

# Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF)

**Small Capital Grants –  
£50,000 to £499,999**

**Round 3**

**Guidance for applicants**



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport



The criteria for the Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF) have been set by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) and Arts Council England. The grants are administered, awarded and monitored by Arts Council England. Funding has been provided by DCMS.

**February 2023**



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Front cover: Cirque Bijou Umbrella Project, The Hive. Photo © Ravi Lakhani Photography

# Overview

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The below is a broad overview of key information. See [section three](#) for full eligibility criteria.

## What can we fund?

Capital expenditure between £50,000 to £499,999 to undertake projects designed to transform library services in England.

We define capital expenditure as an amount spent to purchase or improve fixed assets that will be capitalised on your balance sheet.

## Who can apply?

The lead applicant must be an **English Local Authority**. They must submit the application on behalf of a library service in England (as defined by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964). Local Authority library services can include libraries that are owned and run by the authority, mutual or other structures that are commissioned by the authority, community managed libraries (CMLs) or any other library provision. The library service must contribute to the authority's statutory provision under the 1964 Act.

Other organisations are welcomed as project partners but may not apply without a Local Authority as the lead applicant.

Applications can be made for one or multiple branches.

## How much can be applied for per application?

£50,000 (minimum) – £499,999 (maximum)

## Key dates

Full applications will be by **invite only** following an Expression of Interest round to which any eligible Local Authority can apply.

Expressions of Interest open: 9am on 17 April 2023

Expressions of Interest deadline: midday on 19 June 2023

Full application forms open: 9am on 19 July 2023

Full application deadline: midday on 18 September 2023

Decisions announced: March 2024

### **Funding from other sources**

No partnership funding is required for eligibility to this fund although we would encourage applicants to maximise the impact of the fund by securing partnership funding where possible.

While partnership funding is not a requirement for this fund, applications which include partnership funding are likely to be viewed more favourably. Successful applications in Round 1 had an average of 25% of the project funded by other sources.

### **When must the activity take place?**

- Activities must start no earlier than 1 April 2024 and no later than 1 July 2024
- Activities must end no later than 31 March 2027

### **How will the fund be managed?**

As the accountable body for LIF, Arts Council England will manage the investment process for the fund. This includes advice giving, assessing applications, making decisions, issuing funding agreements and monitoring grants.

Advice will be sought from a Programme Advisory Panel comprising representatives from a range of library sector organisations. They will provide specialist expertise as part of the assessment and decision-making process.

# Section one – introduction

# Section one – introduction

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## Ministerial foreword for Libraries Improvement Fund

Thank you for your interest in the Libraries Improvement Fund.

I am pleased to launch this third, bumper round of the fund. It addresses the need for capital funding to support library services in upgrading their buildings and digital infrastructure to respond to the changing needs of their local communities, and I know that it will make a real difference to many libraries and the people who rely on them, just as previous rounds have done.

With **£10.5 million** of capital funding available in this round, even more library services will be able to seek support for capital projects which have the potential to transform local library services.

We know that the need is there. Previous rounds generated lots of excellent applications, so this third round offers a further opportunity to realise ambitious and inspirational projects, helping libraries to keep evolving and identifying ways in which they can continue to meet the needs of local people.

I know that the value that public libraries offer to their communities can often be intangible – accessible, warm and welcoming spaces; trusted help from skilled and experienced staff; opening up worlds of information to new generations of readers. Through the Libraries Improvement Fund we are able to support the tangible infrastructure which underpins and enables all this and more.

As with previous rounds, projects can seek funding of between £50,000 and £499,999 which supports investment in:

- digital infrastructure: (i) to improve the offer to library users, increasing user satisfaction and improving perceptions; (ii) to improve service delivery and development; or (iii) both;
- and/or,
- physical spaces to increase libraries' potential for transformation, reconfiguring and refurbishing spaces to make them safer, more flexible, more accessible or more environmentally sustainable, or to give them greater commercial potential.

Good luck with your projects and applications.

**Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay**  
**Minister for Arts and Heritage**

## About the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

DCMS helps to drive growth and enrich lives. DCMS sponsors a number of non-departmental public bodies to help deliver national priorities relating to digital, culture, media and sport. It has responsibility to oversee and promote the improvement of local government's provision of public library services in England.

## About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £440 million of public money from Government and an estimated £93 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk).

Following the Covid-19 crisis, the Arts Council developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90% coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. We are also one of the bodies responsible for administering the Government's unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund of which we delivered over £1 billion to the sector in grants and loans. Find out more at [www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/covid19).



# **Section two – aims, impacts and outcomes of the Libraries Improvement Fund**

# Section two – aims, impacts and outcomes of the Libraries Improvement Fund

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## Aims of the fund

The Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF) is an open-access capital fund targeted at library services based in England to apply for funding to undertake capital infrastructure work which will help address historic under-investment in technology and buildings. The aims of the fund are to:

- increase the sustainability and potential for transformation of libraries by developing more flexible, more commercial spaces
- increase and improve digital access within communities
- connect libraries to their communities and increase library use

## Impacts and outcomes

The impacts we expect to see from this investment are:

- future-proofed, modern libraries able to meet evolving patterns of use
- improved user satisfaction
- improved perception of the value and role of libraries
- libraries used by a greater diversity of users
- increased access to library collections by local communities
- increase in digital access and securing libraries' role as the place to do that
- increased collaboration with a wider range of local partners

The outcomes we expect from this investment are as follows:

- more community groups using library space
- increased number of users accessing collections and services
- increased users accessing makerspace technology
- more revenue taken in commercial income
- increased number of PCs/devices available to users
- fewer libraries running outdated operating systems
- extension of available hours
- increased number of co-located services

It is anticipated that the fund will be investing in the following broad categories:

- **investment in digital infrastructure** – i) improve the offer to library users, increasing user satisfaction and improving perceptions; or ii) improve service delivery and development; or iii) both; and/or
- **investment in physical spaces** – to increase libraries' potential for transformation, reconfiguring and refurbishing spaces to make them more flexible, safer, with greater commercial potential, more accessible or more environmentally sustainable

While we are not prescriptive about the types of activities this fund may support and the following list is far from exhaustive, we will consider the following types of capital expenditure, provided they can be capitalised on your organisation's balance sheet:

- building projects to refurbish, improve or extend existing library buildings providing they meet our requirements set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#). This could include but is not limited to:

- o extending an existing library building to provide increased flexibility or greater commercial potential
- o internal reconfiguration/refurbishment to increase the flexibility of spaces or provide greater commercial potential
- o improving accessibility for users, eg toilets, baby changing, Changing Places, ramps, handles, doors, etc
- o external reconfiguration of entrances to improve capacity for community use outside hours
- buying assets such as furniture, equipment, or vehicles where these will support the delivery of library activity
- improving existing facilities to enhance access to and enjoyment of library services by disabled people and those with special educational needs
- buying digital production and distribution equipment such as cables, cameras or screens
- infrastructure to install/improve Wi-Fi connectivity
- increasing capacity to adopt new technologies
- purchasing or developing digital loans or customer relationship management systems where the assets will benefit the widest possible range of users and support shared approaches to increasing library use
- environmental sustainability costs including installing or retrofitting sustainable technologies, including heating/lighting or upgrading existing building fabric to enhance thermal performance

