

Essential read: Inclusivity and Relevance in our regular funding

Arts Council England



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We welcome feedback so please get in touch!
Ref number: 33479

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

Before you begin, please read our Essential Read on Inclusivity and Relevance (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/essential-read-achieving-inclusivity-relevance>) so you can understand the ambition behind the Investment Principle and the changes we want to see. 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 (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-creativity-and-culture/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 here (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/npompm-funding-relationships-2018-22/npompm-funding-requirements#section-10>).

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 here (link).

The Arts Council is on this journey with you. We are committed to embodying Inclusivity and 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 this summer. To ensure you get notified of new material, you can sign up to our newsletter (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-organisation/sign-our-email-updates>)