

## Briefing transcript – National Portfolio Organisations 2023-26: for IPSOs

10.30am, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**MICHELLE DICKSON:** Thanks for joining us today. I'm Michelle Dickson, Director Strategy at Arts Council England. I'm a white woman with brown hair that's tied up. My pronouns are she/her. This session is for organisations that are not currently NPOs who are planning on making an application to the Investment Principles Support Organisations programme or IPSO. These are organisations that will support other organisations and/or individuals to embed our Investment Principles in their work. We're hosting another session about the IPSO programme for organisations that are currently in the National Portfolio. That's tomorrow at 1:30pm. You're welcome to join that. Today's session is live captioned and also has BSL interpretation. For the best experience, we recommend using the desktop version of the Zoom app. This session is also being recorded and will be posted on our website afterwards. The first-half of the session will be a presentation. Then we'll take a ten-minute comfort break before answering your questions. We have a maximum of 90 minutes of this session bringing us to 12 noon, but we'll try to get you away a bit sooner than that. You can submit questions to us using the Q&A box. We'll answer as many questions as we can, but we might not get to every single one, but all the questions we receive will feed into an update of our online FAQs. When these FAQs have been updated and once the recording is available online with a transcript, we'll e-mail you and let you know. Next slide, please, Sam.

Before we start, I want to introduce who is taking part in the session today. We have BSL interpretation from Rosie Copeland and Naomi Bearne. Live captions from Marea O'Brien. The presenters are myself, Michelle Dickson, Director of Strategy, and Amy Vaughan our Director of Change Programmes and we'll be joined on the panel for the questions by Alex Middleton Senior Manager, Funded Organisations and the questions will be hosted by Dan Smith, Head of Marketing and Internal Communication. Next slide, please, Sam.

This is what we're going to cover with you today. This session is designed to help you understand the information we're looking for in an application and how we'll use it to make decisions. We'll go through where we are in the process, what we'll be asking you in the application, and covering off what comes next in the process. So let's get started. Next slide, please.

In January, we published the Guidance for Applicants and other supporting material for this Investment Programme. In February, we published our Relationship Framework, communicated planning figures to current NPOs, and published an addendum to the guidance which sets out how our instruction from DCMS in relation to Levelling Up will impact this programme if you are making an application. We'll cover all of this in today's session. Looking to the application window, the application portal opened on 28th February. It will close at midday on Wednesday, 18th May. Decisions will be shared by the end of October. Next slide, please.

Before we dive into the Guidance for Applicants and the addendum, we wanted to touch on the documentation that's available to you. We know we've published a large volume of information. We did this because we wanted to make sure that everyone, whether you're new to us or old hands, had all the information

you need to make a decision whether to apply and then to be able to submit a strong application. Everything is available in accessible formats such as Easy Read, large print, audio, and BSL. Our essential documents include the Guidance for Applicants either for NPO or for IPSO applications- whichever you intend to apply for. This session is geared towards IPSO applications and the addendum to the guidance which applies to both programmes. Also essential are the templates we need you to complete as part of your application. These are so we can see financial information, your plans to embed our Investment Principles in your own organisation and the outcomes or Investment Principles activity in your application. Again, in this session, we're talking about IPSO applications so we'll be discussing Investment Principles activity and support later on. We have completed examples and walk-throughs. None of the content is essential, but you might find it useful support. It is there if you need it. Similarly we have information sheets available which cover access support, equality and fair pay, supporting practitioners and the importance of good governance. Again, none of this is essential, but you might find it helpful. We have further resources including Word versions of the application form that you can use so you don't have to do all your drafting in Grantium and our online FAQs are divided by topic. If you've got a query, they are a great place to look. Finally, the background reading provides context for this Investment Programme and what we want to achieve with it and it is important you've read this too. That's our strategy, Let's Create, our Delivery Plan and our Investment Principles information. Next slide, please.

We're going to talk you through the information in the Guidance for Applicants which is now in two parts. The main part and the new addendum. We'll talk through everything we're asking for you in the application form and why we're asking for it. But before that, there are a few things you'll need to do before making your application. You'll need to make sure your organisation and the activity you're proposing is eligible by reading the eligibility criteria in our Guidance for Applicants. You'll need to book an introductory conversation. This is mandatory for all new applicants and can be booked through our Customer Services Team. The deadline for booking an introductory conversation is 8th April and the deadline for having your introductory conversation is 22nd April. If had had your introductory conversation before we published the addendum to our guidance, don't worry, you don't need to have another one. You'll need to register on Grantium if you don't already have an applicant profile. The deadline to do this is 22nd April. If you have an applicant profile, you should make sure it is up-to-date. The next slide.

