, choreographers, composers, etc.
- Invest in creating opportunities for a more diverse range of people to join the talent pipeline into the sector. This will include ensuring programming and talent development activity is designed to recognise and remove barriers to participation.
- Provide better access to resources and cultural spaces to empower under-represented creative practitioners to share their stories.

In conclusion

We have expectations of marked progress around this Investment Principle, and we will be asking organisations who apply for regular investment from us to agree on actions and targets to drive change as part of their funding agreements with the Arts Council.

By embracing the Inclusivity & Relevance Principle we believe we will be better placed to deliver the vision of Let's Create, helping enrich lives through the power of creativity and culture.

We will continue to share best practice and learning and celebrate pioneers in this field. The Arts Council is on this journey with you. We are committed to embodying Inclusivity & Relevance across every aspect of our organisation.

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INCLUSIVITY & RELEVANCE IN OUR REGULAR FUNDING

This information is for organisations who receive regular funding from the Arts Council and gives guidance about how our Inclusivity & Relevance Investment Principle links to our investment decisions.

To realise this shared ambition, we want to see this Principle modelled across our investment, beginning with the Arts Council itself and our National Portfolio funding programme.

Using the pillars of this Principle (Communities; Workforce, Leadership and Governance; and, the Creative Case for Diversity), we will be asking all organisations who apply for regular investment from the Arts Council to agree on actions and targets to diversify their governance, leadership, workforce, programming and audiences as part of their funding agreements with us. We will expect these targets to be owned and monitored at board level, or equivalent, in all organisations.

We will expect boards to ensure that these targets are appropriate and ambitious, and that their organisation is committed to achieving them. We will look for the targets to have a particular focus on access to career opportunities, with increased representation in workforce, leadership and governance and evidence of an inclusive culture.

Setting targets that are founded on research

Organisations will be asked to identify which communities are under-represented internally across their workforce, leadership and governing bodies as well as across their programming and audiences using a breadth of data and evidence available to them. The focus should be on groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act and socio-economic diversity.

Organisations are encouraged to use existing internal data and information, such as results from staff surveys and workshops as well as publicly available data on the diversity of their local communities (eg ONS data) to inform their work on actions and targets.

Monitoring

Organisations will develop their own approach to monitoring progress, which should involve their governing bodies, and we will want to see this process taking place at board meetings and recorded in board papers. Progress against targets should be easy to track, with clear mitigations in place to manage the risk of missing targets.

For organisations entering our next National Portfolio, which is planned to run from spring 2023, we will expect clear and measurable targets to be in place as part of funding agreements. For current National Portfolio Organisations, in the 2022/23 extension year we expect you to embed the Investment Principles in your planning, so you can demonstrate you are ready to enter the next National Portfolio in your application. [You can view more information for business planning 2022/23 on our website.](#)

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Outcomes

While progress has been made over the years, our annual reporting shows that the rate of change – especially in access to careers and workforce representation – is too slow across several protected characteristics. Starting with the next National Portfolio investment round (from spring 2023), we will be introducing sanctions that will apply to organisations that fail to make sufficient progress against the targets they have set.

In conclusion

We will expect organisations in receipt of public funding to be able to show the progress they are making, and to face sanctions where they can't. However, we created our Investment Principles in consultation with you and we believe our sector wants to come on this journey towards greater inclusivity and relevance. We see great examples of pioneers and good practice among our organisations and we want to support more of that by sharing resources, examples of the best work and relevant content over the coming months. Some of this content is already available for you to access below.

The Arts Council is on this journey with you. We are committed to embodying Inclusivity & Relevance across every aspect of our organisation. We are looking forward to working with you and sharing our own journey of change as well.

To learn more about our expectations around this Principle, and particularly for those in receipt of, or with the ambition to apply for, regular funding, look out for further resources over the coming months. To ensure you get notified of new material, you can [sign up to our newsletter](#).

Additional content

Make sure to take a look at the [Toolkits and activities](#) section of our Investment Principles resource hub to download a series of exercises designed to help you, your colleagues and trustees to embed Inclusivity & Relevance in your organisation and programming.