



Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

Investment Review 2023

Guidance for Organisations

December 2022

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Arts Council of Wales is committed to making information available in large print, braille, audio and British Sign Language and will endeavour to provide information in languages other than Welsh or English on request.



Arts Council of Wales operates an equal opportunities policy.

Introduction from Dafydd Rhys, Arts Council of Wales Chief Executive

Welcome to the Arts Council of Wales Investment Review 2023, which is an opportunity for us to look at how we fund the arts in Wales. Here we share the principles and processes that we'll use to fund arts organisations in Wales. The decisions we'll make during this process will shape our sector, not just for now but for many years to come. The impact is intended locally and will resonate globally.

This Investment Review is not a task we have taken lightly and we're proposing some big changes. Over the past months we've consulted, we've reflected, and we now need to act. It's a difficult time for the arts – as it is for society as a whole – but that doesn't mean we can't still be ambitious for our sector.

We must make sure that the arts we fund reflect the needs and aspirations of contemporary Wales and helps us to make sense of the world around us. This Investment Review is an opportunity to do just that. It has equality of opportunity at its heart. The arts should be an everyday part of everyone's lives, the length and breadth of Wales. Let's make great things happen on all levels – from grassroots to big stages – and remember that we do this because our communities need the myriad benefits of the arts now more than ever. The arts belong to us all whatever our social background, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, languages or age. However, we recognise that opportunities to enjoy, take part in, and create art are still not equal, and as a sector we will work hard to address this.

Let's also be honest that the next few years are likely to be difficult. An Investment Review such as this can also be, in itself, unsettling. Change can be difficult and challenging but we must move forward together. We need a new way of working and engaging with each other. We know that change must be embraced by us as an organisation, as well as more widely. I hope that this is reflected in our Investment Review proposal and was discussed throughout the consultation sessions we held. Thank you for those discussions and for the resulting ideas and responses which have helped shape this Investment Review. It is so important that we keep having constructive conversations as a sector and move forwards together as we plan for the future.



Here we share the six key principles that we are using as a framework for both this Investment Review and for our own strategic plan for the coming years. They are:

Creativity: Although this principle might seem obvious, it's still important to remind ourselves as often as possible that art in all its forms has the power to connect and help us understand each other and the world around us. Let's use the arts to challenge our thinking – above all, let's be creative!

Welsh Language: The Welsh language is part of our identity as a nation and arts and creativity gives us the opportunity to deepen our relationship with y Gymraeg.

Widening Engagement: Reaching those communities who we consistently fail to engage. It's time for change.

Climate Justice: The most important issue of our time, so be responsible and join this collective journey of fully realising the potential of the arts to imagine, connect, communicate the need for climate justice.

Nurturing talent: Let's make opportunities and plan for the future, creating new ways for people from all backgrounds to develop their skills and potential as leaders.

Transformation: This review is not just a transaction – it is about supporting the potential for arts organisations to transform. Don't be afraid to take risks or to change – and, above all, to become relevant to the communities of modern Wales.

So, as you look to respond to these challenges, be honest with us and tell us where you are as organisations. What are your potential strengths and possible weaknesses? Where are you in the development of different aspects of your journeys as you respond to the challenges that the six principles have set?

This isn't a short-term fix. Inspired by the Well-being of Future Generations Act, we are looking to the longer term and a more collaborative way of working. We are introducing more flexibility to our funding relationship built around multi-year contracts. We are not working in isolation but sharing the aspirations of the Welsh Government and a desire to build a fairer, greener Wales.

We look forward to seeing your applications and continuing our conversation on how the arts play a vital role in our lives, how we can work together to do this better, and to tell the stories of the value of the arts to our nation.



Part One: Funding for now and for the future

This section explains who we are and what the Investment Review is, the challenges we are facing as a sector and society but how we all need to change to make sure funding for the arts is fairer.

It outlines how this Investment Review will be different, and what principles and factors will be guiding decisions.

It explains how the Well-being of Future Generations Act, Welsh Government's Cultural Contract, and our own Widening Engagement Action plan together underpin this approach alongside our own strategic plan.

It also includes a timeline of the process and answers key questions.



1. A time of change

Arts Council of Wales

Arts Council of Wales is the official body for developing, supporting, and connecting the arts. We do this by distributing the public funds that are made available to us by the Welsh Government and the money that we receive for good causes from the National Lottery.

Through our work, we want to see the arts flourish and reach as far and wide as possible. We believe that the arts are for everyone and are **central to the life and well-being of the nation**.

Our funding supports individuals and programmes of work but this document – and the Investment review – focuses on organisations.

The arts organisations that we support, through funding and collaboration, are essential partners in helping us to collectively deliver on our vision. Their creative energy generates thousands of events and experiences across many art forms – from music to theatre, visual arts, dance, community arts, film, circus, literature, and all other forms between and beyond. They create and inspire art that is enjoyed by millions of people throughout the country and further afield.

We provide both support towards the core costs and activities of organisations and funding for projects and programmes of work. The funding we provide for core costs is often described as ‘revenue’ support and traditionally has been distributed following an **Investment Review**. This process usually took place every five years.



Investment Review 2023

The next Investment Review will open to applications in January 2023, for funding from April 2024 and it marks a change of direction for how we fund organisations. Through this process we'll be deciding which organisations will receive multi-year funding by looking at their **potential** to help us deliver against our priorities towards a shared vision for the arts.

Following extensive consultation, the 2023 Investment Review will be different from previous years, as we outline below. This is because we are seeking to address longstanding inequalities in the arts and a new model will allow us to work in a more agile and responsive way.

This document sets out our new process, the context and thinking that has informed it and how organisations can apply.

The context and challenges

We recognise that this review comes at a time when arts organisations – and many households – are struggling to make ends meet. Difficult decisions are being taken to survive at all levels.

The arts sector is still rebuilding post-pandemic and we're now dealing with the cost-of-living crisis and a turbulent economic climate. It's clear that many artists, freelancers, practitioners and workers who are crucial to the arts infrastructure have left the sector for jobs with better pay and greater security. As audiences, we are learning again what we want and how we want the arts to feature in our lives. We are conscious that our vision of 'arts for everyone' may be challenged – put simply, when people are struggling to pay for essentials, how do we make sure that the arts doesn't become the preserve of the wealthy and that the very inequities we are acting to address, worsen?

We cannot stand still. We cannot ignore the monumental societal shifts of recent times. In fact, we want to seize the opportunity to build on everything that we have learned over the past few years as we continue our movement towards a fairer, more responsible, anti-racist, anti-ableist sector. The new Investment Review approach – which centres on [six principles](#) for positive progress which we outline in this document – is a fundamental pillar of that change.



How this Investment Review is different?

In the past we planned an Investment Review every five years which resulted in a fixed group of funded organisations that we called the Arts Portfolio Wales. We want this Investment Review to be the last of such big ‘events’ and instead move to a more responsive way of working that allows us to **take a longer-term view on our funding**. We recognise that multi-year funding can make a real difference to organisations, but we want to be more flexible and inclusive in the way that we decide who benefits from these valuable resources.

Our key changes include:

- An initial funding term of three years, with a ‘check-in’ in year two to potentially confirm a further term.
- The potential for a continuous funding relationship, based on the above pattern, as long as the targets in the annual funding agreement are being met.
- The introduction of an annual opportunity for new organisations to secure multi-year funding.
- The focus being on the potential of an organisation to have an impact, looking at what they have recently been able to achieve with any past investment, in order to consider if their plans are feasible.
- An expectation for organisations to publish their targets and progress twice a year.
- The opportunity for organisations to apply for support for the costs of their core activities OR for a discrete project or element of their work.
- We will use some of our National Lottery Funding alongside our Welsh Government Grant In Aid funding to finance the Investment Review.



We also want to reaffirm that our **relationship with the organisations we fund is one of equals**, where we work together to bring about positive change to society through the arts.

