

Response to Arts Council England's Draft Strategic Framework Summer 2019 consultation

The following is a narrative response compiled by the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance through a process of consultation with our Strategic Alliance Members and regional champions. It complements the online response we have submitted. Additional signatories to this document are listed at the end. ACE's own words are in **blue**; our responses are in black. We include below only the sections to which we have responded in detail. Please refer to the Arts Council's draft strategy ([linked here](#)).

Testing key shifts in the new strategy

Widening the range of culture and creativity we support.

Do you have any comments about this shift?

We are extremely supportive of ACE opening up the boundaries of 'culture', and agree that 'the traditional boundaries between and around cultural activities are disappearing, and we expect this to accelerate over the next decade'. We are really pleased to see that ACE is 'excited by these changes and expect[s] to evolve the types of cultural activities that we will support over the next decade' (p.2). We would add that paying consistent attention to grassroots cultural activity will inevitably require a persistently *flexible* attitude to what creativity and culture can be and would encourage ACE to maintain this flexibility.

We would particularly draw attention to the relationship between landscape, physical environment, green and blue space and cultural and creative activities. Research supported by key groups such as the UKRI-funded [MARCH network](#) finds an equivalence between cultural assets such as parks and museum spaces.

It is encouraging to see such strong acknowledgement of the fact that 'Inequality of access to publicly funded culture still exists across our country', and we particularly welcome ACE's commitment to supporting innovation and risk: 'the Arts Council will do more to support innovation and more explicitly demonstrate our appetite for risk and tolerance for failure' (p.14). We would add to this a need to support risk where it manifests as criticality of current social structures. Within the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance work exists across a spectrum that moves from completely embedded in health structures and care pathways to taking a critical position in relation to how our health and social care structures currently work. Many service-user-led organisations are spearheading this critique (see for example the Power-Threat-Meaning framework developed by the British Psychological Society <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/introducing-power-threat-meaning-framework> or the work of Recovery in the Bin, a service user led critical and activist collective <https://recoveryinthebin.org/>). It behoves us to recognise that health and wellbeing are not coterminous with health and wellbeing structures and that the arts and culture play crucial roles as a disruptors and critical friends, as well as supporters and colleagues.

It is not clear at present what proportion of ACE's funding will go towards grassroots cultural and creative activity. We draw attention to the cautionary note struck in the ACE-commissioned *Everyday Creativity* report (2016): 'There was a clear and on-going belief amongst most consultees that ACE needs to balance significant sums from 'the gatekeepers of high art' to the grassroots, and that *subtle shifts in the focus of funding will have little impact.*' (p.6, our emphasis).

We would also strike a note of caution in relation to accepted norms of culture and creativity:

'When we have the time and the tools to develop our own creative potential we feel fulfilled and empowered. Whenever we encounter culture, whether through museums or libraries, theatres or galleries, carnivals or concert halls, it uplifts and entertains us, increases our knowledge and understanding, unites us and brings us joy' (p.6).

Whilst it is true of course that culture can unite us, it can also divide us; creative and cultural activities can be as exclusive as they are inclusive. More nuance here would be welcome to reflect the question the document rests on, namely that of many people feeling alienated from 'art'.

Reflecting an awareness of questions about cultural democracy could be helpful in signalling intended or possible shifts. To be more explicit about questioning notions of who determines, accesses and produces culture, no matter that this may be uncomfortable for some, might strengthen the sense that ACE are ready to both embrace and instigate change where and when it will make a positive difference.

Stronger support for individuals including diversifying the talent pipeline and sustainable careers.

Do you have any comments about this shift?

We welcome the draft's stronger support for individuals. It is clear from reports like Nicola Naismith's *Artists Practising Well* (2019) that creative practitioners need more robust and better structured support – in particular artists working with vulnerable groups. The 2017 Kings College London report *Changing Cultures* demonstrates that professionals *across* the cultural sector are more at risk of burnout than ever. Indeed the vulnerability of practitioners has been a dominant theme at every gathering of people working in this field since the Alliance's launch. This email received recently from a member sums up the situation:

We are increasingly finding that in our community work we are working with people with people who have very complex needs. This is coinciding with many of the statutory / voluntary agencies who refer people to our projects finding themselves increasingly stretched, under-resourced, and consequently unable to provide a level of support that we might have once expected.

We believe that ACE has a key role to play, in a) ensuring support is provided by commissioners on its funded projects, and b) promoting best practice in terms of support.

We would suggest that larger NPOs should be required to consider how they can support individual practitioners who may lack platform, profile, influence and sustainability.

We would also give additional emphasis to emotional (affective) support that will allow people to stay long enough in this work to develop as experienced professionals who can really take practice forward. There is currently a strong tendency for people to leave this work early in their careers, finding it too isolating and often psychologically risky. There is much that CHWA can do here in terms of support, networking and training, and we hope to apply for additional funding to help achieve this, but ACE has a unique capacity to help the people it funds understand that not only is it OK to ask for support, it is vital to the quality of the work.

In relation to this, while we understand it is intended as an indicative list, we would add 'facilitators' and 'commissioners' to the list below from the current draft (p.14): '...the Arts Council will provide more direct support for independent creative talent: our freelance directors, writers, makers, performers, designers, composers, producers, painters, curators, librarians, sculptors and choreographers'.

A note on terminology: We support ACE's recognition of the importance of language, and its shift to 'culture' and 'creativity'. But we note that the term 'talent pipeline' remains problematic in relation to the draft strategy's ambition.

Firstly, it suggests an adherence to the concept of 'talent' that is at odds with supporting everyday creativity. The *Everyday Creativity* report commissioned by ACE in 2016 tells us that 'Many consultees argued that wider society assumes that "Art is what Artists do"; that it is only worth doing "art" if you are good at it and that striving towards excellence is more important than just having a go'. Sticking with the term 'talent' risks perpetuating this idea that some are talented, and some are not – a concept we reject.

