

Submission to the Baroness Hodge Arts Council England Review, 2025 from the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group

Executive Summary

1 Background & Objectives

This submission, presented by the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group (APPJG) and its secretary **Chris Hodgkins**, aims to evaluate **Arts Council England (ACE)** in fulfilling its mandate, particularly concerning jazz funding and governance. It scrutinizes ACE's strategic policies, funding decisions, and overall effectiveness, while proposing **concrete reforms** to improve its transparency and impact.

2 Arts Council England's Mandate & Performance

The submission outlines ACE's mandate as defined by its **Royal Charter**, which includes:

1. **Developing knowledge, practice, and accessibility of the arts**
2. **Supporting museums and libraries**
3. **Providing expert guidance to government bodies**

However, it argues that ACE has **failed to deliver on these objectives**, particularly due to:

- **Lack of art form-specific policies**, which results in skewed funding allocations.
- **Inconsistent Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** that do not sufficiently measure public accessibility.
- **Obfuscation in decision-making processes**, leading to unclear outcomes for applicants and stakeholders.
- **Failure to consult with devolved administrations**, demonstrated by the funding cuts to Welsh National Opera without notifying the Welsh Government.

3 Critique of ACE's Funding Strategy & Governance Issues

The APPJG highlights **serious discrepancies** in ACE's funding model:

- **Disproportionate funding allocations:**
 - Opera receives **49%** of ACE's music budget (£43.6m).
 - Classical music gets **24%** (£21.3m).
 - Jazz receives **only 2%** (£1.9m), despite **higher audience numbers than opera**.
- **Opaque decision-making:**
 - National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) benefit from lottery funds at the expense of independent applicants, **violating the principle of lottery "additionality"**.
- **Flawed grant application system (Grantium):**
 - Described as **inaccessible and excessively bureaucratic**, with low success rates for jazz applications.
 - Survey respondents report difficulty navigating the system and receiving useful feedback.

4 Arts Council England's 10-Year Strategy: Let's Create

The submission **strongly criticizes ACE's 10-year strategy**, arguing it **lacks clear art form policies** and **focuses on abstract cultural objectives rather than tangible artistic development**. It points out that "Let's Create" **ignores core performance measures** and **prioritizes bureaucratic jargon over concrete arts funding solutions**.

5 Recommendations for Reform

APPJG proposes **major structural changes** to ACE to improve its effectiveness:

1. **Restore Art Form Policies:** Specific policies for **jazz, opera, classical music, and other disciplines** to ensure fair funding distribution.
2. **Fix Funding Imbalances:** Address **long-standing disparities** between different genres and review **skewed support for opera and classical music**.
3. **Improve Grant Systems:**
 - Replace **Grantium** with a **more accessible system**.
 - Provide **better feedback** on rejected applications.
4. **Enhance Transparency & Accountability:**
 - Publish **full records of funding decisions**.
 - **Limit Council Members with ACE affiliations** to avoid conflicts of interest.
5. **Restructure ACE:** Consider **remodelling ACE along the lines of the Football Foundation**, making it a **grassroots-driven organization with direct community engagement**.

6 Conclusion

The submission argues that **ACE must undergo significant reform to fulfill its mandate effectively**. Without urgent action, **funding disparities, opaque governance, and poorly managed strategic priorities** will continue to hinder the arts sector, particularly jazz.

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1 Foreword

This submission is being made by the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group and its secretary Chris Hodgkins.

1.1 The All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group (APPJG)

The All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group (APPJG) currently has over 73 members from the House of Commons and House of Lords across all political parties. Their aim is to encourage wider and deeper enjoyment of jazz, to increase Parliamentarians' understanding of the jazz industry and issues surrounding it, to promote jazz as a musical form and to raise its profile inside and outside Parliament. The Group's officers as at the Inaugural Meeting on 23rd July 2024 are the Chair, Chi Onwurah MP and Deputy Chair, Lord Mann. The Officers are Jo White MP and Lord Crathorne.

The Secretary is Chris Hodgkins with the assistance of Simon Jennings, Will Riley-Smith and Meg Richards of NorthPoint Strategy and Andrew Lansley. The Secretary operates on a strictly pro bono basis and no expenses of any kind are paid to the Secretariate. The contact address is: admin@appjag.org

For further details of the Group including recent minutes and please see:

<https://www.parliament.uk/about/mps-and-lords/members/apg/>

Please note this is not an official website [or feed] of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular

1.2 Chris Hodgkins MBA FCIM

Chris Hodgkins was raised in Cardiff. In 1974 he co-founded the Welsh Jazz Festival and four years later established the Welsh Jazz Society. As a trumpet player Chris toured the UK and Europe and appeared at the Sacramento Jazz Festival in the States. With his own band he made a number of television and radio appearances. Wild Bill Davison commented, "It's a hell of a good band."

He relocated to London to play professionally and in 1985, was appointed Director of Jazz Services Ltd,

the national organisation for jazz funded by Arts Council England and was Chair of the National Jazz Archive 2005-2014. Chris helped establish the annual Parliamentary Jazz Awards.

Chris retired from Jazz Services Ltd in May 2014 and returned to the road, radio and the recording studio to focus on playing. Chris presents two programmes on Jazz London Radio and Pure Jazz in New York

Chris published a business planning manual for jazz musicians: *Where Do You Want To Be?* is available on the Online Music Business Resource as a free download at www.chrishodgkins.co.uk.

Chris is secretary to the All-Party Parliamentary Jazz Group <https://appjag.org/>

Registering an interest: for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of transparency Chris Hodgkins was the Director of Jazz Services from 1985 to 2014. Jazz Services was funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain through to Arts Council England during his tenure. Chris Hodgkins has successfully applied for two awards through Grantium and failed on two occasions for his ["Summoned By Bells Project"](#)

2 Survey questions – profile

2.1 Please indicate whether you are responding individually or representing an organisation.

I am representing the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group

2.2 Where are you based?

London

2.3 To help us think about differences and similarities at a local level, please provide the first part of your postcode

W5 2AS

2.4 Do you currently work for Arts Council England (ACE)?

No

2.5: Have you ever worked for ACE?

No

2.6 Which best describes the sector(s) which you or your organisation work in?

Music – jazz in particular

2.7 Are you currently in receipt of Arts Council England funding?

No

2.8 Have you previously received Arts Council England funding?

Yes

2.9 Which type(s) of funding did you receive?

The secretary received National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) in his capacity as a musician and band leader

The Director as the Director of Jazz Services Ltd was a Regularly funded Organisation and then received NPO funding until 2014 when he retired.

2.10 Have you ever applied for Arts Council England funding?

Yes

3 ACE Review Questions

3.1 Question 1: In what way(s) does Arts Council England (ACE) fulfil its current mandate?

The consolidated Royal Charter incorporating 2008, 2011 and 2013 amendments can be found [here](#)

The objectives of the Royal charter are as follows

“The objects of the Council shall be, for the public benefit, to:

- (1) develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts;*
- (2) increase accessibility of the arts to the public in England; and*
- (3) advance the education of the public and to further any other charitable purpose which relates to the establishment, maintenance and operation of museums and libraries (which are either public or from which the public may benefit) and to the protection of cultural property; and*
- (4) advise and co-operate, where it is appropriate to do so, with the Departments of Our Government, Our Scottish Administration, the Northern Ireland Executive and the*

*Welsh Ministers, local authorities, the Arts Councils and equivalent organisations in the museums and libraries sector for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (or their successors) and other bodies on any matter related to the objects”.*¹

3.1.1 However, before the mandate of the Royal charter is dealt with the Key Performance Indicators agreed with the DCMS need to be examined first as they impact on the Royal Charter mandate.

The Arts Council England’s Report and Accounts for 2020/2024 provide outcomes to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for National Portfolio Organisations as agreed with the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport.

Annual KPI Targets vs. Outcomes (2020–2024) for National Portfolio Organisations (With 2030 long-term goals for context)

1. Creative People

(Target: Increase participation in arts/culture)

Year	Adult Engagement (Target)	Actual	Child Engagement (Target)	Actual
2020	– (Baseline: 47%)	47%	– (Baseline: 88%)	76%* (COVID drop)
2021	48%	48%	85%	82%
2022	49%	49%	86%	85%
2023	50%	49%	87%	87%
2024	51%	49%	88%	87%

¹ https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Consolidated_Royal_Charter_2013.pdf

2030	66%	–	90%	–
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Table 1 Source: ACE Annual Reports (2020–2024) and DCMS Performance Tables

Table 1 yellow highlights shows that 2020 child engagement dropped due to school closures and is below pre-Covid levels. Adult engagement stalled post-COVID (missed 2023 and 24 targets). Biggest gap: Adult engagement stuck at 49% (needs +17% by 2030).

2. Cultural Communities

(Target: Redistribute funding outside London)

Year	Funding Outside London (Target)	Actual	Levelling Up Places (Target)	Actual
2020	– (Baseline: 62%)	62%	–	0
2021	63%	63%	50	54
2022	64%	63%	75	109
2023	65%	63%	100	120+
2024	66%	63%	120	120+
2030	75%	–	All 54 priority areas	

Table 2 Source: ACE Annual Reports (2020–2024) and DCMS Performance Tables

Table 2 yellow highlights shows that funding outside of London has consistently missed targets by 1–3%, but green highlights show Levelling Up Places exceeded targets after 2022.

3. A Creative & Cultural Country

(Targets: Diversity, sustainability, innovation)

Year	BAME-led Orgs (Target)	Actual	Net-Zero NPOs (Target)	Actual
2020	– (Baseline: 14%)	14%	– (Baseline: 30%)	30%
2021	15%	15%	40%	45%
2022	16%	16%	50%	60%
2023	17%	17%	70%	70%
2024	18%	17%	80%	70%
2030	20%	–	100%	–

Table 3 Source: ACE Annual Reports (2020–2024) and DCMS Performance Tables

Note to the table: A Net-Zero NPO refers to a National Portfolio Organisation that has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, as part of ACE's environmental sustainability goals under the Let's Create strategy.

Table 3 shows that diversity meets its 2023 target (17%), but slowed in 2024. Sustainability hit its 2023 target early (70%), but stalled in 2024.

4. Sector-Wide KPIs (2020–2024)

(For the entire cultural sector, including non-NPOs)

KPI Category	2020 Baseline	2024 Target	2024 Status	2030 Target
Adult engagement	47%	50%	49%	66%
Child engagement	88%	90%	87%	90%
Digital reach	15m users	20m	22m (met)	30m
Carbon reduction	–	10% cut	10% cut	50% cut

Table 4 Source: ACE Annual Reports (2020–2024) and DCMS Performance Tables

Notes to the table: Engagement data comes from the Taking Part survey (DCMS) and includes all arts activities, not just NPO-funded ones. Environmental targets apply to ACE's entire funding portfolio (e.g., project grants must now report emissions).

Table 3 shows digital reach and carbon reduction achieved its target but adult and child engagement missed by 1 – 3%.

3.1.2 The mandate

The mandates are sensible, straight forward, reflect activity in the arts and the broader field of culture and are not cluttered with specious junior school management text book argot. These mandates or goals should form, the basis of an Arts Council action programme that is transparent and everyone from practitioners, arts managers and the general public can readily understand and grasp

The mandate can be summarised as follows:

- develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts;
- increase accessibility of the arts to the public in England; and
- advance the education of the public and to further any other charitable purpose which relates to the establishment, maintenance and operation of museums and libraries
- advise and co-operate, where it is appropriate to do so, with Government, devolved, local authorities, the Arts Councils and equivalent organisations in the museums and libraries sector for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

3.1.3 Develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts

This mandate whilst reasonable, sensible and simple has no quantified objectives or performance indicators attached. For example, the core goal of “develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts” – is loosely reflected in the current KPI’s and in the Arts Councils strategy “Let’s Create” in its three outcomes: creative people, cultural communities and a creative and cultural country.

But the current KPIs do not deliver on the mandate. Some may or may not, but the fact of the matter is that they are not particularly clear and err on the indistinct and woolly. In Let’s Create there has been a shift to much broader goals where the word “culture” is used rather than art forms – a shift that creates less accountability. On the first mandate, “develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts”. This is clearly aimed at a set of goals:

- Expand public and professional awareness of artistic disciplines such as art, music, dance, literature, and theatre
- Foster appreciation and accessibility - making art accessible and encouraging people to appreciate it, regardless of their background or abilities .
- Raise artistic quality, innovation, and professional development – to develop focus a culture of experimentation and provide opportunities for artists to refine their craft, and supporting their professional growth

Regrettably these goals are not made concrete in the current set of KPIs, so how does anyone know if the Arts Council is fulfilling this particular mandate

3.1.4 Increase accessibility of the arts to the public in England

The Arts Council appears to have disappeared down a sinkhole of business argot and similar semantics and is now incapable of knowing the attendance at various art forms it funds. The Arts Council has no effective measure for attendance (accessibility) at events.

The second mandate is not being fulfilled. The second mandate relates to Creative People with a target: to increase participation in arts/culture and the entire cultural sector, including non-NPOs. In “Culture is Bad for you” the authors Orian Brook, Dave O’Brien and Mark Taylor drew attention to the fact that

“Just under one-third of the population (29%) had not attended any of the cultural events covered by the Participation Survey in the 12 months preceding.