We're starting by using an 'organisation centred' approach in our application process. By this we mean that we want organisations to respond in a way that is relevant to their circumstances, and to tell us how the work they do and propose to do aligns with our [six principles](#). We want organisations to tell us how this builds on what they have achieved of late, **relative to the investment and opportunities they have been afforded**.

As a funder we know demand will always outweigh resources and that we must also take a Wales-wide view. We have set out the [balancing factors](#) that will frame our final decisions.

An evolving Arts Council

We know that we need to change too and that we are on our own journey of transformation. We are committed to listening, self-reflection, learning and development for ourselves, evaluating the way in which we work and reviewing our approaches.

We're committed to a learning journey alongside the rest of the arts sector. We will be investing in resources, development opportunities and spaces to reflect and support each other in our work across the six principles.

Wherever possible we want work in collaboration with those that share our values and aims and together achieve more than we could do by ourselves. We will continue to build on our own, important partnerships with Welsh Government including Creative Wales, Creative Unions, other sponsored and publicly funded bodies.

Our forthcoming [strategic plan](#) will set this out in more detail.



2. The Investment Review foundations

We want to share the thinking and frameworks that have informed this Investment Review and how our own transformation and strategic planning will work alongside it.

Well-being of Future Generations

The Seven Goals and Five Ways of Working of the [Well-being of Future Generations Act](#) are fundamental to not just what we do, but how we do the Investment review. They steer us to consider the long-term impact of decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to help prevent persistent problems, health inequalities and climate change.

The Seven Well-being Goals



A Prosperous
Wales



A Resilient
Wales



A More Equal
Wales



A Healthier
Wales



A Wales of
Cohesive
Communities



A Wales of
Vibrant Culture
and Thriving
Welsh Language



A Globally
Responsible
Wales

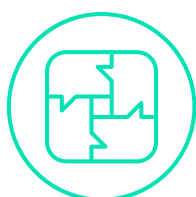


The Five Ways of Working



Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.



Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies



Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.



Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.



Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.



Welsh Government's Cultural Contract and Programme for Government

We work closely with Welsh Government across a number of shared priorities, which are outlined in [our remit](#) letter and in their own [Programme for Government](#). Our principles embody the expectations of Welsh Government's developing [Cultural Contract](#). It reflects the kind of behaviours that are already undertaken by responsible and successful organisations.



[Welsh Government's Cultural Contract](#) intends to support inclusive growth and improved well-being in the cultural and creative industries. It aims to ensure public investment is deployed with a social purpose and asks organisations to pledge commitment across a series of areas including:

- improving the diversity of the organisation's board, workforce and programmes of work
- increasing opportunities for individual artists and creative freelancers and ensuring that those working in the arts are paid fairly
- encouraging organisations to progress in measuring and lowering their carbon footprint
- aligning the well-being impact of their activities against the goals in the Well-being of Future Generations Act
- Supporting arts and health initiatives including social prescribing

We also recognise that Welsh Government is undertaking its own **Cultural Strategy**. We'll ensure that we continue to work closely with them on this.



Widening Engagement Action Plan

The Action Plan was created by Arts Council of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru to address and take forward recommendations made in the Widening Engagement Reports which focus on communities we consistently fail to engage in our work. Each of the three reports focused on specific communities. As we continue to develop our plans, we will take an approach that recognises intersectionality. Our intention is to undertake further work focusing on communities facing disadvantage.

All our work should be **anti-racist, anti-ableist** and support **Welsh language**. We need to recognise the huge disadvantage that **low socio-economic status** – or poverty – forces on people. We need to take positive action to challenge all inequalities.

[You can read the report here.](#)

Arts Council of Wales' Strategic Plan

The Investment Review is the first move in our new 10-year strategy, effective from April 2023. Our new strategic plan will build on much of the learning from our Investment Review consultation and will have the six principles at its centre.

And while the Investment Review is crucial to how we support the arts, it's not the only way. There are other key areas – including **arts and health, education and young people, international work, and support for individual artists and creative freelancers** – which will be included in the work of funded organisations. These important areas will also have additional dedicated investment and programmes set out in our strategic plan.

As we noted in our introduction, a key outcome across all our work and investment – including this Investment Review – will be the arts having a positive impact on the **well-being** of people in Wales.





These resources provide more information on the thinking that has shaped this Investment Review:

[Well-being of Future Generations Act](#)

[Welsh Government's Programme for Government 2021-26](#)

[Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#)

[Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers](#)

[Welsh Government's Cultural Contract](#)

[Seven Inclusive Principles #WeShallNotBeRemoved](#)

[Widening Engagement Action Plan](#) – Arts Council of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru's plan



3. The Investment Review principles and balancing factors

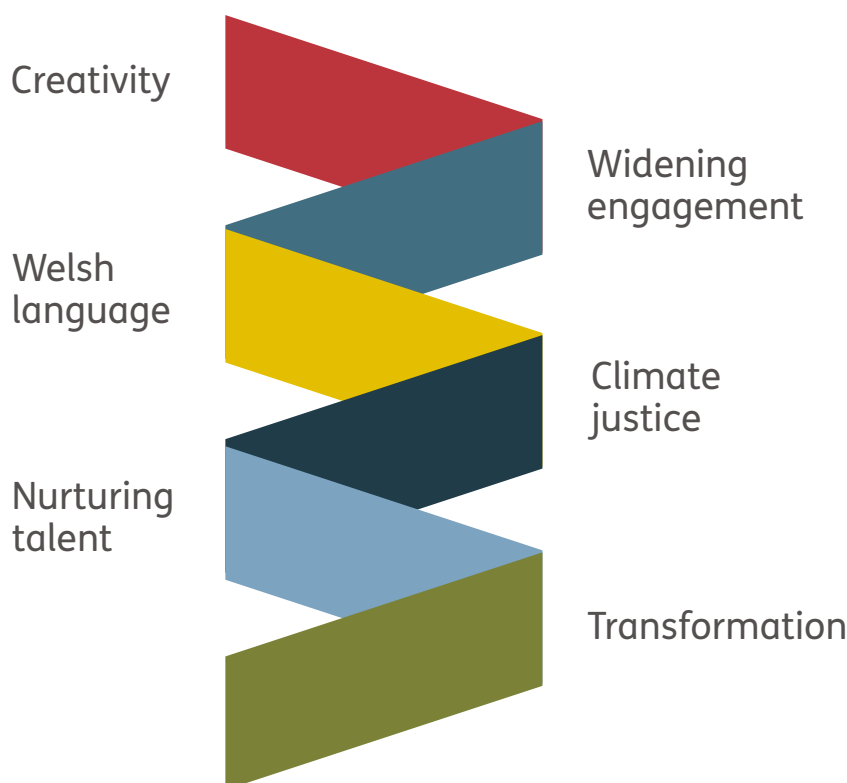
Our Investment Review and its funding decisions will be driven by [six principles](#), designed to reflect aspects of the sector that need positive change, action and evolution. But we will also need to take a Wales-wide view. There is a set of [balancing factors](#) that we'll be taking into consideration when we look at the applications 'in the round'.

I. The six principles

We arrived at these six principles after a period of reflection and consultation. They are closely informed by the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Welsh Government's Cultural Contract and programme for Government. Although we describe each one uniquely, **there is intersectionality between all six principles.**

The Investment Review's application questions and assessment will centre on these six principles. We expect all funded organisations to be committed to their own journey of development across each area.

The six principles are: Creativity; Widening Engagement; Welsh Language; Climate Justice; Nurturing Talent; and Transformation.



Creativity: art has the power to connect and help us understand each other and the world around us. It challenges our thinking and sparks our imagination. Created with integrity and aspiration, it brings joy and hope to audiences and participants.

Creativity is at the heart of everything and everyone we support. We want to see a wide variety of creative forms and practices created with communities and audiences in mind, which encourages artistic innovation. Art that means something to people.

Organisations are encouraged to experiment and take artistic risks but above all to develop work that is relevant, inclusive and made ethically.

Widening Engagement: reaching those communities who we consistently fail to engage. Arts and culture in Wales should reflect the lives of all its citizens and yet many people still face barriers and challenges to engaging with the arts.