Turning to how much you can apply for. The introductory conversation is an opportunity to talk about how much you might apply for. We'll ask you questions about your turn-over and the levels of project funding you may have received. We'll be able to share some information about the levels of funding that organisations similar to yours are in receipt of, to help guide your decision of how much to apply for. But note, this conversation is specific to your organisation and its circumstances and we can't provide general formulas for how much organisations should apply for. You don't have to agree a figure in your introductory conversation, you can go away and make your own decision based on the conversation and on how much you think your organisation needs. You should note that we may make offers at less than organisations have applied for. I'll hand over to my colleague, Amy now.

**AMY VAUGHAN:** Hello everybody. I'm Amy Vaughan, Director for Change Programmes at the Arts Council. I will be on screen more fully later. I'm a white woman with dark brown hair and a white fringe. I'm in front of a blue wall with some

pictures behind me. I'm wearing glasses for reading. We are going to talk about the application form now. The application form is on our online application portal, Grantium, and just a reminder that we can provide support to help you with access issues you may experience in making your application, but we can't accept the application in any other format. Some information from your applicant profile will automatically pull through into your application form such as contact details, and your governance document. You will need to download and complete some templates which you'll need to attach with your application form. If you become an IPSO, the templates you submit as part of the application form will go on to form part of your funding agreement and we will use it as part of our monitoring relationship with you. You can't attach any other information with your application other than the information we specifically ask for. This includes additional information provided via hyperlinks. We will not review any materials that you include that we have not requested. You don't need to include a business plan or any other associated plans. We will also use our knowledge of your organisation, for example, from other applications or grants. This will help inform our judgement about your organisation and its track record. You are also required to provide some information on the people involved in your organisation's governance and leadership. It is important that you provide this information as accurately and completely as possible. This information is a very important part of our balancing process which we'll talk about later on. Next slide, please, Sam.

The first section of the application form has some background questions about your organisation. The questions we ask relate to your organisation as a whole. Whilst our funding agreement with successful organisations will focus on key activities linked to delivery against our outcomes and Investment Principles, we contribute funding to the organisation or business as a whole so in general, you should think of it as core funding rather than funding for specific projects. In asking about your organisation's mission or purpose, we want to get a sense of whether creativity and culture is central to your organisation's work or whether you're an organisation from outside of the creative and cultural sector applying to deliver creative and cultural work. We welcome applications from both types of organisations. We ask about your organisation's track record in access and excellence and this is where you'll start to tell us about the contribution you can make to our strategic aims set out in Let's Create. We recognise at the moment our funding does not reach a wide enough range of people in this country, both in terms of audiences and the people who work in publicly funded culture. We, therefore, want to hear from you about what steps you have been taking to improve access and ensure that a wider range of people benefit from creativity and culture, both in terms of your audience, participants or visitors and the people you work with as paid staff or volunteers. We also want to ensure that our investment is supporting high-quality work. We are therefore interested to hear about your views of the quality of your work and what evidence you use to reach those views. Consider your track record in access and excellence in relation to Let's Create. Tell us about what you have achieved that means you're well placed to make a strong contribution to Let's Create. Next slide, please.

In this section we also ask about your organisation's management and governance arrangements. I'm just going to take a bit more about our expectations here and what our funding relationship with you will look like. As you'll know from our previous briefings and published materials, we will, for successful organisations, expect your board or oversight group to undertake its responsibilities to ensure that

the executive is delivering on the funding agreements signed on behalf of the company. We also want to see boards play an active role in helping the executive embed the Investment Principles. The main way in which we monitor IPSOs will be through the board papers or reports to an oversight group. So we're looking for what you tell us in your application to demonstrate that you have or will put in place appropriate governance or oversight arrangements. We know that not all organisations will have or will be legally required to have an independent board. Where this is not appropriate for your organisation, we will expect you to put in place an oversight or advisory group that can take an active role in ensuring the funding agreement is being delivered and whom we can talk to if we have concerns. An advisory or oversight group should have people on it that understand your business and can help you be more effective. Paid members of staff can be on the group, but there should be a majority of people that are independent. That is, people that aren't related to the executive team in any way and do not receive payment for working for the company. This group should receive reports on how you are doing against your funding agreement and we will want to talk to them if targets aren't being met or if we have identified other risks. It would be good practise to have a conflicts of interest policy and terms of reference making the group's role clear. We have published a series of FAQs should you want to look into this in more detail. There are some organisations that have executive officers on their board. For example, an artistic or executive director. In these cases, we would expect there to be a clear conflict of interest policy in place and terms of reference that set out the role of the board and the role of the executive team. We also require that independent members of the board would be in the majority. Because this is public money, what we need to see is an appropriate level of independent oversight and scrutiny of the funding agreement. If you don't already have a board or appropriate oversight structure in place then you will need to have it up and running by 1st April 2023. So not before you make the application. But you will need to tell us about your plans in your application. You can also use this section of the application form to talk about any board sub-groups that you might have in place to support you. This might include a finance and audit group for instance or a special group set-up to help you with aspects of the Investment Principles for your own organisation. We've published an information sheet on good governance and a guide on boards on working with the Investment Principles. If you need any more advice on our expectations in this area. Again, this would be for your own organisation's adoption of the Investment Principles, not for the activity you will do delivering Investment Principles work as an IPSO. Next slide, please.

