Cuckoo Ensemble, For the Birds 2015, Jony Easterby (image: Giles W Bennett)

Arts Grants for Creative Professionals

Getting Started

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Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

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We implement an Equal Opportunities Policy.

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Getting Started

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Arts Council of Wales and *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals*.

We are the public body responsible for funding and developing the arts in Wales. Our vision is of a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life of the nation.

One of the ways we try to do this is by distributing funding, and this scheme provides funding for arts activity to creative professionals. By this we mean individuals working at a professional level in the arts in Wales. It is funded by the National Lottery.

Supporting creative professionals is a high priority for us. We want to identify and nurture individuals with creative talent and we want to enable creative professionals to develop their careers and be able to earn a sustainable living in Wales from their work.

That's why this scheme isn't the only way we can help. We also fund awards, bursaries and specialist scholarships, offer interest free loans and can provide you with specialist advice on a range of topics. We'll tell you how to find out more about these later.

This scheme is important to us because it enables creative professionals to fulfil their artistic potential by supporting projects that challenge practice and develop artistic careers. We are ambitious for the arts in Wales, and want the scheme to support quality work. We want to invest in projects that represent the very best of the arts in Wales.

Our funding decisions are guided by the priorities set out in *Inspire: Our Strategy for Creativity and the Arts.* It is about creative ambition and imagination; the need for the arts to engage and connect with people; and the skills needed to ensure that the impact of the arts renews and lasts.

Introduction

This document has all the information you need to know if you're thinking of making an application to *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals*. It will help you with the first important step: identifying whether our funding is right for you and your project. It will also tell you the types of activity we want to support. We call these "strands". There's specific guidance available for each strand and we'll tell you how to find this later.

Throughout this guidance we talk about "your project". We use this term to describe the activity you are applying to us for. It's important to understand that we expect a project to

be an activity which can be clearly and succinctly described. You must have a specific purpose in mind and be able to explain the outcomes (or objectives) you hope to achieve.

Your project must be time limited (rather than ongoing), and be additional to (or over and above), what you usually do. There are also some things that this scheme can't fund. We'll explain more about these later.

Here to Help

We want applying to *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals* to be as straightforward as possible. There's plenty of information to help you apply, but we'll signpost you to this at different stages in the process when you need it.

It may be useful for you to know that we produce Help Notes that guide you through filling in your application form. That's why this type of information isn't included here.

We want to support you as best we can. Our Information Team is your first point of contact when you are thinking about applying or are in the process of making an application. We'll tell you how to contact the Information Team later.

If you are looking for advice about other issues affecting your practice it's still worth you contacting our Information Team. They are able to respond to a wide range of queries, can direct you to useful publications and can help put you in touch with other Arts Council colleagues if your enquiry would benefit from additional input.

Alternative and Accessible Formats

Sometimes there are particular reasons why people find it difficult to apply for a grant or access our services. If you experience or anticipate any barriers with the application process, require help to make an application, or access our services and information, please contact the Information Team to discuss the type of support you need.

Demand for Funding

A large number of people apply for funding through *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals*, and sadly there are many good applications that we aren't able to support because there isn't enough money available. We make our decisions based on the information you provide in your application, as well as our strategic priorities, our knowledge about you and your previous activities. And we use our professional judgement to make the difficult choices between the many projects seeking funding. We'll always try to fund the applications which present the most persuasive case for support.

You can read more about our strategic priorities in the next section.

We can't support everything, so when planning your project, you should think about what you'd do if your application is unsuccessful, or you're offered less money than you applied for.

The difference we want to make

We want our investment to make a difference. So all the funding that we distribute must help us meet our strategic priorities. These priorities help us to support projects of the highest possible quality, ensuring that our funding has the widest possible impact and benefits the most people.

The focus of our strategy for Creativity and the Arts in Wales, called *Inspire*, is simple: make, reach, sustain. That's because making art, ensuring it connects with people and has a lasting impact are crucial to our vision of the arts in Wales.

