

130 cultural venues, museums, and libraries to receive funding boost that will improve access to arts and culture across the country

14.4.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

130 cultural venues, museums and libraries are set to receive a share of almost £130 million to protect them for present and future generations.

- Investment forms part of the Arts Everywhere Fund, a bumper £1.5 billion package to support cultural infrastructure projects
- Organisations such as The Lowry, Stratford East, The Black Country Living Museum and Derbyshire Libraries are amongst 130 receiving a needed cash boost

130 cultural venues, museums and libraries are set to benefit from a £127.8 million funding boost, helping to ensure that everyone can access arts and culture in the places they call home.

Venues ranging from The Lowry Centre in Salford, The Hexagon in Reading and the Royal Shakespeare Company in Warwickshire will receive a much needed cash boost to help open up access to facilities, complete much needed building projects and upgrade technology on site.

The 130 organisations receiving funding today mark the first projects receiving cash from the government's Arts Everywhere Fund. As the cost of living continues to affect families across Britain, funding for these venues will help provide welcoming, affordable spaces for communities to visit, come together and celebrate what makes their local area special.

Earlier this year, the Culture Secretary committed up to £1.5 billion to the cultural sector over this parliament, with the Arts Everywhere Fund aiming to save more than 1,000 cherished arts venues, museums, libraries and heritage buildings across England.

Today's £127.8 million which is administered and delivered by Arts Council England on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is made up of three funds:

- The Creative Foundations Fund (CFF) has allocated £96 million to 74 arts and cultural venues to help theatres, performing arts venues, galleries and grassroots music venues address urgent infrastructure needs. In this round, organisations such as The Lowry Centre Trust in Salford, which has been awarded £8.5 million to upgrade critical infrastructure. This funding will replace escalators with new lifts, providing step-free access to galleries and opening up more of the building. Visitors will benefit from improved access to galleries, theatres, family and conference spaces, along with enhanced café and retail facilities, creating a more inclusive and welcoming experience. Theatre Royal Stratford East in London has also secured £1,750,000 funding to upgrade its building and essential systems, ensuring the theatre remains safe, accessible and welcoming for local people.
- The Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) has allocated a share of £25.5 million to support 28 museums to undertake vital infrastructure works, and improve the visitor experience. In this round, organisations such as Black Country Living Museum in Dudley have been awarded £454,159 to safeguard key historic buildings, ensuring they remain safe and

open for visitors while preserving the region's unique heritage. In total the fund has supported 150 museums over the past four years.

- The Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF) has allocated a share of £6.3 million to 28 library services to help upgrade buildings and technology to better meet the needs of the community. The fund has already supported 95 projects across England over five years and this round will support organisations such as Derbyshire Libraries which will use £440,000 to refurbish three sites to create more welcoming, flexible spaces for community use, including bookable rooms and areas for local activities. It is hoped that these improvements will encourage more visits from children and families, support community engagement and ensure the libraries remain sustainable and well-used for years to come.

Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy said:

Across the country, people take real pride in where they come from. Our local arts, museums and libraries are a big part of that, telling our stories, reflecting who we are, and bringing communities together.

That's why our Arts Everywhere Fund matters. We're backing the places people care about most, with support for 130 venues across the country announced today.

Arts and culture aren't a luxury for a privileged few. They are for everyone, everywhere. They bring people together, open doors, and support our shared sense of belonging. That's the role they can play as we build a stronger future for our country.

Arts Council England Chair Sir Nicholas Serota said:

Arts organisations, museums and libraries are the beating heart of our communities.

After significant financial pressures in recent years, this vital investment will help organisations to secure futures where they thrive and not just survive.

We look forward to seeing these cultural spaces flourish as they continue to provide access to excellent art and culture for everyone, everywhere, for many years to come.

Other examples of funded projects include:

Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival (CFF) in East Sussex will receive £468,701 in funding which will modernise the concert hall's systems, improving accessibility, sustainability, and improve the experience for the audience and artists. This safeguards

a vital cultural hub, supporting year-round events, opportunities for young people and community engagement across Brighton & Hove and Sussex. Newstead Abbey (MEND), in Nottinghamshire, is an internationally significant former home of the poet Lord Byron, will receive £1,550,747 for essential roof and drainage repairs. This investment will protect the historic building and its nationally important collections from persistent leaks, ensuring the site remains open for future generations to enjoy. Henleaze Library (LIF) in Bristol is awarded £279,147 to transform it into a more inclusive and flexible community space. The project includes a new front extension for meetings and events, accessible facilities, and digital upgrades allowing community access outside regular hours.

The next rounds of these funds will open for applications in the coming months. Further details on the Museum Estate and Development Fund, and the new Museum Transformation Programme, along with the Libraries Improvement Fund will be announced in due course.

ENDS

Creative Foundations Fund full list of recipients:

London

- Southbank Centre - £10,000,000
- Harrow Arts Centre - £630,014
- Certain Blacks - £150,000
- Autograph ABP - £499,950
- The Lyric Theatre Hammersmith Limited - £534,227
- Theatre Royal Stratford East - £1,750,000
- St Margaret's House - £700,000
- Create London, The White House, Dagenham - £500,000
- Shoreditch Town Hall - £899,847
- Kiln Theatre - £296,500
- London Contemporary Dance (The Place) Limited - £660,000
- Electric Ballroom CIC - £497,000
- Rich Mix Cultural Foundation - £2,205,000
- Royal Opera House - £5,000,000
- VocalEyes - £102,254
- English National Opera - £1,601,293