Our approach to widening engagement should be one that recognises the intersectionality and the inter-connectedness of all those who face discrimination and disadvantage. It is one of zero tolerance to racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia. We want to ensure that people from diverse communities are fully represented in the workforce, as leaders, decision-makers, creators, visitors, participants and audience members. The voices of those facing socio-economic deprivation must also continue to be heard and action must be taken to remove the many barriers and challenges that they face in creating and accessing the arts.

Widening engagement is also about Cultural Democracy – people and communities being empowered to shape and inform their own arts and cultural experiences and to be co-producers and co-creators in arts and culture that reflect their lived experience.



**Welsh
language:**

must be a thriving part of our creative lives. People of all backgrounds should be able to make, participate and experience arts in the Welsh language. This is because we believe everyone should have equal opportunity to access, take part, enjoy, and create art through the medium of Welsh, as well as bilingually, in Wales.

We will use the popularity, potential and influence of the arts to help the Welsh Government reach its ambition of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. We want all the organisations we support to develop and promote a sense of shared ownership for the Welsh language and its unique role within a bilingual and multilingual Wales.

We expect to see organisations maximise opportunities to learn, use and share Welsh language and culture; we want them to celebrate the story of the language and its evolution within the contemporary cultures and communities of Wales.



We are using the term ‘**climate justice**’ when we talk about our response to the climate and nature emergency. Climate justice means putting equality and justice at the heart of any attempt to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. It recognises that climate change affects all of us, but not evenly.

Those who have contributed least to the crisis are often the ones who are bearing the brunt of climate breakdown right now. And if we look across the world, all too often this means those from low socio-economic background and/or culturally and ethnically diverse and/or disabled people.

We use the term ‘climate justice’ to recognise that a fair and equitable society is a key pillar of sustainability, and that the right to equality and justice extends beyond the borders of Wales.

Between November 2022 and March 2023, we are working with the arts and environment sectors to co-design a strategy for climate justice and the arts in Wales. We recognise that everyone is at a different place on their journey towards engaging with the climate and nature emergencies and will have different levels of needs for training and support.

Climate justice: through action that is socially, environmentally, and ethically sustainable.

We all need to take ownership of the climate and nature emergencies. We believe that the arts, and the organisations we fund, can play an important role in addressing these emergencies. For example, we are working towards the Welsh Government targets of a net zero public sector by 2030 and a net zero arts sector by 2050 as part of the net zero Wales target.

We want to fund organisations who will join this collective journey of fully realising the potential of the arts to imagine, connect, and communicate the need for climate justice, and its power to affect change through values of empathy, solidarity and healing. In all our decisions, we will make ethical choices that consider the impact on people and planet, locally and globally.



Nurturing talent:

for a healthy future for the arts. We all need to ensure that there are pathways that allow people from all backgrounds to develop creativity, skills, and leadership.

We want our funded organisations to recognise the breadth and depth of artists within the sector, and to understand that a successful and inclusive artistic ecology requires us to all work together. Investing in a diverse and Welsh-speaking workforce is a core part of this.

We want organisations to nurture skills and develop our future generations of cultural leaders and artists. We will look for evidence that organisations are creating new pathways and opportunities for continuous development, and that they are actively listening to their communities and young people. We want to see this done in a way that recognises the well-being of these individuals and with pay that is fair and equitable.

Transformation: seizing new opportunities and taking risks, being resilient and responsive to change, while remaining relevant to the people and communities of Wales.

Organisations that we fund must be committed to a healthy way of working and a positive culture, and ensure they are responsive, innovative, relevant and accountable. This doesn't necessarily mean growth in economic terms; we will be considering how organisations make their decisions, what kind of evidence they are using, who they involve, and the inclusiveness of those decisions.

We are looking for organisations that lead the way in their field – supporting and partnering with individual artists, freelancers, and other bodies. It is also important that the funded organisations have robust and resilient governance and organisational structures to deliver on their plans, take and manage risks, and to identify areas that require assistance and support.



As we have mentioned previously, there are additional key programme areas of Arts Council of Wales investment, in particular: **arts and health, education and young people, international work**. We have not included them as distinct principles as not all organisations will have practices in these areas, but many will want to highlight how working in these areas is core to achieving their aims.



More on our [Arts and Health work](#)

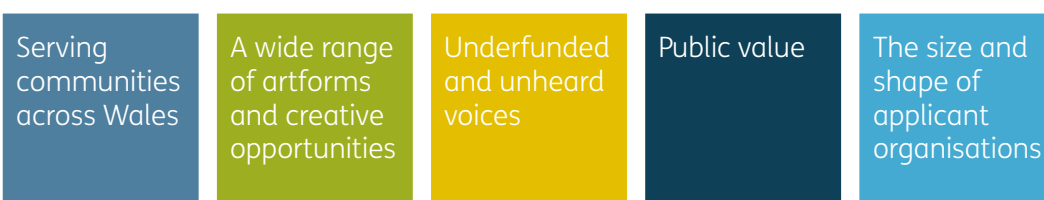
More on our International work though [Wales Arts International](#)

More on [Creative Learning Through the Arts](#)

II. Balancing factors

As well as assessing organisations on their own merit through the six principles, when making our decisions we will take a view on what Wales needs as a whole and the issues across arts funding that we need to address.

To do this we have **five balancing factors** which we will take into consideration in the final stages of our decision making as we look across the organisations that we could fund: Serving communities across Wales; A wide range of artforms and creative opportunities; Underfunded and unheard voices; Public value; The size and shape of applicant organisations.



Serving communities across Wales

Our funding should benefit all of Wales's communities. We recognise that there are areas of deprivation which too often lack arts opportunities. We want to see sustainable infrastructure and activity embedded across both rural and urban settings, making sure that there will be opportunities in the arts for young, old and future generations wherever they may live.

A wide range of artforms and creative opportunities

We want to see a wide range of arts in all its forms developed and presented to the public, from those that are well established to newer forms and those that blend forms. We're also looking for organisations that work in distinct or focussed settings where there is demand for arts, such as arts and health, those working with young people and those working with older people, addressing loneliness and promoting well-being.

Underfunded and unheard voices

We want our funding to reflect the diversity of communities in Wales now and for future generations. Our research, both internally and externally, tells us that we haven't been engaging enough with particular communities, and that some organisations have experienced barriers when trying to access our funding. We are keen to support organisations that are led by ethnically and culturally diverse people, people who have disabilities, people who are deaf, people who are neurodiverse, people who have experienced discrimination or racism, people experiencing socio-economic deprivation, young people and people who identify as being LGBTQ+. Support for these people and communities is vital to increasing the range of high-quality artistic work being created and presented in Wales by diverse artists. We want to champion people with these lived experiences. We will be looking to support organisations that can demonstrate a commitment to giving marginalised communities in Wales a platform.



Public value

We are awarding public funding and have a responsibility to the people of Wales to use it responsibly and effectively for their benefit. The needs and wishes of audiences and participants are key to our decisions. Whilst it might not always be about how many tickets are sold, it does matter that we are supporting arts activities that are affordable and that present good value in terms of who gets to experience it and the worth they place on it.

The size and shape of applicant organisations

We want multi-year support to allow us to support a broader range of organisations than in previous years. Therefore, we will seek to fund a range of organisations of different sizes and at different stages of development. We also recognise the importance of being able to work to scale – across Wales and internationally – and whilst this is not always done by larger companies, they play a role in doing this, as well as supporting others. But we need to ensure that any growth is sustainable.

These five balancing factors will be introduced at the latter stages of the [assessment process](#) (stages 3 and 4), after organisations have been assessed on their own merits against the six principles. They will help guide our decisions as it is likely that we will not have the resources to fund all organisations, potentially including some that present strong applications.

It is important to note that we **will not** base a decision to fund an organisation solely on how they might address balancing factors. First and foremost, organisations need to demonstrate their potential in their own right, to deliver across the six principles.