*Disabled people (39%), Black people (41%) and Asian people (36%), as well as those in routine and semi-routine working-class occupations (38%), were all more likely to say they had not attended any of the arts activities listed in the DCMS Participation Survey”.*²

There is also a problem on reporting on increasing access to the arts and this is the egregious decision to drop the reporting of attendance by art form. The Participation Survey has also been altered so that it now does not give a breakdown of attendances and demographics for individual art forms for music, folk, jazz, pop, opera, classical music. Yet DCMS conducted a consultation on question changes in the Taking Part Survey (TPS) 2020/21. The public consultation ran from November to December 2019 and, in addition, DCMS sought responses from stakeholders directly. DCMS solicited feedback on plans to stop using the TPS to collect data on

- Volunteering and charitable giving
- Child participation in sport.

The result of the consultation was:

*“Removing the questions on volunteering and charitable giving as well as child sport participation. These will free space to add questions which will provide data that is more useful for stakeholders”*³.

DCMS conducted another statistical consultation on the uses of Taking Part survey data, gaps in the survey’s coverage and views on potential changes to methodology, including discontinuation of the survey. The public consultation ran from 26th February to 1st June 2020 and was designed to run alongside a strategic review of DCMS surveys.

Yet for a crucially important indicator of public access there was no public consultation on the deletion of art form attendance.

In table 5 below £68 million is spent on music organisation and the Arts Council or the DCMS have no idea of the overall attendance figures and demographic data for these particular art forms, especially classical music and opera which accounts for 73% of the music funding.

3.1.5 NPOs share of music funding 2023/2024

NPOs	Share of funding	% Share of funding
Opera	£43,613,311	49%
Classical Music	£21,369,354	24%
Venues	£7,061,804	8%
Enabling Organisations	£6,169,347	7%
Diverse Organisations	£4,108,492	5%
Jazz	£1,962,567	2%
Disability Organisations	£1,385,859	1%
Festivals	£1,088,281	1%
Development Organisations	£933,168	1%
Promotional Organisations	£529,406	0.50%
Brass Bands	£525,072	0.50%
Record Labels	£506,076	0.50%
Folk	£396,748	0.40%
Radio Stations	£160,000	0.10%
Total	£89,809,485	100%

Table 5 Source: Arts Council England

Notes to Table 5. The total fund for music organisations is £65,129,380 for 2023/24 (Data NPO's Investment 2023/26, Arts Council England) to present the true scale of music funding ENO funding for 2023/24 of £11,460,000 and an apportionment of Royal Opera House Funding of £13,138,120 has been added

² Paper Presented to the All Party Jazz Group and the All Party Opera Group by Dave O'Brian on 2nd December 2024. Statistical Release for Participation Survey, October 2021 - March 2023 Pub DCMS

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/taking-part-survey-consultation-response>

This is another indication of the shift to a broader set of goals including health and wellbeing all brigaded under the name of the “creativity economy” replete with ROI – return on investment. Darren Henley in his recent reprint of his book “The Arts Dividend” says:

“But there is no subsidy. Personally, I cannot abide the word. The Arts Council doesn’t use public money to subsidise art and culture. It invests public monies for the benefit of all the public”.⁴

As a point of interest, the Arts Council website has a section on “Subsidy” and the “Subsidy Control Act 2022” which governs Arts Council England⁵ Darren Henley recently posted a copy of the “Arts Dividend” to every MP and peer in the Houses of Parliamentary at a cost circa £21k – clearly the tax payer subsidised this odd exercise. The Arts Council appears to have disappeared down a sinkhole of business argot and similar semantics and is now incapable of knowing the attendance at various art forms it funds. The Arts Council has no effective measure for attendance (accessibility) at events.

3.1.6 Advance the education of the public and to further any other charitable purpose which relates to the establishment, maintenance and operation of museums and libraries.

This mandate is coherent, clear and unambiguous and free of management speak and jargon of the arts apparatchiks.

When the Arts Councils Key Performance indicators from Let’s Create are applied to this particular mandate a coherent picture emerges overall success with a few glitches or like the curates egg – good in parts.

Museum Visits – KPIs and Targets

KPI Category	2020 Baseline	2024 Target	2024 Status	2030 Target
Physical visits	12 million (pre-COVID)	10 million	10.2 million	15 million
Digital engagement	5 million	18 million	20 million	25 million
Diverse audiences	22% (ethnic minority visitors)	25%	26%	30%
Schools engagement	40% of schools	50%	48%	60%

Table 6: Let’s Create Strategy (2020–2030), ACE Delivery Plan (2021–2024), ACE Annual Reports and Museum Monitoring, DCMS-ACE Funding Agreement, Taking Part Survey, DCMS Public Library Statistics, ACE’s Annual Survey of Museums + DCMS Taking Part survey

Physical visits are recovering but still below pre-COVID peaks. Digital engagement (virtual tours, online collections) has exceeded targets, so has diverse audiences by 1%. Schools engagements are down by 2%.

Library Visits – KPIs and Targets

KPI Category	2020 Baseline	2024 Target	2024 Status	2030 Target
Physical visits	210 million (pre-COVID)	180 million	185 million	220 million
Digital loans	90 million	120 million	130 million	200 million
Children’s programs	65% of libraries	70%	72%	85%
Library closures	130 (2019)	≤50 net closures	50 new libraries opened	Net zero closures

Table 7: Let’s Create Strategy (2020–2030), ACE Delivery Plan (2021–2024), ACE Annual Reports and Museum Monitoring, DCMS-ACE Funding Agreement, Taking Part Survey, DCMS Public Library Statistics.

Physical visits are lagging but digital loans (e-books, audiobooks) are increasing.

⁴ Darren Henley. The Arts Dividend. Elliott and Thompson Lt 2025 p13

⁵ [Arts Council and Subsidy Control Act](#)

3.1.7 Advise and co-operate, where it is appropriate to do so, with Government, devolved, local authorities, the Arts Councils and equivalent organisations in the museums and libraries sector for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

This mandate is uncomplicated and unequivocal. The Arts Council has failed to deliver on this mandate. A freedom of information inquiry asking:

“Thank you for your request which I received on 3 April 2025. You asked for: What date did Arts Council England contact the Welsh Government to inform them of the cut to the Welsh National Opera funding in 2022. Was it after or before the cuts were announced by Arts Council England?”

Our response

The Welsh Government was made aware of the funding reduction to WNO when ACE made its announcement about the new National Portfolio Organisation funding arrangements on 4 November 2022”.⁶

The Arts Council withdrew a sizable chunk of funding from a major Welsh arts company that also impacted on touring in England with out any consultation with the Welsh government

3.2 Question 2: What changes, if any, would you like to see in ACE's mandate?

The mandate is straightforward, clear and unequivocal and does not need changing. The problem is that the mandate has been cloaked and militated against by Arts Council England plans "Achieving great art for everyone" and "Let's Create" both of which had and have no art form policy.

3.3 Question 3: How would you rate ACE's performance against its mandate?

In the light of my response to question 1 – Very poor

3.4 Question 4: In what way(s) could ACE deliver more effectively?

There are a number of problems with Arts Council England, addressing these problems will create a more effective Arts Council:

3.4.1 The organisational culture of the Arts Council

We need to head back to 2011 when the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) published a report 'Developing Organisational Culture - Six Case Studies', one of these case studies being Arts Council England: Working towards a culture that supports partnership working. In essence the case study logged the changes that were taking place in 2010 as a result of the change programme, with the creation of the new posts of "relationship managers" who replaced "lead officers" whose role was to "manage" funded organisations; each "lead officer" would have responsibility for an art form:

“New posts of relationship managers were created to perform the new relationship management roles with responsibilities across a broader remit.”⁷

A new centralised grants funding system was introduced and development of core competencies were identified as comprising a breadth of perspective, working collaboratively, and accountability.

Additionally, six new core cultural values were agreed upon, namely that it would be: passionate, knowledgeable, bold, nurturing, collaborative and accountable. The impact was assessed internally. The acid test is what people think externally and in confidence.

The "new" culture has created not art form officers but 'relationship managers' as if the Arts Council were a high street bank.

⁶ Chris Hodgkins Freedom of Information Inquiry to the Welsh Government

⁷ Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Developing Organisational Culture - Six Case Studies (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, June 2011, available at: <http://bit.ly/2mch4b8>, accessed 28th July 2018) p4

Furthermore, cultural change programmes usually encompass three levels, the individual, the group and the total system.⁸

The problem with the culture of the Arts Council would appear to be at the total system level. All that has happened at the individual and group levels is the equivalent of a card sharp who shuffles and reshuffles the pack, yet deals out the same hand regardless...

A quick trawl of various sites such as Wikipedia will produce a list of chairs of the Arts Council

• Lord Keynes	1946
• Sir Ernest Pooley	1946-1953
• Sir Kenneth Clark	1953-1960
• The Lord Cottesloe	1969-1965
• The Lord Goodman	1965-1972
• Patrick Gibson	1972-1977
• Sir Kenneth Robinson	1977-1982
• Sir William Rees Mogg	1982-1989
• Peter Palumbo	1989-1993
• Lord Gowrie	1993-1997
• Sir Gerrard Robinson	1998-2004
• Sir Christopher Frayling	2004-2009
• Dame Elizabeth Forgan	2009-2013
• Sir Peter Bazalgette	2013-2016
• Sir Nicholas Serota	2017 onwards

The chairs of the Arts Council have comprised 14 men and one woman who was a Dame. Eight were Knights of the Realm; four were Peers of the Realm and Peter Palumbo, who after his tenure at the Arts Council, became Lord Palumbo.

It is extraordinary in this day and age that there has only been one female chair of the Arts Council

The Arts Council chairs down the years have been a prime facie examples of the Establishment.

3.4.2 A case study that illustrates the culture that exists in Arts Council England is the treatment of English National Opera.

In the 2015/18 funding round the Arts Council awarded English National Opera National Portfolio status. English National Opera received a cut of £5 million from £17 million to £12 million. However, it would appear from an article in the Guardian on 2nd July 2014 (ENO forced to tighten its reins while 58 groups lost all funding from Arts Council) that the funding of English National Opera (ENO) was a done deal as ENO was given an inducement of £7.6 million to help in the transition of its business plan. The Guardian article reported:

"The ENO has been on an artistic high but has struggled to meet box office targets. John Berry, the ENO's artistic director, said: "We have been working for some time with the Arts Council to develop a new business plan which recognises the challenging funding climate and reduces the cost to the public purse, while also enabling us to create an exciting and sustainable future for ENO and maintain our artistic quality, ambition and reach, nationally and internationally."

The Arts Council had initially suggested a reduced schedule of performances, something ENO balked at. Instead, it came up with an alternative plan which includes generating more money from the cafes and bars at the Coliseum, developing West End musicals and creating a single base for rehearsals, potentially outside London.

Alan Davey, chief executive of Arts Council England, said there had been no ultimatums. "Whatever happens, the plan which they follow has to be theirs, they have to believe in it and they have to want

⁸ W. Warner Burke, Organization Change, Theory and Practice (Sage Publications, 2002) p13

to do it. It was clear to both parties that the current business model is under strain in many directions and something had to be done.

The decision followed a best-value investment analysis of the big seven opera and ballet companies, who account for 22% of national portfolio funding.

The ENO pill was sugared with a one-off payment – to help in the transition of its business model – of £7.6m.

The chairman of ACE, Sir Peter Bazalgette, was not able to discuss or be a part of the ENO decisions because he was chairman of ENO until the end of last year.”⁹

After being awarded NPO status a few months later the Arts Council blew the whistle on its own incompetence with regard to ENO. Arts Council England told English National Opera to get its house in order, citing:

“Althea Efunshile, acting chief executive of Arts Council England, said: ‘No-one is doubting that ENO is capable of extraordinary artistic work but we have serious concerns about their governance and business model and we expect them to improve, or they could face the removal of our funding’”¹⁰

For the avoidance of doubt the application guidance for National Portfolio Organisations in terms of organisational resilience clearly states:

“All successful applicants will be expected to demonstrate their resilience. Resilience is the vision and capacity of organisations to anticipate and adapt to economic, environmental and social change by seizing opportunities, identifying and mitigating risks, and deploying resources effectively in order to continue delivering quality work in line with their mission.

This includes thinking about and planning for your own organisational performance, your financial and environmental sustainability, the skills of your workforce, as well as equality and diversity.

As part of this application process, we will carry out a risk assessment of each applicant’s capacity for effective management, governance, leadership and financial viability. During the funding agreement negotiating stage, which will take place between July 2014 and February 2015, applicants who have successfully progressed to a funding offer will have to provide a clear business plan setting out how the organisation will strengthen its resilience.”¹¹

Having awarded English National Opera a grant of £12 million per annum for three years plus a one-off payment of £7.6 million, as part of the awards process Arts Council England must surely have evaluated ENO as being “resilient” or, according to their own criteria, they should not have been awarded the money. £19.6 million later, it would seem that the Arts Council found that the English National Opera was not so “resilient” after all.

Did the Arts Council of England offer this kind of help and assistance to those organisations who similarly lost their funding?

Fast forward to the funding round 2022-2025 and the shambolic treatment of English National Opera. In November 2022, Arts Council England announced that the English National Opera would lose its NPO status (and its £12.6m annual grant) from April 2023. Instead, ACE offered a one-year £17m transition fund (2023–24) to help the ENO adapt.