Secondly, 'pipeline' suggests the kind of production line approach to labour and a homogeneity of practice that is at odds with the general thrust of the strategy. We would strongly advocate changing this terminology in line with the other positive shifts in terminology embraced by this draft.

The concept of a 'Talent pipeline' also assumes that this process is linear, when in fact many who work in the creative industries leave and re-enter the sector for a variety of reasons. Older artists may choose to engage as a second career, those with caring responsibilities leave and return in different circumstances. We would encourage ACE to offer recognition and support to be there to enable individuals to re-enter creative and cultural work, and find ways of balancing this with complex lives; a move which will support the overall inclusiveness of the strategy.

Stronger focus on partnership working to help creativity & culture build thriving communities.

Do you have any comments about this shift?

We celebrate and encourage the shift towards partnership working. We also support the strategic ambition to put 'partnership at its heart'.

On p.7 the draft says that ACE 'will seek out partners who share our vision and who want to work with us to strengthen creative and cultural opportunities in cities, towns and villages across the country. These partners will come from across local government and from The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, from further and higher education and schools, and from inside and outside the cultural sector.'

We note that ACE already has strong partnerships with health, social care and local government, particularly in relation to the Social Prescribing Working Group, work around loneliness, and on our own Strategic Alliance Partners group, which comprises ACE, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Local Government Association, Public Health England and NHS England. We feel it is also important to acknowledge and celebrate these existing partnerships as exemplars of cross-governmental work.

We support the aim to help ACE-funded organisations 'forge new partnerships with further and higher education, the technology sector, the charitable and voluntary sectors and the commercial creative industries,' (p.14) but would recommend adding 'the public sector' or 'health, social care and local government sectors' to this list – in part because this is a key function of the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance as an ACE SSO.

A small semantic point: 'Where appropriate, we will work in partnership with organisations such as media producers, healthcare providers and other government departments and National Lottery distributors, in order to engage with the public more directly' (p.7). Our health and wellbeing partnerships depend as much on social care and local government as on health care, so we suggest broadening to include this at every opportunity.

On partnership and economic models:

Referring in particular to climate change (see the additional comments), in 10 years it is highly unlikely GDP will be a guiding measure of success. There is a risk that if this document adheres to a prioritisation of economic measures over wellbeing measures it will be quickly outdated. We refer for example to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in Wales.

We understand the imperative to prove cost-effectiveness – indeed much of the work undertaken in relation to health and wellbeing has proven it can save public money (see *Creative Health*) – but we would strongly encourage ACE to shift towards understanding wellbeing as comprising three elements: social, environmental and economic. We would refer here to the work on wellbeing economics by the What Works Centre and the inclusion of wellbeing measures in the Treasury Green Book: <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/treasury-green-book-and-wellbeing-the-analysis/>

We acknowledge the point made in the draft strategy, 'that the business models of publicly funded cultural organisations are often fragile and generally lack the flexibility to address emerging challenges and opportunities, especially those relating to operating within the digital economy and in the context of declining public funding'.

We would, however, question the draft strategy's apparent bias towards *commercial* partnership and towards the economic case for the arts and culture (rather than the *wellbeing* case). For example, Chapter 4, Priority D is 'International, national and local collaboration that harnesses and develops the best talent, expertise and ideas, and can open up new markets'. The term 'markets' obviously rests on a commercial model in a way that (e.g.) 'relationships' might not. The draft also says 'if we can confidently connect the everyday culture and creativity that already fills people's lives to the organisations that we fund and, from there, to the commercial creative industries, then we will ultimately achieve more as a development agency for the country as a whole.' We would suggest that a stronger connection needs to be made (as is clearer elsewhere in the document) not just to the *commercial* creative industries, but to the *public and not-for-profit* sectors.

We would also encourage ACE to prioritise *public* partnership. It is public partnership, for example, which will bring the unprecedented reach of a successful rollout of social prescribing with culture and creativity at its heart. But if public partnership is left to lag behind commercial partnership, we could remain on the outskirts of important policy shifts, and (for example) the case for properly remunerating creative professionals in relation to social prescribing will be less effectively made.

f We suggest that this is more likely to future-proof both ACE and its funded organisations than increasing dependence on the commercial sector. Commercial partnership in relation to the public sector – as has been evidenced by the NHS – is more likely to encourage a focus on profit, and a drop in state support without providing long-term responsibility. ACE talks about 'alternative investment tools', such as loans or stakes. We suggest that concepts such as bartering and commoning might find a place in this world. Could organisations swap skills and resources without charging each other for example? Could NPOs provide spaces and resources support local networks for independent creative practitioners? Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums present a great example of this, using their convening power and space to bring together regional culture, health and wellbeing networks across the north east, and support Creativity & Wellbeing Week 2019.

In relation to this, the draft says that 'Pressure on public funding is likely to grow, as health and social care costs continue to rise and the proportion of older people in our population increases'. We would query this acceptance of the austerity narrative. It is vital to note that social care funding has fallen since 2010 (<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/social-care-360/expenditure>) and funding for health services has risen at below inflation rates since 2010 (<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/nhs-in-a-nutshell/nhs-budget>). Whilst our population is ageing, initiatives such as the Centre for Policy on Ageing, Age of Creativity and WIGS "Arts, Ageing & Activism" and Entelechy Arts' "Age against the Machine" (both Sept 2019) are working hard to shift the deficit model and the association of ageing with cost rather than value. Moreover, older audiences subsidise many younger people's experiences of the arts, not to mention the huge contribution of older people in terms of creative volunteering.

Under 'Dynamism and environmental sustainability' (p.17) the draft states that dynamic 'leaders and teams are most likely to build successful businesses over the next decade.' It is important to note that much of ACE's Portfolio is made up of not-for-profit organisations rather than businesses.