Rather than fund an organisation that doesn't meet the mark, if further action needs to be taken to achieve a balance across these factors at the end of the review, we'll commit to making other strategic interventions to help achieve this, such as a targeted programme of work.



4. Our commitment to you

It's vital for the Investment Review to be carried out with transparency, professionalism, and accountability. Arts Council of Wales commits to:

- Ensuring that a simpler, single application process is used and that it applies equally and fairly to all organisations.
- Welcoming applications in English, Welsh and BSL, ensuring fair and equal treatment regardless of language.
- Providing [access support](#) to assist with reading and understanding the application questions and offering the opportunity for applicants to respond in different formats i.e., written, audio, or video.
- Recognising the current economic context and the reality of the cost-of-living challenges faced by the sector. Whilst we're asking organisations to maximise the investment of public funds, we're also asking for realistic proposals that represent value for money for the people of Wales.
- Committing to openness and transparency, ensuring we publish clear guidance on the application and assessment process and the outcomes of our decision making.
- Ensuring our management of any conflicts of interest for our officers and members fully complies with our published [Code of Best Practice](#).
- Allowing sufficient time for managing the impact of our decisions on the organisations concerned.
- Progressing our own transformation, supported by our strategic plan; this will see us develop a more collaborative and peer-learning relationship with our funded organisations as we continue to develop more strategic partnerships with Welsh Government and other national and international bodies to deliver on shared objectives.
- Using the Investment Review as an opportunity to develop our evaluation approaches to better understand the impact of the arts that we fund and to advocate for the difference it makes. We'll move to an 'outcomes-based accountability' way of working that will gather data and examples of impact from organisations to successfully tell the story.



5. Investment Review 2023 – key information

Before we outline the process of how to apply, we'd like to answer some key questions about this Investment Review and the process raised during the consultation with the sector. We'll also continue to update [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) on our website](#) throughout the application period:

What funding can organisations apply for though the investment review?

You can apply for **core funding** (towards the overall running costs of your organisation and your core deliverables) or for a **specific project or programme of activity** aligned with our six principles (e.g., programme costs or costs associated with delivering a specific arts element within a larger operation or multi-year funding for an arts project).

What term will the funding agreements be?

We're asking you to apply for an **initial term of three years**, which takes the funding to end of March 2027. There is the potential for an additional funding term which will be agreed at a year-two 'check-in' and will be dependent on performance and delivery against the targets in your funding agreements.

Our aim is to move from five-year cycles to instead take a longer-term view on funding that encourages us, and the sector that we support, to plan and strategise long into the future, but also allow us to be responsive. There is potential for a continuous funding relationship, but we will continue to review the effectiveness of our approach.



Will there still be other opportunities for funding for Arts Council of Wales?

Yes. The Investment review is for arts organisations seeking multi-year support. Our other National Lottery support schemes (such as [Create](#)) will continue to offer project funding for organisations and individuals and might be a better option if you are looking at a ‘one-off’ activity. Please see our [Funding page](#) for more information. If you are successful for Investment Review funding, you may also be able to apply for other National Lottery support schemes, but we will discuss this with you individually.

We usually apply for National Lottery funding for our project work. Should we continue to apply? What if we want to include some of what might have been funded by Lottery in our Investment Review Application?

As Investment Review funding isn’t guaranteed (and even if successful, doesn’t commence until April 2024), you should continue to apply for project funding as usual. If there is an overlap in the funding you have been awarded through Lottery with activity funded through a successful Investment Review application, we will discuss with you how we will adjust either award in order to ensure a smooth transition.

What other opportunities will there be for accessing this funding after the Investment Review?

Our intention is for there to be an annual opportunity for organisations to apply for multi-year funding after this Investment Review. So that would be end of March 2025.

We will consider ways we can work with organisations who might want to come into multi-year funding in the future. More details on this will be made available in coming months.



Where will the funding come from?

We will be using Welsh Government Grant In Aid or National Lottery funds, or in some instances a mix of both. We will make the decision based on the applications we receive; organisations are not expected to indicate the source of funding at the application stage. We will tell you the source of your funding when we award it. As with our other funding opportunities, if you're unable for any reason to accept Lottery funding, we'll aim to fund from money that we receive from other sources.

What budget is there for the Investment Review?

To give some indication, in previous years we have allocated approximately 88% of our £32m annual Welsh Government Grant in Aid funding and a limited amount of our National Lottery funds to 67 organisations in our Arts Portfolio Wales

This time we are seeking to increase the National Lottery funds contribution to the Investment Review. However, the majority of our National Lottery funding (around £16m) is required to support individual artists and projects so we are limited in how much we can make available, and that figure is yet to be confirmed.

Even using Lottery funds – which fluctuate, depending on ticket sales – we fully expect demand for funding to greatly exceed the funding available. And although we have indicative figures from Welsh Government for Grant In Aid for the next three years, they could change.

We would ask that applicants consider this carefully when preparing their budgets and applications.



How much can I apply for?

Whilst we are not issuing guidance or thresholds for how much you can apply for, remember there will be high demand. If you already receive funding, you should work your budgets up from a ‘clean sheet’ rather than apply a blanket percentage to current funding levels. In other words, you should only ask for the funding required to achieve the key outcomes and associated activities that drive your organisation. We will be looking at the costs of running the activities that are core to your organisation (or a distinct element of it, if you are applying for multi-year project funding), so consider if the costs that you are including in your application are for core deliverables or ‘one-off’ activities that would be better suited to other forms of funding.

I am currently a member of the Arts Portfolio Wales. What if I don’t get continued funding through the Investment Review?

Before the end of March 2023, all current members of the Portfolio will receive notice that their funding will end on 31 March 2024. In September 2023, we will announce which organisations will be awarded funding through this Investment Review. We are considering ‘transition support’ to aid unsuccessful organisations manage this phase, which could include working towards operating in a different way or reducing or ceasing operations. Support would be by application and isn’t guaranteed. We will publish more information in the coming months.

I’m not sure if I should apply to the Investment Review. Can I speak to someone?

Yes, and we really encourage you to do so. You can arrange [a conversation with an Arts Council officer](#) who can offer a ‘guided conversation’ to help you decide. They can also advise on our other programmes of support.

Please arrange this as soon as possible as we will not be able to have these Investment Review conversations after 3 March 2023.



6. Investment Review 2023 – timeline

We go into the detail of the application process in the next section, but here’s the key dates at a glance:

Publication of guidance for investment review	12 December 2022	Publication of this document and our response to the consultation period.
Opportunity to speak to an Arts Council officer about the Investment Review	12 December – 3 March 2023	<p>This is also an opportunity to request any access support you require.</p> <p>We’ll not be able to discuss your application after 3 March (but technical support will be available) so contact us as soon as possible.</p> <p>Remember to register an account on the portal to apply. If you haven’t already got an account note that this can take up to five working days.</p>
Open for Applications	Noon 9 January – noon 31 March 2023	<p>Eligible organisations can submit an online application.</p> <p>There are options for the main questions to be answered by video (including BSL) or audio.</p>
Assessment	April-August 2023	Applications will be assessed by Arts Council officers and Associates. See How we will assess your application for details of the four-stage process.
Indicative Decisions Communicated	By end September 2023	<p>Council will take ‘in principle’ decisions on the membership of its future funding relationships.</p> <p>Council will announce indicative outcome of the Investment Review by the end of the month.</p> <p>The appeals process opens.</p>
Confirmation of funding – Outcomes published	By End December 2023	<p>Appeal process concludes.</p> <p>Successful organisations receive confirmed funding offer.</p> <p>Work on funding agreements commences.</p>
New funding arrangements commence	April 2024	



Part Two: Making your application

This section is to help you through the whole process of applying, from guidance on eligibility, to the provision of application assistance, information on the questions you'll need to answer and what to expect if you are successful or unsuccessful.

This section also explains how we will make our funding decisions.