It is worth noting that ENO likely learned in November 2022 that they would not be receiving National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding for the period 2023-2026. ACE received a letter from the Secretary of State for the DCMS, Nadine Dorries, on the 18th February 2022 and they announced the new National Portfolio Organisations on the 4th November 2022. ACE had 8 months to come up with a solution that wouldn't wreck two opera companies ENO and Welsh National Opera. What a way to

⁹ Mark Brown and Mark Tran, *ENO forced to tighten its reins while 58 groups lose all funding from Arts Council* (The Guardian 1st July 2014, available at: <http://bit.ly/2ovuBLH> accessed 12th April 2025)

¹⁰ Anita Singh, *English National Opera placed in ‘special measures’* (The Telegraph, 12th February 2015, available at: <http://bit.ly/2nO3NGo>, accessed 12th April 2025)

¹¹ Arts Council England, *The National portfolio funding programme 2015/16–2017/18 Guidance for applicants* (Arts Council England (Arts Council England 2014, available at: <http://bit.ly/2mTUVir>, accessed 26th August 2018) p12

run a railway. Arts Council England lives in a world of bounded rationality where the easy way is their only option - did they examine scenarios such as privatising the Royal Opera House and let them do a Wigmore Hall and use the money to expand Opera North? In any event Arts Council England did not consult with the Welsh Government and was therefore in breach of a clause in its Royal Charter (please see 3.1.7 above).

"advise and co-operate, where it is appropriate to do so, with the and the Welsh Ministers"

ACE demanded the ENO move its main operations out of London (likely to Manchester) to receive future funding, as part of ACE's "Levelling Up" agenda.

"Responding to criticism of the move by former Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries, Henley said he had a letter from her dated 18 February 2022 which instructed Arts Council England to move £24m out of London, spread investment more evenly across London boroughs and increase activity and engagement in areas where it had previously been low.

"We acted on those instruction. It is taxpayers and National Lottery players' money that we invest and we have invested that as wisely, and as carefully and as diligently as we can."

Henley was asked whether those instructions ran against the arms-length principle of ACE as a non-departmental government body,

Right the way through history there have been times when Secretaries of State have issued instructions and it is within their right to give broad indications of how they wish to see taxpayers' money spent".

"Governments of all parties have issued those instructions over the years to the Arts Council.

"The decisions that we then took were taken independently."12

On 12 April 2023, £35.36m of lottery funding was awarded to English National Opera. There was the following announcement from Arts Council England and English National Opera:

"Following development work by the English National Opera (ENO), Arts Council England has set a budget of up to £24 million investment for 2024-26. The company will now start the process of making an application to the Arts Council for an award up to this amount. ENO's developing plans are based on a reimagined artistic and business model with a primary base out of London, whilst continuing to own, manage and put on work at the London Coliseum.

The provisional budget of up to £24 million investment for 2024-25 and 2025-26 is to support the ENO make a phased transition to this new artistic and business model, and will include work split between their new main base and London. This will be subject to application and assessment with a decision by the Arts Council expected this summer. This funding would be in addition to the £11.46 million already agreed for 2023/24.

The shared ambition is for the ENO to be in a strong position to apply to the Arts Council's National Portfolio of funded organisations from 2026".

3.4.3 Arts Council England Members and register of interests

Arts Council England Council Members and register of interests at 8th July 2018 indicates the potential for conflict of interests of the 15 Council members 10 had registered interests relating directly or indirectly to Arts Council funding.¹³ The register of National Council Interests as of 6 December 2024 showed that of the 15 members 13 had registered interests relating directly or indirectly to Arts Council England.¹⁴

¹² <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/ace-reveals-opera-analysis-plan-response-backlash>

¹³ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-council/national-council-register-interests> and <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-portfolio-2018-22/more-data-2018-22>

¹⁴ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/national-council-members>

In 2018 67% of the Arts Council England National Council members had registered a direct or indirect relationship with Arts Council England by 2024 this figure had grown to 87%.

In the interests of probity there should be limit on National Council members with direct or indirect links to the Arts Council something like 10 members with no links to Arts Council and five with registered interests would be reasonable allow for checks and balances with teeth and would ensure optimal decisions rather than the merely satisfactory. The Treatment of English National Opera is a case in point.

3.4.4 Lack of art form policies and the use of Lottery funds and applications to National Lottery Project Grants(NLPG) 2026-2023

The Arts Council has eschewed art form policies in favour of Great Art For Everyone (2010 – 2020) and Let's Create (2020-2030). With the absence of art form policies decision making and funding allocations end up being skewed and opaque. The sections below of lottery funding and NPO funding evidence this basic flaw in the Arts Councils operations

3.4.4.1 Introduction and summary

Set out below are statistics gleaned from Arts Council England documents and freedom of Information Inquiries.

Table 8: from 2012 to 2016 the average success rate for jazz awards against all music applications was 4.4%.

Table 9: from 2018 to 2023 the average success rate of jazz awards, as a percentage of all total eligible applications, was 1.2%.

Table 10: the success rate of Jazz applications to the *Supporting Grass Roots Live Music Fund 2022/23* was 2%.

- Grantium has faced significant criticism from users in the UK, especially in the arts sector, for its poor usability, confusing design, and inaccessible language
- Musicians have a lack of confidence when applying for lottery funding
- Grass Roots Venue Fund - However, it is worth noting that jazz organisations tend not to own their premises, and were excluded from much of the Government's funding for small venues
- There has been a 49% increase in the numbers of NPOs since 2015. The subvention from the DCMS has been supplemented by lottery funds.
- Lottery funding is being awarded to NPOs at the expense of individuals and non-funded Organisations
- The core concept of "additionality" would appear to have been negated
- There isn't a level playing field
- There is a substantial difference from the success rate of NPOs to that of individuals and non NPO applications – National Portfolio Organisations stand a better chance of succeeding

3.4.4.2 The purchase of Grantium and problems along the way

Arts Council England purchased their Grantium grant management software from a Canadian company named CSDC. The name "Grantium" is the original product name from CSDC, not something created specifically for Arts Council England.¹⁵

The system was procured and launched in January 2016 at a cost of £930,161 ¹⁶(1.3million in today's terms). The cost breakdown is software licenses for Grantium cost £293,942 and the implementation costs were £636,219, spread over 3 years. However, it is not clear if the software license is annual, or spread over a number of years. The aim was to provide a more efficient online grant application process and to generate cost savings for the organisation.

¹⁵ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/blog/grantium-who-came-name>

¹⁶ https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/how_much_did_grantium_cost_to_im?unfold=1

The Arts Council recently announced that it has been listening and simplified the forms. However, a musician who has applied to the new application process said "They constantly change the questions and format. They are more and more obscure, and it's harder to fathom out what they want to know" [name and email address supplied]. The form is 73 pages long, the form itself keeps timing out – an applicant has to set up a template and cut and paste. The form gives the number of characters allowed in each particular box but the number of characters in the ACE grants form does not equate with windows words and characters checkers.

There were and are a number of criticisms:

- Grantium has faced significant criticism from users in the UK, especially in the arts sector, for its poor usability, confusing design, and inaccessible language.¹⁷
- Applicants have described the system as "dysfunctional," "a nightmare," and "not fit for purpose," with some comparing its interface to "a Soviet-era interface for monitoring grain harvests".¹⁸

Specific issues include:

- Incomprehensible language and unclear instructions.
- Technical glitches, such as the inability to edit applications without starting over.
- Accessibility challenges, particularly for neurodivergent users and those with disabilities.
- The need for extensive documentation (88-98 page guides) to navigate the application process, indicating a lack of intuitiveness.¹⁹

Musicians have a lack of confidence when applying for lottery funding - A survey on behalf of the Review of Jazz in England found that musicians applying for National Lottery funding (under £15K) from Arts Council England, 38% were confident or fairly confident, and applying for funding over £15k, 25% were confident or fairly confident.²⁰ 60% of musicians were not confident when applying for lottery funding from the Arts Council England

The author conducted a recent survey on the Grantium funding scheme and set out below are the results. It was an ad hoc survey with 50 respondents but nevertheless gives a snap shot of the problems with Grantium:

- 65.3% of respondents had used Grantium
- The ratings of their experience with Grantium were, 27.3% had a very poor experience. The next level down 2 was 30.3%, level 3 was 30.9% level 4 was 9.1% and 3% said excellent.
- The biggest challenges facing the respondents were, difficult navigation/user interface 45.5%, technical errors/glitches 24.3%, unclear instructions 27.3% and time-consuming process 84.8%.
- Respondents were asked if they found the Grantium system easy to use compared to other grant application systems? 36.4% found it much harder, 39.4% found it slightly harder and 24.2% found it about the same.
- Asked if they were able to save and return to their application easily, 57.6% said yes without difficulty, 18.3% said yes with some difficulty and 24.2% said they had problems
- Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the support/resources provided, 12.15% of respondents were satisfied, 36.4% somewhat satisfied, 21.2% were neutral, 21.2% were somewhat dissatisfied and 9.9% were very dissatisfied.
- Respondents were asked what additional support or features would make Grantium easier to use. 60% said a better step-by-step guidance, 60% wanted more examples of successful

¹⁷ <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/grantium-impasse-hell-hole-unleashes-twitter-storm>

¹⁸ <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/npo-applicants-struggle-nightmare-grantium>

¹⁹ <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/sector-struggles-aces-online-funding-portal>

²⁰ [Review of Jazz in England](#)

applications, a simpler interface received a 55.6% response, 20% wanted faster loading times and 17.8% a better error messages.

- Asked if they would prefer would an alternative application method. 46.9% said yes, 22.4% said no and the rest were unsure
- Of the type of applicants 66% were musicians, 12% were promoters, 6% arts organisations, 8% charities/not for profit and 8% were other
- Respondents were asked how many times they had applied through Grantium, 34.95 were first time triers, 44.2% had attempted 2-5 times and 20.95 had tried more than five times.

There were a number of comments which give the full measure of Grantium:

- The whole user interface is old-fashioned, clunky, and years out of date. It needs a complete re-design by a team with specific expertise in User Experience – an important IT discipline now, but not when Grantium was designed.
- Generally speaking, speaking as a UK jazz musician, I'd say that a really credible replacement for the former Jazz Services funding scheme is needed in the UK Jazz in particular is really suffering with clubs paying as low as £150 for a whole band for a gig. It is bandleaders who are paying sidemen out of their own pockets and going home in debt. Meanwhile there are other styles of music which are still being financed much more generously by government
- It would be great to see jazz funding distributed more equitably across the wider scene, rather than consistently going to the same organisations that receive a large percentage of annual allocations. A major issue is that many working jazz musicians don't even know how to begin applying for funding, while some organisations employ full-time grant writers who submit application after application to keep the funding pipeline open. It often feels less about supporting the music, the art form, or the public, and more about sustaining their own operations. Arts Council England also appears to have its favourites—organisations that receive substantial funding year after year—leaving fewer resources available for independent musicians and projects that fall outside that inner circle, ultimately creating a funding gap within the broader jazz ecosystem.
- Suggesting great projects and taking a great deal of time over applications which are ultimately unsuccessful is really tricky, especially for touring work where the gigs need to be booked in advance but can't go ahead properly without funding. This additional work that goes into the booking and subsequent cancellation of concerts is time consuming and fruitless.
- Musicians and promoters are up against professional bid writers. I think they're ought to be a separate category and a simpler process for these people. Our music infrastructure is dying right in front of our eyes due to insufficient funding that is in part caused by the hugely complicated process of bidding for funding. Many musicians and promoters won't even try it because it's too hard. Many that have tried it say they will never do it again, having been unsuccessful and having given weeks of their time to it.
- Surely, rectifying this situation has to be the number one priority for the Arts Council.
- Feedback on unsuccessful applications was not helpful at all, did not allow me to improve my application process.
- The application process is complicated, hard to navigate and is therefore not accessible to the majority of the population. It takes days and days to fill in, is really difficult and you generally are unsuccessful. It's really quite dispiriting.
- I feel better feedback on unsuccessful applications to help with future ones. I've applied many times now and not been successful and in process of completing another. If we could understand the reasons why we are refused, I think this would help.

- I would have liked clearer feedback after my last application was turned down after 3 previous successful applications. As a result of being refused a 4th time, and not being given a clear reason, I have not bothered to apply again.
- We rarely apply for ACE funding - we are a small charity and don't have the resources
- The time out function on Grantium is difficult to deal with. In the end I was using Word to write sections and then copy and paste. The time out function is too short and is unnecessary, in my opinion. On my second application on Grantium, the process was easier as I knew what I was dealing with. If I had a query regarding the application and phoned the grant application helpline, the response from the staff was always helpful.
- My frustration with Grantium reflects my view of ACE when it comes to funding jazz projects and touring in the UK. Very inadequate and out of touch.
- I think some examples of rejected applications that then got accepted would be really helpful . I've almost given up trying again to be honest . running a big band and trying to tour with hotels and sound person ... I'm still severely in debt.
- Grantium is as much a data collection exercise as a funding application form. Since it was amended about two year ago it no longer asks for artistic information about the project you are applying for. It is a one size fits all form and therein lies a problem. I spent two years recently as Chair of a community organisation which included arts ambitions and programmes as part of its work. When I joined, it had received funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, but that funding was running out. We needed to re-bid. I co-authored a rebid for £10,000 – the maximum they offered at the time. It was a short application form requiring us to answer four questions and provide a budget. The answers to the questions needed careful framing, but overall, it was a comparatively easy process. This contrasts with Grantium which asks 58 questions. Another real irritant is that the budget format the Arts Council imposes is invariably different to the budget format I use, requiring me to do an extra budget, which can complicate matters. In my view Grantium greatly restricts ACE's ability to deliver its Let's Create strategy. Small organisations are going to flounder and fail given its complexity. Even professional organisations struggle. Finally, the level of feedback on failed bids one gets from ACE is often insufficient to help make a successful re-bid.

