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2023-26 INVESTMENT PROGRAMME INFORMATION SHEET

Access Support

For arts organisations, libraries and museums planning to apply to our 2023-26 National Portfolio Organisation and Investment Principles Support Organisation programmes to provide the backbone of creative and cultural provision across the country.

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

artscouncil.org.uk

What's inside

This information sheet relates to Arts Council England's 2023-26 Investment Programme. It can be used alongside the Guidance for Applicants documents to support you to make your application.

See our [website](#) for more information about 2023-26 Investment Programme.

In this information sheet, we will talk about the following:

Information Sheet on Access Support	3
Access support before you apply	4
Introductory conversations	4
What we cannot support	5
Access support for applications	6
Personal access costs	6
If you cannot read the guidance for applicants	6
If you cannot use our online system, Grantium	6
If you do not have a computer or access to the internet	7
Access support workers	7
Grantium and access support workers	8
Filling in your application form and budget	8
Making your work accessible to others	9
Access support for managing your relationship	9
Further information	10
Contact us	10

This information is also available in audio, BSL, Easy Read and large print formats. If you require it in an alternative format, like Braille, please [get in touch](#).

Information Sheet on Access Support

Arts Council England are committed to helping everyone decide if the National Portfolio Organisation and Investment Principles Support Organisation programme are right for their organisation and then to help them make an application.

If you, or the key people working on your organisation's application:

- are D/deaf
- are disabled
- are neurodivergent
- experience learning difficulties
- have a mental health condition, or have a long-term health condition

there may be extra costs relating to your own access needs, or those of the people you are working with, that you will need to pay to help you make your application, deliver your activity, and manage your relationship online. Some examples are a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, a notetaker or specialist tutor for admin support, or counselling costs during your project.

This sheet outlines the ways we can help at different stages of the application process, and how to show these costs in your application budget.

Access support before you apply

We can help you to find and use our information and services before you apply, and help you if you want to make an application.

Our Customer Services team are on hand to give you advice and support throughout the application process. You can find them in these ways:

- **Telephone:** 0161 934 4317 between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday
- **Livechat:** by clicking the [icon in the bottom right-hand corner of our website](#) between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday
- **Email:** us at enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk. We aim to respond to emails within five working days at the most – but we mostly respond within 48 working hours

You can email us directly, or you can use the contact form on our website, which can be found at artscouncil.org.uk/contact.

Introductory conversations

All applicants who are not currently part of the national portfolio must have an introductory conversation with us before applying.

These conversations are an opportunity for in-depth support for new potential applications while they decide whether to make an application.

Customer Services will support you with the booking process as required.

The general support the Customer Services team can give includes:

- advice on eligibility and our application processes
- how to navigate our systems such as our online portal, Grantium
- how to set up a profile on Grantium
- resetting passwords
- setting up an introductory conversation about applying as outlined above

In addition, more specialist access support from the team includes:

- referring you to a named contact in Customer Services who will help throughout your application where possible or practical
- agreeing payment if you have a support worker you usually work with or, where possible, helping you directly with support work
- considering additional requests for assistance on a case-by-case basis (eg if you need help scribing or connecting to a specialist support worker)
- where needed, and on a case-by-case basis, agreeing extensions to the application deadline for those who may need additional time

We are committed to ensuring that everyone gets sufficient information on our grant programmes to help them decide whether or not to apply. We will consider cost and practicality, as well as your preference when finding the best way to help.

If we do pay for any access support, you do not have to make an application if you feel your organisation is not ready to become a National Portfolio Organisation or Investment Principles Support Organisation.

What we cannot support

We cannot pay for the following:

- support for developing your application, such as the cost of an arts worker, bid writer or development consultant
- support for staff who are already paid a salary by the applicant organisation
- translation from other spoken languages into English
- costs already covered by the Access to Work scheme or any other sources

For more information about the Access to Work scheme, please visit the government website: gov.uk/access-to-work

Access support for applications

Personal access costs

If you are the lead applicant and require one-to-one access support, we can pay for an access support worker to assist you to make your application. This may be:

- a specialist support worker, for example a BSL interpreter
- a note-taker or scribe who is additional to your organisation's paid staff
- someone to support you with additional needs when making your application
- someone to support you get your application onto the portal

Our Customer Services team will help you to arrange payment for your access support worker. When finding the best way to help, consider cost, practicality and your preference and comfort.

Applications, decision letters, payment requests and any related messages are managed using our online application portal, **Grantium**. [Read the guidance on how to use Grantium](#).