The draft also states that 'We will develop a set of performance measures – covering areas such as the take-up of publicly funded cultural and creative opportunities by adults, children and young people, *the value of the cultural sector to the nation's economy* and the diversity and geographic spread of our investment – that we will report against regularly in order to track progress.'

We would suggest again that the emphasis on the *economy* needs to be tempered with an emphasis on wellbeing, for example: 'the value of the cultural sector to the nation's wellbeing and economy'.

Embedding children and young people across our stated outcomes and principles.

Do you have any comments about this shift?

We agree that there is a crisis in young people's access to creativity, which relates strongly to the crisis in young people's mental health, and we strongly support ACE's work to shore up the case for young people's access to creativity and culture. We believe, however, that there is a risk of undervaluing people at different stages of life, and in particular of playing into negative narratives about ageing. We believe it is vital that ACE supports an understanding of all members of society as necessary to our future. Younger people are the audiences of the future, but 1 in 3 born today are likely to live until they are 100. Investing in the first 10-20% of a lifetime without acknowledging the barriers that exist for the following 80% is going to have a long-term impact on the audiences of the future.

We note also the key relationship between diversity of adults in the sector and access to culture and creativity for children. This means taking seriously the issue of diversity and of cultural democracy from the earliest of ages and that efforts should be just as thoughtful, nuanced and innovative for early years as it is for adults.

Increasing our focus on international working.

Do you have any comments about this shift?

We support the outward-looking nature of this ambition and recognise it is vital for us to learn from other countries to improve work here. We support ACE's ambition 'to broker more global opportunities for our sector and bring best practice, wherever it happens in the world, to this country'. We would suggest broadening the ambition beyond tourism.

Under 'A Creative & Cultural Country', for example, the draft states that 'Many of this country's cultural organisations and creative practitioners are already celebrated internationally, with reputations that contribute to England's position as a global tourist destination. We want to build on this success and support more organisations and practitioners to deliver work to the highest international standards.' The international celebration of work made in England is not just about tourism; it is about the risk and innovation this document espouses elsewhere. In the culture, health and wellbeing sector our international reputation is around the breadth and depth of practice, and our capacity to influence policy – as the 2017 visit of the NZ minister for social development and the arts evidenced; as well as the forthcoming WHO report, and the world-leading research undertaken by researchers like Helen Chatterjee and Daisy Fancourt. It is worth noting that whilst cultural tourism has consistently increased, support from DCMS has decreased. This suggests that emphasising tourism may not strengthen the case with DCMS for supporting ACE's work.

We also suggest that a shift could be made in the following statement: 'we will do this because we want England to be one of the most creative countries in the world' (p.6). Could this be more inclusive, and less competitive? For example: 'We will do this because we want to encourage creativity in countries around the world through our own success, in terms of improvements to national wellbeing?' Or '...because we believe we can learn from other countries' cultural heritage'?

It is also important ACE leads the conversation about international travel and transport. Should ACE discourage international flights? Could ACE – especially with its new digital champions – play a role in building new models for international exchange that do not depend on physical movement?



Priority A: Ensuring more people, of all ages and all backgrounds, find, access and take part in a wide range of creative activities, both in their communities and online.

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Explore the most effective ways to increase the visibility of the local creative offer provided by voluntary, publicly funded and commercial organisations.
- Consider ways that Arts Council funded organisations and their partners could collaborate to increase the creative offer available to local people of all ages.
- Explore how we can support and enable better connections between the professional and amateur/ voluntary sectors.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- (1) Explore further partnership working with other sectors, such as health and social care, to ensure the arts are accessible to those who might be disadvantaged by ill-health and disability.
- (2) Explore strategies and methodologies that help local communities determine, access and produce culture that resonates for them.

Priority B: The creativity of pre-school children and their families.

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Look at what lessons can be learnt from Talent25 (a longitudinal action research programme currently run in partnership with De Montfort University) to inform the design of a strong national offer for preschool children and their families.
- Identify high quality programmes that are already being delivered by arts organisations, museums and libraries for pre-school children and their families.
- Identify new partnerships that could help us reach pre-school children and their families, including media and broadcast, commercial leisure and entertainment, community groups and others.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- (1) Focus on the relationship between resilience and creativity/cultural activity and relate this back to the mental health crisis in young people (see for example this recent report from Mind).
- (2) Focus on prevention and early intervention, developing partnerships with health and other professionals working with families around e.g. post-natal depression.
- (3) Explore strategies and methodologies that actively seek to discover appropriate provision for children from BAME communities and, importantly, their families.

Priority C: The creativity of 4-19 year-olds both within and beyond the curriculum

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Explore what a national schools programme for creativity and culture could look like, including:
 - Develop and test ideas with classroom teachers, headteachers, governors, parents and pupils to make sure we understand and respond to need
 - Work with the cultural sector to identify best ways to support the school curriculum
 - Advocate to the Department for Education for increased and sustained policy and funding support for creativity in education.
- Consider how we can best respond to the forthcoming recommendations from the Durham Commission on creativity and education.
- Explore whether National Lottery Project Grants could be used further to develop the creativity of 4-19 year olds.
- Consider whether there are early lessons from the five new Youth Performance Partnerships that can be used to inform ongoing work in this area.
- Research models for talent development provision to better understand how we can build more equitable and inclusive progression routes for children and young people.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- (1) Partnership working with other initiatives (e.g. mental health in schools and a 'whole-school' approach to prevention to support emotional development and good mental health for young people through creativity.
- (2) Specifically explore strategies and methodologies that seek to determine what appropriate provision for children from BAME communities looks like.

Priority D: Help for people from all backgrounds to understand and access careers in the creative sector.