So now moving on to what we will ask you to tell us about supporting other cultural organisations and/or individuals to embed the Investment Principles. You'll need to tell us which Investment Principle or principles your support role will focus on. This can be just one or up to all four. We'd encourage you to focus on where you have experience and expertise and we welcome applications that focus on supporting the sector to get to grips with just one of the IPs. We want to sustainable applications where the activity is feasible within the budget and the cost pressures facing you. It should take into account access provision, support for freelancers and training. We ask you what percentage of your activity will contribute to each of the IPs you have selected. You may find it easier to answer this question once you have completed the activity plan. We know that this will be an estimate, but it does help us understand roughly how our total IPSO investment supports each of our four Investment Principles. We ask you about your organisation's plans for the next three-

year funding period with a focus on how those plans will contribute to the Investment Principle or principles you have applied against. You need to provide a narrative response here. We also ask you to complete and upload an activity plan using a template. You need to use this template to provide more detail about how you will support the sector in embedding the Investment Principles for the first year of funding as well as provide information about the location of these activities. The templates will help us understand your proposed contribution across the Investment Principles you've applied against and will form the basis of the funding agreement and will be at the heart of our monitoring requirements for successful applicants. In reviewing what you tell us about your three-year plans, and your activity plan for the first funding year, we'll be focusing on the strength of your contribution to supporting the sector to embed our Investment Principles. So remember to focus on that. Next slide.

So, this slide talks about the Investment Principles in terms of embedding them in your own organisation's work. All NPOs and IPSOs will be required to embed all four of our Investment Principles. We think the Investment Principles are what characterises a well-run, modern cultural organisation and we want to be confident that we are investing in well-run organisations. In the application form, you'll need to tell us about your plans for demonstrating progress against the IPs by coming and uploading the Investment Principles plan template. In the IP plan, you'll need to tell us about your three-year ambition for each IP, your priorities for the first funding year and the actions you plan to take in the first funding year. In reviewing your plan, we'll focus on the progress you're likely to make against each Investment Principle. What we're really interested here is the journey you're on and the process your organisation is taking to embed the Investment Principles. How you're setting and monitoring measures of success and how you're using data to do this. As with the activity plan, we're holding a separate Q&A session on the Investment Principles plan template and have published other materials including examples of completed templates to help you work out how to approach these. The Q&A session will be recorded and posted online afterwards. Next slide, please.

In the finance section of the application form, we ask a couple of narrative questions and then ask you to upload your most recent financial statements and the templates to complete in three parts. They are a balance sheet, an annual budget for each funding year, a cashflow forecast for the first funding year. The financial information should be for your organisation as a whole, not just the activity your application is focused on. For local authorities and universities this would mean the departmental budget and cashflow for the organisation that is seeking funding. For instance, a museum or theatre based within a local authority. We know that the item lines in the budget and cashflow may not match all of your own organisational budgets, but we need consistent and reportable information from organisations and that is why we're asking you to use the template we have provided for your financial information. You should use your judgement to include items in what seems like the most appropriate line. There is a line for access costs in the budget and it is really important that you think about including sufficient costs for making your work accessible as well as any access costs your organisation might incur in working with disabled creatives and/or members of staff. We're aware that some organisations, for instance, disabled-led organisations may have higher costs in this area and we will take this into account as we go through our assessment and decision-making process. We know this might mean you're asking for proportionally more money from the Arts Council than other applicants. Back to Michelle.

**MICHELLE DICKSON:** Thanks, Amy. Next slide, please, Sam. So, on 23rd February, we published an addendum to the Guidance for Applicants. This was the final piece of information we needed to share with you before the application portal opened. We had let people know that we would be publishing an addendum when we published the main guidance. This addendum sets out how we intend to support the Government's Levelling Up agenda and in particular, how we will deliver on the instruction we received from the Secretary of State at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The instruction details how some of our existing London budget along with new money in the Spending Review should be deployed outside London in this Investment Programme. Before we go any further, we want to make some points clear. We know that having more information to absorb during the process can be stressful. We know it is not ideal to have to publish more information later on in the process so we delayed and extended the application period to give everyone more time. We understand that and we want to explain what the addendum means for applicants in the simplest terms as we can. We also want to remind you that we're here to help. If you have questions or concerns that we don't answer today, and aren't reflected in our FAQs, then please get in touch with our Customer Services Team. We'll do all we can to answer your queries. We also acknowledge that this addendum brings particular challenges to London-based organisations. Whether currently an NPO or not, competition for our NPO and IPSO Investment Programme will now be even fiercer in London. But we can promise you now that we will look at the whole ecology and all the individual bids we receive before making any decisions and we will take those decisions carefully and fairly and according to our published criteria. We understand that many London-based organisation deliver much activity outside of London. We will take this into account when we make our decision, but we are required by the Government to account for our investment by postcode of applicant. And finally, we also want to make clear that the addendum doesn't change the eligibility criteria for this Investment Programme. If you could make an application before the addendum was published then you still can now. The addendum and the instruction from government are both available online. You can also see a recording of a detailed briefing session we held when the addendum was published on our website. I'll take you through the key aspects of it now. Next slide, please, Sam.

