

Transfer Programme (NPO)

Guidance for applicants



We have separate guidance for organisations considering applying for the Transfer Programme (IPSO), which can be found on our website here <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/transferprogramme>

Guidance for applicants

Summary of key information

What is the focus of the Transfer Programme fund?

The Transfer Programme is a parallel programme to the 2023-26 Investment Programme for National Portfolio Organisations ('the 2023-26 Investment Programme'). It shares the same aims but will provide two-year business funding to organisations that are willing to relocate outside of London by 31 October 2024 (see note 1). Transfer Programme recipients will use the funded period to deliver activity and to consider their options for relocation and, if they choose to, implement their relocation plans.

Note 1: Please note that this date is earlier than the previously published date of 31 March 2025

Who is the Transfer Programme for?

Organisations that applied for the Investment Programme from an address within the Arts Council's London area, and who would be willing to relocate to an Arts Council area (see note 2) in England (outside of London) by 31 October 2024.

Note 2: You can find more information about Arts Council areas and our area boundaries **here** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/your-area>)

What is the funding period?

The Transfer Programme is a two-year funding programme covering the period 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2025.

Associated funding opportunities for Transfer Programme recipients

Transfer organisations who have established a main (and registered) office in an Arts Council area in England (outside of London), not later than 31 October 2024, will have the opportunity to apply for ring-fenced Investment Programme funding for 2025-26 through a separate programme launching in autumn 2024.

Feasibility funding will also be available from April 2023 to support all Transfer organisations in assessing their options for relocation. This funding is separate to the Transfer Programme and will be subject to additional monitoring and reporting requirements.

Further information on Feasibility funding and the 2025-26 Investment Programme can be found in **Section five** (page 19) of this guidance document. Full guidance for both programmes will be made available to successful Transfer organisations in due course.

When is the deadline to confirm whether we want to be considered for the Transfer Programme instead of the 2023-2026 Investment Programme?

Organisations that applied for the 2023-26 Investment Programme from an address within the Arts Council's London area will be asked to confirm which programme they wish their application to be considered for by **18 July 2022**.

You will be asked to confirm whether you wish to 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme via a link issued in June.

When will decisions on the Transfer Programme be made?

For organisations that 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme, we aim to notify you of the outcome of your application **by the end of October 2022**.

Changes to this guidance or our programmes

We reserve the right to make changes to the guidance and/or programme after its launch. We will communicate any changes as quickly and clearly as we can.

Access support

We are committed to being open and accessible to everyone. We realise some people may find that there are barriers to accessing our services. Our **Access Support information sheet** ([https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Access Support information sheet - 2023-26 Investment Programme_0.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Access%20Support%20information%20sheet%20-%202023-26%20Investment%20Programme_0.pdf)) explains the ways we can help.

If you experience or expect any barrier with making your application and would like more information, please contact us.

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

Web: [artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

Post: Arts Council England – NPO The Hive, 49 Lever Street
Manchester, M1 1FN

Telephone: 0161 934 4317

You can also **Livechat** with us by visiting our website:
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/contact-us>

We will be as flexible as possible and consider and respond to requests on an individual basis.

Do you need this information in another format?

You can also find the following versions of this guidance on our **website** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/transferprogramme>):

- audio
- British Sign Language (BSL)
- Easy Read
- large print

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Section one – Introduction

Welcome

As set out in the **2023-26 Investment Programme – Addendum to the Guidance for Applicants**

([https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/2023-26 Investment Programme - Addendum to the Guidance for Applicants_.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/2023-26%20Investment%20Programme%20-%20Addendum%20to%20the%20Guidance%20for%20Applicants_.pdf)), the Arts Council has been instructed to reduce its overall current investment in the National Portfolio in London by £24 million per year by the end of the 2024/25 Financial Year and reinvest that money outside of London, so that it can be spread more equitably across the country. £24 million represents approximately 15% of the current London portfolio budget. We are required to reallocate that investment in two stages:

- a minimum of £16 million per year from 1 April 2023
- a further £8 million by 1 April 2025

The Transfer Programme has been designed to help achieve the second part of this allocation. The Transfer Programme is a parallel programme to the 2023-26 Investment Programme. It shares the same aims and will be assessed against the same criteria but will provide two-year business funding to organisations that are willing to relocate outside of London by 31 October 2024. Transfer Programme recipients will use the funded period to deliver activity and to consider their options for relocation and, if they choose to, implement their relocation plans.