We're interested in how you respond to this in your application.

Our strategy identifies a number of creative challenges. These include:

- how we encourage more people in Wales to choose to engage with the arts
- how we make innovative and imaginative use of digital technologies
- how we develop the creativity of children and young people
- how the arts and culture of Wales connect internationally, and
- how we embed the principles of sustainable development into our creative and business practices.

You can find out more about our *Inspire* strategy by clicking here.

Supporting the creative professional

Our strategy places greater emphasis on our support to creative professionals who have either proved they can deliver, or shown their potential to deliver, outstanding work.

We want to foster a supportive environment in which you can make the best work possible, and we want to support you at pivotal moments in your career. We hope that providing this support we'll have more success at retaining creative talent in Wales.

It's important to us that you're able to earn a sustainable living from your practice and build a career in Wales. To make this happen we want to support projects that strengthen the business side of your practice, perhaps through helping you diversify into new markets or finding other ways to generate income.

And of course we want to support you to make work. We're passionate about investing in work that excites and inspires, that seeks out new audiences, that is the product of new and innovative collaborations and that is developed by and delivered in creative partnerships.

So we want to invest in you, our creative professionals. We want to invest in your imagination.

What we're looking for

Inspire is a new approach to strategic planning for us. It's not prescriptive. Instead we want it to help you to think about the bigger picture issues affecting the arts in Wales and how your project can make a difference to these.

Telling us how your project contributes to our creative challenges can bring added value to your proposal and could set your application apart from others. This is because the extent to which you're addressing our creative challenges is one of the factors that affects our decision making.

In other words, a project that addresses at least one of our challenges in an appropriate and effective way is more likely to be funded, or prioritised, over a project that doesn't address any of the challenges, or a project that does so in a less convincing manner.

There are also some principles that are so fundamental to us that we will expect all applications to *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals* to take them into account:

- Wales is a bilingual nation and we expect people to be able to engage with the arts in the language of their choice, whether as artist, audience or participant. We expect you to reflect this appropriately in your application.

- We want the arts in Wales to be more inclusive and engaging, so we want the creative professionals that we fund to embed the principles of equality and diversity in all that you do. Tell us how your project will tackle barriers to engagement and reach out to the widest possible audience.

- We want to invest in work that excites and inspires. We'll always want to support those projects that exemplify the best of the arts – those characteristics which mark the work out as distinctive, relevant, compelling and enduring. Make sure you show us in your application how your project stands out from the crowd.

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Who can apply

Only creative professionals can apply to this scheme. By this we mean we mean individuals working at a professional level in the arts in Wales. It includes curators and producers and individuals who define themselves as artists across all artforms.

This is not a definitive list, and if you are not sure about this, or any other issue relating to your eligibility, please get in touch with our Information Team.

There are other eligibility requirements that you also need to consider. To be able to apply you:

- Must be over 18 and live in Wales. Your work should mainly be based in Wales too.
- Must not be in full-time education, either at school, college or university.
- Must be able to show us that you have an awareness and understanding of Equal Opportunities and that you reflect equality and diversity in your practice. We may ask you for examples of how you do this.
- Must be able provide evidence of your track record of facilitating or creating artistic work for presentation to audiences

We know that demonstrating a successful track record can be a difficult thing to do. It may be helpful here to think about your career achievements to date, as well as when and how your work has received endorsement from the sector in which you work. This could be from other creative professionals and arts organisations too.

When we consider your track record we'll be looking at your experience to date and consider if the project you would like us to support is in keeping with this. So, we'll look at the scale of your proposed project, the partners and mentors involved and if it's the right stage of your career to be embarking on a project like this. It's not necessarily about the length of your CV. We're interested in your creative journey and how this project will help you get to where you want to be.

You won't be able to apply for funding if you're in default of any financial agreement with the Arts Council of Wales.

