

Arts Council of Wales

Arts Portfolio Wales Resilience Programme

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Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales



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Arts Portfolio Wales Resilience Programme

What is the Resilience Programme, and why would it interest me and my organisation?

These are challenging times, particularly for arts organisations. You might be finding it more difficult to attract funding from the sources that you used to, or perhaps your audiences are changing as people find their own funds being squeezed. Retaining healthy year round income through box office or sales is a constant challenge particularly as overheads increase. You may be experiencing a range of other issues that are creating barriers to success, and preventing your organisation from realising its creative ambition. All organisations would probably benefit from becoming more 'resilient' and as arts organisations we think a creative and collaborative approach is the most likely way of protecting yourself against many of the current pressures.



This programme is not simply about an additional one off investment of cash. We don't think this is necessarily the most effective way to drive change and future proof organisations. Instead, we want to use this opportunity to explore the issues and, hopefully, to find solutions together. There could potentially be some investment at a later stage but this is not the starting point for the programme.

The first step will be analytical. We want to review your organisation with you – focussing on those areas you have identified as being particularly problematic.

We know that in most cases there won't be a convenient 'off the peg' solution to hand. Arts organisations are by their very nature multi-faceted and complex and so the key to unlocking potential and achieving resilience will be equally varied in its solutions. In some instances there could be an easy 'fix' such as some capital investment or specialised training programme, whilst others will need a more tailored and structured plan of work to achieve longer term goals.

“This programme aims to be a cooperative and collaborative partnership between Arts Council and members of the new Arts Portfolio Wales with, both parties working towards a better, more resilient organisation. We know that this may be challenging but we are confident in securing some very positive outcomes.”

How will the programme work?

This isn't a traditional grant scheme. We will ask you to submit an initial 'expression of interest' which should identify areas that need further investigation. These will not comprise direct applications for funding and in some cases the end result could be the offer of practical assistance rather than a cash investment. Some scenarios may require a mixture of the two. That's where the diagnostic stage becomes an essential part of the process. We will be drawing on the skills of our pool of external specialist advisers to assist us in the delivery of this ambitious programme. Successful candidates may have the opportunity to work with them either in a group session, on a one to one or team basis over the duration of the scheme.

In order that we can target the specific areas that you've identified, we will be recruiting a team of specialist advisers with a wide range of skills over the coming months. This will ensure we have the best advice readily available when we need it.

The types of scenarios that you may want to think about include (but are not limited to):

- Governance reviews to strengthen your organisation from the top.
- Skills audits to ensure the right people are in the right place to deliver your objectives.
- Organisational reviews to strengthen your team and improve efficiency.
- Financial and business reviews to identify areas where improvements can be made.
- Marketing initiatives to get more people involved with your work and potentially boost income.
- Assistance with particular initiatives such as realising the potential of Government tax relief or rate reduction schemes that could have a major impact for a small initial outlay.
- Making your organisation more environmentally sustainable and reducing energy costs
- Reviews of commercial services and ancillary spend to improve retail and/or catering that can provide valuable additional income.

“We encourage you to think creatively here as we can try and get some interesting conversations going - hopefully leading to some imaginative outcomes that we can share with the sector.”

By asking for expressions of interest to participate we will be able to undertake the following:

- An initial analysis of the portfolio as a whole, identifying where there may be similar concerns affecting a group of portfolio members. This will build on the information we have already gathered through your Investment Review submissions.
- The opportunity to tailor an appropriate series of early workshop sessions, bringing together organisations in a forum that allows discussion of common areas, debate and information sharing.

What the next stage of the process looks like will depend on the outcome of these workshop sessions. We imagine that there will be three likely scenarios:

- In a few instances, the simple opportunity to discuss issues with peers and invited professionals may deliver a solution in itself, or the programme is not considered appropriate at this time. Other paths may be more appropriate.
- ‘Families’ of organisations may identify a particular area in which they feel they would benefit from assistance. This may have a simple, one off solution that could be:
 - Practical assistance from our teams of professional advisers.
 - The opportunity to apply for grant funding if this is the more appropriate strategic route. This includes access to the Arts Council’s Lottery Capital programme.
 - Access to some tailored leadership/training programmes
- A further group may have a more complex or challenging set of issues that require a correspondingly tailored approach. In this instance we will invite these organisations to continue to work with us and our advisory teams to draw up an action plan for change. Although we expect most members of the programme to have completed this stage by March 2017, more complex situations could require an extended period to reach their goals. In some instances, part of the action plan could involve applying for Arts Council funding in order to progress specific pieces of work



Who is eligible to express an interest in the programme?

For the current selection round, only members of the 2016/17 Arts Portfolio Wales are eligible to express an interest

How will your organisation progress through the Programme?

We want to help as many organisations as possible and therefore we would like to include all organisations where we feel we are able to offer assistance.

We are likely to invite you to discuss your expression further if we feel that you have:

1. A genuine issue that, if addressed, will assist your organisation in strengthening its operation or stabilising its financial position
2. The commitment to work with us to address this issue
3. A realistic expectation of the assistance that we can provide with a limited budget

However, progression to later stages of the Programme will be decided based on the following criteria:

- The clear identification and recognition of the issues you face. We won't expect a ready solution at this stage - that's what we want to explore during the early stages of the programme.
- The involvement and commitment of your Board, as well as your senior management team. This is vital if you are to achieve a successful outcome
- A long term view of success rather than a short term 'patching up' of a problem.

Your willingness to be open about what a successful outcome might be, including the fact that a cash injection may not be the most appropriate solution



When will the scheme be operational?

The scheme will go live towards the end of June 2016 and we will be accepting initial **expressions of interest** until the **22nd July 2016**.

In order to be involved, portfolio members will need to have completed the initial expression of interest.

Depending on the issues that are identified during the programme, we envisage that the majority of candidates will complete the programme prior to March 2017. As discussed above there may be some more complex scenarios that will require longer. These will be identified on a case by case basis.

The diagram below gives a basic representation of the possible stages.

So what do I need to do next?

Your Board and Management team should discuss what they consider to be the barriers to progression within your organisation, and complete our simple **'Expression of Interest' form** prior to the closing date of **22nd July 2016**.

If we feel that there is merit in discussing your issues further you will be invited to participate in the next stage. In this initial phase we intend to keep the process as straightforward and flexible as possible to allow for changes and individual situations. So we imagine, in the first instance, that successful candidates will receive invitation to a workshop session with other candidates.