This fund also strongly encourages library services to:

- source additional funding towards their project proposals either from their own Local Authority or by engaging with Local Enterprise Partnerships or other local decision-makers and funders. While partnership funding is not a requirement to apply, this fund is

likely to be highly competitive and we often receive more good applications than we are able to fund. With this in mind, applications which include partnership funding may present a stronger case to be funded

- undertake appropriate consultation with users and stakeholders and take account of these in their project proposals

We expect one application to cover the full capital requirements for either one library site or for multiple sites or an entire service. You can make more than one application if you have more than one project. If you are successful with your application to this fund, it will not prevent you from applying to any future rounds which may be offered subject to the availability of funding.

If you currently have a live LIF grant from Round 1 and/or 2, then we may prioritise other applications that have not yet been successful, and/or that benefit other geographical locations. If you do decide to apply again, we would also need assurance that measures are in place to manage multiple LIF grants concurrently.

### **Other key eligibility points**

Your application must be for capital expenditure. We define capital expenditure as an amount spent to acquire or improve a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings. If you are offered a capital grant, we require it to be shown as a restricted grant and the full grant amount to be capitalised on your balance sheet.

As such, there are some things we cannot support with this funding which include:

- Book stock
- Advertising & Marketing costs
- Ongoing library staffing or running costs
- Any costs that cannot be capitalised on your balance sheet, in line with your capital policy

- Spending that has already taken place before we are able to make a decision
- Access audits & feasibility studies, which should take place before making an application

Funding for these elements must be sourced elsewhere.

For building works and improvements, you will need to demonstrate that you own the land and/or buildings (either as a freehold or leasehold) on which you spend the grant, and that the land and buildings can be used for the project purposes. Ownership of land and buildings requirements are set out in [Section four – our capital requirements](#).

### **Building project definition**

We define a building project as any type of building or construction work that is required to comply with statutory approvals such as building or planning regulations. The main statutory approvals and consents are:

- building regulations
- outline planning permission
- full planning permission
- listed building consent
- change of use
- lawful development certificate

If **any** part of your project is subject to one or more of these statutory approvals, it will be classified as a building project and you will need to take account of the full requirements for building projects set out in [Section four – our capital requirements](#) and provide all of the mandatory attachments listed in [section five – how to apply](#).

If your project does not involve construction, but involves any level of mechanical, electrical or plumbing (MEP) work, it may need to comply with building regulations and therefore be deemed a building project. However, it could be that these are minor works that may not require building regulations approval. If this is the case, tell us about your approach in your application, including any professional advice you have received. If you are unsure, please contact us before making your application, as it may be deemed ineligible if you do not provide the relevant information.

### **How much funding is available?**

LIF has a budget of up to £10.5 million for the 2023/24 round.

We expect to support a mix of projects of varying sizes and delivery timescales subject to the quality of the proposals we receive.

**This is a competitive fund.** We anticipate high demand, and we expect to receive more strong applications than we can support. We recommend that you consider implementing a contingency plan should you be unsuccessful.

### **Other capital funding**

Capital funding is available through a range of other Arts Council programmes including the Museums Maintenance Fund (MEND). You may apply to other Arts Council funding programmes providing you meet the eligibility criteria for those funds, but not for the same items of expenditure. For example, if a museum and library are co-located in a single building, two applications could be made for a single building project, but they would need to be split into separate library and museum elements.

### **Contact us**

You are strongly advised to discuss your project with your [Arts Council area office](#) before making an application and after reading these guidance notes. You can also get advice from our Customer Services team. If you decide to make an application, we wish you every success.



# Section three – eligibility

## Section three – eligibility

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Please read the eligibility requirements for the fund carefully. If you do not meet any of these requirements it will not be possible to consider your application for funding.

### Who can apply?

The lead applicant must be an English Local Authority. They will make an application on behalf of a library service in England (as defined by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964). Local Authority library services can include libraries that are owned and run by the authority, mutual or other structures that are commissioned by the authority, community managed libraries (CMLs) or any other library provision. The library service must contribute to the authority's statutory provision under the 1964 Act.

Applications can be made for one or multiple branches.

Other organisations are welcomed as project partners but may not apply without a Local Authority library service as the lead applicant.

### Before you apply

Applicants should already have freehold or leasehold ownership of the land and buildings where the proposed project will take place. Further details are set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#).

Prior to submitting a full application:

- for building projects, applicants will need to have detailed plans and costs. Plans for architectural elements should be developed to at least RIBA Work Stage 3 – 'Spatial coordination', where relevant

- ensure you have evidenced the need for your project, including any research, data and/or how your project aligns with any local initiatives and priorities

### Who cannot apply?

- individual library branches within the service
- libraries which are not open to the general public
- academic libraries, including schools
- community managed libraries that are not part of the statutory service
- for building projects, applicants who have not completed RIBA Work Stage 3 as a minimum before applying
- applicants who do not own the land or buildings where the proposed project will take place (see below for leasehold requirements)

If you were successful with a project in Round 1 and/or 2 you can still apply for a different project in Round 3. However, the Programme Advisory Panel and decision-makers will take this into account when making recommendations or balancing decisions and would also want to see assurance about capacity to manage multiple projects.

### What activity can be supported?

We fund capital expenditure as an amount spent to purchase or improve fixed assets that will be capitalised on your balance sheet.

- Building projects to refurbish, improve or extend existing library buildings to make them more flexible, accessible and safer, with greater commercial potential providing they meet our requirements set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#).
- Buying assets such as furniture, equipment or vehicles where these will support the delivery of library activity which includes:
  - o installation or upgrade of digital infrastructure
  - o buying digital production and distribution equipment such as cables, cameras or screens
  - o infrastructure to install/improve Wi-Fi connectivity
  - o purchasing of furniture such as shelving or desks
  - o purchasing or developing digital loans or customer relationship management systems where the assets will benefit the widest possible range of users and support shared approaches to increasing library use
  - o purchasing vehicles to support access to library services
- Improving existing facilities to enhance access to and enjoyment of library services by disabled people and those with special educational needs to provide inclusive access for everyone, including [Changing Places](#) toilets.
- Where appropriate, works to increase the environmental sustainability of library infrastructure such as:
  - o upgrading lighting to LEDs
  - o installing or retrofitting sustainable technologies
  - o upgrading existing building fabric to enhance thermal performance
  - o property protection measures to reduce the risk of flooding such as flood proofing or flood resilient works
- Decant, temporary accommodation and storage costs, including insurance.

