

## **Arts Council England and The National Archives Collaboration Agreement 2024-27**

This Collaboration Agreement builds on the framework for cooperation outlined in the previous Collaboration Agreement 2021-2024 between Arts Council England and The National Archives.

This refreshed agreement sets out the role of each organisation and describes how they will work together to achieve their separate and common goals.

### **Background**

[Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries, investing money from the Government and The National Lottery and providing a range of development programmes and schemes to support the arts and cultural sector.

[The National Archives](#) leads the archives sector for England and performs the Historical Manuscripts Commission's functions in relation to independent archives. Its support and advice help archives across the UK to develop and enhance their services, facilities and collections.

This agreement recognises that while both organisations have distinct roles, their strategic visions, programmes and aims reflect many areas of shared interest. Archives, libraries and museums often share audiences, workforces, stakeholders, and collections and frequently operate interdependently. This agreement and its action plan reflect our common values, goals and realities.

### **Arts Council England**

[Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Our 2020-2030 strategy, [Let's Create](#), sets out our vision 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 every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. We invest public money from Government and The National Lottery to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.

### **The National Archives**

[The National Archives](#) is the official archive and publisher for the UK government, and England and Wales. In our role as the leadership body for the archives sector in England, we work with over 2,500 archives across the country.

Our current strategy, [Archives for Everyone](#), sets out The National Archives' ambition to become the 21st-Century National archive, one that is inclusive, entrepreneurial, and disruptive. Our strategic vision for the sector, [Archives Unlocked](#), outlines our leadership

priorities under the themes of trust, enrichment and openness, and describes our work to encourage a sustainable and innovative archives sector. We have been commissioned by the Minister to review and refresh this vision document in 2024/5.

## **Aim**

This agreement outlines how both organisations will continue to build on the work completed to date to ensure a comprehensive cultural offer for the public, which includes the rich diversity of arts, museums, libraries and archives.

## **Shared objectives**

Through collaboration, Arts Council England and The National Archives will:

1. Act strategically and practically across the full range of cultural and heritage sectors to help communities and people across England benefit from opportunities to engage with culture, and to make sure our sectors' collections and activities are open and accessible to all.
2. Continue to recognise archives as part of the wider cultural landscape, particularly within the context of museum, library services and arts organisations.
3. Identify and act on shared challenges and opportunities, and collaborate to reach audiences nationally, regionally and locally.
4. Work together on programmes to develop inclusive workforces and collections, that better reflect the diversity of contemporary England and include diverse perspectives and points of view.
5. Explore shared approaches to opening up data and developing digital capacity across the cultural sector.
6. Work together to develop a more sustainable and resilient cultural sector, making the most of available advocacy, skills sharing and funding opportunities.

## **Statement of intent**

Arts Council England and The National Archives recognise that they have complementary expertise and overlapping interests.

The two organisations will endeavour to cooperate and work together in so far as their separate interests, legal constraints and corporate aims permit.

Arts Council England will continue membership of the Archives Unlocked steering board.

Both parties:

- will share knowledge (so far as they are legally permitted to do so), expertise and best practice in relation to matters of mutual interest and, if there is an overlap or mutual interest in a particular area, they will consult as appropriate.
- are committed to the principle of good communication with each other and will coordinate communications about topics relevant to both sectors.

- Arts Council England and The National Archives will seek to alert each other as soon as is practically possible to relevant developments within their respective sectors.

This Collaboration Agreement will be published on both organisations' websites.

### **Frequency of contact**

Senior members of staff from Arts Council England and The National Archives will meet on an annual basis to discuss matters of mutual interest, share lessons learnt from our respective sectors, and review the direction of this agreement. These meetings will be underpinned by regular liaison between their officials, on a quarterly basis, and at other times as and when required, to review the action plan resulting from this agreement.

The organisations will ensure that it is clear who the appropriate contacts for particular matters are, and that contact details are kept up to date.

### **Frequency of review**

This Collaboration Agreement will be reviewed every three years or more frequently if developments in either organisation make it necessary.

This Collaboration Agreement records a formal agreement between the Parties and the Parties acknowledge that this Collaboration Agreement does not create a legally binding contract.

The Parties agree that they enter into this Collaboration Agreement intending to honour all of their obligations and both agree to act in good faith and work collaboratively to achieve the purposes set out in this Collaboration Agreement.

This Collaboration Agreement replaces any previous agreements between the Parties.

On behalf of Arts Council England

On behalf of The National Archives

Darren Henley, Chief Executive

Jeff James, Chief Executive and Keeper