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Work with partners including industry bodies and further and higher education to identify the right interventions across the country to deliver this priority.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

We would suggest that the research/review plan here may need to be fleshed out further; we support the strategy's statement that 'we know there is more work to be done, and we are ready to do it' (p.18), but would suggest that more detail is needed about how greater access can be achieved. Our specific suggestions are:

- (1) Cross-mapping demographic and geographic information about the social determinants of health and health inequalities with access to the arts (from the Taking Part surveys) to establish the relationship between the two;
- (2) Identifying pathways e.g. through case studies;
- (3) Supporting paid internships;
- (4) Learning from ACE's own fundees, and also from other sectors (e.g. health and social care) that have been more proactively and effectively diversified;
- (5) Greater support to the local freelance ecology;
- (6) Greater use of public buildings not only for community activity but as incubators of creative and social innovation.
- (7) The following recommendations from *Everyday Creativity* may have important impacts here:
 - 2. Supporting existing and encouraging more grassroots activity: better supporting existing examples of everyday creativity and helping to develop more**
 - ACE to adapt its current funding structures to better support everyday creativity. Including:
 - creating a small grants fund EITHER as part of Grants for the Arts OR

using community funding models such as Feast to distribute small grants, with lower requirements for up to £5,000.

- creating longer term funding opportunities for community development
- funding people, not projects: supporting creative catalysts and individuals who are promoting everyday creativity
- training Contact Centre staff to better understand everyday creativity
- Commission a feasibility study into improving information sharing for local groups, activities and cultural and community events
- Continue support for networking opportunities across the broadest range of everyday creativity

3. Democratising an existing funded infrastructure: supporting existing funded cultural organisations to democratised their working practices and encourage more and better everyday creativity

- Funded cultural buildings, where possible and appropriate, should be better deployed for community activity.
- ‘Citizen panels’ to be convened for funding decisions.
- The arts and cultural sector to facilitate and encourage local, regional and national skills sharing between individuals from across the broadest spectrum of creative activity.



Priority A: Place-based partnerships which deliver shared outcomes, i.e. to strengthen and connect communities, and support inclusive growth.

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Identify current best practice, in the UK and abroad, of cultural organisations and others who are working in place-based partnerships to deliver cultural and other outcomes to a wider range of people.
- Research what type of evidence-based, place focused analysis of the creative and cultural needs of communities across England could inform and support more joined-up planning and delivery.
- Consider how we can best sustain and develop the Creative People and Places programme over the next decade.
- Explore how we can deliver this priority with a range of partners, including local government, business, further and higher education and schools, healthcare providers, the criminal justice system, the commercial and voluntary sector, and other funders.
- Reviewing the contribution to local economic growth of the Business and Intellectual Property Centre Network in public libraries in partnership with the British Library.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- Support and advocate for arts and cultural providers to work collaboratively at a locality level, for example within integrated care systems and partnerships.

Priority B: Cultural provision, including touring and distribution, that responds to the needs and aspirations of local communities

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Consider how we might use the learnings from programmes such as Creative People and Places to support community co-design across the cultural sector.
- Review what learning can be taken from the new Performing Arts Producing Hubs pilot, and especially the use of a local needs analysis to help design a collaborative programme of place-based activities.
- Consider whether a new mechanism to provide small grants for grassroots organisations might help deliver this priority.
- Review best practice in connecting communities to collections and ensuring that collections are developed and used to reflect and speak to the public.
- Consider the pivotal role that libraries can play through their position, platform and reach into local communities in supporting cultural engagement.
- Review how we use data to build and share a more sophisticated picture of investment at a local level, and to operate more effectively as an expert and strategic national development agency.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- (1) Consider how to use the learnings from additional organisations (including SSOs and organisations not funded by ACE) to support co-design.
- (2) Review how data is collected as well as analysed. We would suggest that Audience Finder would benefit from a full review, to challenge issues around implementation as well as design (difficulties around the Grantium system have been well documented elsewhere).

Priority C: Place-based cultural education that is co-designed with young people and others, and delivered through local partnerships of cultural organisations and education providers.

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Identify features of success in various local models of partnership working including Music Education Hubs, Local Cultural Education Partnerships, Youth Performance Partnerships and Artsmark.
- Explore what a national schools programme for creativity and culture could look like, including:
 - Develop and test ideas with classroom teachers, headteachers, governors, parents and pupils to make sure we understand and respond to need
 - Work with the cultural sector to identify best ways to support the school curriculum
 - Advocate to the Department for Education for increased and sustained policy and funding support for creativity in education.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

Priority D: Cultural initiatives that achieve health and well-being benefits for people of all ages

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Consider how we can work more effectively in partnership with health, cultural and community partners to deliver culture with health and wellbeing benefits.
- Undertake research, consider international best practice, explore promising new approaches such as social prescribing and give specific consideration to the needs of children and young people and older people.
- Consider the viability of a programme that supports prototypes – small cultural experiments with measurable outcomes that could in the long term contribute to both practice and a measurement framework for social outcomes.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

We would suggest more ambition would be appropriate here in terms of work with health and wellbeing. The 'prototypes' the third bullet points describe are already happening around the country and have been for some decades (see the *ACE Evidence Review (2018)* and *Creative Health (2017)*). We need to build on what is already working across the country and move towards far more ambitious partnership programmes with health; and towards the more longitudinal, large-scale studies that researchers consistently identify as the crucial next step. We would argue for a greater focus on what's already happening and the various success stories of national programmes (e.g. Dance for Parkinson's/People Dancing, Liverpool Museums' House of Memories programme, The Reader, Dance to Health, Paintings in Hospitals (celebrating their 60th year), Live Music Now etc.) and local partnerships (e.g. Gloucestershire CCG's arts programme, Arts & Minds/Cambridge Museums arts-on-prescription scheme, the Manchester Institute for Arts, Health & Social Change etc.).

