

Over 100 places to see improved access to culture and arts across England

- More than 100 locations to be prioritised for new arts funding
- Cultural organisations in London to be supported to expand operations beyond the capital so more communities benefit from their work

Access to arts and culture across the country will be transformed with plans to increase and better distribute funding for the sector to previously overlooked or neglected areas.

This aim is to generate more opportunities for people in the regions, with more arts jobs on offer and better access to cultural activities so people do not have to travel as far to see world-class arts.

An additional £75 million will be provided by 2025 to make sure places which have been culturally under-served in the past get a better distribution of arts funding.

Cultural investment by the government via Arts Council England (ACE) is expected to rise to almost £250 million by 2025 across England outside London. This is the equivalent to a 19 per cent increase by 2025, the final year of the Spending Review period.

Arts Council England will oversee the distribution of the funds which will support new and established thriving arts organisations in the regions so people can enjoy activities in their area.

The move comes after the government set out a commitment to raise cultural spending significantly outside of the capital in its Levelling Up White Paper. It is part of plans to level up people's opportunity to experience the benefits of culture – from seeing performances to taking part in activities.

ACE and DCMS have identified 109 'Levelling Up for Culture Places' which will be targeted for additional investment. Organisations old and new in areas that historically have had low investment in arts and culture will be encouraged to bid for funds, meaning places such as Wolverhampton, Hartlepool, Rotherham, Peterborough and Oldham could be given the extra support they need to build on their rich cultural heritage.

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

I have said from day one in this role my priority is to increase access to arts and culture across the whole country.

Today marks a big step in achieving this aim as we shift new cultural investment into places previously at the back of the queue.

Culture enriches people's lives. It entertains us, brings us together and can be a catalyst for regeneration. Everyone should have access to it no matter where they live or what their background.

Commissioner for Cultural Recovery and Renewal Lord Mendoza said:

Culture policy will play a critical role in levelling up.

This announcement confirms an increase in financial support which will enable more people and more places across the country to play a part in the nation's outstanding cultural sector.

Arts Council England chair Sir Nicholas Serota said:

The Arts Council welcomes this increase in funding from the government.

It will enable more people in more places to reap the benefits of arts and culture and will accelerate our commitment to parts of the country that deserve more investment.

We will be able to do more to nurture new creative talent, support work that makes us healthier and happier, renew our high streets and, above all, ensure that everyone, everywhere has the opportunity of a rich cultural and creative life.

Tony Butler, Executive Director, Derby Museums said:

Being part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio enables a balanced financial model where public funding provides a platform for private investment. It's underpinned our development of the critically acclaimed Museum of Making which explores 300 years of manufacturing in Derby and it has ensured that cultural heritage frames the future ambition of our city as a place of innovation and creativity.

Our STEAM-based learning programme inspires young people to be the thinkers and makers of the future, focusing on both knowledge and skills, the head and the hands.

Nic Millington, Chief Executive, Rural Media said:

All too often the needs of rural communities, especially those most disadvantaged, are poorly understood and often overlooked. With Arts Council's investment to the NPO network, arts organisations up

and down the country are able not only to develop and deliver creative projects and cultural products of national significance, but have capacity to engage isolated and under-represented communities through participation, skills and audience development.

Furthermore, investment enables NPOs to share their professional and organisational expertise with freelance artists and young entrepreneurs, thereby attracting cross-sector investment, the retention of talent in rural areas and the growth of rural creative industries. Improved digital connectivity in rural areas and innovative hybrid working models are pointing towards an exciting new dawn for cultural development in rural areas. Watch this space!

Chris Stafford, Chief Executive of Leicester's Curve theatre, said:

We believe everyone, irrespective of their circumstances, should have equal opportunity to engage with world-class culture and fulfil their creative potential. We welcome the new Arts Council investment programme which will see a greater balance of public investment across the country, ensuring no one is left behind.

As an NPO located in the heart of England, we create work with, in and for our local communities every day of the week. Each year we engage up to 60,000 people through free and low-cost creative programmes and activities, we welcome over 330,000 people to our Leicester home and our productions on tour are seen by in excess of 500,000 people across the UK – none of this would be possible without the crucial investment from Arts Council England.

National Portfolio Organisations

The increase and redistribution of investment will see many arts and culture organisations become National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) – organisations which receive public funding and with a significant national or local cultural offer – for the first time.

Around 80 new NPOs could be created and more than 100 existing NPOs are set to receive funding from the redistribution plan.

ACE will be expected to support London-based cultural bodies wishing to expand or become established across other parts of England. This could mean, for example, new centres, permanent spaces and extended tours, performances and exhibitions to generate a truly national cultural offering.

Separately, the largest nationally and internationally renowned cultural organisations, which receive the greatest level of public subsidy, will be expected to increase the total proportion of their activity in 'Levelling Up for Culture Places' collectively by 15 per cent by March 2026.

London distribution

Arts Council England will also seek to ensure its funds are more evenly distributed across the capital's boroughs so people in places such as Brent and Barking & Dagenham get better access to the arts.

A further £48 million from the Cultural Investment Fund

On top of this, the government will shortly announce the recipients of £48 million of funding from the latest round of its Cultural Investment Fund. This will go to more than 50 organisations, the majority of which will be outside London in another boost for promoting better access for people in their local area. Libraries, museums and creative projects in areas in need of levelling up will benefit, with a further £150 million to be invested from the Cultural Investment Fund over the rest of the Spending Review period.

Diversity and inclusion

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries has also written to national arts and culture organisations asking that they be more ambitious on diversity in all areas. This will mean they engage with a wider potential audience and better reflect the community they serve.

Marking taxpayers' contribution

Recipients of government funding in the arts will be asked to do more to ensure their visitors are aware of the contribution made by taxpayers and will be expected to have physical plaques in or on their buildings, and carry branding on their websites.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The government supported organisations through the pandemic with its unprecedented £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund. Together with today's announcement it means there has never been greater levels of investment by the taxpayer in culture in the post-war period.
- Levelling Up for Culture Places: These places were identified by DCMS and Arts Council England as areas of historic low cultural engagement and spending.
- [List of the 109 places](#)