You'll be asked to confirm that you meet these eligibility requirements at the start of our online application process.

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What we can fund

Arts Grants for Creative Professionals is designed to support a wide range of activity, but there are some things we can't fund.

We cannot fund:

- activities that are not related to the arts
- prizes, merchandise, catering, gifts, fireworks, competitive events and purely promotional events
- retrospective costs. By this we mean activity that has already taken place, or any costs that you have paid or agreed to pay (by signing a contract or placing an order for example), before we have made a decision on your application and you have accepted our offer of grant. Advertising or promoting your project before this point is done so at your own risk.
- creative professionals to lead participation projects or to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults. We'd expect an established organisation with appropriate safeguarding procedures in place to apply for funding in these cases.

In addition, *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals* does not provide educational funding. So we do not support full-time or part-time undergraduate or postgraduate courses in further or higher education institutions. We also do not fund individual tuition, lessons or vocational training.

We want to fund activity that demonstrates a clear benefit, whether to your artistic career, to the wider arts sector or to the public in Wales. We won't fund activity that, in our view, only has a commercial benefit.

To be able to apply for funding you must show us that your project meets certain requirements. These are set out below. We'll ask you to confirm this is the case when you begin the on-line application process.

Your project must take place mainly in Wales	• We will consider funding a training or development opportunity that is delivered outside of Wales if it is not available here • We will consider funding up to 15% of the total cost of a project to enable touring outside of Wales • We can consider funding some international activity as part of a wider project where there will be benefit to Wales if a clear artistic, financial or business rationale is made

Your project must be additional to your usual professional practice	• This means it is over and above what you usually do
Your project must be time limited	• This means it is a planned activity with a definite start and end date
Your project must have a start date that allows you to thoroughly plan you project	• This means that you have built into your planning a sufficient amount of time to fully prepare for your project if you are awarded funding
You must have partnership funding for your project (sometimes called match funding)	• This means the other funding you need for your project to go ahead

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What you can apply for

We call the types of activity we want to support “strands”. We are very clear about what we want to achieve from each strand, and how they help us meet our strategic priorities.

The strands are:

Strand	Purpose
Music Industry Development	To support projects that develop the foundations for a vibrant music industry in Wales and that help music talent in Wales to build a sustainable career
Production	To support the creation of high quality artistic work for presentation to audiences
Professional Development	To enable creative professionals to attend training, enhance their creative practice and invest in the skills that will help them to build a sustainable career in Wales
Research and Development	To support experimentation and to enable the exploration and development of new ideas, new collaborations and new ways of working

We have separate guidance notes for each strand. These provide further information about the types of projects we want to support and how to make an application.

Working Internationally

We support international work in two ways: by bringing overseas work into Wales, and by providing the opportunity for Wales based creative professionals and arts organisations to work internationally (by this we mean outside of the UK).

It is important that we connect Wales’ culture to the world in ways which have an impact that can be seen and have long-lasting value. So we can support international activity that takes place in Wales through *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals.* Activity can include programming international artists of quality, artistic collaborations and partnerships, showcase events and delegation visits, residency exchanges, sharing good practice and skills development.

Our International Opportunities Fund (IOF) specifically supports activity which takes place outside the UK. It is administered by Wales Arts International (WAI), the international arm of the Arts Council, and you can read more about it, here.

Funding Available

There are two levels of funding available: small grants and large grants.

Small Grants

Our small grants provide funding of £250 to £5,000 (or £3,000 for research and development projects). They support small scale or pilot arts projects or they can contribute towards the costs of a larger project supported by several funding partners.

If you're making your first application to us, then you must apply at this level. This is so that we can build up our knowledge of your work and see that you're able to manage public funds effectively.

Large Grants for Production Projects

Large grants are available to creative professionals applying to the Production strand.

These grants provide funding of £5,001 to £25,000 (or in exceptional circumstances £30,000 if your project is for an international production project). This grant supports large scale production projects across any artform. Or it can contribute towards the costs of a very large project supported by several funding partners.