Terminology: We note that throughout the document there is a tendency to refer to 'health' when it would be more accurate (particularly in the light of the move towards Integrated Care and the general direction of the NHS Long Term Plan) to refer to health, social care and local government.

- (1) Advocate to the Department for Health & Social Care for increased and sustained policy and funding support for creativity and culture across its various agendas, from prevention to social prescribing
- (2) Work with the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance to develop more nuanced conceptions of the value of arts/culture in relation to health and wellbeing, considering for example the importance of relationality (which connects strongly with the government's commitment to tackle loneliness)
- (3) Explore different research questions and models: e.g. citizen-led research, the arts as research; reframe the questions to better articulate the value of this work in relation to a more 'well' society.
- (4) Commission a strategic programme co-funded with health and social care to deliver culture with health and wellbeing benefits which meets shared outcome priorities (building on the work of the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance and APPG for Arts, Health & Wellbeing, as well as e.g. ACE's Cultural Commissioning Programme)
- (5) Create a health/wellbeing/criminal justice tab in the ACE jobs search
- (6) Build on existing partnership work and existing national programmes (from delivery organisations like Dance to Parkinsons to research groupings like the MARCH Network).
- (7) Build on work that has already been done, use the learning of (e.g.) Cultural Commissioning programme.
- (8) Ensure that ACE's Health, wellbeing and criminal justice champions are working in alignment with the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance and National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance to ensure a) we are not replicating work and b) relationship managers can take full advantage of the two networks' knowledge and local networks to support NPOs and other projects
- (9) Support local networks, which will become increasingly important as we move towards geographically oriented integrated care systems. Embed health and wellbeing into ACE's new Cultural Compacts; consider developing an equivalent to Local Education Partnerships: Local Culture and Health Partnerships. Build on the work of highly successful local partnerships like Gloucestershire CCG or Arts & Minds and Cambridge Museums (see recent [ICS guidance](#) produced by APPG, CHWA and KSSAHSN).
- (10) Better articulate the workforce in relation to health and wellbeing (it is articulated in priority C but not priority D, where the emphasis is on commissioners; independent artists provide much of the infrastructure for priority D, which shifts the discussion about support).
- (11) Commission mapping and data-gathering that can support the sector. Examples include:
 - a. Building on exercises like [Aesop's survey with ComRes](#) on attitudes to the arts amongst GPs
 - b. Scoping the amount of funding the health and social care sector is currently putting into the arts and culture



Priority A: Support for independent creatives that enables more people from all backgrounds to sustain careers in the creative sector

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Review what methods might best be used to provide sustained and targeted support to independent creatives from all background including stipends, business support, training, peer support networks, and leadership programmes.
- Consider how Arts Council England, and those we invest in, can better support independent creatives from all backgrounds, e.g. through place-based co-ordinated talent development, showcases, skills development and the involvement of practitioners in governance.
- Review how programmes like Developing Your Creative Practice, National Lottery Project Grants and BBC/Arts Council New Creatives are currently helping to deliver this priority.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- (1) Research the numbers of freelance/individual artists working in socially engaged practice
- (2) Prioritise wellbeing and affective support
- (3) Ringfence funding within all grants to support reflective practice, debriefs, and/or counselling as appropriate
- (4) Develop pathways for CPD for artists working in this space, reframing ideas about what “quality” practice/art is within this context.
- (5) Ringfence funding within NPO provision to support local arts ecology and grassroots practice

Priority B: Innovation and research and development, including the use of new technologies, to support new ways of creating and sharing cultural content

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Consider what steps Arts Council England should take to signal its appetite for innovation, and “give permission” for risk taking within the sector.
- Consider what approaches might best stimulate innovation in the cultural sector.
- Consider how we might develop better partnerships and collaborations with Higher Education Institutions to enable the cultural sector to access cutting edge research facilities, equipment and academic expertise.
- Consider what lessons can be drawn from the Digital Culture Network, CreativeXR, Living Knowledge Network and the From Live to Digital research and support programme.
- Consider the next steps and implications for realising 'a single digital presence' for libraries.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- (1) Consider the ethical challenges of digital work, particularly where they relate to the broader aims of this draft strategy. For example:
 - a. who is excluded?
 - b. what are its long-term implications for the workforce?
 - c. what are the environmental consequences of existing smartphone tech?

- d. what are the mental health challenges of social media?
- (2) Consider where companies such as Tech for Good are campaigning for ethical use of technology
- (3) Actively work against prevailing biases in AI research (e.g. <14% of AI researchers are women)

Priority C: Ensuring the country's collections are dynamically managed, researched, curated and shared to the highest standards

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Consider how we can ensure that more collections are strategically developed and managed so that they are relevant and able to connect with the widest possible audience. This will include ensuring more museums have access to, and make ambitious use of, collections, knowledge and expertise.
- Consider how to promote partnerships across museums, both within and beyond Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations, and identify opportunities for shared approaches, resources, knowledge and collections.
- How to maximise the effectiveness, reach and understanding of the Arts Council's collections and cultural property responsibilities including the Government Indemnity Scheme, the Acceptance in Lieu and Cultural Gifts Schemes, export controls, the Accreditation Scheme, Designation Scheme and Designation Development Fund, Subject Specialist Networks, and the Arts Council/V&A Purchase Grant Fund.
- Consider how we can best support the development of digitisation and digital engagement projects and initiatives that increase access and usage of England's collections by the widest range of people and communities.
- Consider what lessons can be drawn from the Arts Council Collection's National Partners Programme.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- Ensure that the significant collections held in hospitals and clinics across England are considered
- Consider access to collections in relation to health and wellbeing e.g. museums on prescription and Creative Ageing approaches to engaging people in museums with dementia or access issues

Priority D: International, national and local collaboration that harnesses and develops the best talent, expertise and ideas, and can open up new markets