1. Overview of process

The Investment Review 2023 is a **single-route application process**. This means all organisations will complete the same application process. However, each applicant will need to provide a level of detail that is **relative to their own organisation and their funding requests**. We'll explain more on this when we cover the [application questions](#).

We've worked on making the application process as simple as possible. Below is an outline of the key steps:

Before you make an application:

- Check your organisation's [eligibility](#).
- Consider [speaking with an Arts Council officer](#). Especially if you are not currently a member of the Arts Portfolio Wales. This needs to take place before 3rd March 2023.
- Contact us as soon as possible at grants@arts.wales if you need [access support](#).

The six steps to application:

1. Register for an online account on the Arts Council of Wales's online portal [here](#), or log into your account if you already have one.
2. Navigate to the *Grants* section and start an online application.
3. Complete the required basic information about your organisation.
4. Answer the [questions on the application](#) about your recent and future activities. This can be done in text on the portal, or by providing a link to a video or audio response that we can download. [More information here](#).
5. Upload a copy of your [business plan](#) (covering the years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27).
6. Upload a copy of your [budgets](#) (covering the years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27).

Note that you will also have the option of supplying up to three weblinks of [supporting material](#) that are related to or representative of your work.



2. Eligibility

To apply to the Investment Review, you must be an organisation, or a collective of organisations, either based in Wales or with a recognised operating base in Wales, and be formally constituted. You must meet the following criteria (if you are applying as a collective, one lead organisation must apply and meet the criteria).

Eligible types of organisations include (but are not limited to):

- A company limited by guarantee
- A registered charity (including charitable trusts)
- A charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
- A community interest company (CIC)
- Part of a local authority (a department that has a public arts programme, such as an arts centre or venue)
- Part of a university (a department that has a public arts programme, such as an arts centre or venue)

If your not-for-profit organisation is constituted in a different way, please speak to us to confirm eligibility before applying.



Your organisation must have all of the following:

- A written constitution/memorandum and articles of association that reflect an arts focus.
- An appropriate number of trustees or directors registered with Companies House and/or The Charity Commission. This must be at least three unconnected people, but the number of board members and terms of service will need to reflect the size and nature of the organisation. These need to be in place by 31 March 2023;
OR
An Advisory Board or Steering Group if you are led by a statutory body (e.g., local authority, university or college department, or BBC).
- Been operating for at least two years and therefore have produced financial statements for that period (audited accounts or the equivalent for your organisation or local authority or university department) and, where appropriate, filed them with Companies House and/or The Charity Commission. If your legal structure is less than two years old but you have been similarly operating for two years or more as a previous legal entity, contact us to consider if we can take your former structure into consideration.
- Experience of delivering high-quality arts activity.

The following **will not be eligible** to apply:

- Individuals (our National Lottery schemes remain open)
- Schools (full time educational establishments that are either independent or under local authority management)
- Companies limited by shares
- Companies with sole directors or companies with only two directors (or more) who are related or living at the same address
- Other organisations not meeting the above eligible criteria

Please note: we may check the information you have provided with Companies House, The Charity Commission or other regulatory bodies.



3. Speak to an Arts Council officer

We advise that you contact an Arts Council officer before you make an application, especially if you are not an existing member of the Arts Portfolio Wales.

You can email or call us. [Our contact details are here.](#)

The officer will not be able to give bespoke advice or recommendations beyond the information we have published. They can assist with specific questions. If you are not sure about applying, they can help you arrive at an informed decision by taking you through a series of questions in a 'guided conversation' held on phone or Zoom (or equivalent).

Email enquiries and conversations need to take place before the end of 3rd March 2023, after which point officers will no longer be able to discuss applications (but you will still be able to receive technical support).

4. Accessibility and applying in alternative formats

If you require assistance in reading and understanding the application questions, [we can provide support](#). We can help you set up your online account and help with completing the basic information. If you would like our assistance in these areas, please let us know as soon as possible.

For the application questions we can [accept video \(including BSL signed\) or audio](#) submissions.



5. Making your application

Registering your organisation on the portal

If your organisation does not already have an account on our online portal, you'll need to create one.

[You can register here](#). If you're unsure whether your organisation has applied to us before or are unsure if you have an account or can't find the details, please contact us at grants@arts.wales and we will check for you.

It can take up to five working days for new organisations to be registered on our system and gain access to the application process, so please ensure you register in good time if you wish to apply.

Updating your details

When you log in to our funding portal, it's helpful to review the Admin section of your account and ensure your information is up to date. For example, you may need to update your organisation's contacts, governance details, bank details or equalities information.

It's always helpful to do this first and it helps to reduce administration time later in the application process.

[You can find out how to do this here](#).



Starting an application

Once you're confident we've got all the up-to-date information for your organisation, you can begin your application.

Making an application in our Investment Review is just like making any other funding application you may have made to us.

Find the *Investment Review Application* form under *Start New Application* in the *Grants* section of our portal. Once you've started a form you can save it and come back to it in the future, through the *Continue Application* section in the *Grants* section of the portal.

You'll then need to complete an online application form on the portal.

If you're unable to access the online form or require further assistance, please contact us at grants@arts.wales.

Submitting your application

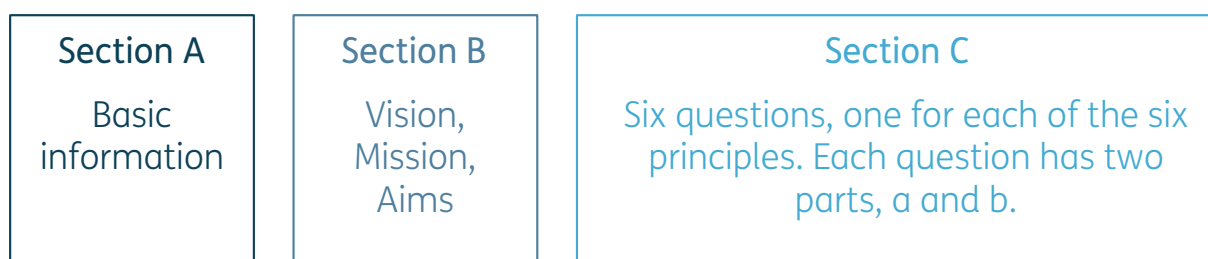
You will need to submit your completed application through the portal by noon on the 31 March 2023. After we receive your application, we'll send you an acknowledgement.

We will **not** assess late applications. We will not be able to accept additional information relating to the application after the deadline. Applicants should therefore ensure that they have included all information requested at the point of submission.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the full application is received by the above deadline. If you experience any difficulties in submitting your application, please do email us on investmentreview@arts.wales as soon as possible. However please ensure that you allow sufficient time prior to the application deadline for us to respond to your issue.



6. The application questions



A. Basic Information

In the portal we will ask you to fill in some basic information about your organisation at the start and the end of the application.

We will also ask you to tell us about your history of funding in the last three years.

B. Vision, Mission, Aims

We'll start off by asking you about your vision, mission and aims as an organisation. We want to understand the longer-term change you want to make. It will help us understand why you want to do the things you want to do in the next three years and the goals that they are working towards.

You have 500 words – or 5 minutes for audio or video submissions – but you might just want to clearly reference the relevant section of your business plan.

C. The Six Principles Questions

The main part of the application is a set of questions around the [six principles](#). Your answers to these should be linked to your longer-term mission, vision and aims.

We want to understand how your plans for the next three years relate to and support our six principles. Therefore, **for each principle, we will ask you to complete two questions.**

When answering, you can refer to your **business plan, budgets** and supporting **weblinks** for more detail or context. You'll need to clearly and specifically reference when you do this (e.g., "p13, Section 12.3, para 4"). **Without a clear and specific reference, officers at Arts Council of Wales will not be able to consider it as supporting material.** The business plan or supporting material weblinks are not being assessed or scored separately as part of this process.

You will be able to answer these questions in 'written' form or by video or audio.

The first question (a)

Your potential: What do you aim to achieve (outcome) and what activity will you be doing in each year to make this happen (outputs)?

