



Armagh Rhymers  
Front cover - Liam O'Flynn. Photo Phil Smyth

#### Further Information

Full details of all Council funding are available from:

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TRADITIONAL ARTS

## traditional arts

funding policy



## 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

## Traditional Arts Funding Policy

### Introduction

The traditional arts are an essential element within the social and cultural landscape of Northern Ireland. Traditional music, dance, and song, are not just the lifeblood of community and voluntary artistic practice in both rural and urban settings, they are a rich source of the cultural distinctiveness of the arts from Northern Ireland in a global context. The Arts Council is committed to supporting this sector because it makes a strong contribution to the artistic excellence of the region and because it has a profound effect on community life and the wider understanding of a diverse yet shared cultural heritage.

The traditional arts are naturally participative and provide a perfect vehicle for increasing participation in the arts, particularly of young people, in community-based and volunteer settings.

### Definitions

Traditional arts practitioners tend to have expertise in one of the following – dance music, unaccompanied narrative song, step and set dancing, and storytelling. The traditional arts are mostly related to indigenous forms of music. While some might have a wider conception of traditional arts – for example, literature and drama in the Irish language, craftwork, thatching, or ironwork – the Council addresses the needs of these related art forms and crafts separately.

While every art form has a 'tradition' on which contemporary practitioners reflect, draw inspiration, or indeed rebel against, the traditional arts have a special relationship to tradition. Continuity with the past through oral and aural

transmission is central to the identity of the traditional arts. Like other art forms, the traditional arts evolve, though in a different way and more slowly. True innovation springs from authenticity, and the authentic derives from an intimacy with a global community of practitioners. As the poet and flute player Ciaran Carson has written, "the really innovative music is practised by those who recognise the depth and complexity of the tradition itself. To know the way forward you must also know the way back."

### Funding

Traditional arts practitioners and organisations are funded through the following programmes:

- Annual Support for Organisations (There is a special allocation of 'Cultural Traditions' funding from the Department of Education to promote reconciliation among young people up to age 25 from different cultural backgrounds. Programmes and activities funded by this allocation contribute to an exploration and understanding of our shared cultural heritage and diversity of cultural traditions through traditional arts training.)
- 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 (prioritises in Traditional Arts the documentation and dissemination of regional styles and repertoires, and prominent individuals and their work, which are not widely available)
- Awards for All (for projects under £5,000. Applicants should consult [www.awardsforall.com](http://www.awardsforall.com). Tel. 0845 600204).

## Funding Objectives

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

Funding objectives are to:

- assist traditional musicians in the development of their knowledge, artistry and their professional careers (1)
- foster and promote our heritage of traditional music, song and dance by supporting collection, archiving, and dissemination (2, 7)
- enhance understanding of cultural traditions and diversity in Ireland, the UK and around the globe (2, 3, 4, 6, 7)
- support initiatives in traditional music education inside and outside the formal education sector (6)
- support the showcasing of traditional arts through local festivals, concerts, education programmes, and other events (2, 7)