



Arts Council of Northern

**ART FORM AND SPECIALIST
AREA POLICY 2013-2018**

DRAMA



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Awarding funds from
The National Lottery

www.artscouncil-ni.org

Preamble

The Drama Policy has been developed in line with *Ambitions for the Arts*, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's five-year Strategic Plan for the Arts, 2013-18. The overarching priorities of the Plan – champion the arts, promote access, build a sustainable sector – are reflected across the set of the Council's Art Form and Specialist Area policies, 2013-18.

Introduction to Drama Policy

Northern Ireland uniquely embodies a sense of place, a sense of culture and a sense of identity, with a significant, coherent, dramatic history, which is reflected through its diverse theatre scene. The principles of the sector and of Council support for it are: quality, quantity, diversity and innovation.

The Independent Theatre sector is amongst the most visible and marketable of the arts in Northern Ireland. The creation of theatre product, be it devised or a fully scripted play, takes place throughout Northern Ireland and in various settings and communities. No single model is right or wrong - development and production is created in different contexts for different audiences, and innovative approaches to creation are as important and as valuable as traditional models of practice. Theatre is ever-changing as it reflects and documents our imaginations, histories and realities.

The 'play' serves not only as a channel for our words, but as a testament to our society, cultures and visions. The Council recognises the need to mobilise the energy and vision of the sector to promote its value to our society as a whole.

The Council recognises how important it is to maintain a diverse range of drama activity, ensuring access for people throughout Northern Ireland. Diverse provision includes an appropriately-resourced, building-based, production house to showcase the best new, emerging and established repertoire.

Innovative new work may not always have secured an audience base adequate to it. The Council and the sector need to work together to devise imaginative solutions to the marketing of such work.

Independent theatre companies in Northern Ireland are funded in their day-to-day operations and artistic programming through either of the Council's two main funding streams – Annual Funding Programme and Lottery Project Funding. The Council's Small Grants Programme also offers opportunities for companies to avail of support for commissioning projects or smaller productions. This document recognizes the importance of adequate resourcing of play production alongside the provision of audience development and outreach work. The Council is aware of the need for flexibility in encouraging the development of new directions in existing companies as well as new companies with new visions.

At the core of the best artistic work is the energy and commitment of individual artists. The Council acknowledges the importance of the vision of individuals to the viability of more specialised theatre production.

The Council does not insist on a formal company structure to enable drama to be produced. There are various ways in which it can flourish, and there are several models of operation, only one of which would be a fully-staffed orthodox company.

The principle underlying all Council funding is to support work of predominantly artistic intention. Some performance forms, such as re-enactments and pantomime, while effective in themselves, may not be considered appropriate for Council support.

Funding Objectives

- increase the number, quality and reach of drama productions;
- maintain and increase support to the independent theatre sector;
- increase touring product throughout Northern Ireland;
- increase the number of applications from individual practitioners;
- increase the number and quality of co-productions;
- increase audiences by supporting new and artistic marketing and promotional initiatives;

- ensure developmental expertise, mentoring and training is available through inclusive and cross-sectoral mechanisms;
- promote success internationally by assisting the showcasing of Northern Ireland work at home and abroad.

Additional Information

'Ambitions for the Arts' Five Year Arts Strategy, 2013-2018

www.artscouncil-ni.org/about-us/strategy

Art Form and Specialist Area Policies, 2013-2018

www.artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts

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