- Professional fees directly related to the activity provided the appointments have been made in accordance with the procurement requirements set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#).
- VAT that you cannot recover from HM Revenue and Customs.

### **What activity cannot be funded?**

- Expenditure that cannot or will not be capitalised on your balance sheet. This includes any programming, performance or workshop costs.
- Activities (including buying goods or services) or any part of the projects that have already started, been bought, ordered or contracted before we make a decision about your application. This is because we cannot fund activity retrospectively.
- Day-to-day maintenance and minor repairs which should form part of a maintenance and management plan for the building(s).
- For building projects, projects that do not meet the ownership of land and buildings requirements set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#).
- Costs that are already paid for by other income including your own funds or any other funding.
- Research or feasibility work, including access audits.
- Development of architectural drawings up to and including RIBA Work Stage 3 – ‘Spatial coordination’.
- Assets that you plan to sell or dispose of.
- General running costs or overheads such as, but not limited to, additional staffing and insurance.
- Goods, works or services that have not been procured in accordance with the requirements set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#).
- Purchase of new land or buildings not currently occupied by the library service.
- Book stocks
- Marketing/advertising costs

## How much can be applied for?

Between **£50,000** (minimum) and **£499,999** (maximum).

## Funding from other sources

**There is no minimum partnership requirement for this programme.** However, we strongly encourage library services to maximise the value of this fund by securing partnership funding where possible, and applications which include partnership funding may present a stronger case to be funded.

Eligible sources of partnership funding include:

- grants from trusts and foundations
- other public funding including other Local Authority funding
- grants from National Lottery distributors
- donations from individuals or companies
- public appeals and fundraising events
- in-kind support
- donations of equipment or materials subject to suitable valuations
- loan finance

Where partnership funding is part of your project, we expect you to have secured it prior to you agreeing a contract to start any construction work in the case of a building project. You must tell us how you are raising the remaining funds to complete the project in your application and where possible provide evidence to support your plans.

## When must the activity take place?

- Activities must start no earlier than 1 April 2024 and no later than 1 July 2024.
- Activities must end no later than 31 March 2027.

We are unable to pay for costs invoiced before the date you accept our funding agreement.

## Partnership agreements

Applications for funding from organisations working together will be accepted. **However, the library authority must act as the lead organisation for any LIF application and submit the application.** The involvement and contribution of partners to a bid should be formally agreed in advance and written down. There is further guidance about [partnership agreements](#) on the Arts Council England website.

If the project is funded, Arts Council England will enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the lead organisation. This organisation must accept the Arts Council's terms and conditions of grant and will be solely accountable to the Arts Council for all monitoring information, how all the money is spent, and for the full and successful delivery of the project.



## Before you apply

To help you consider whether your project is sufficiently developed to make an application, please consider the following questions before applying:

- Have you carried out consultations with library users and your local communities to identify and prioritise why this project is needed and/or relevant? How will they be involved?
- Have you undertaken research and feasibility work to demonstrate the expected impact of the project and how this will add value on top of your business as usual offer?
- Have you identified any project constraints and risks such as, but not limited to, statutory approvals, consents (including any consents required for building works under the terms of any leases), land ownership and legal issues?
- Have you considered the resources required to deliver the project?
- Have you considered the impact on your organisation and its activities, both during the project and on its completion?
- Have you undertaken research to develop your budget and timetable? Have you taken appropriate professional advice?
- Have you identified other sources of funding? Would the activity happen without our investment?
- Have you considered what you will do if project costs increase?
- Have you developed architectural drawings to inform your building project, if applicable?
- Have you commissioned an access audit to inform your project proposals, if applicable? Are any of the recommendations reflected in your project?
- Have you considered environmental sustainability as an integral part of your project?
- Have you considered the ongoing maintenance of any assets beyond the project and how this will be funded and managed?

# Section four – capital requirements

## Section four – capital requirements

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Organisations applying for this fund should consider our requirements below and ensure that they have taken them into consideration in their project.

### Contingency

We need to remind you that you are responsible for any costs involved in developing your application. If successful, we will not be able to increase the grant if your project costs increase, and you should ensure that you include a contingency sum in your project budget. The calculation of your required contingency should reflect:

- the degree of certainty on the project costs
- the stage of design or development work you have completed
- the project timetable
- the risks in relation to the type of project you are carrying out – in support of this, a costed risk register will help identify and quantify the adequacy of the risk contingency allowance

We expect all organisations applying for this fund to produce a fully costed risk register which will help identify the adequacy of the risk contingency allowance.

### Inflation

In addition to your figure for contingency, your plan should also consider inflation. Inflation will usually be built into any cost plans prepared by Quantity Surveyors for construction projects. As a result, inflation may be built into each budget line as part of the cost plan or included as a single, separate figure with its own budget line. We also want you to detail your approach to managing inflation in the finance narrative as a lack of planning for increasing and/or unforeseen costs

can lead to future financial challenges, presenting a risk to your project and any investment from LIF. Make sure it's clear in your application how inflation has been considered and where in the budget it is included.

### Contracts for building works

You must put in place all the necessary contracts with contractors and professional advisors, with standard terms and conditions appropriate to the project's value, size and complexity. The contractors and professional advisors must have the relevant specialist knowledge and experience and all the necessary professional indemnity insurance cover.

### Environmental responsibility

We want libraries to take the lead in their communities in their approach to environmental responsibility in terms of how they run their service and buildings: by lowering carbon emissions, increasing levels of recycling, cutting their use of plastic, and reducing water consumption.

As building projects can contribute significantly to carbon emissions and cultural buildings can have high energy consumption, applicants to this fund should consider energy efficiency as a priority. This includes helping to lead change and being innovative and responsive in the choices they make to support an overall reduction in carbon emissions in the cultural sector. We expect you to consider:

- sourcing environmentally responsible goods and materials
- whole-life cycle costs in the selection of materials, plant and equipment
- sustainable construction practices
- the long-term environmental impacts of your buildings

- improved environmental responsibility in the operation of your service including improving awareness in all building users to reduce energy demand, waste and water consumption and to maximise recycling
- developing an environmental action policy and an annual action plan to improve environmental performance and reduce carbon emissions

The [Julie's Bicycle website](#) provides a number of useful guides on how to embed environmental sustainability into your project including the publication, [Fit for the future: Investing in environmentally sustainable buildings – a guide for the arts](#).

### **Inclusive access**

If your application will include works that to improve physical access or that may affect physical access, you must provide an access audit prepared by an independent access consultant with your application. This will include all building projects. The access audit should be undertaken at the beginning of the project and its findings reflected in the project designs and cost plan. We have published [Building Access: A good practice guide for arts and cultural organisations](#) to support organisations undertaking capital development work to cultural buildings.

