

community arts

funding policy



Beat Initiative. Photo Lesley Doyle
Front cover - Best Cellars. Photo Lesley Doyle



Further Information

Full details of all Council funding are available from:

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Strategic Priorities

The Arts Council will give a priority to artists, arts organisations, arts initiatives and partnerships which:

- A increase opportunities for creative participation in the arts;
- B develop new audiences for the arts and build on existing ones;
- C extend opportunities for artists to develop their work and practice;
- D strengthen the capacity of arts organisations to deliver quality experiences of the arts.

Strategic Objectives

The Arts Council is committed to:

- 1 increase opportunities for artists working to the highest standards and in innovative ways;
- 2 strengthen the arts infrastructure;
- 3 engage with community arts to increase opportunities for creative participation, to develop new audiences and to expand the range of contexts in which artists work;
- 4 engage with voluntary arts to increase opportunities for creative participation, to develop new audiences and expand the range of contexts in which artists work;
- 5 increase the quality of access for disabled people to the arts;
- 6 enhance children and young people's access to creative expression through the arts, in contexts of their own choosing, and increase opportunities for participation as they grow and develop;
- 7 increase audiences for the arts.

The arts: inspiring the imagination, building the future

Community Arts Funding Policy

Introduction

Community arts contribute in a unique way to the health and wellbeing of the wider community, and to targeting social need. In 1978, the Arts Council was charged with delivering community arts work in areas of high deprivation in Belfast and Londonderry. The modest sum of £32,575 was awarded to groups in grant aid.

In 2002-03, grant aid offered by the Council to organisations working in the sector right across Northern Ireland totalled more than £3.25 million. The Council is working towards its objectives in partnership with other bodies such as urban regeneration agencies, the local authorities within the context of integrated cultural development plans, and other voluntary and statutory agencies.

Recognising the expansion of the sector, the Council set a specific objective and series of key tasks within its five-year Plan 2001-2006. In addition, in 2003 the Council appointed a second Community Arts Officer, with particular responsibility for social inclusion, to address the needs of diverse communities and interface areas in inner cities, and with the specific objective of promoting good relations.

Definitions

Community Arts practice involves a diverse range of art forms and can create synergies across art-form working within a single project. The creative boundaries are limited only by the needs of the participants, the imaginations of the facilitators and available resources.

A Community Arts approach can bring many benefits: the project is critically owned by the community; a skills exchange between artists/facilitators and the group is effected; the community can gain confidence in expressing itself creatively. These skills can be used by communities in other non arts-based directions. For the artist, valuable insights can be gained which may help inform artistic practice, while individual participants can gain vital experience into the creative process.

The Council funds carnival, circus, local festivals, film, video and photography, drama, music, dance, new technologies and the visual arts and crafts. An important aspect of its work is the funding of programmes relating to Section 75 groupings including children and young people, people with disabilities and all ethnic minority groups. The community arts programme also includes work in prisons and young offenders' centres.

Funding

Community Arts can be funded under all of the Council's programmes, but of particular interest are:

- Annual Support for Organisations (for organisations with year-round programmes)
- Support for the Individual Artist (to assist artists in the development of their practice)
- Access to the Arts (aimed at addressing the needs of communities in areas of social and economic deprivation or supporting the involvement of children and young people)
- New Work (if it is the creation of innovative original work)
- Awards for All (for projects under £5,000. Applicants should consult www.awardsforall.com. Tel. 0845 600204).

Funding Objectives

A concerted focus of attention on Community Arts enables the Council to realise its four Priorities and meet its seven Strategic Objectives.

Funding objectives are to:

- stabilise key community arts organisations (2)
- increase the quality of experience of participants (1, 3)
- promote models of good practice to practitioners (1)
- quantify the benefits to individuals and communities (3)
- provide synergies across art form practices (1)
- provide more opportunities for artists to work at community level and in communities of interest (3, 4)
- anchor the work of community arts organisations to the context of integrated cultural development plans across all local authorities (3, 4, 5, 6, 7)
- contribute to good community relations (3, 4, 5, 6, 7)