**The Principles of Creative People and Places**

This document is designed to support potential applicants to the 2026-29 Creative People and Places National Portfolio Programme. Its purpose is to set out the broad principles of the programme to support developmental conversations and partnership development. *It does not replace the guidance for the 2026-29 programme which will be published at a later date*. It is simply intended as a useful tool that potential applicants may choose to use to support their thinking in the forthcoming year. Its use is not mandatory. All of this should be read in the context of our 10 year Strategy [Let’s Create](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create).

Information below is based on the current programme. New guidance will be issued when the 26-29 programme goes live. Although unlikely, we reserve the right to change the terms as set out here

**What is Creative People and Places about?**

The vision of Creative People and Places is to support the public in shaping local arts and culture, increasing attendance and participation in excellent cultural experiences. The programme aims to foster long-term collaborations among communities, arts organisations, museums, libraries, and voluntary sectors, encouraging innovative cultural programmes that genuinely engage people and involve a variety of partners. The programme will only be open to the 142 eligible places listed [here](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places-0/creative-people-and-places-national-portfolio-programme-2025-28)

The **central aims** of the programme are as follows:

1. Engage more people from identified places in a wide range of arts and cultural experiences as audiences and/or participants

2.Empower communities to lead and shape local cultural provision.

3. Ensure both the engagement process and the creative and cultural experiences on offer are relevant and excellent.

4. Encourage partnerships between publicly funded, amateur, voluntary, community and commercial sectors, as well as collaboration across various cultural institutions.

5. Take an Action Research approach to community engagement in arts, creativity and culture; learn what works best and share that learning.

The programme is driven by three key questions that inform the outcomes we are looking for:

1. Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by creativity and culture and what are the most effective ways to achieve this?

2. What approaches enable us to deliver on our aspiration for excellence, both in the process of community engagement and the creative and cultural experiences on offer?

3. What else are we learning that facilitates better public engagement in creativity and culture?

**Are there particular approaches we should be thinking about?**

In exploring how you will achieve the above aims, you may want to think about how you will

1. Develop a clear methodology that empowers the local (non-arts) community to make decisions
2. Develop programmes that respond to the demographic in your area and are inclusive of the *whole* place
3. Take an asset-based approach (for examples of what we mean by asset-based see [here](https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/))
4. Both respond to public creative and cultural interests and provide a taste of the widest possible range of high-quality experiences (as audiences and participants) to support people to make an informed choice about the kinds of culture they may like
5. Challenge and support people to try new and different things with *all* partners being introduced to new and broader creative and cultural choices (local, national and international) and different ways of working with communities
6. Be clear about what is different about your approach. Perhaps explore approaches that you believe are not currently being tested anywhere else and might be distinctive to your programme.
7. Reflect Arts Council England’s four [Investment Principles](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/investment-principles)

**Consortia and Partnership Agreements:**

When the programme goes live - we will only accept applications from consortia. Governance arrangements should be led by the consortium, who act as an oversight board and hold the specifically recruited delivery team to account. We would not expect core consortium members to be *delivery* partners in the programme unless by exception.

By ‘consortium’ we mean a group of separate organisations joining together in a written partnership arrangement and co-operating to facilitate oversight of delivery of the programme of activity.

* We currently only accept applications from Consortia, led by a single organisation representing and *on behalf of*, the consortium.
* Consortia *must include* community and/or grass roots organisations (non-arts/cultural) and arts/cultural organisations. The community representation cannot be from cultural organisations or groups.
* Individuals cannot be core consortium members
* Each consortium should have three to five core members, with additional affiliates/partners who may change over time.
* Consortia may wish to consider appointing an independent chair
* Partnership agreements between core consortium members are essential
* Organisations can be core members in only one consortium application.
* Consortia may apply to cover multiple places, if it makes geographical sense.
* Local authorities cannot be the lead applicant

**Anything else useful to know?**

* The current programme asks for a minimum of 15% match funding
* It’s important that you think about how you might demonstrate the capacity and skill of the lead organisation to manage the finances and a track record of managing ring fenced project budgets.
* In the event of a successful application a newly appointed delivery team would be accountable to the consortium but expected to maintain a level of operational independence

**Where else can I go for resources or information**

[Creative People and Places learning pages](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places-0/learning-creative-people-and-places)