North East

- Northern Stage (Theatrical Productions) Ltd - £192,600
- Queen's Hall Arts - £393,068
- THIRTY-SIX LIME STREET LIMITED - £847,932
- Baltic Flour Mills Visual Arts Trust - £3,649,800
- Gateway Studio CIO, New Trinity - £400,000
- Middlesbrough Council Cultural Services - £2,595,000
- The Cluny Events (North East) CIC - £334,000

North West

- Theatre Porto - £139,000
- esea contemporary - £359,100

- The Lowry Centre Trust - £8,500,000
- Liverpool & Merseyside Theatres Trust Ltd - £999,999
- Blackburn with Darwen BC - £990,000
- Skylight Circus Arts - £125,990
- Octopus Collective Ltd, Barrow - £396,000

East of England

- New Wolsey Theatre Company Ltd - £529,340
- Palace Theatre Watford Limited - £999,896
- Creative Arts East - £144,226
- Stagertext - £183,356
- Wysing Arts Centre - £195,000
- Firstsite Ltd - £995,000
- Britten Pears Arts - £1,954,825

South East

- Worthing Borough Council - £371,278
- Brighton Dome & Festival Limited - £468,701
- Watermill Theatre - £300,000
- The Mill Arts Centre - £135,000
- Kent County Council - £865,000
- Portsmouth New Theatre Royal - £450,000
- The Hexagon, Reading - £2,068,000
- Turner Sims, Southampton - £350,000
- Play to the Crowd, Theatre Royal Winchester - £398,000

South West

- TwoCan Inclusive Theatre Company - £283,169
- Taunton Theatre Association Ltd - £527,083
- Wiltshire Creative - £3,000,000
- Friends of the Lyric CIC - £170,000
- Newlyn Art Gallery Ltd - £726,599
- Theatre Royal (Plymouth) Ltd - £8,356,000
- Music Venue Properties - £999,000
- Trinity Community Arts - £390,000

East Midlands

- University of Leicester, Attenborough Arts Centre - £899,999
- Serendipity Institute for Black Arts and Heritage, Leicester - £119,725
- Northampton Theatres Trust - £538,000
- Nottingham Playhouse - £285,574
- North Kesteven District Council - £107,777

West Midlands

- Stoke on Trent & North Staffordshire Theatre Trust - £295,308
- Royal Shakespeare Company - £7,298,800
- Paines Plough - £750,000
- Birmingham Royal Ballet - £949,953

- Birmingham Repertory Theatre - £3,047,229
- Claybody Theatre - £150,000
- Wolverhampton Arts Centre - £4,999,999

Yorkshire and the Humber

- Hull Truck Theatre - £318,911
- Barnsley Civic Enterprise Ltd Civic - £805,165
- Kirklees Theatre Trust - £630,000
- Yorkshire Dance Centre Trust - £750,000
- Mind the Gap Studio - £100,000
- Northern Ballet Limited - £522,500
- Rotherham Theatres - £200,000
- Scarborough Theatre Trust Ltd - £2,700,000

Museum Estate and Development Fund full list of recipients:

London

- London Transport Museum - £999,999
- Museum of the Order of St John - £413,015

North East

- Hartlepool Borough Council - £2,458,641
- Chesters Roman Fort - £476,566

North West

- Grundy Art Gallery - £357,000
- People's History Museum - £2,491,670
- Port Sunlight Village Trust - £499,999
- Lancaster City Museum - £94,056
- Bramall Hall, Stockport Museums - £1,000,000
- Greater Manchester Transport Society - £244,000
- The Armitage Museum and Library - £238,098

East of England

- Natural History Museum, Colchester - £499,477
- Sheringham Museum - £456,170

South East

- Walmer Council - £3,080,000
- The Brickworks Museum - £280,000
- Whitchurch Silk Mill - £210,045
- Brading Roman Villa - £80,707

South West

- Bristol Museums - £3,567,713

East Midlands

- Boston Guildhall - £401,112
- National Tramway Museum - £492,880
- Creswell Crags - £184,705
- Newstead Abbey, Nottingham - £1,550,747

West Midlands

- Black Country Living Museum - £454,159
- Compton Verney - £794,750

Yorkshire and the Humber

- Burton Constable Hall - £242,000
- Oakwell Hall, Kirklees - £1,638,724
- Yorkshire Museum - £2,000,000
- Ryedale Folk Museum - £350,676

Libraries Improvement Fund full list of recipients:

London

- London Borough Havering - £499,000
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham - £300,000
- London Borough of Ealing Libraries - £50,000
- RBG - Sport, Leisure and Library Services, Greenwich Libraries - £121,755
- Harrow Libraries - £110,000
- Camden Council - £149,655

East of England

- East Ham Co-Working and Study Space - £350,000
- Suffolk County Council - £500,000
- Cambridgeshire Community and Cultural Services - £150,000

North East

- Hartlepool Borough Council - £94,400
- Northumberland Libraries - £491,022
- Gateshead Council - Library Service - £71,794

North West

- Manchester City Council - £52,942
- St Helens Council Library Service - £290,000
- Rochdale Borough Council - £140,000

South East

- Surrey Libraries - £50,000

South West

- South Gloucestershire Council (Cultural Services) - £167,639
- Devon County Council - £200,000
- Bristol City Council - £279,147

East Midlands

- Derbyshire County Council - £440,000

West Midlands

- Walsall Council - £170,000
- City of Wolverhampton Council - £270,000
- Shropshire Libraries - £299,000
- Telford & Wrekin - £235,971

Yorkshire and the Humber

- Sheffield Libraries - £87,000
- North Lincolnshire Council - £265,560
- Hull Culture and Leisure Library - £203,175
- East Riding Libraries - £300,000

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/130-cultural-venues-museums-and-libraries-to-receive-funding-boost-that-will-improve-access-to-arts-and-culture-across-the-country>