We'll tell you more about the specific requirements of this grant in the more detailed information we provide about the Production strand.

Partnership funding

The maximum grant we can make for both small grants and large grants for production projects is 90% of your project's total eligible cost. We'll tell you more about eligible costs at a later stage in the application process.

Please remember that these are the maximum amounts we can consider. It's likely that in many cases our contribution will be considerably less.

We'll expect you to try to maximise contributions to your project from other funding partners and your own funds.

We want to see how you use our contribution to secure funding from other sources. This shows us that there's a commitment to your project. It also shows us that other stakeholders agree that your project meets a need and that it will have public benefit.

Access costs

If you're disabled you can apply for funding towards access costs you'll incur in delivering your project. These costs will be considered in addition to the artistic project costs and we'll consider allowing your application to exceed the maximum grant level.

How often you can apply

We want to ensure that our funding is available as widely as possible, so there's a limit to how many times you can receive funding from *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals*.

Creative Professionals can hold one grant from us in any twelve month period. We use the start date of the first project we have funded to work out the twelve month period. The only exception to this is where you're applying for developmental activity, where we will consider funding one additional grant a year under each of the following strands:

- Research and Development
- Professional Development

For example, you could receive funding from the Research and Development and Production strands in one year, but wouldn't receive funding for two Research and Development projects.

Being able to submit a second application in any twelve month period does not guarantee that it will be successful.

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When to apply

You should always make your application as far ahead as possible.

You can apply for a small grant at any time, but you need to allow a minimum of six working weeks between the date you submit your application and the date you want to start your project. This is so that we can properly assess your application. We won't accept your application if your project's start date is too soon.

Your application will be considered at the next available decision meeting. If your application is successful you'll normally be able to start your project after we've sent a grant offer letter and received your signed grant acceptance.

There are four deadlines a year for large grant applications. We publish the deadline dates on our website, and we will accept applications up until 5.00pm on the deadline date. You need to allow a minimum of nine working weeks between the deadline date and the date you want to start your project. We won't accept your application if your project's start date is too soon.

If your application is successful you'll normally be able to start your project after we've sent a grant offer letter and received your signed grant acceptance and you have met any conditions we have attached to your grant.

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Next steps

If you think *Arts Grants for Creative Professionals* is right for you, you can now move on to find out more about the strand your project fits and how to apply online.

You can find all of the strand guidance on our website, by clicking here.

We also have Information Sheets to help you with specific aspects of the application process or to provide advice on specific issues. You may find the information on using our online application system helpful, particularly if this is your first application to us.

Remember that you can contact our Information Team for further advice and guidance. They are happy to provide advice by email, phone or at one of our bookable Funding Advice Sessions.

Contact details

Email: information@artscouncilofwales.org.uk

Phone: 0845 873 4900 (from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday)

Textphone/SMS: 07797 800 504 (messages charged at your standard network rate)

Twitter: @Arts_Wales_

Website: www.artscouncilofwales.org.uk

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Not what you expected?

Arts Grants for Creative Professionals is just one of the ways we provide support for creative professionals. If it's not right for you or your project there may still be other ways we could help you.

You can find information about our other funding opportunities on our website, or you could of course contact our Information Team for a discussion. Some of the other ways we support creative professionals include:

Creative Wales Awards

These are designed to support career development and to give space and time for an artist already with career achievements. Read more here.

Advanced Study Music Scholarships

To support advanced (postgraduate) music study for promising musicians from Wales or who have studied in Wales. Read more here.

Arts Grants for Creative Professionals may not be right for you because it is funded by the National Lottery. If you're unable to accept lottery funding for religious reasons, please include a letter with your application explaining why this is the case. If your application is successful we will try and fund your project from money we receive from other sources. Please note that such funding is very limited, so we can't guarantee to be able to do this.

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