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review:

- Review how best to support international market development, exchange and collaboration, drawing on lessons from Arts Council England's current international showcasing initiatives and the approach of other arts councils around the world.
- Consider how we can develop and support new ways of working for our sector with partners in Europe, including bilateral engagement and new multi-national clusters.
- Explore how we can build stronger more effective collaboration with arts councils, cultural agencies and other partners working internationally, including The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, The British Council, and the Department of International Trade and the GREAT campaign.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- We have noted above the problematic nature of the term 'markets' and would suggest instead 'relationships', which could be commercial or non-commercial
- Explore international policy in relation to health, wellbeing, social development and culture and where countries such as Wales and New Zealand have shifted their priority from economic growth towards wellbeing, at the same time prioritising culture and creativity

Dynamism & environmental sustainability

Cultural organisations are dynamic and environmentally sustainable

The opportunities and challenges that a dynamic organisation might need to respond to include changes in demographics; consumer interests and demand; competition; technology; funding/finance; legislation and/or best practice. Would you suggest any different or new opportunities or challenges?

Suggest an additional opportunity here

Suggest a second additional opportunity here

Suggest an additional challenge here

- Climate change (see notes at the end of this response)

Suggest a second additional challenge here

- Changes in international political relationships, alignments and groupings that could emerge post-Brexit

We have identified four key characteristics that make up a dynamic organisation – culture, people, assets, and systems and processes.

Culture:

We think a dynamic organisation:

- Is open to new ideas and approaches in all aspects of its work
- Grows leadership behaviours throughout the organisation
- Has well-defined processes for identifying, testing and implementing new ideas
- Explicitly recognises and tolerates risk and failure
- Regularly reviews priorities on the basis of evidence
- Understands and responds to the needs of audiences, customers, visitors or users
- Takes part in a range of networks within and beyond the sector
- Is open to collaboration and sharing knowledge and expertise.

Are there any other features of culture within a dynamic organisation that we should consider?

People:

We think a dynamic organisation:

- Has an inclusive approach and workforce across the organisation
- Has strong effective leadership across the organisation
- Clearly understands the different roles of non-executive and executive leadership
- Distributes leadership across the organisation and supports people to build leadership capability
- Has clear entry and progression routes into and throughout the workforce, and a clear approach to succession planning
- Communicates purpose and values internally and externally
- Empowers staff to work together to meet challenges and provides them with the resources to deliver
- Invests in staff development and learning.

Are there any other features of people within a dynamic organisation that we should consider?

Assets:

We think that a dynamic organisation:

- Seeks out new income streams (diversification) and is not overly dependent on any one source of income (risk mitigation)
- Maintains its physical assets in good condition through planned maintenance and replacement/refurbishment of physical assets
- Builds and holds reserves to allow the organisation to address unexpected events (a bad debt, loss of a funder etc), purchase new assets or to exploit new opportunities/ways to deliver their mission
- Protects and exploits intangible assets (intellectual property etc).

Are there any other features of assets within a dynamic organisation that we should consider?

We note that ACE suggests it will support 'organisations to become more entrepreneurial and to develop business models that help them maximise income, reduce costs and become more financially resilient' (p.17). We question the pressure on *all* organisations within the portfolio to cut costs when many are already operating below their own running costs. As we have said elsewhere there is also a need to widen the concept of entrepreneurship beyond finance and to support wellbeing as an aim rather than a by-product of economic success.

- Using an asset-based approach to develop local relationships and partnerships – i.e. building on existing assets rather than starting from scratch each time.

Systems and processes:

We think that a dynamic organisation:

- Seeks to embed a data culture throughout the organisation, ensuring that accurate data and evidence reaches the right people in a timely manner so they can make informed decisions
- Makes use of new technology to make the business more effective and/or efficient
- Identifies and tracks performance indicators – financial and non-financial – and evaluates the organisation's performance honestly
- Recognises the value of investing in systems and processes, and ensures that the business model and budgets of the organisation make provision for this.

Are there any other features of systems and processes within a dynamic organisation that we should consider?

- See our previous caveats about digital tech/ethics, above.
- This priority seems to consider larger organisations only – we would encourage more consideration of small organisations and individuals here.
- Could ACE consider ‘slow’ trends? (e.g. <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/news/general-news/art-and-activism-project-promoting-calm-online-public-space-launches-national>)

Which of the below ideas do you think organisations should commit to in a new framework for environmental sustainability?

Progressive targets on carbon emissions

Progressive targets on water usage

Progressive targets on waste

Progressive targets on plastic usage

Use of renewable energy

Reducing national travel

Reducing international travel

An ethical partnership policy being in place and reviewed regularly by the board

A holistic approach encompassing all aspects of their operation

Is there anything else that organisations should commit to? Please suggest one additional idea

Please see our note above on economic models and climate change: We would recommend that ACE invest time into researching concepts such as ‘cultural commons’ (explored here by Voluntary Arts), and alternative economic modelling such as that supported by organisations such as Stir to Action, and which has informed the inclusive economic approach of cities like Wigan and Preston. We would also recommend following the model of groups such as MAST in Manchester, who have come together to consider their impacts as a collective. Partnership models and peer support will be crucial in this context since real innovation right across strategy and delivery is essential.

Should the dynamic & environmental sustainability investment principle be applied to

All National Portfolio Organisations (Y)

Only National Portfolio Organisations that receive more funding e.g bands 2 and 3 (Y)

Other (Y)

If you selected other, please explain

All fundees, but with a consideration of their different capacities and impacts according to scale and existing footprint. The greatest impact will be achieved by considering the development of the portfolio as a whole rather than individuals within it. See also further notes at the end of this response.