### **Management and maintenance of the funded assets (building projects only)**

As part of our standard terms of grant, we will also ask you to maintain the benefits of your project in the future. That means we will expect you to make sure that the work we have funded is kept in good condition. We will expect your organisation to have plans for the management and care of the asset and to implement that plan for **5-10 years from the date of the funding agreement**. Historic England publishes further guidance on [maintenance plans](#).

### **Ownership of land and buildings**

If you are offered a grant, you will need to demonstrate that you own the land and/or buildings (either as a freehold or leasehold) on which you spend the grant, and that the land and/or buildings can be used for the project purposes. Please note our requirements in respect of land and/or buildings use and leasehold interests below:

**For grants for building projects, we expect the land and/or buildings to be used for the project purposes for 10 years.** For leaseholds, this means you need to hold a registered and assignable lease of at least 10 years with no break clauses and the permitted user clause must be compliant with the project and proposed use.

**For grants for non-building projects, we expect the land and/or buildings as well as the funded assets to be used for the project purposes for five years.** For leaseholds, this means you need to hold a registered and assignable lease of at least five years with no break clauses and the permitted user clause must be compliant with the project and proposed use.

In the event that your grant is for both a building project as well as a non-building project, the greater of the two periods would apply, that is, 10 years.

### **Procurement**

If you receive a grant from us you must comply with the following conditions when buying any goods, works or services to be used in relation to the capital project.

It is a condition of our [standard terms and conditions for LIF](#) **that you seek competitive tenders for all contracts in excess of £10,000 (excluding VAT)** and show that you have selected the option which provides value for money.



You should also be aware that if the total value of your procurement meets or exceeds certain threshold values, then your procurement may be subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR). The current thresholds are £5,336,937 inc. VAT for works contracts (e.g. contracts for the design and execution of construction work) and £213,477 inc. VAT (or £138,760 inc. VAT if you are a central government authority) for supply or services contracts. The PCR will normally apply if you are either:

- a) subject to the PCR in your own right, eg you are a contracting authority as defined in the PCR; or
- b) a non-contracting authority, and the amount of money given solely by the Arts Council, or in conjunction with other public funding or other Lottery distributor, exceeds 50 per cent of your project costs (see regulation 13 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 for further details).

If you are unsure about your obligations, we advise you to take professional or legal advice.

In all applications we will ask you to provide a method statement explaining how you will ensure your project complies with the above rules. If we offer you a grant, you must also provide any information we request in order to satisfy us that you have followed the correct procedure. We may not be able to pay your grant if you cannot demonstrate that the process of appointing suppliers and contractors has been made in accordance with the correct procedure.

### **Quality of design and construction**

We want to ensure that projects meet high standards of design and construction, taking due notice of priorities such as fitness for purpose, environmental standards, energy efficiency, disabled access and inclusive design, cost effectiveness and value for money. The proposed method of procurement for construction works must be appropriate to the specialist needs of cultural buildings.

We have published [Building excellence in the cultural sector: a guide for client organisations](#) to support organisations undertaking capital development work to cultural buildings and it includes a selection of case studies of Arts Council funded capital projects. .

### **Subsidy control**

The Subsidy Control rules regulate financial assistance given by public authorities (including Arts Council England) to organisations engaged in economic activity. As part of the application process you will be asked to indicate whether you regard the award to be a “subsidy” (as defined in the Subsidy Control Act 2022) and, depending upon the characteristics of your proposed award, you may also be required to provide information relating to how the financial assistance satisfies the requirements of exemptions under the Act.

Our FAQs at <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/subsidy-control> set out more information on Subsidy Control law and you may choose to get your own advice on the compliance requirements. Please note that if you are applying for a grant of £10 million or above (either cumulative in value or one-off awards for substantially the same project or purpose), your application will need to be referred to the Competition and Markets Authority for review (more information on this process is set out in the FAQs).

# Section five – how to apply

## Section five – how to apply

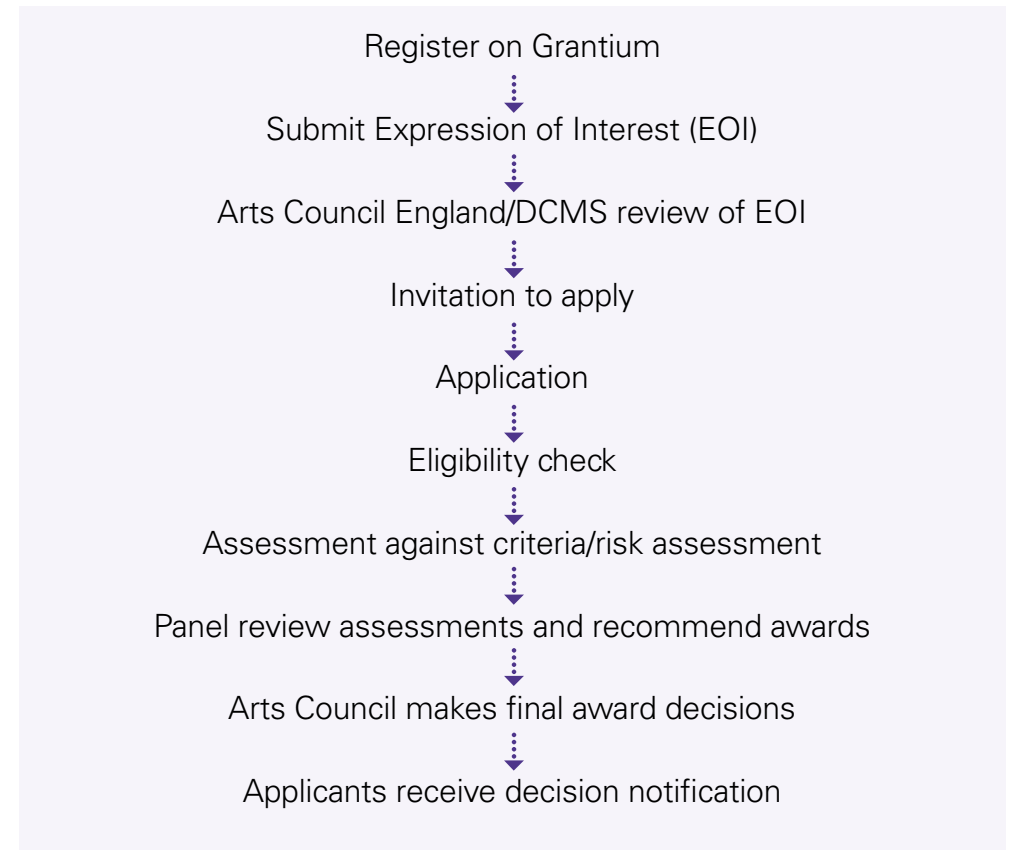
### Before you apply

Applications are made using Arts Council England's Grantium grants management system. For further details on this, including how to set up your applicant profile, programme registration, submit your Expression of Interest and complete your full application, please see [Grantium guidance for applicants – Strategic Funds](#).