If you cannot read the guidance for applicants

The Guidance for Applicants for both the National Portfolio Organisation and Investment Principles Support Organisation programmes are available in PDF as well as in audio, British Sign Language, Easy Read and large print formats. [Access the Guidance for Applicants here](#)

If you need another format, such as Braille, please [contact our Customer Services team](#).

If you cannot use our online system, Grantium

If you cannot use Grantium, we can pay for an access support worker to help you to use it.

You can work with your access support worker to fill in an offline version of the eligibility questionnaire and application form. Your support worker will then fill in an online application form for you.

Please also read the [Grantium and access support workers](#) and [Access support for managing your relationship](#) sections of this information sheet.

If you do not have a computer or access to the internet

We are not able to provide access to a computer or the internet if you do not have this. Your local council might be able to provide access to a computer connected to the internet, or direct you to a service provider who can help, such as a local library.

If you cannot physically use a computer, we can provide support via an access support worker.

We can send out printed copies of the [Guidance for Applicants](#) and an offline version of the application form to you, but you or your support worker will need to fill in the online form in order to make an application.

Access support workers

We can contribute towards the cost of an access support worker who can use our online application portal, Grantium, on your behalf, or provide support in meetings with us. If you need to use a support worker, contact our Customer Services team.

They will ask:

- what type of support you need – for example, someone to take notes, or a BSL interpreter
- your artform, discipline or project type – for example, a music tour
- your name, address and contact details
- how and when you would prefer us to contact you

You can contact the Customer Services team on 0161 934 4317 or email enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk. You can also Livechat with our Customer Services team by clicking the icon [on our website](#).

You are responsible for deciding who your support worker will be. You may have a note taker or interpreter that you regularly use. We will work with you and your support worker to agree when and how they will support you. They should then provide a quote for their services so that we can agree their fee.

Each request is considered based on your individual needs and the level of support you need. We can pay reasonable costs of up to a maximum amount of £300 per day for specialist support. If the daily rate a support worker asks for is higher than average, we may ask for other quotes, or a detailed breakdown of costs.

Once your support worker has completed the agreed work, they should send their invoices to the Arts Council contact in your Area office. We will pay them when we know you are satisfied with the work they have done.

Grantium and access support workers

Your access support worker should use your user account to create a Grantium profile in your name and using your contact details, if you do not already have one.

Your access support worker should also set up a user account for themselves with their own username, password and email address.

Your support worker should then email grant.management@artscouncil.org.uk with:

- the name and applicant number of your profile; and
- their username and email address

We will link their user account to the profile in your name. Both user accounts will then be able to work on, and receive notifications about, any applications made.

You can find instructions on how to set up a user account [on our website](#).

Filling in your application form and budget

There is a line in the Budget section of the Financial information template for access costs (under 'overheads').

Applicants should make an estimate of what costs will be needed based on the type of work they envisage delivering. If you are made a conditional offer of funding, then you will need to submit an updated budget during funding agreement negotiation as well as for each funding year, which will be an opportunity to update cost details to be more accurate.

Making your work accessible to others

We can help with the costs of making your work accessible to as many people as possible.

We want to make sure that everyone can get access to, and enjoy, the work we fund. In your application budget, you can include any costs you will need to pay to make your activity accessible to a wide range of people, including those taking part and audiences with access needs. For example:

- booking BSL interpreters for events or performances
- making your website compatible with screen readers
- producing exhibition materials in other formats such as in Braille/audio

You can use our grant towards these costs and should include them in the Budget section of the Financial information template under 'access costs'.

Access support for managing your relationship

If you become a National Portfolio Organisation or an Investment Principles Support Organisation, you and your board (or governing body) will have significant responsibilities to provide us with regular reports on the progress you are making on delivering your funding agreement.

You may need extra access costs for you, or anyone directly involved in managing your relationship with us, to:

- report on your organisational progress
- manage your grant online

You can use our grant towards these costs and should include them in the Budget section of the Financial information template under 'access costs'.

Further information

The organisations below have specialist knowledge about accessibility and may be able to provide guidance or advice:

- [Carousel](#)
- [Attitude is Everything](#)
- [Shape Arts](#)
- [Stagetext](#)
- [VocalEyes](#)

Access to Work scheme

The government's Access to Work scheme can support you if you're disabled or have a physical or mental health condition that makes it hard for you to do your job.

For more information about the Access to Work scheme please visit the government website: gov.uk/access-to-work

Contact us

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You can also Livechat with our Customer Services team by clicking the icon on our Access Support page: artscouncil.org.uk/access-support