How much funding is available?

The overall budget for the Transfer Programme is £8 million per annum – a total of £16 million over the period 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2025.

Advice giving

As your 2023-26 Investment Programme application is currently under assessment, we are unable to provide advice at this time. This is to ensure we have a transparent and fair assessment process.

The information contained in this guidance document is designed to support you in deciding whether the Transfer Programme is right for your organisation. You can find further support in our information sheet Considerations for Relocation on our **website** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/transferprogramme>), which includes a series of questions that you may wish to consider when thinking about relocation.

If you have general queries or require system support, you can contact our Customer Service team **here** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/contact-us>).

Section two – Is the Transfer Programme right for you?

National Portfolio Organisations – Transfer (NPO-T) will be expected to play a key role in helping us achieve the aims set out in our Strategy for 2020-2030, Let's Create.

You should give serious consideration to whether becoming a National Portfolio Organisation - Transfer is right for your organisation. We expect organisations to be having active discussions with their board or oversight group to help them arrive at the right decision.

We anticipate the majority of organisations interested in the Transfer Programme will be those without either a public facing building or a deep-rooted local community focus.

If you decide that relocating is not right for your organisation at this time and decide not to 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme your application will still be considered for the 2023-26 Investment Programme, and you will not be disadvantaged in that process in any way. However, we know that competition for funding for organisations that will remain based in London will be especially intense for the 2023-26 Investment Programme, and we expect to face challenging decisions about which organisations to support and at what level.

If you do decide to 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme, your application will be formally withdrawn from the 2023-26 Investment Programme and will be considered alongside other Transfer Programme applications within the budget for that fund. You cannot be considered for both programmes.

You do not need to have decided where you would move to at the point you 'opt in' as we expect organisations to use time in the funded period to consider their options and implement their relocation plans. It is up to your organisation to decide if it wants to move and where to move to. There are no restrictions on which Arts Council area (outside of London) you should consider moving to, and there is no requirement to move to a Levelling Up for Culture Place or Priority Place.

The Arts Council will not be able to play a central role in supporting organisations to relocate. Transfer Programme organisations will therefore need to ensure adequate organisational capacity to consider their options and implement their relocation plans.

If you are awarded funding through the Transfer Programme, you will be able to apply for associated funding opportunities, see **Section five** (page 19) for further details.

No capital funding will be available to support organisations to relocate.

For successful Transfer Programme applicants, an appropriate level of activity for the period 2023-25 will be negotiated as part of the funding agreement process.

National Portfolio Organisations - Transfer will have the opportunity to apply for the 2025-26 Investment Programme, providing they have established a main (and registered) office in an Arts Council area in England outside of London no later than 31 October 2024 and have met the terms of the 2023-25 funding agreement to date. The 2025-26 Investment Programme will be run through a separate application process launching in autumn 2024. You can find more information in the '**Applying for the 2025-26 Investment Programme**' section below (page 20).

It is important to note that relocation is not a condition of receiving Transfer Programme funding for the period 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2025. Organisations accepted onto the Transfer Programme may decide, following further consideration and/or carrying out feasibility projects, that relocation is not a viable option during the funded period; this remains a decision for your organisation. In this instance Transfer organisations would retain their funding for the two-year period but would not be eligible to apply for further funding through the 2025-26 Investment Programme, which is ringfenced for organisations that are part of the Transfer Programme **and** are based outside of London by 31 October 2024. Organisations that remain in London after 31 October 2024 would be eligible to apply for funding through National Lottery Project Grants and/or through any future open application Investment Process, where funding would be subject to successful application/s.

What we expect from National Portfolio Organisations - Transfer

Organisations that 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme must be willing to move to an Arts Council area in England (outside of London) by 31 October 2024.

By 'move' we mean establishing a main office (and your registered office) outside of London, as well as demonstrating a tangible commitment to adding value to the local cultural sector and the communities it serves.