We'll ask you to state a **maximum of three outcomes here**, so choose those that are priorities. **Whilst we want to see you respond across all six principles, do not feel you need to state three outcomes for each. You might only have one or two for some principles. It will not put you at a disadvantage.**

A (non-arts) example:

Outcome 1 (and associated annual outputs)

Outcome: Increase well-being via improving access to nature on our housing estate (p3 biz plan)

Output 2024/5: select schools to co-design public garden (p9 biz plan) fundraise (p2 budget),

Output 2025/6: make safe/repairs, weekly young gardener sessions (p9 para 5 biz plan)

Output 2026/27: launch campaign (p2 budget), opening Feb 2027, planting with schools x 5, join international twinning scheme (p10 biz plan)

If your application is successful, the outcomes and outputs that you submit will form the basis of the funding agreement discussions and therefore the basis of the plans we'll ask you to publish. Keep the outcomes and outputs simple, achievable, and measurable, including baseline figures where appropriate.



The second question (b)

Your evidence: What have you been doing in this area recently to evidence that you are committed to this work and have the potential to deliver your outputs and outcome?

We're **not** looking for an historical track record here, just recent examples (last two to three years) to **demonstrate that you are capable of delivering your plans** and are **committed to a journey of development**, however advanced.

We also know that some organisations **might not have had core funding before** or at the level you're requesting now. That's ok. We want to see the impact that you have managed to achieve **relative to the investment** and opportunities that you have had to date, so we can understand the difference you might make with funding. For example, you might be able to show us the impact you have made already with £20k of project funding and then demonstrate how your impact could be enhanced with further investment. You may want to refer to your supporting material weblinks (e.g., "see weblink of a review of our last exhibition that used this approach")

For those organisations that have been funded, we'll be looking at the impact and focus of past investment and how that has shaped your future plans.

We expect organisations to be honest about how they are developing their work across **all six** principles. We understand that there may be differences in the impact you are making for each principle – organisations may be considerably advanced in some areas yet earlier in their journey for others. It's ok to be honest about this and to highlight where you may need support to fulfil your ambitions. We won't be applying a weighting to any particular principle within our assessment process.



Below you can see the questions set out as you would find in the online portal, including character counts. We've provided as much detail as we can to enable you to plan your submission.

1. Creativity

In your answers, tell us how:

- Your strong **artistic vision** is created in collaboration with your audiences and communities and can be communicated clearly with the public.
- Your **programme of work is ambitious, exciting and inclusive**. You can measure success from the response of the communities and audiences you serve, and you are open to new ways of delivering and presenting.
- You actively support **artists and freelancers, respecting the contributions they make to your work**. You will offer everyone fairness and parity in work and pay terms.
- You're committed to **collaborating**, learning, sharing best practice and engaging with colleagues across the sector. You have the **connections** with other organisations and networks – be those locally, nationally or internationally, or inside and outside the arts – to excel in the delivery, growth and evolution of your vision.
- You **understand your audience and communities and this is reflected in the demand for your work**. You are continually examining and evolving your plans to strengthen existing relationships with those groups, whilst striving to reach and engage with even more people.
- In your work, you consider the **Seven Goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act** and the Cultural Contract. **You also take into account the opportunity for responding to demands for arts in other settings**, such as arts and health (including social prescribing) arts for older people, arts for younger people (including the new curriculum in Wales) and international opportunities.
- You **successfully communicate** with people inside and outside your organisation, to ensure they understand you and your work. Your interaction with others should also inspire them to participate and provide avenues and information to help them get involved.



1 a) Your potential

What do you aim to achieve (outcome) and what activity will you be doing in each year to make this happen (outputs)?

Word limit: 500 per outcome

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes per outcome

Outcome 1 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 2 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 3 (and annual outputs)

1 b) Your evidence

What have you been doing in this area recently to evidence that you are committed to this work and have the potential to deliver your outputs and outcome?

Word limit: 500

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes



2. Widening engagement

In your answers, tell us how:

- You support people from underrepresented groups and communities to **actively and creatively engage in deciding what counts as culture**, where culture happens, who makes and experiences it, and how.
- You are deeply rooted in the communities that you serve with your work, particularly those that are currently underrepresented and those that continue to face barriers to engaging with the arts.
- You **are committed to anti-racist and anti-ableist actions** and recognise the multiple barriers that come with **socio-economic deprivation**, and how you consider these when planning your work. What actions are you taking to address any institutional barriers within your organisation.
- You consider the **needs and experiences of users, audiences and visitors** that are deaf, disabled or neurodiverse. What actions are you taking to be more inclusive in this area?
- You consider the **needs of different generations** and are involving and reflecting young people, families, and the growing, aging population.
- Your organisation ensures that **different perspectives and diverse voices are involved in your decision making and work**, by incorporating views and perspectives from your staff and board, the artists and the communities that you work with.



2 a) Your potential

What do you aim to achieve (outcome) and what activity will you be doing in each year to make this happen (outputs)?

Word limit: 500 per outcome

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes per outcome

Outcome 1 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 2 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 3 (and annual outputs)

2 b) Your evidence

What have you been doing in this area recently to evidence that you are committed to this work and have the potential to deliver your outputs and outcome?

Word limit: 500

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes



3. Welsh language

In your answers, tell us how:

- Your organisation is **proactive and ambitious in their Welsh language plans and policies** across all aspects of the organisation and monitors them regularly.
- You are committed to **increasing the number of Welsh speakers** in the organisation at all levels.
- Your **programme of work** maximises opportunities to connect with, learn and use the language for all, developing creative strategies to positively promote Welsh as a minority language in a global context.
- You ensure **creative ways to share and celebrate the story of Wales** and the Welsh language, raising awareness of its evolution within the context of contemporary culture.
- You implement all requirements expected under the Welsh language measure and gain a **Cynnig Cymraeg** quality mark to improve, expand and evolve your Welsh language services.
- You **work collaboratively with other organisations and individuals**, ensuring a creative shared ownership which draws on others' experience and knowledge to develop the Welsh language within your organisation and communities.
- You ensure a commitment to developing and maintaining Welsh language **career paths and Welsh-speaking skillsets that facilitate, promote and willing to explore opportunities to link the Welsh language arts sector.**
- You are willing to explore opportunities to link the Welsh language to other languages, intersectional practice, and initiatives, e.g., U N's Decade of Indigenous Languages



3 a) Your potential

What do you aim to achieve (outcome) and what activity will you be doing in each year to make this happen (outputs)?

Word limit: 500 per outcome

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes per outcome

Outcome 1 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 2 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 3 (and annual outputs)

3 b) Your evidence

What have you been doing in this area recently to evidence that you are committed to this work and have the potential to deliver your outputs and outcome?

Word limit: 500

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes



4. Climate justice

Tell us how:

- You will be **engaging with the climate and nature emergencies** and understand the importance of a just and fair approach to tackling these emergencies. This could include joining relevant networks to learn how you can progress in this area.
- You will be committed to developing an **environmental policy and/or action plan**. This will include monitoring and understanding your current carbon consumption and how it might be reduced to reach Carbon Net Zero, or an ambition to do so.
- You will play an active role in **managing your resources responsibly**. You reuse and recycle materials and avoid harmful and unsustainable materials. You undertake ethical procurement.
- Your plans will evidence a commitment to considering **the impact of your choices on our populations and our planet**, and to making ethical choices in all your decisions, from operational to creative.
- Where relevant, your **artistic programme** supports work and artists, or opportunities to create work, that brings an ambition to improve our behaviours related to the climate and environment.
- There is **responsibility at both staff and board level** for these actions and the environmental impact of your work is discussed at Board level.
- Where you engage in international working, you are committed to embedding an **ethical and values-led approach**.



4 a) Your potential

What do you aim to achieve (outcome) and what activity will you be doing in each year to make this happen (outputs)?

Word limit: 500 per outcome

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes per outcome

Outcome 1 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 2 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 3 (and annual outputs)

4 b) Your evidence

What have you been doing in this area recently to evidence that you are committed to this work and have the potential to deliver your outputs and outcome?