3.4.4.3 Grants for the Arts - investment in music and jazz 2012/2016

The tables below show the awards for jazz. In 2012/2013 the number of successful jazz applications for lottery funding was 37 rising to 146 in 2019/20, reducing to 69 in 2023. In fairness to Arts Council England this may be due to a number of reasons: a lower number of applications, the quality of the applications, or an insufficiency of funds.

Lottery Awards for 2012 to 2016 in Table 1 has a success rate for jazz awards, as a percentage of all music applications, rising from 3.5% to 5% in 2016.

From 2012 to 2016 all music awards increased from £10.9m to £18.9m. Jazz awards increased from £0.6m (39 awards) in 2012/13 to £1.8m (99 awards) in 2015/16

Grants for the Arts investment in music and jazz 2012/2016

Decision Year	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
All music applications	1,058	1,301	1,638	1974
Music awards	495	652	863	959
Success rate %	46.8%	50.11%	52.68%	48.56%
All Music Awards £s	£10,958,337	£14,198,508	£14,791,496	£18,949,401
Jazz Applications	69	99	115	169
Jazz Awards	37	61	70	99
Jazz Awards £'s	£576,498	£1,206,711	£1,001,544	£1,843,492
Success rate of jazz awards as against all music applications	3.5%	4.68%	4.27%	5%

% Increase of jazz awards on previous year	-	64.86%	14.75%	41.42%
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Table 8 Source: Arts Council England

3.4.4.4 National Lottery Project Grants to music and jazz from April 2018–2023

In Table 9, from 2018 the success rate of jazz awards, as a percentage of all total eligible applications, decreased from 1.5 % to 0.88% in 2023.

From 2018 to 2023 the total of all music awards increased from £10.8m to £15.4m. The numbers of jazz awards decreased from £2.09m (135 awards) in 2018/19 to £1.9m (69 awards) in 2022/23.

Table 2 contains other data such as the success rate percentage of all music awards against total eligible applications is an average over the six years of 7.06%

Decision Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total number of eligible applications	8,793	9,107	6,942	9,627	7,836	7,810
Total number of successful applications	4,296	4,543	2,936	3,968	2,992	2,895
Successful applications [£s]	£85,596,208	£99,712,522	£61,299,276	£109,118,061	£105,045,514	£114,603,317
Success rate % of successful applications against total eligible applications	48.9%	48.9%	42.3%	41.2%	38.2%	37.1%

Decision Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
All music Applications	1547	1779	1763	2142	1626	Not available
All Music Awards	659	739	479	638	498	539
Success rate % of all music awards against total eligible applications	7.6%	8.1%	6.9%	6.6%	6.3%	6.9%
All Music Awards £s	10,823,451	13,572,936	8,254,914	14,993,889	15,407,336	Not available
Jazz Applications	251	283	188	260	184	Not available
Jazz Awards	135	146	64	104	69	Not available
Jazz Awards £	£2,096,608	£2,807,727	£1,070,259	£2,345,291	£1,924,654	Not available
Success rate of jazz awards as a % of all jazz applications	53.7%	51.5%	34%	40%	37.5%	Not available
Success rate of jazz awards as a % of total number of eligible applications	1.5%	1.60%	0.92%	1.08%	0.88%	Not available
Success rate of jazz awards as a percentage of total successful application	3.3%	3.2%	2.1%	2.6%	2.3%	Not available
% Increase(decrease) of jazz awards on previous year	-	8.1%%	(56.1%)	62.5%	(66.34%)	Not available

Table 9 Source Arts Council England

Notes to the table

'All Applications' includes successful, rejected, and ineligible applications, and is likely to include multiple resubmissions of the same or similar projects.

'Jazz Applications/Awards' are defined as any application where Jazz was identified as a relevant music art form in the application process.

'Decision Year' refers to the date ACE committed to fund a project. The date of payment and/or activity will be later than this date, and in some cases, activity may not commence in the same financial year as decision. Amounts awarded are subject to change and are correct as of the Date reporting is completed (07/09/2023).

3.4.4.5 Supporting Live Music Venues

There were two funding streams: **National Lottery Project Grants** and **Supporting Live Music Applications** in 2022/23. Only 10 jazz applicants received monies for Supporting **Grass Roots Live Music** (SGM). (see table 10 below)

That fund was planned to close in March 2023. A key recommendation from the 'Supporting Grassroots Live Music Evaluation Report' undertaken by 'the hub' is this:

".....a priority must be ensuring that such venues and promoters are as equipped as possible to make successful applications"

Supporting Grassroots Music Fund has been extended beyond March 2025

A new fund to support grassroots music has just been announced which will offer grants of up to £40k to rehearsal spaces, recording studios, festivals, venues and promoters.

Funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the SGM fund is part of the UK government's Creative Industries sector vision, which aims to grow the creative industries by £50bn by 2030. It will be administered by Arts Council England (ACE) and follows on from the funder's Supporting Grassroots Live Music programme, initially launched in 2019.

The problem is that instead of focusing on small grassroots venues, the Arts Council has decided to broaden the scope, and thereby dilute the crucial need to fund grass roots venues.

However, it is worth noting that jazz organisations tend not to own their premises, and were excluded from much of the Government's funding for small venues

3.4.4.6 Jazz applications to the *Supporting Grass Roots Live Music Fund 2022/23*

Total National Lottery Project Grant (NLPG) music applications	496
[of which] total Supporting Grass Roots Live Music applications	97
Total NLPG funds awarded	£15,407,336
Total amount of money awarded to <i>Supporting Grass Roots Live Music</i> applications	£2,060,925
Percentage of total NLPG funds	13%
[of which] total jazz applications in Supporting Grass Roots Live Music	10
Total amount of money awarded	£212,993
Percentage of total amount of money awarded to <i>Supporting Grass Roots Live Music</i>	10%

Table 10 Source: Freedom of Information (FOI), Arts Council England

3.4.4.7 Arts Council England: Growth of National Portfolio Organisations in Relation to Lottery Funding

Looks at Arts Council England and the growth of National Portfolio Organisations in relation to lottery funding

Growth of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) 2012-2026

There has been a 49% increase in the numbers of NPOs since 2015. The subvention from the DCMS has been supplemented by lottery funds.

Year	Number of Arts Council England funded National Portfolio Organisations	Percentage increase or (decrease) on the previous year
2012/15	703	-
2015/18	663	(5.6%)
2018/22	828	19.9%
2023/26	985	18.9%

Increase of numbers of NPOs on 2015/18	322	48.5%
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Table 11 Source: Arts Council England

3.4.4.8 Lottery Funding of National Portfolio Organisations 2023/2026

On 4 November 2022, Arts Council England announced that it will be investing £446 million per year in 990 organisations through its 2023-26 Investment Programme. This is made up of £351.8 million from The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), £0.5 million from Department for Education and £93.9million from The National Lottery.

(please see <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/31958/documents/179403/default/>)

Then on 31 March 2023, ACE announced funding for NPOs for 2023/2026. There are 985 NPOs of which 275 are new applicants. 985 organisations will receive in total £444.5m. This is made up of £370.6m of core funding and £73.9m of lottery funding

A Freedom of Information Inquiry to Arts Council England on 7 April 2023 elicited the following facts:

....there are annual budgets that have been signed off by Executive Board and National Council, but they are subject to change if DCMS confirm a reduced settlement.

Excluding restricted funds and income from National Lottery, these budgets currently stand at the following:

- Grant in Aid core admin before IFRS 16 adjustment £15.764m
- Grant in Aid core Programme £370.675
- Grant in Aid Capital programme £11.819

A further Freedom of Information Inquiry on the 14 April 2023 provided the following:

The final accounts for 2022/2023 are still being finalised and will be published at a later date. However, the current figures state:

- Lottery income was £252.74m
- Lottery expenditure was £448.53m.

Expenditure is notably higher than income because we have committed to paying out grants to NPOs for the next three years.

Lottery budgets for 2023/2024 are estimated at £251.7m, though this is dependent on lottery sales across the year so may change.

On 12 April 2023, £35.36m of lottery funding was awarded to English National Opera. There was the following announcement from Arts Council England and English National Opera:

Following development work by the English National Opera (ENO), Arts Council England has set a budget of up to £24 million investment for 2024-26. The company will now start the process of making an application to the Arts Council for an award up to this amount. ENO's developing plans are based on a reimagined artistic and business model with a primary base out of London, whilst continuing to own, manage and put on work at the London Coliseum.

The provisional budget of up to £24 million investment for 2024-25 and 2025-26 is to support the ENO make a phased transition to this new artistic and business model, and will include work split between their new main base and London. This will be subject to application and assessment with a decision by the Arts Council expected this summer. This funding would be in addition to the £11.46 million already agreed for 2023/24.

The shared ambition is for the ENO to be in a strong position to apply to the Arts Council's National Portfolio of funded organisations from 2026.

3.4.4.9 Lottery funding is being awarded to NPOs at the expense of individuals and non-funded

organisations

Applicants to the National Lottery Project Grants programme will have some light shed on a stock response to failed applicants from the Arts Council England of an “insufficiency of funds”.

Under Lottery funding, the Projects Grant lottery application process and form is now so cumbersome (even for very small amounts) you almost need to be a funding specialist to be able to get it. It also takes hours / days to apply. It needs reforming into a much simpler form for smaller grants that wouldn't exclude people who aren't arts administrators / funding specialists. At the moment it is very exclusive

In the year 2018/19, the success rate was almost 50% for applicants to National Lottery Project Funding; by 22/23 that was down to 38%. Success rates for those with a London address are lower: currently 32% in the present financial year.²¹ **Creative Lives In Progress** in 2023 asserted the success rate was as low as 10 – 20%²². In either case, due to lack of funding, success rates are way down.

In 2018/22, as well as receiving core funding from the Lottery, Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations were awarded over half of all Strategic and Capital funding.

Please see: <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/ace-draws-lottery-reserves-npo-funding>

The use of lottery funding for core funding is questionable. Lottery funds are not supposed to be used as an alternative to Government funding known as “additionality” – that is Lottery funding should not “become a substitute for funding that would normally fall into mainstream Government spending”.

The use of Lottery funding to shore up National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) started in the Arts Council England funding round of 2012-2015, where £54m was used to shore up NPOs. This continued in the 2015/2018 funding round, where £180m of Lottery funds were used for NPOs in the same way. In the latest funding round – 2019/2023 – this figure rose to £326m.

The Arts Council England report and accounts for 2022/2023 show that about £280m of lottery funding was allocated to NPOs, assuming this is spread over three years. Then the Arts Council announced that ENO is to receive £11.46m for 2022/23 plus £24m lottery funding for 2024/2026 (subject to application) a total of £35.76m. The total of lottery funding to NPOs and one ex-NPO is £316m

The Arts Council has raided lottery funds to buttress NPOs. This reduces the funds available to individuals and organisations who do not have NPO status. NPOs are also eligible to apply for Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants – they have the capacity to seek additional funding elsewhere. This is not a level playing field, nor is it levelling it up. It is discriminatory and levels down. Many individuals and organisations will apply and be turned down due to the spurious reason of insufficiency of funds and that lottery funding has not increased. The available lottery funding has decreased as the Arts Council has awarded it to NPOs.

3.4.4.10 The core concept of “additionality” would appear to have been negated

The lines have become increasingly blurred at the expense of the musician, band, dancer, touring theatre and so forth

157 From the inception of the National Lottery, the Government has stated its commitment to the principle of additionality. In the 1992 White Paper it was stated that the Lottery would fund only projects additional to those that would otherwise be funded by the public through general taxation.

158 DCMS, in written evidence to this inquiry, defines the principle of additionality as not allowing Lottery funding to 'become a substitute for funding that would normally fall into mainstream Government spending' and states that it 'remains firmly committed to the principle.'

165 We believe that the additionality principle is being eroded, especially with the establishment of the Olympic Lottery. This Committee deplores this erosion. Therefore, we shall consider returning to the additionality principle before the end of this Parliament. In the meantime, we

²¹ Lyn Gardner, “Is ACE project funding working for artists?”, The Stage, 29th Feb 2024

²² Lara Munro, “What is Arts Council funding and how can you apply for it?”, Creative Lives In Progress, 11 July 2023

3.4.4.11 National Lottery Project Grants Funding of National Portfolio Organisations

Table 12 below illustrates National Lottery jazz Project Grants to NPOs.