Before you can start an application, you need to create a user account and applicant profile on Grantium. You cannot start your eligibility questionnaire, Expression of Interest or application until your applicant profile has been validated, which may take up to 10 working days.

Once your applicant profile has been validated and you have registered for LIF, you can begin working on your eligibility questionnaire and Expression of Interest.

The following diagram provides an overview of the required programme stages:



## Expression of Interest stage

If you believe you have a proposal that meets all of the eligibility criteria and [the aims and outcomes of this fund](#) as set out in section two of this guidance, please complete an Expression of Interest through Grantium. An Expression of Interest is accessed by working through the Eligibility Questionnaire for LIF. It will give you the opportunity to describe your outline proposal in no more than 2,500 characters (around 400 words).

In your submission you will:

- provide brief details of your organisation and the library site(s) included in the project
- confirm the number of visitors you had in the last 12 full months of opening to the site(s) included in the project
- provide details of your project proposal and the work you have undertaken to date to evidence the need for your project, including any user/community consultation and engagement
- identify how your project contributes to the aims and outcomes of LIF
- confirm whether or not your project is a [building project](#)
- provide details of the preparatory work you have already undertaken and confirm the RIBA design stage you have reached, if applicable
- provide your anticipated overall project cost and the amount you would like to request if you are invited to apply
- confirm whether and from where you are seeking partnership funding or provide details of in-kind support
- if you received funding in Round 1 and/or 2 of LIF, describe how you would manage both this project and any previously funded project(s) and how it will benefit a wider group of people

## Reviewing your Expression of Interest

Expressions of Interest will be reviewed jointly by the Arts Council and DCMS. If it is considered that your proposal could make a significant contribution to the [aims and outcomes](#) of the fund, you will be informed online and invited to submit a full application.

If it is considered that your proposal does not have the potential to deliver strongly on the aims and outcomes of the fund, you will also be informed on the same day. Arts Council England is unable to give detailed feedback or engage in a discussion about why your proposal is not being taken forward at this time.

**If you are invited to submit a full application, this is not a guarantee that the application will go on to be successful.**

The Expression of Interest process is not a grant decision-making process, and final funding decisions will be based on the detail in a full application that has been through the assessment, balancing and review processes as outlined in this document.

The information you provide in your full application will be shared with DCMS and with members of the Programme Advisory Panel.

## Making an application

You must apply through [Grantium](#). The Grantium guidance for applicants [available on our website](#) should provide you with all the information that you need about how to access the system and complete your online application.

The following gives support on completing the different sections of your application and the information we ask you to provide.

## Basic details

Please provide details about your organisation including a concise description of the activity you are asking us to support. Please confirm the amount you are requesting and the start and end dates for the activity. Please also confirm whether you are applying for a building project. A building project is any type of capital work that is required to comply with statutory approvals such as building or planning regulations.

## Finance

In this section, you will be asked to complete a budget for your activity.

### Income

Complete the income section to tell us where you expect to get other funding from, how much that will be, and whether it is expected or confirmed.

If you are including non-cash contributions (in-kind support), give an estimated value for each item. You should also provide details of the goods or services and who is giving the contribution under the 'financial viability' section of your proposal.

### Expenditure

Complete the expenditure section to show the expenditure for your entire project. Expenditure should be set against the following budget headings as appropriate to the project:

- **specialist equipment** – this may include lighting, AV and digital equipment, and disabled access equipment
- **pre-construction** – this may include specialist surveys
- **construction** – this should identify estimated construction costs, including materials, labour, preliminaries, construction contingency and inflation figures

- **fees and charges** – this may include legal or consultants' fees along with planning costs, Local Authority fees, post-tender surveys, etc
- **client costs** – this may include costs such as storage, decant costs, access audit or advisers appointed to help develop the project as well as any personal access costs\* you may need to deliver the project
- **contingency** – that is not already included in your construction contingency sum, this may include your project management contingency
- **irrecoverable VAT** – any VAT that you cannot claim back

**Break down the costs in your budget as far as is possible by adding multiple lines. For example, you can add multiple expenditure lines with the heading 'construction costs' outlining each element of construction:**

Heading	Description	Cost
Construction costs	Lighting materials and installation	£18,985
Construction costs	Flooring materials and installation	£14,520
Construction costs	Mechanical alteration	£8,250

You should make sure that the costs are as accurate as possible. If you have to spend more to complete your project, we will not contribute to any extra costs.

**Remember: Any costs you include must be able to be capitalised on your organisation's balance sheet. Only include any of the above costs if you are able to do this, in line with your organisation's policy.**

### **\*Personal access costs**

If there are extra costs relating to your own access needs, or those of the people you are working with, to help you deliver your project and manage your grant online (for example, a BSL interpreter) then these can be included in your budget provided they can be capitalised on your organisation's balance sheet. For example, these access costs could be for a support worker to help a project manager with access requirements to complete payment requests on our system.

Please note that you cannot apply to us for access costs that are already covered by the Access to Work scheme.

### **Location**

Please provide the current address of the main library site for which funding is being applied or the address of the library service for a service-wide project.

### **Ownership of land and buildings**

For building projects, you will need to demonstrate to us that you meet the ownership of land and buildings requirements as set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#).

Please provide the full address of the land and/or buildings where the capital project will take place. If the capital project will take place in your current premises, please re-enter the address provided under 'location'. Provide details of your interest in the land and/or buildings where the capital project will take place, ie leasehold or freehold interest, and answer the corresponding questions.

### **Visitor numbers**

Please provide annual visitor numbers for the last full year of operation for all parts of the service which will benefit from this project. For example, if it is a single library, user numbers for that one library; if it is across an entire service, provide numbers for the whole service.

### **Statutory approvals**

For building projects, please list all [statutory approvals](#) and consents that apply to your project.

### **Activity plan**

The activity plan should include all milestones for the delivery of your project. The level of detail will vary depending on the size and scope of your project but in all cases it should:

- reflect all parts of your project and when each part is expected to start and finish
- provide details of the design, procurement, and commissioning activities
- confirm the lead manager for each task

For building projects it must:

- include details of the design, procurement, construction and commissioning activities
- state when relevant statutory approvals will be applied for and when notifications are expected
- identify anticipated completion dates for freehold or leasehold purchases
- include the RIBA design stages (if applicable)



## Partners

This screen includes a table into which you should enter any major project partners such as other Library partners, construction/architecture partners and anyone else who will directly take part in the delivery of the project outlined in your proposal. Each partner should be either confirmed or expected to take part if your application should be successful.

## Proposal

The proposal is divided into three sections:

- Meeting the brief
- Governance and management of the activity
- Financial viability

It should be no longer than **45,000 characters (around 5,000 words)** in total. You do not need to use the full character count if you feel it is unnecessary.

