

Arts Council England

Access Support

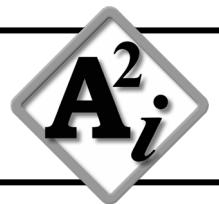
Information for anyone applying for our funding and using our services

access@artscouncil.org.uk

Version 1 – Last update December 2023

Accessible PDF version

Transcribed by A2i Transcription Services



This is the **accessible PDF** version.

There are also

- a **plain text** version
- a **large print** version
- a **audio** version
- a video version **with BSL**
- a video version **with captions**
- a **Easy Read** version

Please contact us if you need **another format**.

1. Welcome from Arts Council England

Hello from all of us at Arts Council England. We know that **applying for funding** and **having a grant** can feel daunting. **We're here to support you.**

Everyone should be able to **access our funding** and **use our services**. We're here to work to make sure that **you can**.

We set up a dedicated Access Support Team in 2021 to improve access for **Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people and those experiencing poor health**.

This page explains what Access Support is, what it could mean for you and how the team can help you.

If you're unsure about what Access Support is or any information in this document, please **get in touch**. Our **Customer Services** team can **answer questions** about access support, our funding and have a wealth of knowledge.

We always welcome feedback and want to be as open as we can. **Get in touch** if you have **questions or feedback** – it always helps.

You can find **alternative formats of this guidance below**. Please contact us if you need any other format.

Thanks and **we wish you every success** with your creative projects!

2. What is Access Support?

Access support is available to help remove barriers. This helps to ensure that applying for funding is fair and equitable.

Pre-application access support refers to any **support provided when making an application for funding.**

We can **support applicants experiencing barriers** to access our services and information. Here are some examples of the support we can offer:

- providing information in **alternative formats**
- paying a **support worker** to help **make an application**
- supporting someone when they receive their **decision and feedback**
- **note-taking** during **development conversations**
- **explaining feedback** or help **make a complaint**
- **linking someone to a support worker** as part of our network of support workers (based on availability)

3. Who can request Access Support?

Access support is available for **Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people and those experiencing poor health,** looking to apply for funds or use our services.

We will **never ask for proof** of diagnosis. We consider **self-ID valid.**

We also understand that **people's experience and barriers are unique** and not everyone needs the same kind of support. Some may not need any.

Any questions we ask are to understand **how the support is tailored** to you, how we can **improve access more widely** and to protect the use of public funding.

4. When should you request support?

If you're requesting access support to make a funding application, we recommend that you do the following **before you request access support**,

- have a clear idea of what activities you want to get funding for
- check your idea is one that we can fund
Developing Your Creative Practice Eligibility Questionnaire
National Lottery Project Grants Eligibility Questionnaire
- check availability of the people you plan to work with (if you have someone in mind)
- have an idea of how much things will cost in your activity

Having this will **help your support worker** to work with you on your application. It will also give you a **clearer idea of your aims**.

It will also **save you time** and make the process as **smooth as possible**.

If you're not sure, we can help!

If you're unsure about what Access Support is or any information in this document, **please get in touch**. Our **Customer Services** team can **answer questions** about our funding and have a wealth of knowledge.

We also run **online advice-giving sessions** for first time applicants that provide more information.

We can also provide **guidance in different formats**, such as:

- Audio versions
- Video versions with BSL and/or captions
- Easy Read
- Large Print

5. Working with a support worker

A support worker's role is to **remove barriers** for someone applying to the Arts Council for **funding or using our services**. This must be **tailored to your needs** – there is no 'one size fits all' approach.

We ask for a **breakdown of support work** at the start. We also ask how this is **shaped around you**. Your support worker can provide this.

Here are a few examples of what support work can include:

- Note taking and interpreting ideas to write up answers
- Helping process the application questions and forms
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation
- Helping applicants to navigate Grantium, our online application system
- Signposting to other resources or asking us for additional support

We cannot pay support workers for:

- Translation from other languages into English
- Costs related to caring responsibilities
- Costs covered by **Access to Work** or other sources
- Developing a project e.g. the services of a bid writer or development consultant

You can choose the person that provides support to you. This is not limited to experienced support workers, but it is helpful if they **understand arts, culture and creativity** and our **funding process**. If unsure, they can contact us for advice.

If you already have a Support Worker and their costs to support you making an application are covered from another funding source (such as Access To Work), we cannot pay for their services. If you don't have anyone, we can try to link you to someone in our network of support workers. There is more information on this in section 9.

A support worker is **not a development consultant or a bid writer**. As such, **support workers can't advise or make decisions** on what is best. It's **your project idea** – they are there to **support you** with it.

6. How to request Access Support

- **Applicant submits access support request**
[leads to]
- **Request is reviewed by the Access Support Team**
[leads to]
- **Request is approved, applicant can start work with support worker**
[leads to]
- **Once the work is complete, support worker submits invoice**

To request access support, **please submit this online form.**

Our **Customer Services** team can provide assistance to submit a request via a phone call, email or Live Chat.

We process requests as quickly as we can when they come in. This can take up to **5 working days.**

What information do we ask for when you submit a request?