The success rate of National Lottery Project Grants awards to total applications by NPOs is an average of 74.4%. When the average success rate 74.4% is compared to the average success rate of 42.7% for the total number of successful applications against total eligible applications the National Lottery Project Grants Scheme for individuals and non-NPO organisations in Table 2 above, there is a marked difference

The success rate of National Lottery Project Grants jazz awards as a percentage of all NPO jazz applications ranges from 75% in 2018/19, through 100% from 2019/2021 and back to 50% in 2022/23. The average is 82.5%. When this is compared to **table 9** (the success rate of jazz awards as a percentage of all jazz applications), the average success rate for jazz awards against all jazz applications for 2018/2023 is 43.4%. There is a substantial difference from the success rate of NPOs to that of individuals and non NPO applications – National Portfolio Organisations stand a better chance of succeeding

3.4.4.12 National Lottery Project Grant applications made by National Portfolio Organisations 2018–2023

Decision Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total applications	40	47	29	70	23
Awards	26	36	25	47	17
Success rate %	69%	77%	85%	63%	78%
Awards £s	£789,446	£1,953,710	£1,188,853	£2,473,442	£1,008,536
Jazz Applications	4	6	2	8	2
Jazz Awards	3	6	2	7	1
Jazz Awards £	£79,662	£518,704	£109,288	£363,625	£85,576
Success rate of jazz awards as a % of all jazz applications	75%	100%	100%	87.5%	50%
Rate of successful jazz awards as a percentage of total applications	7.5%	12.7%	6.9%	10%	4.3%

Table 12 Source: Arts Council England. Amounts awarded are subject to change and are correct as of the date Arts Council England reporting is completed on the Freedom of Information Inquiry of 25th September 2023

3.4.4.13 National Lottery Project Grant applications made by National Portfolio Organisations NOT identified as jazz related: 2018-2023

Tables 13 and 14 below show the break down between applications for jazz projects made by non-jazz NPO's and applications for jazz projects by jazz NPOs. The average success rate of jazz awards as a percentage of all jazz applications, is 73.3% and 70%

The success rate for National Portfolio Organisations is greater than that of organisations and individuals applying for National Lottery Project Grants. No one can blame NPOs for applying, but this Arts Council policy has unintended consequences which need urgent attention. There is not a level playing field and it is also divisive.

Decision Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total applications	32	35	27	54	18
Awards	22	27	23	34	14
Success rate %	69%	77%	85%	63%	78%
Awards £s	£639,114	£1,328,419	£1,065,498	£1,746,303	£860,485

²³ Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport Fifth Report 9th March 2004
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmcmmeds/196/19611.htm>

Jazz Applications	2	3	2	3	1
Jazz Awards	2	3	2	2	0
Jazz Awards £	£30,000	394,971	£109,288	62,471	0
Success rate of jazz awards as a % of all jazz applications	100%	100%	100%	66.66%	0%
Success rate of successful jazz awards as a percentage of total applications	6.25%	8.57%	7.4%	3.7%	0%

Table 13 Source: Arts Council England. Amounts awarded are subject to change and are correct as of the date Arts Council England reporting is completed on the Freedom of Information Inquiry of 25th September 2023

3.4.4.14 National Lottery Project Grant applications made by National Portfolio Organisations IDENTIFIED as jazz related. 2018–2023

Decision Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total applications	8	12	2	16	5
Awards	4	9	2	13	3
Success rate %	50%	75%	100%	81%	60%
Awards £s	£150,332	£625,291	£123,355	£727,139	£148,051
Jazz Applications	2	3	-	5	1
Jazz Awards	1	3	-	5	1
Jazz Awards £	£49,662	£423,913	-	£301,154	£85,576
Success rate of jazz awards as a percentage of all jazz applications	50%	100%	0%	100%	100%
Success rate of successful jazz awards as a percentage of total application	12.5%	25%	0%	31.25%	20%%

Table 14 Source: Arts Council England. Amounts awarded are subject to change and are correct as of the date Arts Council England reporting is completed on the Freedom of Information Inquiry of 25 September 2023

3.4.4.15 National Portfolio Organisation jazz applications to the National Lottery Project Grants 2018 – 2026

The jazz applications and jazz awards are for jazz and jazz-related organisations. Please note the number of jazz organisations is about 7.

NPO Round	All Applications	All Awards	Award (£)	Jazz Applications	Jazz Awards	Jazz Award (£)
National Portfolio 2018-22	1173	857	£1,637,818,918	53	33	£43,586,368
2022-23 Extension	833	831	£410,378,190	33	33	£10,995,928
2023-2026 Investment Programme	1720	985	£1,325,487,339	53	40	£21,963,999

Table 115 Source: Arts Council England FOI 18 September 2023

Notes to table 15

Total NPO counts are based on specific agreements and as such may represent migrations and novations across multiple agreements.

The 2022-23 NPO Extension was only eligible for NPOs already funded in the 2018-22 Portfolio

Jazz-related figures for the 2022-23 NPO Extension are based on the assumption of continuation of information provided for those NPOs in the National Portfolio 2018-22 round.

NPO Award (£) value refers to full award at the point of decision when ACE committed to fund the project, for the full duration of the NPO round.

3.4.4.16 Jazz funding vs audience disparities proves need for separate art form policies

Arts Council England abandoned art form policies in the first funding round under the new National Portfolio Organisation system took place in 2011 for the period 2012/2015.

“Jazz Services has always said that we are not in the business of robbing Bryn Terfel to pay Courtney Pine, but we did say that the selection of the national portfolio organisations was a missed opportunity to reshape the landscape for the arts. The solution is a national policy for music that is collectively owned by all parties involved”.²⁴

In 2013 the audience for opera in England is 1.6 million people; for jazz 2.5 million and for classical music 3.3 million. Total Arts Council funding for opera in England in 2012-13 is about £50m, for classical music £18.3m and for jazz £1.35m.

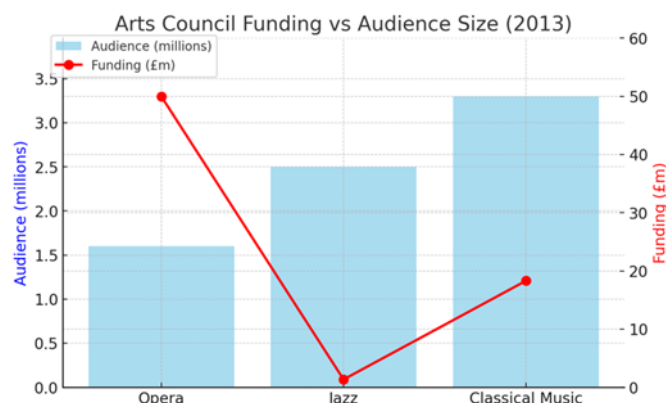


Fig 1

In the funding round 2016/2019 in 2018/19, opera received £57.1m, of which 32.5% was spent outside London. Classical music received £19m of which 55% was allocated to the English regions, and jazz received a total of £1.6m, of which 30% was spent outside London; 3.4 million people attend classical music concerts, 2.1 million attend jazz concerts and 1.7 million attend opera.²⁵

For the avoidance of doubt in the Arts Council England's last funding round for the year 2023/2024, 49% of the music allocation went to opera, 24% to classical music, 0.40% to folk music, 0.50% to brass bands and 2% to jazz.

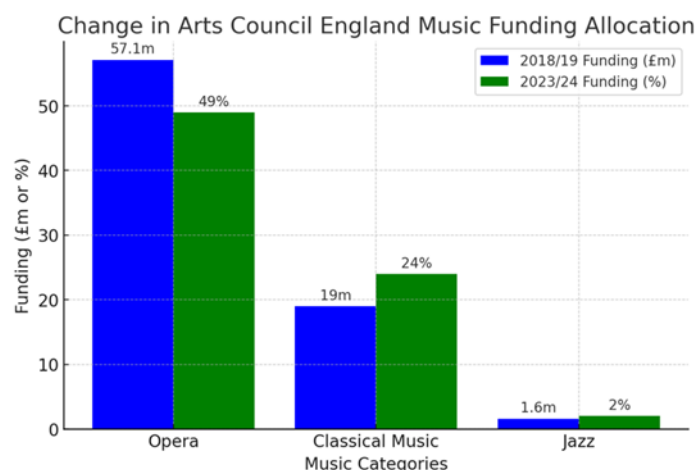


Fig 2

There has been little change over the years and funding has been distributed under the bounded rationality of the past. It is crucial that separate art form policies are developed to ensure an equitable

²⁴ Chris Hodgkins, Arts funding, opera and all that jazz (The Guardian, Letters, 19 January 2013, available at: <http://bit.ly/2mSnVqg>, accessed 18th July 2018)

²⁵ Chris Hodgkins, Stepping up for the homeless at opera (The Guardian, Letters, 24th March 2018, available at: <http://bit.ly/2l5Auy0>, accessed 18th July 2018)

distribution of funds. Jazz in England would be best served, as would all art forms, but not having to fight for a larger slice of a finite pie, rather to make a strong case for the overall pot to be increased.

3.4.4.17 National Portfolio Organisations' share of the music budget for 2023/2024

Set out below is a breakdown of music National Portfolio Organisations awards in the last funding round. 73% of the music allocation went to classical music and opera.

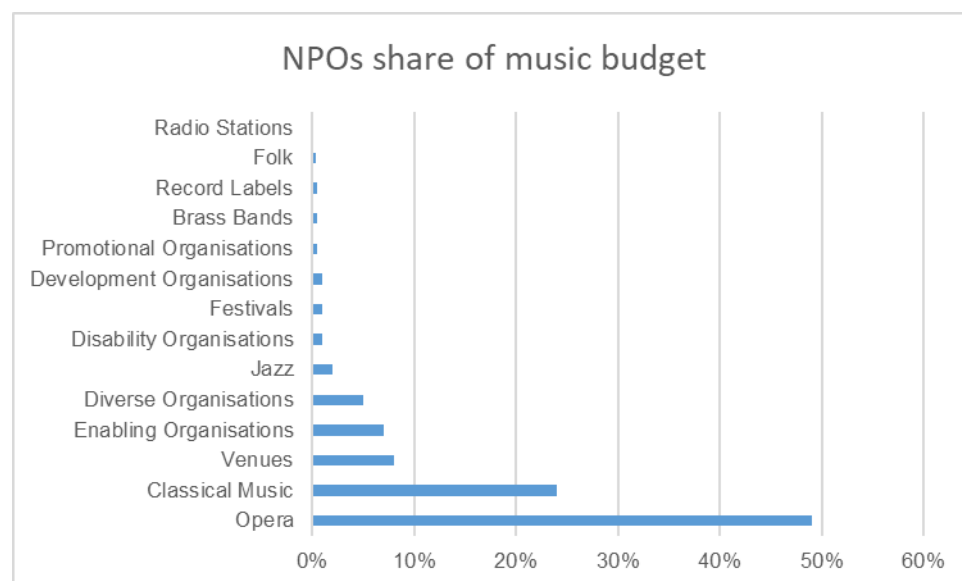


Figure 3

3.4.4.18 NPOs share of music funding 2023/2024

NPOs	Share of funding	% Share of funding
Opera	£43,613,311	49%
Classical Music	£21,369,354	24%
Venues	£7,061,804	8%
Enabling Organisations	£6,169,347	7%
Diverse Organisations	£4,108,492	5%
Jazz	£1,962,567	2%
Disability Organisations	£1,385,859	1%
Festivals	£1,088,281	1%
Development Organisations	£933,168	1%
Promotional Organisations	£529,406	0.50%
Brass Bands	£525,072	0.50%
Record Labels	£506,076	0.50%
Folk	£396,748	0.40%
Radio Stations	£160,000	0.10%
Total	£89,809,485	100%

Table 16 Source: Arts Council England

Notes to Fig. 2 and Table 8. The total fund for music organisations is £65,129,380 for 2023/24 (Data NPO's Investment 2023/26, Arts Council England) to present the true scale of music funding ENO funding for 2023/24 of £11,460,000 and an apportionment of Royal Opera House Funding of £13,138,120 has been added

3.4.5 The disingenuity of the Arts Council, lack of policy, impact analysis, obfuscation, needless raising of expectations and time wasting.

Set out below are a few examples of the way the Arts Council treats jazz. They are incapable of admitting they are wrong and mea culpa are not words in their lexicon. This inability to listen to the arts communities plus their ingrained arrogance means they are utterly out of touch with reality.

3.4.5.1 Summary

What a way to run a railway. Decisions on funding and NPOs are conducted by a “balancing process” based on discussion which leaves decisions wide open to personal and subjective judgement

- ACE talks of strategy but as the correspondence details below it is either raising expectations and misleading or nothing but a talking shop. No detailed concrete strategy emerges
- There is no impact analysis of NPOs
- The Arts Council does not hold minutes of discussions between officers on art form discussions

The author to the Arts Council – the full correspondence is available at

<https://appjag.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/freedom-of-information-request-regarding-the-arts-councils-long-term-strategic-approach-to-jazz-and-the-arts-councils-approach-will-mean-a-stronger-future-for-jazz.pdf>

- *Furthermore, it was stated in answer to my F o I request regarding “the many conversations between the sector and my colleagues”, that “Our conversations with organisations and individuals are noted and logged, as we have described.”. Clearly no minutes are kept as under the F o I as I have asked for them to be produced and they are not forthcoming. The notion that a long term strategic approach has been shaped by conversations with colleagues and the sector I feel is also misleading as there are no records of these conversations or discussions.*

Arts Council response – the full correspondence is available at

<https://appjag.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/freedom-of-information-request-regarding-the-arts-councils-long-term-strategic-approach-to-jazz-and-the-arts-councils-approach-will-mean-a-stronger-future-for-jazz.pdf>

- *“Additionally, I must also clarify that we do not hold minutes of the sector conversations you have mentioned, but have explained in detail how external approaches to RMs are logged and followed up”. The Arts Council does not hold minutes of meetings that involve o*
- The Arts Council does not undertake analysis of individual NPOs or specific art forms, therefore the Arts Council was unable to provide information of that kind
- There never an apology or explanation when the jazz community is being led up the garden path.

3.4.5.2 Freedom of Information request regarding the Arts Council’s long term strategic approach to jazz

A In 2026 the author made a Freedom of Information request regarding the Arts Council’s long term strategic approach to jazz and the Arts Council’s approach will mean a stronger future for jazz ran and ran and is a story of obfuscation with smoke and mirrors.