Word limit: 500

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes



5. Nurturing talent

In your answers, tell us how:

- You invest in the **development of people in your organisation – board, staff, and freelance artists**. You have a proactive approach to succession planning and inclusive recruitment.
- You are a **learning organisation**, committed to reflection and evaluation. You build in time and resources to do this.
- You are committed to the development of new and existing **talent pathways** for your artform(s) or creative area(s). In line with the five ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, you take the long view on your own responsibility for this, from nurturing young people as future leaders, through to support for later years with life-long learning and development opportunities.
- You operate within an **inclusive and welcoming** ethos when working with artists and creative practitioners, regardless of age, background, language, place of birth, career stage or status. You actively encourage a diverse and Welsh speaking team.
- You **actively consult and network** within your sector and across the arts to understand current and future needs, as well as understanding and addressing potential and real barriers to accessing creative and professional development.
- You are committed to fair work and the **fair pay and well-being** of the people who you work with. This includes paying for time spent learning, as well as the people you consult with



5 a) Your potential

What do you aim to achieve (outcome) and what activity will you be doing in each year to make this happen (outputs)?

Word limit: 500 per outcome

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes per outcome

Outcome 1 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 2 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 3 (and annual outputs)

5 b) Your evidence

What have you been doing in this area recently to evidence that you are committed to this work and have the potential to deliver your outputs and outcome?

Word limit: 500

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes



6. Transformation In your answers, tell us how:

- You have **good governance**, with an active and engaged board (or equivalent) of appropriate size and skills, recruited in alignment with organisation needs. **Good leadership is diverse leadership** and should reflect the communities you want to connect with your work.
- You are committed to a **healthy way of working** and a positive culture which considers the well-being of your people.
- Your approach is **relevant and responsive**, clearly demonstrating an open and inclusive approach to your decision making, what voices are heard and the power they have at the table.
- In your role as sector leaders, you act as **collaborators** and connectors. You support and partner with individual artists, freelancers, and other organisations in the arts and beyond, across your communities, locally, and where relevant, nationally and internationally.
- You are committed to the highest level of **accountability** with robust and resilient governance and organisational structures that deliver on plans, take and manage risks and identify areas that require assistance and support.
- You are **open about your plans and your progress** against them, you take and manage informed risks appropriately and responsibly, and you identify and communicate areas that require assistance and support as they arise.
- You will embrace **innovation**, this doesn't necessarily mean growth or new for new's sake but means that you are open to exploring different ways of working better.
- You are looking to **maximise the value gained from public funding** through opportunities to earn income, and by diversifying and growing income from a range of sources to support your future sustainability.



6 a) Your potential

What do you aim to achieve (outcome) and what activity will you be doing in each year to make this happen (outputs)?

Word limit: 500 per outcome

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes per outcome

Outcome 1 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 2 (and annual outputs)

Outcome 3 (and annual outputs)

6 b) Your evidence

What have you been doing in this area recently to evidence that you are committed to this work and have the potential to deliver your outputs and outcome?

Word limit: 500

Time Limit for audio/video: 5 minutes



7. Your business plan

You will be asked to submit a business plan as a ‘supporting document’. This means that when answering the questions in the application, you can refer to pages in the business plan for more detail. As noted above, we will not be assessing or scoring the business plan separately.

You don’t need to create a document specifically for us, you can use an existing document. When we say ‘business plan’ we recognise that organisations use different terms, so we mean the main corporate or strategic plan your organisation uses to guide your work.

As a minimum, your business plan should cover the tax years 2024/25, 2025/26, and 2026/27. There are various guides available online for how to structure a business plan. The most important thing is that your business plan is a living document that is used by your organisation for planning and reflection, and that it is regularly revisited and updated by your Board.

We know that things change. Your business plan will be based on the best information available at the time and will have the potential to evolve as circumstances change. Further, it should be *your* document, with a level of detail that is relative to your organisation’s size and structure. It should outline how you work and how you plan, as much as what you will be doing.

Please note: Even if you answer the application questions by video or audio, your business plan will need to be a document.



8. Your budget

You should also submit a separate budget document to support your business plan (even if headline budgets are within the plan).

[There is a template you must use here.](#)

We're providing this so there is consistency across all applications.

It's important for us to understand how you plan to operate financially across the three years of your business plan. We do understand, however, that especially at times of change, budget figures do not always match with what you actually spend. Therefore, you should budget based on the information that is available to you at this time and be prepared to flex your budgets in later months and years as your planning cycle progresses.

Your budget should:

- Cover the tax years 2023/24 (as a baseline, so we can compare) 2024/25, 25/26 and 26/27 (to align with your business plan).
- Clearly include the funding that you are requesting from the Arts Council as a clear and separate budget line. Check that this aligns with the figures in your application form.
- Be aligned to the activities detailed in the business plan. You can attach notes to aid cross referencing to specific sections in the business plan.
- Not assume prior knowledge of your organisation. You don't need to explain every line, but we should be able to see how you have arrived at key figures within the budget. This will allow us to assess how appropriate your ask is.
- Explain any variations in budget lines between years. Without this we can't see how changes in activity, for example, have impacted your income or costs.
- Include clear notes (either as a column or separate cross-referenced sheet) to assist our understanding of the above or any other aspects that need further detail.
- Avoid applying general percentage increases to budget lines year on year; instead use actual figures that reflect planned activity.



9. Supporting material weblinks

You will have the opportunity to provide up to three weblinks as supporting material. These could be links to examples of your work, or reviews of your work.

These will not be scored or assessed and should only be used as references to enhance and support your [application answers](#). As with the business plan, it's your responsibility to include a clear and specific reference to a webpage or a section of a webpage. Be as exact as possible in your referencing.

10. How we will assess your application

At the start of each assessment, an individual assessment report will be drafted and updated at each stage of assessment until final decision making.

The main basis of the assessment will be the answers provided to all questions and the budget you provide, supported by your business plan.

A transcription or translation of your application may be created by us, and any subsequent people involved in assessing or decision making will have access to both the original and the translation or transcription.

As noted above, the business plan and weblinks will not be assessed independently.

We are committed to treating every application fairly and equitably, whether in English, Welsh or BSL, or in written, video or audio format.



After an initial eligibility check at submission, there is a **four-stage assessment process**:

Stage 1: Individual Application Assessment.

After further eligibility checks, the application will be reviewed by an Arts Council of Wales officer. They will assess your answers against the questions in the application including those based on our [six principles](#).

Stage 2: Group Assessment.

The application will then be taken to an [Officer](#) and [Associate](#) group with the expertise to consider, review, and moderate the first stage Officer review. This will allow a number of people with differing expertise and experience to reflect on the application.

After this stage, the individual assessment report will be updated to reflect the meeting discussions.

Stage 3: Quality Assurance and Balancing.

The report and meeting minutes will then be reviewed by a group formed from our [Senior Leadership Team](#) and chairs of the second stage groups; together, they will make recommendations to [Council](#).

At this stage the [balancing factors](#) will be taken into consideration.

Stage 4: Council Review and Decision-Making Meeting.

Council will make final decisions on the success or otherwise of applications.

Please note that there is a limited level of funding available and difficult decisions will have to be made. Council may not award the full amounts requested, as is the case across our other funds.



11. Notification of decisions

Council will make its final decisions at its September meeting and we will notify all applicants by the end of that month by email. We'll be using the contact details that you have provided in your online account so it's important that you let us know of any changes.

We will let you know the outcome and our reasons for arriving at this decision. If the funding offer made is lower than the request, we will explain why.

From this point you will also have 21 days to [make an appeal](#) if you think there are grounds to do so.

Any funding offer made at this stage will be indicative.

Confirmation of funding amount will follow the completion of the appeals process in December.

Please note: Any offer made will be contingent on Arts Council of Wales' funding from Welsh Government. This is currently confirmed for up to 2025/26. We will only be able to confirm future years' funding to organisations once Arts Council Wales has itself received confirmation of its own level of funding from the Welsh Government.