The information we ask for is included below:

About you:

- Your name, email address and phone number
- The fund you'll be applying to e.g. DYCP or National Lottery Project Grants
- If it's your first time applying to us
- The main art form / discipline
- Where you are based
- A short outline of the barriers you are facing and access needs.

We understand that sharing this information can be sensitive. We ask for this to make sure you have the **right level of support**, and it is shaped around you. It also helps us understand where **access improvements** are most needed.

If you have a preferred support worker in mind, we will also ask for:

- Support worker's name, email and phone number
- Number of days or hours of support
- Daily or hourly rate and total amount
- Planned outline and breakdown of the support work – we know that this can change but this gives us a plan to review

You'll need to include this when you request access support using our form. Your support worker can help you with this. Please contact us if you are unsure of anything – we're here to help!

7. How much support should I request?

Every individual is different and will need different levels of support. It is important that the support is tailored to your access needs.

We will review all requests on a case-by-case basis, but we've included some guidelines around the maximum support below.

- **Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP):**
up to £600
- **National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) – under £30k:**
up to £900
- **National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) – over £30k:**
up to £1200
- **National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) – resubmission:**
up to £600
- **Applications requiring an Expression of Interest (EOI):**
up to £1,500
(split between the EOI and application)

All figures are **inclusive of VAT**.

These guide figures are informed by the amount of time spent on each type of application by the support workers in our network. The maximum rates are reviewed annually.

Support workers should charge a rate that is proportionate to their level of expertise and experience. **The maximum day rate we can pay is £300** (with 1 day being 8 hours of work including breaks).

For support with any other funds or services not listed above, please email access@artscouncil.org.uk

If a request exceeds the above guidelines:

- We will need some extra information about why additional time is needed. Please supply this in the original request.
- Your support worker will be required to send us a log of your work (see Appendix A) before we can issue payment.

If your request exceeds the guidelines above (e.g. for BSL interpreters or other specialist support), please include any useful additional information in the details of the request. We review these requests within 5 working days. We may ask for a **call to help us expedite this.**

You must wait until we approve the request by email before starting the support work. **Please note that we are unable to pay for support work that is carried out before we have approved the request in writing.** We will notify the applicant and the support worker by email when we have approved the request.

If the rate a support worker asks for is **higher than average** for the kind of tailored support being provided, we reserve the right to ask for **other quotes** and suggest an alternative. We will **contact you before** we do this.

If it becomes apparent that **additional time** will be required, **please contact us with more information** so that we can review the request for extra time **before** you carry out the additional work.

8. What happens next?

We review the request and reply **as quickly as we can**. In busier periods this is **within 5 working days**.

We will contact you if we need any **more information**. This usually **only takes a few minutes** on a phone or video call.

Sometimes we receive requests that we can't approve due to:

- the amount of time is higher than the time required to do the work
- the support worker has previously failed our quality checks
- concerns around safeguarding and/or our duty to protect public funds
- insufficient detail regarding what the work is likely to entail

This is **extremely rare** and we may only be able to provide limited information. We will work closely with you to **find an alternative**.

Please **wait until we confirm this is approved before starting the work**. We **can't pay** for any support work done **before we have approved** your request.

You can start **as soon as you get confirmation from us**.

All support workers are sent a copy of our **Guidance for Support Workers**. This includes the information they need about what we can pay and how to get paid by us for providing support work. We pay support workers directly **when the support work is complete**.

We may **contact you during or after** you have worked with your support worker to **get feedback** on how it went. The majority of these calls are randomly selected spot checks for **quality assurance**. This helps us **understand how we can improve** accessibility and update our **information for support workers**.

Please contact us if you have any concerns about the support you're receiving.

Other useful information

It is important that the support is **shaped around your needs**. Support workers are expected to **tailor their approach to you**.

Not all support work leads to an application, and **we understand there can be different reasons for this**. Please **let us know if you decide to postpone** making an application.

9. What if I don't have a support worker?

We recently started a trial for a **network of support workers**. This allows us to link applicants who don't have a support worker with a support worker from our network.

All support workers in our network have gone through a recruitment and training process. They've also completed an enhanced DBS check.

If you don't have a support worker and would like us to try and find one for you, here's the process:

1. Please fill in **this online form** and select the option "I'd like Arts Council England to help me find a support worker"
2. We will then share your request in an anonymised way with the members of our network. If someone is available to support you, they'll let us know.
3. We can't guarantee that we'll find someone for you, as it will depend on the availability of the support workers in the network. We will get back to you within 3 weeks. We ask that you let us know if you find someone else in the meantime or don't wish to apply anymore.
4. If we find someone who's available to support you, we will share your contact details with them and they'll organise an introduction meeting. If you're both happy to work together, you can then start working on your funding application.

Please note we have a limited number of support workers in our network. **We can't guarantee that we'll be able to link you up with someone.** As such we advise you to keep looking for your own support worker, and let us know if anything changes.

We're not able to link you up with a support worker for support during the project (personal access costs), only for support to make an application or access our services.

10. Contact us

Any questions or feedback?

Please **contact our Customer Services team** via phone, email or LiveChat.