By 'establishing a main office' we mean:

The organisation (if it has a physical office) should establish an office outside London and the majority of staff should be working from a non-London location, although you can continue to deliver activity in London as part of your funded programme.

That office should be the principal contact point for your organisation ie the address for postal correspondence and the address registered with your bank.

If you work within a hybrid or distributed model where you do not need a physical presence in a 'main office', the principal contact point for your organisation should be outside London ie the address for postal correspondence and the address registered with your bank.

By 'demonstrating a tangible commitment to adding value' we mean:

We anticipate that organisations will add value in different ways and we will be flexible in the way we assess this. It could include renting or buying an office or creation space, employing or contracting local people, delivering creative or cultural activity locally, and/or participating in local cultural networks such as Local Cultural Education Partnerships.

We recognise that a number of London based organisations who 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme will have a national remit (eg as a touring organisation) and may currently have limited impact in London, other than being based there. We are not expecting these organisations to make major changes to the way they work when relocating to their new home area.

If you are successful with your application to join as a National Portfolio Organisation - Transfer, we will also have a number of important expectations of your organisation to support the delivery of Arts Council England's Strategy for 2020-2030, **Let's Create** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate>). These expectations mirror those set out in **2023-26 Investment Programme guidance for applicants** ([https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/_Guidance for Applicants - National Portfolio Organisation 2023-26___0.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/_Guidance%20for%20Applicants%20-%20National%20Portfolio%20Organisation%202023-26___0.pdf)), which formed the basis of your original application.

What you need to do next

In mid-June, we will send all organisations that applied for the 2023-26 Investment Programme from an address within the Arts Council's London area an email link which will ask you to confirm whether you wish to 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme. The deadline to respond is **18 July 2022**.

If you do decide to 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme, we will remove your application from the 2023-26 Investment Programme, but we will use the information provided in your original application to carry out our assessment and decision-making. In assessing your application, we will use the criteria set out in the 2023-26 Investment Programme guidance.

The 'opt in' form will also ask you whether there are any local authority areas you are considering moving to at this point. The location information provided will not be used to inform assessments or decision making for the Transfer Programme. You do not need to supply any further supplementary information unless we specifically ask for it.

If you decide not to 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme, your application will remain in consideration for the 2023-26 Investment Programme.

If you do not respond by the 18 July deadline, we will assume you wish to remain in consideration for the 2023-26 Investment Programme.

Section three – How we will make our decision

Please note that, once you have submitted your application via the 2023-26 Investment Programme, you must not approach the Arts Council, or members of our Area and National Councils, to discuss your application. This is to ensure we have a transparent and fair assessment process. We will contact you directly if we need any more information.

We are unable to provide advice about whether you should remain in the 2023-26 Investment Programme or 'opt in' to the Transfer Programme. You should use the information in this document to consider your options and choose the route that is best for your organisation, in discussion with your board or oversight group.

How will you assess my application?

In order to make decisions for the Transfer Programme, we will use the information you provided in your **2023-26 Investment Programme application** ([https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/_Guidance for Applicants - National Portfolio Organisation 2023-26___0.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/_Guidance%20for%20Applicants%20-%20National%20Portfolio%20Organisation%202023-26___0.pdf)).

Your application will be assessed in the same way, against the same prompts and criteria, as set out in the 'Completing your application' and 'After you submit your application' sections of the 2023-26 Investment Programme guidance.

We will make our assessment based on the information you provided in your 2023-26 Investment Programme application and our knowledge of your organisation if you have previously been a National Portfolio Organisation or received other funding from us. We may refer to publicly available information, such as

your organisation's website or records held at Companies House or the Charity Commission, or discuss your application with other Lottery distributors, to assist us in our assessment of your application. We will also consider any further information that we have specifically asked you to provide.

When assessing applications from current National Portfolio Organisations we will take evidence of your current performance into account.

Our balancing process

We may receive more strong, eligible applications than we can fund through the Transfer Programme and/or the 2023-2026 Investment Programme. This means that we will go through a process of 'balancing' to make our final decisions to ensure we are achieving the strongest spread of investment against the applications we receive.