12. What happens if your application is successful?

You'll be notified in September if your application has been successful and you will receive an indicative offer.

Funding agreements

If your application is successful, we will confirm the funding offer in December. After this we will meet with you to discuss our decision and your plans based on the funding offer we have made (as it may be lower than your request). We will explore how we can work together to support you in your plans, we can answer any questions you have, and we will go through the [monitoring requirements](#).

At this point, we will begin the process of **creating a funding agreement with you**. This document will be based on the information that you provided in your application and will be mutually agreed and signed by both parties. It will include the outcomes and outputs against our six principles to be achieved that year; these will be your targets. We will expect your board to review progress against your targets at every meeting.

Publishing your targets and progress

You will be **required to publish your targets and share progress against them twice a year**. We want the funding agreement to represent a contract with your communities and for you to be as accountable to them as you are to us. This might mean that you have your funding agreement on your website and post an update six months in and at year end. Or you might share your progress in another format, such as publishing board papers or reports against your operational plan. The important thing is that you make public what you intend to do with the funding you receive, and then also share what you have done and achieved.

Annual reviews and monitoring

The funding agreement will be **reviewed annually**. You will meet with an Arts Council Officer for a 'check in' to assess your progress against targets. If we believe that you're not delivering to your targets, we can take action, such as the reduction or withdrawal of funding or applying further conditional measures. We will take into account any reasons that you have for not delivering before making our decision.

At the **check-in during year two**, we will also determine if a further term of up to three years can be awarded, or if funding will end at the completion of year three.



Acknowledgment and promotion

The funding agreement will include a commitment to **acknowledge that you are in receipt of public funding**. We will also expect you to be **promoting how your funds are making a difference**. We want everyone we fund to be an advocate for the arts. As part of our move towards ‘outcomes-based accountability,’ we want you to use both data, and the narratives around the difference that you have made with funding, to tell a powerful story about the value of the arts.

Monitoring requirements

As a minimum, every organisation will also need to provide the following during their funding term:

- Annual Budget
- Copy of your Business Plan
- Copy of your year-end accounts
- Quarterly financial update – the level of detail will depend on your organisation; we will discuss this with you as part of your funding agreement discussions
- Survey completion and return. We will provide this every six months and it will include information on your audience, participants, staff, board and communications. We’re looking to tailor this to different organisations
- Evidence of publication of six-monthly progress reports, such as a website link.

A condition of funding will be that we receive these documents from you. If you are not able to supply the information listed above, then we may need to review your grant payments.

We will use this information to understand and review your progress against your stated outcomes and outputs and the broader impact of our funding. We will also use it to report to Council and advocate for the arts.



13. What happens if your application is not successful?

You'll be notified if your application isn't successful in September. We'll arrange a follow-up meeting to explain our decision and, where relevant, discuss other ways we might be able to support your work.

If you feel that you have grounds to appeal, [the appeals process can be found here](#) and you will have 21 days to make your appeal.

Even in these disappointing and challenging circumstances, we will work towards constructive outcomes and will aim to provide feedback and advice that you'll find useful in moving forward with your plans.

If you are an existing Arts Portfolio Wales organisation, we'll discuss impact of the decision on your organisation and the options that are available to help you transition into your organisation's next phase.

We are considering 'transition support' to help unsuccessful Arts Portfolio Wales organisations to manage this phase, which could include working towards operating in a different way or reducing or ceasing operations. Support would be by application, isn't guaranteed and is likely to be proportional to 2023/24 Portfolio funding levels. We will publish more information in the coming months.

We will work sensitively and professionally and do our best to minimise impact to you, your community and the sector.



Part Three: Essential Information

Here we have compiled information that you may want to refer to during and after the application process.

It includes an application checklist, explanations of our terms and structures, information on our appeals process and how you can contact us.



1. The submission checklist

This is a quick checklist of everything required to make your application to the Investment Review. You need to submit:

1. An eligible, up-to-date, signed governing document. If your documents are up to date on our portal, you don't need to supply this again. Check the governing documents section to confirm this before applying.
2. All required basic information on your organisation via the portal.
3. Your responses to the Investment Review application questions via the portal – either 'written' or video or audio submissions.
4. Your supporting business plan.
5. Up to three weblinks of supporting material.
6. Your accompanying budgets for the tax years 2023/24, 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.



2. Explaining some of our terms and structures

Here's an explanation of the people who will play a role in the investment review. They will all adhere to the principles set out in our document [Managing an Impartial Process](#).

Council – This is our governing body, appointed by Welsh Government. They are responsible for the decisions made at this Investment Review and the final allocation of funding. [More information on Council here](#).

Officers – They are employees of the Arts Council, including Development Officers and Portfolio Managers, with a range of expertise and experience, who will be involved in the assessment process. They will be trained in advance of the assessment process. As part of our own organisation's development, they are also having ongoing training around bias and equalities. They will also be involved in ongoing monitoring and support of organisations after decisions have been made.

Senior Leadership Team – Four members of our [Senior Leadership Team](#) including our Chief Executive, will be involved in the assessment process, with our Director of Finance remaining independent to oversee the appeals process. They will be supported by our Agent of Change and Welsh Language Enabler.

Associates – After reviewing the way that we work with Associates in 2021, this is now a key way that we bring different perspective, experiences and expertise into our work. Following [an open call](#) will be recruiting Associates work with us on the Investment Review around the time we publish this documentation. Associates must abide by the same declaration of interest rules as staff. They will also be trained ahead of the assessment process.



3. Making an appeal

We expect our decision-making process to be of the highest standard. However, if you wish to appeal our decision, we have established an independent process for the consideration of appeals. Only appeals made on the grounds of the fairness of the process will be considered.

Our [Investment Review 2023: Making an Appeal](#) document explains the right of appeal, and associated procedure that is available to any organisation that is dissatisfied with our funding decision. This appeal procedure applies only to the Investment Review 2023. If you have complaints about any other matter, please refer to the standard procedures outlined in our [complaints procedure](#).



4. Freedom of information and data protection

We're committed to making the Investment Review process as open and transparent as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions. Our aim, therefore, is to publish clear guidance on the application and assessment process in this document, and the outcomes of our decision making on our website, except for information which is genuinely confidential or commercially sensitive.

We are listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks to see them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. [Our policy on Freedom of Information](#) is available on our website. Please see the [Freedom of Information website](#) for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications during the assessment and appeals period, as this may interfere with the decision-making and appeals process.

Protecting the privacy and personal data of our clients and visitors is of utmost importance to us. Any personal data received and processed as part of the Investment Review will be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Further details on our compliance with these requirements, particularly our arrangements for handling and assessing funding applications, can be found in our published [Privacy Policy](#).



5. Keeping in touch

As far as is possible, we will maintain a business-as-usual approach to our contact with organisations and the wider sector throughout the Investment Review.

However, it's important for the integrity of the process that every applicant is treated fairly and that no one is given, or is seen to be given, an unfair advantage. As we have outlined, there will be a period when we will [offer 'guided conversations'](#) to potential applicants, but we will not be able to offer feedback on proposals or give bespoke advice while the application process is ongoing.

We'll continue to discuss and communicate with you across all other areas of work, including Lottery applications. If you are a member of the current Arts Portfolio Wales, you will be able to contact your lead officer as usual, but they will not be able to advise on your Investment Review application beyond the information that we have published.



6. Contact us

We've tried to make the application process and guidance as straightforward and clear as possible. We will continue to update the Frequently Asked Questions section on our website, so [check here to see if your question has already been answered](#).

If you still have any questions, please get in touch.

If you have a technical query when making your application, please contact our Grants and Information Officers by email grants@arts.wales or phone 03301 242733 then select option 1, then option 1.

If you have a question about applying, please contact us before 3rd March:



Telephone: 03301 242733



Email: investmentreview@arts.wales



Hours: 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am-4.30pm Friday



Website: www.arts.wales/about-us/contact-us



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