### Meeting the brief

#### **Character count: up to 15,000 characters (around 1,700 words)**

Describe the project you are asking us to support. This should include:

- a detailed description of the work you are proposing to undertake and the outcomes your project aims to achieve (please refer to the programme outcomes)
- how the project will achieve the aims of the fund in [section two](#) of this guidance
- how the work you have completed to date, including any research and/or consultation with library users, demonstrates the need for your project, including how the works in your application have been prioritised, with costs for each element
- the impact of the project on your organisation's activities during the project's delivery
- how it will improve user experience of the library, and comfort of the public, staff and building users on completion, and any evidence/research to support this
- where relevant to your project, how the project will address inclusivity and relevance by benefitting the broadest range of people
- where relevant to your project, any specific measures included in your project that will improve access provision for all with reference to statutory requirements such as building regulations and best practice
- where relevant, how your project will support environmental responsibility including the steps taken to minimise the impact on the environment. Tell us about any plans to measure reductions in energy usage and the carbon footprint resulting from your project
- if you were successful in Round 1 and/or 2, how you will ensure capacity to deliver multiple projects, and how this application will provide benefit beyond the existing project

## **Governance and management of activity**

### **Character count: up to 15,000 characters (around 1,700 words)**

Set out your plans for managing the project, including how you will ensure it is delivered on time and on budget and within the delivery timescale for this fund. Include the following details:

- details of your organisation's experience in managing a project of similar scope and complexity
- details of any partners involved in the delivery of the project
- how project progress will be monitored and reported to your board and senior management team
- if relevant, how your project will contribute to the implementation of your organisation's equality and diversity policy
- how the decision on your proposed timetable and sequence of works has been decided, eg through a single phase or phases
- your plans for project management, including whether you plan to work with an external project manager
- whether you plan to work with external specialists/contractors
- how the risks will be assessed and how you will manage these risks
- how your project will meet high standards in the following areas:
  - o fitness for purpose
  - o environmental responsibility
  - o energy efficiency
  - o cost effectiveness and value for money
  - o disabled access and inclusive design (where applicable)

Further details on procurement, quality of design and construction, including accessibility, are set out in [Section four – capital requirements](#).

## Financial viability

### Character count: up to 15,000 characters (around 1,700 words)

Tell us about the work you have done to assess the project's financial impact on your organisation, both during and after the project. Include the following details:

- any professional advice you have sought in support of the figures in your budget, including how you have calculated allowances for such things as (but not limited to) specialist equipment, sustainable technologies, furniture, fittings and equipment, contingency, inflation, VAT
- if you are including non-cash contributions (in-kind support), details of the goods or services and who is giving the contribution
- the other sources of any other funding you have applied for, and the progress and timetable of other funding applications you have made
- how you will make up any shortfalls if your project goes over budget
- how you have considered your organisation's ability to operate the buildings or equipment in the longer term, including the financial planning you have undertaken for repair, insurance, maintenance and replacing the capital asset. Tell us whether you currently have a costing maintenance management plan and whether funding is available to carry it out

### A note on project cashflows:

You should ensure that your cashflow shows no running deficits, as this could represent a major risk to the delivery of your project. If there are any deficits present in your cashflow, you will need to explain how you will manage this in the finance narrative.

## Mandatory attachments

All applicants applying to this fund **must** upload the following mandatory attachments:

Allowable formats: jpg, xls, xlsx, jpeg, pdf, doc, docx, pptx, and ppt.  
The combined limit on file size for all the attachments taken together is **50 megabytes**.

**Send only the supporting information we have asked for. We will not consider any additional information you send after you have submitted your application unless we have specifically asked for it.**

## Cash flow for the project

Please use the cash flow template provided. Your cash flow should demonstrate both project income and outgoings and the expected grant payments from us and should align with the income and expenditure figures already provided. You should take the following information into consideration when preparing your cash flow forecast:

- we are unable to pay for costs invoiced before the date you accept our funding agreement
- we will typically pay the grant in three instalments:
  - o 50 per cent – at the start of the project, once the conditions and requirements for the first payment have been met

- o 40 per cent – at the mid-point of the project and subject to satisfactory project reporting, as set out in your funding agreement
- o 10 per cent – one month after your project activity is completed and all final grant monitoring requirements have been met

Your cashflow should not show any running deficits in the cash c/f or b/f fields, as not having money available to pay for costs at any point in the project could be a major risk to delivery. If your cash flow does show major deficits, you will need to explain how you will manage this in the finance narrative.

- grants are only available to support activity up to 31 March 2027

### Costed Risk register

Please submit a **costed** risk register covering all the risks you have identified with your project. It should include:

- the risk and the likelihood of the risk occurring
- the impact on your project if it does happen
- how much each risk may cost – this will help you to check whether you have enough contingency set aside to avoid cash flow problems if something does go wrong
- how you can prevent the risk or deal with it (mitigate it) if it does happen
- the person responsible for dealing with the risk

We use your analysis of risks to the activity to help us with our assessment of [governance and management of activity](#). We want you to show that you have considered risk thoroughly and have thought about how you will manage and mitigate it.

### Procurement method statement

This should document the procedures that will be used to select consultants and contractors and when purchasing goods and equipment, and must demonstrate that these comply with all relevant

UK public regulation procurement laws (see [Section four – capital requirements](#)).

It is a condition of our [Standard Terms and Conditions for Capital Investments \(grants up to £499,999\)](#) that grant holders seek competitive tenders when procuring goods, works and services in excess of £10,000 (excluding VAT).

### Cost plan (building projects only)

This should be prepared by a professional quantity surveyor and provide details of the construction, furniture, fittings and equipment costs. It should reflect the RIBA work stage that your project has reached, if applicable. For this programme, the cost plan should be based against the stage 3 spatially coordinated design drawings.

It should also cover any methodology for developing the cost plan, including figures for both contingency and inflation, explaining how these have been included in the budget (is inflation built in, or is there a separate line for overall inflation?)

### Design drawings and specifications for the project (building projects only)

Detailed drawings and specification should be submitted. Plans for architectural elements should be developed to at least RIBA Work Stage 3 – ‘Spatial coordination’.

Drawings should be provided with the scale of the drawing clearly shown and all information clearly indexed. Your design information must be submitted as one digital file.

### Access audit (building projects only)

This should be prepared by an independent access consultant. The audit should provide details of existing provision as well as barriers and recommend specific measures to overcome these, eg ramps, lifts, induction loops, accessible toilets, clear signage. It must describe both

the process followed in conducting the audit and how the proposed access provisions will provide access for all with reference to statutory requirements such as building regulations and best practice. For more information, see [Building Access: A best practice guide for arts and cultural organisations](#).

**We use the access audit not only to determine the existing level of access, but also the impact of planned works and whether it has been used to inform the project itself.**

Depending on which type of project you are carrying out, 3 or 6 of these attachments are **mandatory**. This means they **must** be provided. Without them we may be unable to process your application.