Our 'balancing criteria' provide a framework which we will use to judge how organisations individually and collectively might contribute to the delivery of Let's Create. We may decide to invest in organisations depending on contributions they are making across the range of our balancing criteria. When considering balancing criteria, we will consider the spread of investment across both the Transfer Programme and the 2023-26 Investment Programme; however, we will not consider geographic location as part of the balancing for the Transfer Programme.

You can find further information in the 'Balancing criteria' section of the **2023-26 Investment Programme guidance** ([https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/_Guidance for Applicants - National Portfolio Organisation 2023-26___0.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/_Guidance%20for%20Applicants%20-%20National%20Portfolio%20Organisation%202023-26___0.pdf)).

Who will make the final decision on my application?

Final decisions on Transfer Programme applications will be made by the members of our National Council.

When will you tell me about your decision?

We will tell you by **the end of October 2022** whether you have been made a conditional offer of investment and if you have, how much investment we are offering you for 2023-24 and an indicative amount for 2024-25. Arts Council England can only guarantee future instalments of the grant as long as sufficient funds from the Government are available to it. It is possible that the indicative amounts may therefore be reduced for future instalments.

Any offer of investment will be conditional and subject to successful funding agreement negotiation.

When we have made you a conditional offer of investment, we will need to agree final Activity (Outcomes) and Investment Principles plans with you which will form part of your funding agreement. The funding agreement will set out mutually agreed targets and success measures for how an organisation will embed our Investment Principles and deliver agreed Outcomes.

For successful National Portfolio Organisations - Transfer, an appropriate level of activity for the 2023-25 period will be negotiated as part of the funding agreement process.

Section four – After our decision

Relationship Framework

As well as strongly delivering against Let's Create, we will expect you to work within our Relationship Framework for National Portfolio Organisations - Transfer, which can be found on our **website** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/transferprogramme>). This is a document that sets out how we will work with National Portfolio Organisations - Transfer during the period of the funding agreement 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2025 and mirrors the framework for National Portfolio Organisations.

Monitoring and reporting

National Portfolio Organisations - Transfer will need to meet the same requirements for monitoring and data reporting as National Portfolio Organisations. This is so that we can track the progress of our investment programmes in delivering our strategy and provide important data, evidence and insight for the sector and our stakeholders.

We will consider where we can make reasonable adjustments to our monitoring and reporting arrangements for organisations with specific access needs.

If you are successful, your Transfer Programme funding agreement will have agreed targets and success measures (based on your application to us) that we will expect you to achieve. Failure to achieve these is likely to involve the Arts Council intervening with a range of different measures. This includes the possibility of your funding being withheld, reduced or withdrawn during the investment period.

What happens if we are not successful?

We may receive more strong, eligible applications than we can fund. We recognise that it will be disappointing for any organisations who are unsuccessful in their applications.

We will be able to provide you with feedback and suggest possible alternate sources of Arts Council funding including **National Lottery Project Grants** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/ProjectGrants>).

For current National Portfolio Organisations, to facilitate your exit from being a National Portfolio Organisation, we may agree transition funding with you (based on a proportion of your 2022-23 investment). You will be invited to submit a plan demonstrating need and how this funding would be used.

Section five – Associated funding opportunities for Transfer Programme recipients

Feasibility funding

Feasibility funding will be available to support Transfer recipients in assessing their options for relocation. This funding is separate to the Transfer Programme and will be subject to additional monitoring and reporting requirements. As with the Transfer Programme, receiving Feasibility funding is not conditional on an organisation completing a relocation as the organisation may conclude that relocation is not a viable option.

We anticipate that the amount of Feasibility funding made available to organisations will be based on the amount they are awarded through the Transfer Programme, as below:

[In the following list we detail for each item:

- Transfer Programme award: Feasibility funding available]
- Up to £250,000 per annum: Up to £25,000 in total
- Up to £1 million per annum: Up to £35,000 in total
- Over £1 million per annum: Up to £50,000 in total

In order to access Feasibility funding, you will need to submit a budget setting out how you would use the requested funds, which should be reasonable in terms of the size and scale of feasibility project you are planning to carry out. You will need to report on actual expenditure and the outcomes of your feasibility project as part of the monitoring and reporting process.

