

Reformed Arts Council to better ensure the arts are no longer the preserve of the privileged few

26.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Government publishes formal response to independent review of Arts Council England

- Recommendations to be taken forward and considered to ensure the arts tell stories from every corner of the country
- New vision to break down barriers to the arts and support a decade of national renewal

Communities up and down the country will benefit from increased access to the arts, following the government's response to the independent review of Arts Council England (ACE), published today.

The formal response sets out the government's vision for a reformed Arts Council that will support a culture sector that will ensure everyone, everywhere is welcome and can be inspired by access to the arts. The response confirms that the government will accept or explore all of the recommendations made last year by Baroness Margaret Hodge.

This includes:

- Committing to work with the Arts Council to develop a new fund for future artists and creatives to ensure that those who have had fewer opportunities are given the chance to flourish. This new programme, part of an improved total offer for individuals, will sit alongside work to ensure that access to a high-quality arts education will be the entitlement of every child. The government's enrichment framework will support schools to build relationships with arts organisations so that all children have access to a stronger arts enrichment offer.
- Spreading art across communities through reforming the Arts Council's National Portfolio Investment Programme and putting people and places back at the heart of decision-making. As a result of these reforms, people will be able to experience artistic excellence where they live, realise their creative ambitions and build skills for a career in our high-growth creative industries - ensuring that the benefits of culture are equally distributed. ACE will be investing over £2 million in projects to engage citizens directly to understand what they want from arts in their areas.
- Maintaining a strong, politically impartial and independent Arts Council that remains a champion for freedom of expression - meaning everyone can be confident that the Arts Council is a home for diversity of ideas.
- Revolutionising arts investment by exploring ideas that have the potential to boost our cultural sector - including committing to longer funding rounds for the National Portfolio of up to five years, incentivising philanthropy, cultural tax reliefs, and exploring the potential opportunities that charging international visitors at museums could bring.
- Supporting the Arts Council with up to £8 million to reform its systems and simplify its application processes to help the sector spend less time on funding applications and reporting, and more time throwing open their doors, getting out into communities and telling stories from every corner of England.

Over the coming months, the government and Arts Council England will work closely with the sector to ensure that these reforms are a success for future generations of artists and creatives and

communities across the country, who want to see themselves reflected in our national story.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said:

For far too long, the benefits of culture have not been equally distributed.

I refuse to sit back while communities are forgotten in our national story. Change must start today. That change begins with a culture sector that is proud and unafraid to tell the whole story of our nation. A reformed and independent Arts Council will sit at the heart of this vision to reach, inspire and nurture young people who otherwise would not have the opportunity to be creative, let alone pursue a creative career.

We must seize the opportunity we have to build a culture sector that works for the whole country and provides the tonic we need in the face of division.

Arts Minister Ian Murray said:

The government is a proud champion of the arts and our ambition is to ensure that everyone, everywhere has access to excellent culture where they live and that we build on the vast talent we have in this country to grow the future workforce for our world-leading creative industries.

We will stand alongside the Arts Council as they implement these reforms to revolutionise the way we fund the arts in this country and the way we work with creatives and the public to provide the access to culture that our country needs, wants and deserves.

The accepted recommendations will support a decade of national renewal, break down barriers to the best arts and culture, and support the development of vital creative skills.

The reforms will also support the aims of the Industrial Strategy, which identifies the cultural and creative industries as a priority sector. These recommendations will help widen access to the arts, unlocking the creativity of young people and ensuring children of all backgrounds are able to pursue fulfilling careers in high growth sectors.

The government is already making progress on the priorities identified in Baroness Hodge's Review. Earlier this year, the Culture Secretary announced the biggest capital investment in the arts in over a decade, with an investment of £1.5 billion into cultural infrastructure. This funding will create a stronger, more resilient cultural sector and enhance access to vital community spaces up and down the country.

This followed a new UK Town of Culture competition being launched and the Every Child Can programme which will see £132.5 million of dormant assets funding used to increase disadvantaged young people's access to enrichment opportunities in the arts, culture, sports and wider youth

services.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reformed-arts-council-to-better-ensure-the-arts-are-no-longer-t
he-preserve-of-the-privileged-few](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reformed-arts-council-to-better-ensure-the-arts-are-no-longer-the-preserve-of-the-privileged-few)