Althea Efunshile, Deputy Chief Executive of Arts Council England at the programme launch of the EFG London Jazz Festival for 2016 talked of a long term strategy and stated:

“Our long term, strategic approach to the form (jazz) has been shaped by many conversations between the sector and my colleagues, including **Redacted** who many of you will know. Our approach will mean a stronger future for Jazz; greater resilience, a stronger focus on talent development and progression, and new audiences.”

This speech is also published on the Arts Council website.

I would be grateful if the Arts Council could provide me with the concrete, explicit document that states Arts Council England’s “long term strategic approach to the form” Also I would be grateful if the Arts Council would provide records of the conversations that the Arts Council has had with the “sector” that helped develop this long term strategy.

Needless to say, the Arts Council could not provide me with a long term strategy as they didn’t have one. But this is the sort of idiocy they get up to. The entire paper trail is below. All they have done is fob the jazz community off with a raised expectation that leads nowhere. A classic example of obfuscation and smoke and mirrors thrown in with good measure.

B The All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group (APPJG) a protracted correspondence with the Arts Council England between June 2016 and January 2018

The All Party Parliamentary Jazz Group (APPJG) a protracted correspondence with the Arts Council England between June 2016 and January 2018 attempting to get the Arts Council to undertake a review of jazz in England.

The chair of APPJG wrote to the Arts Council England on the 20th July 2016 requesting a review of jazz. The reply came back on the 13th September 2016 and the Arts Council stated that it:

"Looking across our investment and policy with respect to jazz, we believe that we are making good progress, and do not think it is necessary to conduct a review into the funding of the art-form.

We have a strategic, sector-wide approach to jazz that considers talent development, the provision of quality national and international touring, and the long-term resilience of the art form. We carefully monitor the level and impact of our investment, and regularly review our funding decisions to ensure that we are realising best value for the public funds invested.

For the last two years we have also convened an internal working group on jazz to share intelligence, agree on strategies to support the art form, and to meet with potential applicants".

APPJG replied on the 29th November 2016 with the following points

*"In your letter you state that the Arts Council has a "strategic sector-wide approach to jazz that considers talent development, the provision of quality national and international touring, and the long term resilience of the art-form." No mention is made of venues and jazz promoters. For clarification, is "sector-wide" the music sector or the jazz sector? **We would be grateful for a copy of the document that lays out this sector wide approach.***

*We note that you carefully monitor the level and impact of the Arts Council investment in jazz and **we would be grateful if you could supply us with the Arts Council's impact analysis and assessment of the jazz National Portfolio Organisations you fund.***

*We also note that for the past two years there is an internal working group on jazz that shares intelligence, agrees strategies that support jazz and who meet with potential applicants. It would be very useful if you could provide us with the people who make up this working group and their experience in jazz, **details of the strategies they have agreed and the potential applicants they have met"***

As the reply below demonstrates the Arts Council is unable to provide the information that has been requested. - because they haven't got it. They fob people off with stuff and then find they have been rumbled.

The Arts Council reply dated 20th December:

"With regards to the internal working group on jazz to which I referred in my letter to Jason McCartney, some confusion appears to have arisen over its purpose. It comprises a number of our Relationship Managers working on jazz across the country. Rather than agree strategy documents, the group brings together relationship managers engaging with the sector. It allows them to share intelligence and identify upcoming opportunities for us to invest in projects and organisations. Externally its members help promote awareness of our funding for jazz through funding surgeries for applicants, and at public events like the London Jazz Festival.

Since these are staff members working in roles below Executive Board and Director level, I do not believe it would be appropriate to publish or disclose their names. However our relationship managers are recruited with an expectation they have experience and knowledge of their specialisms, and many on the working group have

extensive experience in jazz “.

APPJG's response of the 17th January 2017 pursued a number of points:

*In paragraph seven of your most recent letter you say that some confusion has arisen over the purpose of the internal working group. There is no confusion on our part. In your letter of the 13th September it was stated “For the last two years we have also convened an internal working group on jazz to share intelligence, agree strategy to support the art form and meet with potential applicants”. **I would be grateful if you would supply me with the details of the strategy, they have agreed to support jazz and the potential applicants who have met with this group.***

*In Lord Colwyn's letter of the 29th November 2016 we noted that the Arts Council carefully monitors the level and impact of the Arts Council's investment in jazz. **We asked for the Arts Council's impact and analysis of the jazz National Portfolio Organisations you fund. We would be grateful if you would supply this information. We also assume that this will be readily at hand as National Portfolio Organisations should be supplying the Arts Council with their own annual review and impact statements.***

The Arts Council's response of the 17th July 2017 – note the time it took to respond – stated:

“Jazz Working Group

*Your letter asked again about our internal working group on Jazz. **The confusion around this group appears to stem from my use of the term ‘agreeing strategies’ in my letter to Jason McCartney. Please let me be as clear as I can. The Jazz Working Group (AWG) does not create strategy documents. My use of the word ‘strategies’ was to indicate that the group discuss informally how to ensure jazz applications we expect to receive are as strong as possible, and how to stimulate more of them.***

*The group is made up of Relationship Managers from different regions and the national team. **They meet quarterly and share intelligence on jazz applications they expect from artists, organisation, festivals and venue/promoters.** One way they ensure applications are as strong as possible is by organising bespoke funding advice sessions for applicants with jazz focused projects to facilitate an increase the number of applications. These have included organisations, venues, promoters, festivals & individual artists, and taken place in a range of formats including Skype, one to one meetings and group seminars. A recent example was an open surgery on jazz funding held all day in our Brighton office, for potential applicants across the South East to call or drop in. Our advice for applicants is tailored to the opportunities and challenges of each region.*

Impact analysis of the National Portfolio

Your request refers to a phrase I used in my letter to Jason McCartney, ‘we now carefully monitor the level and impact of our investment in this area’. This sentence was intended to reflect the attention our Relationship Managers across the country are paying to jazz, not least through our informal Jazz Working Group. We want to ensure high quality jazz activity is taking place nationwide. Because our investment is a key part of achieving this, we are monitoring our impact by continually checking the level of investment benefiting jazz, and how we can improve that. The spreadsheet I have enclosed retreats the results of our monitoring of our impact, and I have described how that takes place in practice.

The Arts Council does not undertake analysis of individual NPOs or specific art forms, therefore I am unable to provide information of that kind. NPOs do report to us through our annual survey however, including data on the number of performances, attendances, and their staff. We publish this data on our website”..

Please note the tables the Arts Council refer to our not an impact analysis – just what grants have been paid to bands and musicians

APPJGs reply of the 29th November 2017 asked:

“Your letter of the 27th July 2017 also stated that the “Arts Council does not undertake analysis of individual NPOs or specific art forms”. Can I ask how the Arts Council measures the efficacy of its investment in these organisations and art forms?”

The Arts Council's reply of the 22nd January 2018 stated the following:

“With regard to our assessments of organisations and art forms, it is important to consider these separately. As I wrote in my last letter, we do not undertake specific written analysis of either individual NPOs or specific art forms.

One way we are able to judge our efficacy is our levels of investment in a particular area or art form, and I have already shared figures for 5azz with you. However, the efficacy of our investment depends on a number of highly complex questions. These might include what the right level of investment might be for an area or art form given the budget available, the quality of applications submitted, or how they contribute to specific challenges such as geographic spread of our investments.

The Arts Council makes grants based on the strength of applications we receive in meeting the Goals set out in our 10 year strategy, and using the on-the-ground knowledge of our Relationship Managers, Area Directors and Art Form Directors across the country.

For National Portfolio Organisations, we consider the strength of applications we receive and then use our balancing process to ensure that issues such as art form spread, diversity and financial risk are properly considered. Therefore, the NPO application process is one way we gain insight into the efficacy of our investments since the last investment round, and the best value for our investments in the next.

As I mentioned earlier, this balancing process is based on the informed discussion of local and art form staff, rather than individual written analyses for each sub art-form. In our most recent investment round, for example, staff identified through the balancing process that more work was needed to support Jazz in the South East, which we hope to address through our Ambition for Excellence programme”.

C A recent FOI regarding the use of Jazz Strategy when there is no such thing. The Arts Council allows staff to promote the idea there is a jazz strategy when clearly there isn't. This behavior is misleading and vexatious

The Authors FOI of the 13th March 2025 to the Arts Council and there reply

The author's request:

*“Whilst undertaking some research for a project on jazz in Europe I noticed that one of your employees was mentioned on the IMC website - here is the link **redacted** 10th December 2020*

*In an article "Do's & Don'ts of Funding Applications with **redacted**". It was reported as:*

At Jazz Connector on 10th December 2020, members of Ireland's jazz and improvised music scene gathered together for a professional development session on:

*The Do's and Don'ts of Funding Applications with **redacted** - How to implement best practices when applying for funding from state bodies and other sources*

*Our Guest Speaker was **redacted** a musician, composer, and teacher who is also*

*In Arts Council England, **redacted** works on the national strategy for jazz and improvised music, identifying trends, understanding support needed for the landscape, and lobbying for the needs of the sector. On funding decisions, she provides contextual information for jazz and improvised music applications, and sits on panels for all artforms.*

I would be grateful for a concrete copy of the national strategy and further details of the following -

"trends, understanding support needed for the landscape, and lobbying for the needs of the sector. On funding decisions, she provides contextual information for jazz and improvised music Applications"

The Arts Councils response:

"Arts Council England does not have specific strategies for individual music genres. The Arts Council England strategy for culture and creativity is 'Let's Create'. If you would like further information in regard to our Let's Create strategy, please see below our website link"

There was no apology or explanation for this misleading and vexation matter

3.4.5.3 Conclusions

What a way to run a railway. Decisions on funding and NPOs are conducted by a "balancing process" based on discussion which leaves decisions wide open to personal and subjective judgement

- ACE talks of strategy but as the correspondence details below it is either raising expectations and misleading or nothing but a talking shop. No detailed concrete strategy emerges
- There is no impact analysis of NPOs
- The Arts Council does not undertake analysis of individual NPOs or specific art forms, therefore the Arts Council was unable to provide information of that kind
- There never an apology or explanation when the jazz community is being led up the garden path.

3.5. Question 5: On a scale of 1 - 5 how strongly do you support ACE's current 10 year strategy Let's Create.

Do not support at all

3.6 .Question 6: What is important to you in the Let's Create strategy?

Regrettably very little. The strategy was flawed from the start. The Arts Council undertook a lengthy consultation which was called the "conversation". Arising from this "conversation " was a document Arts Council England: The Conversation. a report by BritainThinks. The Arts Council's 10 Year strategy/plan was based on this document. Two points leap out from the executive summary:

"While the public may be engaging with the arts, they do not always associate their creative activities with the sector. Rather, they tend to define arts and culture through a fairly tight prism. This often focuses on artforms such as classical music, ballet and opera, underplaying the potential role of the sector in people's lives. In addition, the public often do not know what opportunities are available in their local area; over half (53%) of English adults do not feel informed about the arts opportunities available to them locally

Linked to this is a recognition of the need to promote arts, museums and libraries to younger audiences, among whom the sector is not seen to be particularly 'cool' or something they want to engage in with their friends. This is seen by many as a key risk for the sector's future workforce, skills, talent and leadership. The issue is felt to be heightened by the government's perceived current focus on STEM subjects, and a public perception that a career in the arts is not particularly secure. It is widely recognised by both the sector and the public that school is often the first point of contact children have with the sector, and that experience of arts and culture in this

context can act as a 'social leveller'.²⁶

This was the evidence that Let's Create was based on. The Arts Council England had a marketing problem. They were not reaching the people they were supposed to reach and instead of addressing the real problem – a problem they should have got to grips with years ago – off they cheerily went and came up with "Let's Create" instead of addressing the major difficulty – marketing.

Here is the authors critique written at the time of the launch.

3.6.1 Summary

The Arts Council has launched a new ten year strategy which they say is not dreamed up by a bunch of bureaucrats sitting in a room on their own – well tough as this is what it reads like out of touch and given the resources probably unachievable.

Musicians, dancer, painters, poets, writer, singers have been conveniently dumped into a box marked "Creative Practioners". This is one size fits all and ignores the diversity of expression. Culture has been reduced to a homogenous blob and creativity has been simplified to a uniform act, a level playing field in which the participants are all the same.

A fundamental flaw in "Let's Create is the complete absence of any art form policy.

After 10 years of "*Great Art and Culture for Everyone*" the Arts Council has yet to nail the question of what constitutes high quality or quality period, and spending another 10 years attempting to establish a shared language that will define quality.

The Arts Council's failure to resolve inequality in its last ten year Strategic Plan should be publicly scrutinised and they should be held to account.

The Arts Council has moved from the objects of its Royal Charter to a vision that is flawed for a number of reasons; is it achievable given existing resources?

The Arts Council has yet to produce an operational plan for the execution of Let's Create. Without that it is like a cart without a horse

Enquiries to the Arts Council at the time of the development of Let's Create failed to provide an internal appraisal of the Arts Council with an analysis of its capabilities and core competences.

3.6.2 Background to the strategy Let's Create

The Arts Council England published its 10 year strategy Let's Create2020-2030 on the 27th January 2020. The delivery plan for the strategy is expected in April 2020.