We will publish full supporting guidance on Feasibility funds by March 2023. Organisations will be able to access funds at any point from April 2023 up to 31 March 2024. Feasibility projects must be concluded in advance of applications being submitted for the 2025-26 Investment Programme in autumn 2024.

Eligible costs will include:

- Professional and/or consultancy fees
- Staffing costs (new posts or backfill) to consider options and implement plans for relocation
- Travel and accommodation costs for meetings/viewings related to the relocation project

Ineligible costs will include:

- Redundancy costs
- Exit costs from leases
- Moving costs, for example, removals
- Costs related to new premises, for example, refurbishment

Applying for the 2025-26 Investment Programme

We intend to run a simplified application process to enable successful National Portfolio Organisations - Transfer to apply for funding for 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026, providing they have established a main (and registered) office located in an Arts Council area in England (outside of London) no later than 31 October 2024 and have met the terms of the 2023-25 Transfer funding agreement to date. The 2025-26 Investment Programme will be ring-fenced for Transfer Programme recipients who are based outside of London. Arts Council England can only guarantee future funding as long as sufficient funds from the Government are available to it.

To be eligible to apply for funding through the 2025-26 Investment Programme you must have completed your relocation by 31 October 2024, and you will be required to provide evidence of this as part of your application.

Organisations that decide relocation is not a viable option, or that fail to complete their relocation by 31 October 2024, will not be eligible to apply for funding through the 2025-26 Investment Programme.

To receive funding through the 2025-26 Investment Programme, you will need to make an application based on your outline Activity (Outcomes) and Investment Principles plans and budget for 2025-26. When assessing applications, we will take evidence of your current performance as a National Portfolio Organisation - Transfer, including our current risk monitoring and any other information we hold about your organisation, into account. Final Activity (Outcomes) and Investment Principles plans and budget for 2025-26, that are acceptable to the Arts Council, will be required as a condition of first payment.

Below is a high-level expected timeline for the 2025-26 Investment Programme process:

- **By September 2024:** 2025-26 Investment Programme guidance published
- **November 2024:** Application portal open
- **January 2025:** Decisions: funding agreements issued
- **01 April 2025:** Funding period starts: Final Activity (Outcomes) and Investment Principles plans and budget agreed

Section six – Further information

Making a complaint

Following decisions for this programme, we will have a process that you will be able to use 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.

If you believe we made a mistake and you want to make a complaint, you can find out about our **complaints procedure** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/making-complaint>) on our website. Please note, however, that Arts Council England doesn't operate an appeals process. We cannot consider concerns through our formal process where we have followed our processes correctly.

Should you want to complain, you can also contact our Complaints Managers for further advice by emailing **complaints@artscouncil.org.uk**

Counter fraud measures

Arts Council England has a **Counter Fraud Strategy and Policy** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/document/anti-fraud-policy>) and appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that grant holders given funding through this programme use the funding appropriately. This will include random sampling checks on a proportion of grants made. All grant holders must retain their financial and other documentation relating to the grant, and Arts Council England reserves the right to request this at any time. In addition, Arts Council England will complete checks pre- and post-award against grant applicants for due diligence and counter fraud purposes.

Subsidy Control

The subsidy control rules regulate the award of financial assistance from the public sector to organisations engaged in economic activity. In some cases, and in particular depending on the nature of the recipient's activity, money given under the Transfer Programme may constitute a subsidy and need to comply with the subsidy control requirements, including those set out in the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

In this event, there may be further conditions on the funding that can be given out under this programme. You must provide any information we request that will allow us to ensure that the grant funding is compliant with the subsidy control rules.

Freedom of Information Act

We are 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 decisions about investment. We are also listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This means that, by law, we may have to share your application documents and information about our assessment with any member of the public who asks to see them under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We may not release those parts of the documents that are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act. Please see the Freedom of Information website at <https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request> 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 our decision-making.

Data Protection

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** (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/freedom-information/data-protection>). 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**

Contact us

Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

Web: [artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

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You can also **Livechat** with us by visiting our website:

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/contact-us>

June 2022

Transcribed into Large Print by: A2i Transcription Services
Unit 4 Montpelier Central, Station Road, Bristol BS6 5EE
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We welcome feedback so please get in touch!
Ref number: 35297