**If you think a mandatory document is not required; get in touch – as it would be more beneficial for your application to have this conversation before submission than at assessment, as your application may be deemed ineligible if it does not include enough information for us to assess it.**

### Optional attachments

You may also upload up to three other relevant attachments. Examples of optional attachments include but are not limited to:

- draft partnership agreement(s)
- your Local Authority's libraries strategy or plan
- fundraising strategy – where partnership funding is required to deliver the project, please include details of the funding you have secured to date as outlined in your project income and expenditure and your approach and timeline for raising the remaining funds

**Send only the supporting information we have asked for. We will not consider any additional information you send after you have submitted your application unless we have specifically asked for it.**

The information you provide in your application form and any attachments will be assessed by Arts Council England and used to decide whether your application will be recommended for funding to

the Programme Advisory Panel. This information will also be shared with external bodies. If your application does not contain the information required in the format requested, it may not be possible to consider your application. After you have read this guidance, if you have any further questions, please contact Arts Council England for further advice.

### Assistance with your application

Arts Council England are committed to being open and accessible and want to make the LIF application process accessible to everyone. If you experience any barriers within the application process or require help to make an application, the Arts Council's Customer Services team can be contacted on **0161 934 4317** or by [email](#).

### After you submit your application

You will receive an acknowledgement email confirming that your application has been received by Arts Council England. This will be sent to the email address you used to log in to the portal.

Your full application will then be checked against the criteria for this fund (see [Section three – eligibility](#)) and, if the application is eligible, it will be assessed using the prompts in [Section six – how decisions will be made](#). If your application is not eligible, we will not process it any further and it will not be considered for funding. If this happens, we will write to you to let you know.

### Commenting process

During the assessment process, additional comments on each project may be sought from a range of external partners to ensure that expert views from a variety of sectors are incorporated into the final assessment. These partners include but are not limited to DCMS and members of the Programme Advisory Panel. A decision on which partners to contact for further comment will be made by Arts Council England and will be based on the nature of the activity being applied for.

We will share your application with these organisations for this purpose. Please see our [General Privacy Notice](#) for how we process your information.

# **Section six – how decisions will be made**



## Section six – how decisions will be made

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Once you have submitted your full application, the application will be checked to ensure that you have provided all the requested information.

We will make our assessment based on the information you provide in your application and attachments, any further information that we request and, where partner delivery organisations are involved, we may seek data and information from the Charity Commission and Companies House websites relating to their constitution and finances.

If your organisation is a part of our National Portfolio, we may also use the information we hold on file to help us assess your application.

Our assessment will use the expertise of our staff and advisers, which may include independently appointed assessors, to judge how well your application meets each of the three criteria. Identifying and considering the level of risk in your project and what plans you have in place to mitigate these risks is an important part of our assessment. A visit by our staff, our partners and independently appointed assessors may form part of the assessment process and you may be asked to facilitate a visit.

We will consider how each application meets the following criteria:

- **Meeting the brief**
- **Management of the activity**
- **Financial viability**

Each application will be assessed using a five-point word scoring:

- **Not met**  
The application does not meet the criteria
- **Potential**  
The application does not meet the criteria but shows potential to do so
- **Met**  
The application meets the criteria
- **Met (strong)**  
The application meets the criteria and shows strong qualities
- **Met (outstanding)**  
The application meets the criteria and shows outstanding qualities

Applications that do not achieve at least 'met' under all three criteria will not be recommended for funding.

We will assess each application against the following criteria, using the assessment prompts below.

## Assessment prompts

### Meeting the brief

- To what extent does the application demonstrate that the project outcomes will meet the [aims of the fund](#)?
- How well does the organisation demonstrate it has considered the impact of the project during the works and on completion? To what extent does the application demonstrate that the quality of the organisation's work will be improved, including improvements to the experience for public, staff and library users?
- Has the applicant demonstrated the need and/or relevance of the project to library/community needs through evidenced research/consultation?
- Where appropriate, does the application demonstrate that the project will reach the broadest range of people by promoting inclusivity? How has this been reflected in the project plans, if relevant?
- Where appropriate, what evidence is there that the organisation has considered the environmental impact of the project? In what way does the organisation plan to reduce any negative impact?
- For building projects, does the applicant own the land and/or buildings where the building works will take place, either by owning the freehold (owning the property outright) or having a leasehold interest (having a registerable lease of at least 10 years without a break clause)?
- For non-building projects, does the applicant own the land and/or buildings where the project will take place, either by owning the freehold (owning the property outright) or having a leasehold interest (having a registerable lease of at least five years without a break clause)?
- If the applicant is the leaseholder, have they confirmed that the works applied for are their responsibility as the tenant?

### Governance and management of activity

- What evidence is there that the organisation has the appropriate skills and experience to undertake the project?
- Where partners are involved in the delivery of the project, are appropriate agreements in place?
- Will progress be appropriately reported and reviewed by senior management? Is there evidence that the Local Authority is fully engaged with the project?
- To what extent does the application demonstrate appropriate plans for project management? For building projects, do they plan to work with an external project manager?

- To what extent has the applicant taken appropriate professional advice? Is the makeup of the professional team appropriate?
- How well does the application demonstrate that the project can be delivered to the activity plan provided?
- Does it provide a rationale for the proposed sequence or phasing of works? For building projects, does it show that all relevant statutory approvals will be in place to enable the activity to commence as outlined in the activity plan?
- Does the activity plan and cash flow align with the delivery timescale for this fund?
- What evidence is there that procedures will be in place to assess, report and manage the project risks effectively?
- Does the costed risk register demonstrate an appropriate review of risks and consider the impact of the risks occurring, and identify suitable actions to mitigate and manage these risks? Is the risk register costed and is there a clear correlation between these costings and the project contingency?
- Does the procurement method statement explain how the applicant will undertake the procurement activity for the project? Does it align with the procurement requirements set out in [section four](#) of this guidance?
- To what extent will the project achieve high standards in terms of:
  - o fitness for purpose
  - o environmental sustainability
  - o energy efficiency
  - o disabled access and inclusive design (if relevant)
  - o cost effectiveness and value for money?
- If the applicant was successful in Round 1 and/or 2, have they provided assurance about their capacity to deliver multiple projects?

### **Financial viability**

- Will the organisation's financial resilience be improved as a result of the project?
- To what extent does the application demonstrate that the organisation can operate the capital assets in the longer term? Has the applicant considered the likely maintenance costs and timescales for maintaining, replacing or upgrading buildings or equipment?
- Is the budget detail appropriate to the type of project proposed? Does the budget demonstrate that:
  - o expenditure is for the items listed under [What activity can be supported](#)
  - o costs are based on appropriate professional advice (including VAT advice) or quotations
  - o appropriate allowances have been made for contingency?