Inclusivity & relevance

England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support and in the culture they produce

What being an inclusive and relevant organisation means in practice

We think that inclusivity and relevance should be considered in relation to:

- **Programming** – the experiences, exhibitions or performances on offer, how these are selected, developed and presented and who is involved in production and commissioning.
- **Workforce** – the people that work for the organisation.
- **Leadership** – people at director level and above within the organisation: those responsible for taking decisions.
- **Governance** – the board members or trustees.
- **Audiences** – the audiences, participants and visitors – who they are, and how they are engaged, involved and communicated with.

Would you suggest any different or new areas?

We note the use of the phrase 'the individuals we support and the culture they produce' in the title of this Investment Principle. We suggest this could constructively be changed to 'the individuals we support and the culture they foster', to move against the idea that culture is produced by ACE-funded organisations and individuals.

Please identify up to three key contextual factors that you believe should be taken into account as we develop this framework, using the below examples if you think they are relevant.

We recognise that inclusivity in these areas will mean different things in different contexts and will need to reflect the type of organisation (e.g. touring companies, size of company, type of physical building) and where they are based (e.g. rural, urban, different parts of the country).

Programming

(No specific response)

Workforce, leadership and governance

(No specific response)

Audiences

Relevance

We want the organisations and individuals we support to be valued by their audiences and partners and to deliver a wider civic role within their communities. Now answer the question below.

How can organisations best respond to the interests and needs of their communities and stakeholders?

- Ensure representation of those communities and stakeholders on their board
- Hold regular open meetings with people in the community to improve understanding of their interests and needs
- Involve the public in co-designing the programme
- Ensure input from key stakeholders (such as funding partners) into business plans
- Take part in other non-cultural civic initiatives in their community
- Do you have any additional ideas for how organisations can best respond to the interests and needs of their communities and stakeholders?

Enter your first idea here

- Could ACE help develop more nuanced understandings of inclusivity, which better reflect the complex makeup of different communities across England?

Enter your second idea here

- We note also the draft's use of the word 'background' which generally refers to people who are socio-economically deprived, rather than people with protected characteristics – 'background' may lack the specificity to be truly inclusive.

Enter your third idea here

Should the inclusivity and relevance investment principle be applied to the following (select one):

- All National Portfolio Organisations
- Only National Portfolio Organisations that receive more funding e.g bands 2 and 3
- Other

If other, please suggest an alternative option here

We would reiterate that this should be applied with nuanced consideration of the specific characteristics of the localities in which people work.



Which of these should be part of the process for how organisations review the quality of their work?

- Platforms such as the Insight & Impact Toolkit
- Media reviews
- Arts Council assessors

- Arts Council staff feedback
- Audience surveys
- Peer review
- Self-evaluation involving colleagues / staff
- Self-evaluation with the board

Do you have any other suggestions for what should be part of the process for how organisations review the quality of their work?

[Enter your first suggestion here](#)

- Qualitative assessments of participation (designed by the organisations based on their own ambitions?)

[Enter your second suggestion here](#)

- Please see our [Research & Evaluation](#) and [Toolkits](#) pages here

Can you suggest any processes by which organisations can learn from best practice in their field – locally, nationally, internationally?

- Using SSOs such as CHWA, NCJAA or AMA, who are consolidating information and research for the sector

Can you suggest any further ideas that should be considered for a framework designed to assess ambition and quality?

- Support for creative practitioners
- Collaboration
- Wellbeing impacts
- Qualitative measures of participation

Applying the investment principles

Ambition & quality

Cultural organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work

Inclusivity & relevance

England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support and in the culture they produce

Dynamism & environmental sustainability

Cultural organisations are dynamic and environmentally sustainable

In the previous sections, we've asked you questions about the investment principles separately to help us develop frameworks for each.

In this section, we ask you to consider how we might apply all of these principles as a group.

What support do you think would be most helpful for organisations in the delivery of the investment principles? (Choose 3)

- Toolkits for self-evaluation
- Access to datasets of peers
- Peer review and support
- Learning networks
- Expert guidance, training and coaching

- [Examples of best practice](#)

What other support would be helpful for organisations in the delivery of the investment principles? Suggest up to two ideas in the boxes provided below.

Enter your first idea here

- Information on new economic models – from social investment bonds to bartering and inclusive economies – and how these might relate to culture

Further thoughts

This is an opportunity to share anything additional you would like to contribute to the consultation.

Share your thoughts

Health and wellbeing

We are encouraged by the document's reference to 'initiatives around arts and health' and the need to 'adapt and expand' these (p.5) and we are thrilled to see Priority D under 'Cultural Communities' devoted to health and wellbeing.

Building on what works

The current draft strategy is very concerned with the 'new'. Whilst we applaud and wholeheartedly support the appetite for innovation and risk, we would emphasise that there is much to be gained from building on existing success stories (in the case of health and wellbeing we have made this point re Priority D, Cultural Communities). In fact true innovation will only be possible if we learn from what has gone before; without this there is a danger of reinventing the wheel. We would like to work as much as possible with ACE to ensure that new applicants or in particular NPOs who are newer to practice in relation to health and wellbeing should be well informed about and connected to existing grassroots practice and programmes in their regions and nationally.

General comments on document and culture change

We found it difficult to locate a governing theory of change or logic model in the structure – we recognise that this may exist but suggest that at present it is not readily discernible in the document. It would be helpful to understand ACE approach to both

- a) strategic work – advocacy, making the case networking, bringing in new perspectives etc.; and
- b) delivery – funding, building structures, supporting partnership programmes etc.

We note an overall sense that there should be a culture change, but it is unclear how this will happen within ACE, or how ACE seeks to embed this in the systems it supports. There is a risk without clarity here that the work will remain at a project level and that broader cultural shift will remain elusive.

Everyday Creativity's recommendations include the following:

- ACE to consider a national campaign that highlights the benefits of, encourages more, and celebrates, everyday creativity.
- Cultural organisations (including ACE) to promote a culture of everyday creativity in their own workplaces and with sponsors/partners.