In the Guardian the ACE chief executive, Darren Henley said it had not been developed "*by a bunch of bureaucrats sitting in a room on their own*"²⁷ but after a long period of consultation with professionals, audiences and potential audiences

Let's Create lists a number of important issues requiring action. They include:

- Persistent and widespread lack of diversity across the creative industries and in publicly funded cultural organisations.
- Difference in understanding of the terms "arts" and "culture" across the country, with many seeing the "arts" as only the high arts.
- Big differences in cultural engagement, geographically and socioeconomically.
- Unequal opportunities for children outside school across the country.
- The often fragile business models of publicly funded cultural organisations.

²⁶ [Arts Council England: The Conversation. a report by BritainThinks](#) Pub. 18th July 2028 p5-6

²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/jan/27/arts-council-england-culture-in-every-village-town-and-city-strategy-lets-create>

- A retreat from innovation, risk-taking and sustained talent development.

The previous strategy, “*Great Art For Everyone*” ran from 2010 to 2020 and included five long-term goals. These were:

- Goal 1: Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated.
- Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by the arts.
- Goal 3: The arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative.
- Goal 4: The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled.
- Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts.

The important issues listed for action in Let's Create are many the same issues that the five goals in “*Great Art For Everyone*”, were supposed to achieve; diversity, more people experiencing the arts and culture, in fact the only important issue missing from “*Great Art For Everyone*” is a retreat from innovation and risk taking.

3.6.3 General observations

3.6.3.1 Culture, Creativity, DCMS and art form policy

Reading the strategy was the intellectual equivalent of chewing rubber spaghetti compounded by the flawed thinking of one size fits all in terms of “culture” and “creativity” For example page 12 contains a disingenuous, illogical and tortuous definition of culture:

“..we use it to mean all those areas of activity associated with the art forms and organisations which Arts Council England invests in collections, combined arts, dance , libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre and the visual arts. By describing all of this work collectively as ‘culture’ rather than separately as ‘the arts’ ‘museums’ and libraries’, we aim to be inclusive of the full breadth of activity that we support as well as to reflect the findings from the research we commissioned for this Strategy, which showed that members of the public tend to use the words ‘the art’s and ‘artists’ to refer specifically to classical music, opera, ballet or the fine arts. Similarly, we have used ‘creative practioners’ rather than ‘artists’ as an umbrella term for all those who work to create new or reshaping existing cultural content.” (Let’s Create p12)

This is the semantics of a “*bunch of bureaucrats sitting in a room on their own*”. Instead of painters, sculptors, dance, ballet, theatre, literature, classical musicians, poets, writers, folk musicians, jazz musicians, rap artists, brass bands and so forth we have one size fits all. This definition ignores the diversity of expression that comprises each art form, the concept of marketing and the marketing of different art forms. It also completely ignores the needs of the artist and the audiences which will be different for each art form. So, what happens to a jazz club or an opera house, a theatre or a concert hall? Are they going to be branded as “Culture Houses” or from a Stalinist dystopian world, “Palaces of Culture”?

Having simplified “culture” to a homogenous blob “Creativity” is next on the list and it is shoehorned into:

“.....the process through which people apply their knowledge, skill and intuition to imagine, conceives, express or make something that wasn’t there before. While creativity is present in all areas of life, in this Strategy, we use it specifically to refer to the process of making, producing or participating in culture” (Let’s Create p12)

“Creativity” has been reduced to the banal with a definition that is ideally suited to the “*bunch of bureaucrats sitting in a room on their own*”. In Let’s Create creativity has been simplified to a uniform act, a level playing field in which the participants are all the same. Diversity of art form is redacted and the definition of creativity wilfully ignores “*the history of discovery is full of [such] arrivals at unexpected destinations and arrivals at the right destination by the wrong boat*” (The Act of Creation, Koestler, 1964, p145). Or that the creative act “*is an act of liberation – the defeat of habit by originality.*” (Koestler 1964 p96)

It would be fair comment to say that perhaps an implicit part of Lets Create was to align itself in some way with its funder the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport who's Single Departmental Plan 2019 has the following objective and actions contributing to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The actions applicable to the Arts Council are set out below:

"Objective 4: Maximise social action, cultural, sporting and physical activity participation"

This will be achieved by the following actions that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and are applicable to Arts Council England:

- *"Build a sustainable future for libraries. In partnership with the Libraries Taskforce, Arts Council, and British Library we will promote how public libraries contribute to wider central and local government strategic priorities (contributes to SDG 4*
- *Support UK arts and culture, promote its role in delivering positive social outcomes through effective policy making and public investment (contributes to SDG 11)*
- *Make public appointments and empower DCMS Arm's Length Bodies to be effective, resilient and innovative. We will lead the process for chair and trustee appointments to 42 Arm's Length Bodies, 15 of which are made by the Prime Minister or HM The Queen. Work to ensure that public appointments made contribute to realising the ambition that by 2022, 50% of all public appointees are female and 14% of all public appointments made are from ethnic minorities (contributes to SDG 10)*
- *Support people of all ages to thrive, connect with each other, and give back to their communities, including our commitment to using Office for National Statistics' recommended measurement package as government's standard way of measuring loneliness (contributes to SDG 10)*
- *Increase participation in arts and culture by extending the reach, innovation and resilience in the cultural sector through our delivery of the Culture is Digital report (contributes to SDG 8)*
- *Preserve museums/galleries/cultural property for the enjoyment and education of citizens by supporting as many visitors as possible to enjoy our national collections, especially through free entry to permanent collections (contributes to SDG 16)*
- *Deliver the 2022 UK Festival (contributes to SDG 8)"*

The crucial point is the DCMS has not abandoned the word "Arts" and the compelling phrase is "delivering positive social outcomes through effective policy making and public investment". Here in lies another fundamental flaw in "Let's Create which is the complete absence of any art form policy.

3.6.3.2 Ten years of Great Art For Everyone and Arts Council England still has to tackle the question of quality.

The strategy in its vision that by 2030 everyone will have will have access to a *"remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences"* (Let's Create p14). Well, no one could argue with that laudable, maybe pious hope but nevertheless a reasonable vision. High-quality is mentioned on a number of occasions;

"In this Strategy, we are drawing a distinction between the two (Creativity and Culture) because we want everyone to have more opportunities for both to be creative and experience high-quality culture" (Let's Create p15)

"Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their creative potential and to access highest quality cultural experiences" (Let's Create p18)

So far, so good until you arrive at the investment principle *"Ambition and Quality"* on page 47. It is as if the Arts Councils previous strategy, *"Great Art and Culture for Everyone"*, 2010-2020 had not existed. Goal 1 was *"Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated"*. One would have

thought that in 10 years the Arts Council would have formulated the notion of what determines artistic excellence and by implication quality and ensured that its funded organisations were turning out work of the highest quality. This appears not to be the case as the strategy states:

“Judgements about quality are inevitable complex and open to debate. We will therefore continue to work with the cultural sector to establish a shared language around it, which we will draw on as we consider and explain our investment decisions. But in the end it will be the Arts Councils responsibility to use our experience and expertise to make the judgements that determine these decisions”.(Let’s Create p 47)

After 10 years of *“Great Art and Culture for Everyone* the Arts Council has yet to nail the question of what constitutes high quality or quality period, and Arts Council England is going to spend another 10 years working with the cultural sector to establish a shared language that will define quality. The reality is that you end up with a *“bunch of bureaucrats sitting in a room on their own”* and developing a *“shared language”* that will end up as a lingua franca of the cultural establishment with little or no resonance with audiences, artists or arts consumers. Furthermore, Koestler argued that language can become an obstacle to creative thought and that *“true creativity often starts where language ends”* (Koestler 1964 p177).

This whole lamentable exercise is redolent of Little Dorritt, *“Whatever was required to be done, the Circumlocution Office was beforehand with all the public departments in the art of perceiving — HOW NOT TO DO IT”*.

3.6.3.3 The lack of diversity across the creative industries and in publicly funded cultural organisations.

In the Governments Culture White Paper, 2016 The DCMS stated that they:

“... will work with Arts Council England to understand the barriers that prevent people from particularly under-represented groups becoming professionals in the arts”. (Culture White Paper 2016 p 25)

The Arts Council in Goal 4 in its Strategic Plan for 2010-2020 stated: *“The arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled”*. Yet 10 years later an Arts Council report says: *“Persistent and widespread lack of diversity across the creative industries and in publicly funded cultural organisations”*. And action is required. I am sure the reader will forgive the rhetorical question but, *“What has the Arts Council been doing for the past 10 years? The world of Arts Council funded organisations abounds with “lack of diversity”*. The London Symphony Orchestra for example. A count of the orchestra members reveals 86 orchestra members of which only five came from the diverse community when to reflect the demographics of the UK population it should be around 13 members if not more. Glyndebourne Opera (Glyndebourne Productions Ltd) received £6,516,220 as a National Portfolio Organisation in the 4 year period 2018-2022. Yet its board as at the 11th April 2020, on its website, comprised six trustees of whom one trustee was female and no representation from the diverse community.

In fairness to the Arts Council to tackle inequality across the arts in the public and private sectors would be a Herculean task however there is no excuse in terms of its own client roster and Arts Council funded organisations. In fact, the Arts Council’s failure to resolve inequality in its last ten year Strategic Plan should be publicly scrutinised and they should be held to account.

3.6.4 The Arts Council Charter and Let’s Create

The Consolidated Royal Charter (Incorporates 2008, 2011 and 2013 amendments) for the Arts Council England contains the following objectives:

“The objects of the Council shall be, for the public benefit, to:

- (1) develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts;*
- (2) increase accessibility of the arts to the public in England; and*

(3) advance the education of the public and to further any other charitable purpose which relates to the establishment, maintenance and operation of museums and libraries (which are either public or from which the public may benefit) and to the protection of cultural property; and

(4) advise and co-operate, where it is appropriate to do so, with the Departments of Our Government, Our Scottish Administration, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Welsh Ministers, local authorities, the Arts Councils and equivalent organisations in the museums and libraries sector for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (or their successors) and other bodies on any matter related to the objects” https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Consolidated_Royal_Charter_2013.pdf

Let's Create states that:

“Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture” (Let's Create p 18).

The Arts Council appears to have confused alchemy with reality by the transmutation of the reasonable and proper concept, enshrined in the Royal Charter, of developing and improving the *“knowledge, understanding and practise of the arts and the accessibility of the arts to the public in England”* into the *“national development agency for creativity and culture”* a panacea which aims to:

“recognise and champion the creative activities and cultural experiences of every person in every town, village and city in the country and to ensure that over the next 10 years, we support more people to express and develop their creativity and culture, given their power to fulfil us and to transform the communities in which we live and work. And we will do this because we want England to strengthen its reputation as one of the most creative countries in the world”. (Let's Create p15).

The Arts Council envisages by 2030:

“a country transformed by its culture and at the same time constantly transforming it: a truly create nation in which every one of us can play a part”. (Let's Create p15)

The published vision on page 14 of Let's Create:

“By 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences”.

There is an overwhelming sense of incredulity about Let's Create. The Arts Council has moved from the objects of its Royal Charter to a vision that is flawed for a number of reasons; is it achievable given existing resources? The vision is certainly challenging but it will it inspire the very people it is supposed to serve? Is the vision something that everyone can collectively own and share?

The primary objective of a vision is to inspire and create a shared sense of purpose. Will the person on the Clapham Omnibus or the Manchester tram buy into this vision or will it mean anything to them?

The vision is usually finalised half way through the strategic planning process so let us examine Let's Create in terms of strategic planning.

3.6.5 Let's Create and strategic planning

At the time of writing – August 2020 - the Arts Council had yet to produce an operational plan for the execution of Let's Create. Without that it is a like a cart without a horse.

However, it would be useful to define exactly what strategy is. Strategy is:

*“...the **direction** and **scope** of an organisation over the **long-term**: which achieves **advantage** for the organisation through its configuration of **resources** within a challenging **environment**, to meet the needs of **markets** and to fulfil **stakeholder** expectations”.* (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008)

This definition is equally applicable to commercial or not for profit organisations.

The fundamental resources for Arts Council England are clearly finance – funding from the DCMS and lottery funding. But what of the capability and the core competences of the organisation? These are usually identified in an internal appraisal and eventual feature in an analysis of the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and the external opportunities and threats the organisation faces – the technical term is a SWOT analysis.

The Arts Council held an initial consultation exercise and one of the questions the Arts Council posed was what were the opportunities and threats faced by the arts? I wrote to the company who were organising the consultation and asked:

January 22, 2018 at 9:03pm

“Has the Arts Council developed a paper outlining their strengths and weaknesses? This would be helpful in looking at the opportunities and threats. Thank you”.

And then wrote again:

February 9, 2018 at 5:41pm

“You have asked what are the opportunities and threats facing the arts in the UK. However, there is an important part of the equation that needs to be addressed which is the strengths and weaknesses of not just the arts in the UK but the major funders as well”.

I finally received a reply:

26 February 2018 at 11:45

“I have followed up with Arts Council England regarding your specific query about a paper outlining their strengths and weaknesses and will let you know when I hear back on this”

No further reply was forthcoming so had an internal appraisal of the Arts Council been undertaken with an analysis of its capabilities and core competences?

Without this analysis then a strategy may well not be efficiently or effectively executed. Recent events with the treatment of opera bear this out..

3.7 Question 7: In what ways would you wish to enhance the strategy?

The Arts Council England needs to drop Let's Create with its onerous reporting requirements and develop a simple action plan for all funded organisations, with the sole objective of encouraging attendance and involvement in arts activity. A simple action plan that people can understand and relate to.

Purpose & Structure

3.8 Question 8: Arts Council England is the development agency for arts and creativity.

How effective is it in delivering this role? What does it do well and what could it improve?