- What sources and percentage of partnership funding are confirmed, if required?
- If the applicant needs to raise further funds, have they provided a fundraising plan and does this demonstrate that the required level of partnership funding can be secured from other sources (excluding funding spent prior to the date of the funding agreement)? Is the timetable for raising these funds realistic?
- What evidence is there that contingency plans have been considered if the project goes over budget or the project cannot be delivered as originally planned?
- Does the cash flow show:
  - o that there are no running deficits (negative values in the cash c/f or b/f fields) and that adequate funds will be available at each stage of the project to pay for costs incurred?
  - o what sources of expected project income will be in place to support the tasks outlined in the activity plan
  - o expenditure will be for activity starting no earlier than March 2024 and ending no later than 31 March 2027?

### The Programme Advisory Panel step, including balancing

Following the assessment step, the Programme Advisory Panel will review the assessments. This panel comprises library sector professionals and representatives from the Arts Council and DCMS. They will use their subject specialist expertise to review the applications assessed as at least 'met' against all three criteria, and will provide recommendations to Arts Council England's decision makers who will make the final decisions on which applications will be supported.

As part of this process, the Programme Advisory Panel will consider how well each application will fit into a balanced portfolio of grants. In doing this, they will consider four factors to balance the projects funded against the available budget in each round and across all rounds of LIF. These factors will be used in addition to the main criteria to ensure a good spread of funded projects and to differentiate between proposals that are considered fundable.

The four factors we will consider are:

- **geography** – geographical location of the project and the type of local area that will benefit, including with reference to the Arts Council's Levelling Up for Culture Places as well as the Priority Places in London
- **risk and deliverability** – the extent of the risks to the overall balance of projects in each round
- **strategic fit** – with the Arts Council's strategy, [Let's Create](#)
- **type of project** – we will consider the need to achieve a range of project types with varying delivery timescales

There is no mechanistic formula for balancing the final list of awarded projects. This is a framework against which the Programme Advisory Panel will make an informed judgement about how each project might contribute to the overall mix in the context of the funds available to distribute.

## Decision making

Once we have scored your application and a recommendation about whether to fund it has been made by the Programme Advisory Panel, Arts Council England will make final decisions. To do this, they will consider how strongly your activity scored against our criteria and the four factors outlined above. They will also consider your activity alongside other applications to the fund.

## If you are unsuccessful

We will write to you explaining the main reasons why your application was unsuccessful and telling you who to contact for more detailed feedback.

## If you are successful

Any decision to offer funding will be subject to acceptance of a funding agreement and our [standard terms and conditions for LIF](#) including any conditions specific to your project. Our offer may be for a different sum than that requested by you in your application.

The funding agreement starts on the date you accept it by completing the online 'offer letter acknowledgement' form and ends when you've met all our terms and conditions. The submission of this form will be your formal and legal acceptance of the grant and the terms and conditions that apply to it.

## Monitoring and evaluation

The funding agreement will set out how we will monitor your grant, including any documentation that we will require from you to ensure it meets the agreed outcomes. Some of these terms and conditions must be met before we make a first payment and some of them still apply after your last payment has been made. We expect you to progress your project in line with the timescales, specification and budget set out in your application.

We will be evaluating how effective the programme has been in meeting the aims and outcomes of the fund and a full programme evaluation is being undertaken by independent evaluators working alongside the Arts Council and DCMS.

We require all grantees to engage with this process and collaborate in providing data, interviews and images to the appointed evaluators.

## Requesting payments

The grant cannot be used towards any costs invoiced before the date you accept our offer on Grantium.

Payments are conditional on us receiving and approving any additional monitoring (payment conditions) information we have asked for. The payment conditions will be set out in the funding agreement. You must meet each condition to access each of your grant payments. We will typically schedule payments as follows:

- 50 per cent – at the start of the project, once the conditions and requirements for the first payment have been met
- 40 per cent – at the mid-point of the project and subject to satisfactory project reporting, as set out in your funding agreement
- 10 per cent – one month after your project activity is completed and all final grant monitoring requirements have been met

## Final payments

We will not normally pay more than 90 per cent of your grant until we are satisfied that:

- the project is finished
- you have met the terms of your grant agreement with us
- we have received an acceptable final payment request
- we have been provided with an activity report form
- appropriate funding acknowledgement is in place

# **Section seven – Freedom of Information Act**

## Section seven – Freedom of Information Act

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The Arts Council is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions.

We are also listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks for them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) for information about freedom of information generally and the exemptions.

We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.



# Section eight – data protection

## Section eight – data protection

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The Arts Council is committed to using any personal information (or personal data) we collect on a lawful, fair and transparent basis, respecting your legal rights as an individual in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation, the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and other applicable laws that regulate the use and privacy of personal data (Data Protection Law).

As part of us meeting this requirement, we have published our General Privacy Notice for you to refer to [here](#). This tells you more about: the personal data the Arts Council collects; the different purposes that we use it for and on what legal basis; who we may share that personal data with; how long we keep it; and your legal rights, including your right to contact us and receive information regarding the personal data about you that we may hold from time to time.

For further information about our obligations and your rights under Data Protection Law, as well as how to report a concern if you believe that your personal data is being collected or used illegally, please also see the Information Commissioner's Office website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

# Section nine – other information

## Section nine – other information

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### Complaints procedure

As an organisation, we will always listen to and respond to any concerns that you may have. If you would like to make a complaint about either the service you have received from Arts Council England or the way we have handled your application, we have a process that you can use.

Please note that Arts Council England does not have an appeals process and for this reason, we are unable to accept complaints that relate solely to the decision we have made rather than how we have made it.

For more information, please visit the 'Complaints' section of our website, under 'Contact us' ([www.artscouncil.org.uk/contact](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/contact)). Additionally, you can email [complaints@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@artscouncil.org.uk) for more information.

### Public sector equality duty

Your application form gives us information we may use to report to the Government or to monitor the different backgrounds of people who receive grants. Under the public sector equality duty, we must research and monitor the different backgrounds of people who receive our grants.

### Counter fraud measures

Arts Council England has a [Counter Fraud Strategy and Policy](#) and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that grant holders given funding through this programme use the funding appropriately. This will include conducting checks at the point of application and award, and random sampling checks on a proportion of grants made. All grant holders are required to retain their financial and other documentation relating to the grant and maintain a full audit trail. Arts Council England reserves the right to request this at any time.

## **Get in touch – we're happy to help**

Arts Council England

The Hive

49 Lever Street

Manchester

M1 1FN

Phone: 0161 934 4317

Email: [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk)

Website: [artscouncil.org.uk/contact](http://artscouncil.org.uk/contact)

Twitter: [@ace\\_national](https://twitter.com/ace_national)

Facebook: [facebook.com/artscouncilofengland](https://facebook.com/artscouncilofengland)

## Contact

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 2BQ

**Website:** [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport)

**General enquiries:** 020 7211 6000

**Email:** [enquiries@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@dcms.gov.uk)

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**Email** [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk)

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