ACE is under increasing pressure to deliver against ambitious targets with diminishing resources. We would support and encourage the idea that ACE's organisational culture should embrace the principles of everyday creativity for its own staff's health and wellbeing.

We strongly welcome the ambition to simplify application processes. We would suggest that alongside this there may need to be some work to make ACE seem more accessible – perhaps even making direct emails/phone numbers available. At present keeping information like this in-house can seem alienating to

many of those ACE is seeking to support, especially independent practitioners who have fewer mechanisms for and less experience in how to approach ACE and develop relationships.

Further notes on climate change

We agree wholeheartedly that 'climate change and environmental degradation look certain to be the pre-eminent forces shaping our social, political and economic landscape up to 2030 and beyond.' We also agree that 'cultural organisations will need to become more dynamic and more environmentally sustainable.' To this end we would urge ACE to throw itself more decisively behind the international effort to mitigate climate change and support biodiversity.

Declaring a Climate Emergency

The first step would be to **declare a climate emergency**, as so many of ACE's funded organisations, and indeed the UK's parliament has done. ACE's influence here is crucial. ACE has huge opportunity to create change, leading by example as both a development agency and funder. As things stand, there remains a fear in the cultural sector that future funding may be affected by taking the decision to declare an emergency. We argue that funded organisations and those seeking support in the future must feel *unequivocally supported* in their efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change and the loss of biodiversity in increasingly imaginative and definitive ways; and that a declaration from ACE would be an important step towards this.

We would reiterate that climate change will radically affect the makeup of our cultural and creative communities, whether through movement of peoples or the increasing physical and psychological needs brought on by pollution, resource scarcity and shifting weather patterns. Already the communities we work with in the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance are feeling the effects of a stagnating political debate on climate on their own mental health, and the effects of pollution on their physical health. The empathy, community (p.6) that this draft strategy champions will be key to determining whether we are able to meet these challenges.

Where the drafts says that its funded organisations "will be capable of adapting to meet the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing world, and leading the way in addressing climate change and resource exploitation," (p.15) we would urge ACE to push further. We are a resource for the development of the imagination, and our creativity can be put to essential use at this moment of extreme crisis.

Wellbeing as a priority

The shift towards wellbeing and away from GDP will be a crucial step towards in tackling climate change. We believe that the arts and culture are essential components of our wellbeing, and that these two arguments must be made together. The Treasury's Wellbeing

Climate change, mental health and resilience

We celebrate the draft strategy's committed relating of creativity and culture to wellbeing, for example: 'we are looking to shape a country that encourages every one of us to express our creativity: for the joy, satisfaction and wellbeing that living a creative life brings, and for the way in which creativity and the culture that comes from it allow us both to adapt to our world and to adapt it; to change, and to make the changes that we want to see' (p.1). In relation to climate change, we would call for more emphasis through the strategy on the emotional and psychological resilience clearly associated with creative activity, as reports such as *Connected Communities* (Macpherson, Hart & Heaver) show (even the World Bank HQ is hosting an international exhibition on the Art of Resilience this October).

Climate change and new forms of economic resilience

We know that "Climate change and air pollution ... disproportionately affect disadvantaged and vulnerable populations" (Health Foundation 2019, p.43). If we are serious about working to change inequalities of access and if we believe we have the capacity to foster community [find a quote] we must prioritise climate change. If we are about fostering community, we must also consider the work organisations like VA have

done around 'creative commons' and work towards inclusive economies such as those evinced in Wigan, Preston and Bristol.

We urge ACE to consider initiatives undertaken by arts councils in other countries. The US Department for Arts & Culture for example is convening and encourage debate and discussion through *Artists Unite for a Green New Deal*: 'a three-part series of calls with artists, organizers, scientists and others to unpack the policy and science behind a Green New Deal—and to dream into the cultural strategies and creative actions that can help make it real', and through exercises like 'citizen artist salons'. The National Arts Council of South Africa has collaborated with a regional arts festival to produce *Regenerative Culture* which discusses amongst other things the 'convening power of the arts'.

Could ACE consider proactively supporting the leading role museums are now taking, encouraging assemblies, debate, creating 'safe' and 'brave' spaces for debate and assembly? *Everyday Creativity* recommends that "Funded cultural buildings, where possible and appropriate, should be better deployed for community activity" and that "'Citizen panels" to be convened for funding decisions'. We would take this one step further and argue that citizen panels may be a model that could be used for broad social change. We draw the Arts Council's attention to the Health Foundation's recent work to configure the NHS as an 'anchor institution', whose "sizeable assets ... could be used to support community wealth building and development, and in doing so, advance the welfare of local people". We suggest that cultural assets, both tangible in the case of buildings and intangible in the case of skills, could serve the same purpose.

"we will support such organisations to become more entrepreneurial and to develop business models that help them maximise income, reduce costs and become more financially resilient."

We support the push for financial resilience but suggest that at this time of crisis, dynamism needs to be about using creativity as a catalyst for building new systems, new communities, that can a) support the radical changes needed to political and economic frameworks, and the psychological instability this will bring and b) survive the test of climate change.

Additional Signatories

Aesop; Age of Creativity; Arthur MacTaggart, freelance artist; Arts & Health South West; Arts Derbyshire; The Beaney House of Art & Knowledge; British Association of Art Therapists; British Association of Dramatherapists; The Culture Capital Exchange; Happy Museum; Kids in Museums; Live Music Now; Making Music; Ministry of Others; National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance; National Museums Liverpool; National Rural Touring Forum; Nordoff Robbins; Paintings in Hospitals; Clive Parkinson, Arts for Health, Manchester MMU; People Dancing; Snape Maltings; Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums.

Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance
September 2019