The first thing the Arts Council England should do is dump “Let's Create” and develop a simple action programme that the arts community and the public can relate and responds to.

The next thing that the Arts Council needs to do is to ask “Where are we now? Where do we want to be and how will they get there? What structure is required to make this happen?

Instead of the bounded rationality of the past what is required is a paradigm shift into the future

3.9 Question 9: Since 2011 this has included being the development agency for museums and libraries.

How effective is ACE in delivering its relatively new responsibilities in relation to libraries and museums? What does it do well? In what ways could it improve its effectiveness?

No comment, not the authors area of expertise.

However, it should be noted that the DCMS funds 15 museums and art galleries including, the British Museum, National Gallery, Tate Modern, National Maritime Museum, and the National Railway Museum. There appears to be a duplication of effort as the Arts Council funds museums and one would assume the same skill sets to manage and found these organisations are the same. This should be looked at with some urgency as money is clearly being wasted on what is a duplication of effort – it also opens the door to an examination of the roles of the Arts Council and the DCMS

3.10 Question 10: What should ACE's role be in promoting and supporting technological innovation across the arts and culture sectors, and can you share any thoughts on its visibility in this regard?

The Arts Council should ensure that the arts are up to speed and are confident in their ability to exploit new technology. But this is again putting the cart before the horse. First of all, ask the questions. Where are we now? Where do we want to be and What organisation and resources do we need to get there?

Activity and Decision Making

3.11 Question 11: When applying for grant funding from Arts Council England, to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

- a. ACE staff are responsive and helpful and work collaboratively with me to ensure my application is as strong as possible. **Disagree**
- b. The guidance and instructions provided by ACE staff are clear and easy to understand. **Disagree**
- c. The guidance and instructions on ACE's website are easy to find and easy to understand. **Strongly Disagree**
- d. ACE staff are knowledgeable and understand the specific needs of the sectors and regions in which they work. **Strongly disagree**
- e. The resources required to engage in the application process are proportionate. **Strongly disagree**

3.12 Question 12: Please choose three priority areas where ACE could improve its grant application process.

All of them

- a. Issuing guidance on application criteria
- b. Application support
- c. Online application form
- d. Decision making process
- e. Timing of receiving decision
- f. Application feedback
- g. Receiving initial payment arrangement

If you would like to provide further information on ACE's grant application process, please do so here:

Please see 3.4.4.2 The purchase of Grantium and problems along the way

3.13 Question 13: What do you think of the level of data and information requested by ACE in proportion to the amount of funding being applied for?

Far too much

3.14 Question 14 ACE's funding decisions

Strongly disagree on all of them

Please see 3.4.5.2 Freedom of Information request regarding the Arts Council's long term strategic approach to jazz

- a. Based on clear evidence
- b. Reflective of community needs
- c. Reflective of national priorities and needs
- d. Transparent in rationale
- e. Consistent in approach

3.15 Question 15: How clear is ACE in communicating, including when sharing the results and reasons for its funding decisions to applicants?

- a. Very unclear

3.16. Question 16: Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

Strongly disagree with all of them

Please see 3.4.5.2 Freedom of Information request regarding the Arts Council's long term strategic approach to jazz

- a. ACE clearly defines the intended outcomes and impacts of its funding programmes.
- b. ACE collects relevant data to measure the actual outcomes and impacts achieved.
- c. ACE transparently reports on the demonstrated impacts of its investments.
- d. The information ACE provides about its impacts is easy for the public to understand.
- e. ACE's approach to measuring and communicating impact is effective in holding the organisation accountable.

3.17 Question 17 What, if anything, do you think ACE could do to better measure and Communicate its impact?

As mentioned before ACE needs to start from scratch.

The first thing the Arts Council England should do is dump "Lets Create" and develop a simple action programme with clear goals and objectives that the arts community and the public can relate and responds to.

The next thing that the Arts Council needs to do is to ask "Where are we now? Where do we want to be and how will they get there? What structure is required to make this happen?"

Instead of the bounded rationality of the past what is required is a paradigm shift into the future

Working Relationships & Partnerships

3.18 Question 18: Based on your experience or knowledge, please rate the following aspect of Arts Council England's engagement with local stakeholders:

Very Poor for all of them

- a. ACE's efforts to actively engage with regional stakeholders and other relevant Public Bodies / organisations.
- b. ACE's efforts to actively involve local organisations, and community groups in decision-making.
- c. ACE's incorporation of local stakeholder input when setting funding priorities and program designs.
- d. ACE's transparency in communicating how local stakeholder feedback influences its decisions.
- e. ACE's efforts to engage with diverse communities including in deprived areas.

3.19 Question 19: Are there ways that ACE could improve engagement and responsiveness to local communities?

Yes by changing the structure of the organisation to something like the
<https://footballfoundation.org.uk/>

3.20 Question 20. ACE Relationship Managers are often the first and most important port of call for organisations in receipt of ACE funding. If relevant to you, how would you describe your experience working with your ACE Relationship Manager?

The problem is they have been given the name of relationship managers which is pure idiocy – the Arts Council has been turned into high street bank where the relationship managers hover around cash point machines and try to help which is invariably utterly ineffective.

In terms of the quality of the relationship managers some are good, others bad, one or two superb but basically the Arts Council has a personnel management problem. The calibre of the relationship managers goes from the sublime to the cor blimey. There is no consistency and some have not got a clue on business – budgeting, marketing etc with appalling inter personal skills whilst others unfortunately for them are out of their depth. This is not their fault this is a top management problem. It is the old ,old storey of lions in the trenches being led by the donkeys in the officers mess.

3.21 Question 21: Working Relationships & Partnerships

Based on your experience or knowledge, please rate the following aspects of Arts Council England's collaboration and knowledge sharing:

- a. How effective is ACE at cooperating and sharing knowledge with the United Kingdom 'Arts Councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The Arts Council has failed to deliver on a:

A freedom of information inquiry asking:

“Thank you for your request which I received on 3 April 2025. You asked for:
What date did Arts Council England contact the Welsh Government to inform them of the cut to the Welsh National Opera funding in 2022. Was it after or before the cuts were announced by Arts Council England?

The Welsh Government response

The Welsh Government was made aware of the funding reduction to WNO when ACE made its announcement about the new National Portfolio Organisation funding arrangements on 4 November 2022”.

The Arts Council withdrew a sizable chunk of funding from a major Welsh arts company that also impacted on touring in England without any consultation with the Welsh government

- b. How effective is ACE in fostering international collaboration, and promoting British art and culture abroad?

In fairness to the Arts Council this is a sizable job to undertake and demonstrates the lack of Government quangos not being joined up. Where is the action plan for promoting UK arts abroad? The British Council, the Foreign Office, The DCMS. This just highlights the lack of a national plan for the arts from the cradle to the grave.

- c. How effective is ACE at working with other agencies and bodies in the creative sector to promote and enhance the UK's creative capabilities?

This needs a detailed study rather than the views of a survey.

- d. How effective is ACE at working with and bringing different institutions and organisations together to support arts and creativity in places?

There were flutterings in the dovecote when ACE after it was accused of attempting to “silence artists both on stage and in their personal lives”. The Arts Council published updates to its relationship

framework in January 2024, which has been criticised by the performing arts and entertainment trade union Equity.²⁸

Arts Council England & Government

ACE makes funding decisions at arm's length from the government of the day, using taxpayers' and National Lottery players' money to support engaging and innovative projects and organisations across the whole of England.

3.22 Question 22 How much involvement should the national government have in the work of ACE?

Since 2010 there has been more and more interference in the "arm's length" principle. The use of lottery funding to prop up NPO's.

Please see 3.4.4.7 above, There has been a 49% increase in the numbers of NPOs since 2015. The subvention from the DCMS has been supplemented by lottery funds.

The Government should set the terms /mandate in for a parliamentary term and let the Arts Council get on with it.

3.23 Question 23:How much involvement should local governments have in the work of ACE?

If the structure of the Arts Council were to change to a grass roots organisation along the lines of the <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/> then maximum co-operation is required

3.24.Question 24: How much influence should any each level of government have in funding decisions?

Again, if the structure of the Arts Council were to change to a grass roots organisation along the lines of the

<https://footballfoundation.org.uk/> then maximum co-operation is required

3.25 Question 25: How effectively does the government hold ACE to account?

Since 2010 there has been more and more interference in the "arm's length" principle. The use of lottery funding to prop up NPO's.

Please see 3.4.4.7 above, There has been a 49% increase in the numbers of NPOs since 2015. The subvention from the DCMS has been supplemented by lottery funds.

The Government should set the terms /mandate in for a parliamentary term and let the Arts Council get on with it but hold them to account annually on whether they reaching their goals and quantified objectives.

Future Development

3.26 Question 26: What is the biggest challenge facing the arts and cultural sector in the next 10 years?

1. That a national action plan for the arts is developed and enacted from the cradle to the grave
2. The lack of Art Form policies has manifested itself in many ways: in the problem that arose concerning opera in the last National Portfolio funding round. It is crucial that the funding system develops Art Form policies, separately, for music, theatre, dance, etc. and funding decisions should be guided by these policies.
3. Arts Council England's Lottery Project Grant Scheme requires an overhaul to make it fit for purpose.

²⁸ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/arts-council-england-b2496863.html>

4. The current use of lottery funds to support the growth of National Portfolio Organisations needs urgent attention to redress the imbalance by restoring adequate levels of funding to the National Lottery Project Grants Scheme.
5. Grass Roots Music Venues - Ensuring promoters and small-scale venues are supported and that new promoters are encouraged and trained.
6. Working to reduce the red tape which stifles jazz touring in the EU.
The Trade and Cooperation Agreement – How to help musicians work in the EU after BREXIT
<https://appjag.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/the-trade-and-cooperation-agreement-how-to-help-musicians-work-in-the-eu.pdf> © Chris Hodgkins
7. Working to fix the inequalities in musicians' and composers' earnings from streaming.
<https://appjag.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/appjag-submission-to-the-dcms-committee-inquiry-into-the-economics-of-music-streaming-15th-november-2020.pdf> © Chris Hodgkins
8. Artificial Intelligence (AI) - the speed of technical development requires monitoring as it has already outstripped legislative frameworks to respond effectively. An ever present danger is the ease with which UK tech companies are taken over by foreign firms who only want the intellectual property and then wind it down
[.Submission to the open consultation on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence](#) © Chris Hodgkins
9. Responding to the new Government's mission for growth.
10. With an ageing population a concerted effort must be made to improve access at venues
There are now more disabled people post-COVID and more people are disabled due to an ageing population. Current statistic shows that 24% of people the UK are disabled (largely due to an aging population and upcoming dementia crisis) and no one has thought to directly market to this richest slice of society yet.

3.27 Question 27: What are the most important things Arts Council England should focus on?

1. That a national action plan for the arts is developed and enacted from the cradle to the grave
2. The lack of Art Form policies has manifested itself in many ways: in the problem that arose concerning opera in the last National Portfolio funding round. It is crucial that the funding system develops Art Form policies, separately, for music, theatre, dance, etc. and funding decisions should be guided by these policies.
3. Arts Council England's Lottery Project Grant Scheme requires an overhaul to make it fit for purpose.
4. The current use of lottery funds to support the growth of National Portfolio Organisations needs urgent attention to redress the imbalance by restoring adequate levels of funding to the National Lottery Project Grants Scheme.
5. Grass Roots Music Venues - Ensuring promoters and small-scale venues are supported and that new promoters are encouraged and trained.
6. With an ageing population a concerted effort must be made to improve access at venues
7. There are now more disabled people post-COVID and more people are disabled due to an ageing population. Current statistic shows that 24% of people the UK are disabled (largely due to an aging population and upcoming dementia crisis) and no one has thought to directly market to this richest slice of society yet.

3.28 Question 28: What changes would you like to see regarding ACE?

As mentioned before ACE needs to start from scratch.

The Arts Council for years has lived in a world of bounded rationality where the Arts Council instead of seeking the best possible solution has settled for a satisfactory option that meets a low threshold of acceptability. Rather than trying to optimise they take the easy way out.

This is evidenced in the treatment of jazz. In the *Jazz the Case for Better Investment* published in 1993 as a submission to the Arts Council of Great Britain's review of jazz - jazz received £230.400, opera £27.1 million and classical music £8.6million

In 2023/2024 the NPOs share of music funding was Opera received £43.6 million equating to 49% of all music funding, Classical Music received £21.4% that was 24% of total music funding and jazz received £1.9 million that was 2% of total music funding

Instead of the bounded rationality of the past what is required is a paradigm shift into the future

The Arts Council should be remodelled along the lines of the [Foot Ball Foundation](#)

Then the Arts Council England should dump "Lets Create" and develop a simple action programme that the arts community and the public can relate and responds to that is about grass roots activity

There needs to be a fundamental change in the culture of the Arts Council that can only be effected by a complete change of management from the council down to the executive board.

The so called "flag ship" arts organisations should be managed by the DCMS and organisations like the Royal Opera House should be encouraged to do a "Wigmore Hall". The Royal Opera House has received substantial National Lottery funding since the lottery's inception. It was awarded £55 million in 1995 for redevelopment, with an additional £23 million later allocated, bringing the total to £78 million. More broadly, the Royal Opera House, along with other major London arts institutions, has collectively received £315 million in Arts Lottery funding since the beginning of the National Lottery.²⁹

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²⁹ <https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/place-report-reveals-wealthy-are-big-winners-in-arts-funding-lottery/>