Levelling Up for Culture Places. The Arts Council and DCMS have identified 109 Levelling Up for Culture Places outside of London. Where opportunities to engage in creativity and culture are historically lower than other parts of the country. We will prioritise making additional investment in these places in three ways. Increasing our investment in existing NPOs and Levelling Up for Culture Places. Investing in new NPOs and IPSOs in Levelling Up for Culture Places, investing in new activity in Levelling Up for Culture Places delivered by organisations outside of those places, but working in partnership with those places. So, what this means for you. If you're an applicant based in one of the Levelling Up for Culture Places, we'll take this into account when we consider your application. In our balancing and our decision-making process. If you're an applicant that's based outside one of the Levelling Up for Culture Places and are planning new activity in one or more of those places, then you should include that information in your activity plan for 2023/2024 and make sure you indicate which of those places you're planning to work in. We will expect you to provide information on how that activity has been planned in partnership with those places. Organisations in receipt of more than £2 million per year. For those organisations which will receive £2 million or more per year, there

will be a requirement to release their collective activity as a cohort in Levelling Up for Culture Places by 15% by the end of the 2025/2026 financial year. This applies to organisations wherever they're based. The eligible activity we're looking for is broad and can include things like talks, workshops, education programmes, tours, co-productions, training, mentoring, etcetera. We'll agree a baseline of activity for tracking when we come to establishing funding agreements with organisations in the autumn. Next slide, please.

To achieve the redistribution of investment required in the addendum, and to make the London portfolio more representative, we will need to remove funding from some existing NPOs, reduce funding to others, and explore relocations out of London. We will make our decisions about reductions and removals on a case-by-case basis and we'll take in to account the relative strengths and opportunities we receive from the applications from London. For existing NPOs, where we're offering less than their planning figures, we will use the funding negotiation period to agree a revised activity plan based on their new funding offer. Notwithstanding the £16 million reduction to the budget we will need to make in London, we're determined that in London, as with the rest of the country, we will build a portfolio that's more representative of all of London's communities and that in particular, we want to increase investment in our five Priority Places in London. We therefore welcome ambitious applications from London-based organisations that will help us make the portfolio more representative, including IPSOs as well as NPOs. To support our ambitions to make the London portfolio more representative, we will need to find savings in our current investment in London beyond the £16 million required by government. Relocation - by the beginning of the third year of the Investment Programme, so by 1st April 2025, we need to have moved to further £8 million of annual investment outside of London and we're aiming to achieve this by London-based organisations relocating by which we mean, moving their registered office and main office outside of London by this date. That could be to any location outside of London. It doesn't need to be one of the Levelling Up for Culture Places. We're currently developing a programme to support relocations and we will be sharing more information with organisations that express an interest in relocating in their application later in the summer. But for now, all London-based organisations need to do is answer yes or no as to whether they're willing to relocate to outside of London by 1st April 2025. There is no commitment at this stage, but by saying yes, it will enable us to send you further information about it in the near future. We know that relocation is something that a number of London-based organisations simply won't be able to consider for a great many reasons and that's fine. But we also know that a number of cultural organisations have already relocated and done so successfully and given the competition for funding in London, a range of different companies and organisations might, we expect, want to consider whether this is a feasible option. This may include organisations whose primary impact is not local because they are for instance national touring companies or delivering services for the whole sector. We're not expecting these organisations to change the way they work just because they relocate. Some may want to move, put down deep roots and deliver new programmes of activity for their local communities. The Arts Council will play a limited role in the relocation process. We'll not be telling you whether you should or shouldn't relocate or where you should relocate to. This will need to be a decision you take in terms of what makes best sense for your business. We will develop further information to support you and we're hopeful that we'll be able to run a programme to support feasibility studies or options analysis, but we will not be able

to organise or fund the relocations themselves and nor will there be capital funding available for organisations relocating. If you think that your organisation might be interested in relocating, then all you need do in your application is respond yes to the question. To reconfirm - this is not committing you to relocating if you answer yes now. When we provide you with more information later in the summer, we'll ask you to choose whether you want to pursue relocation. I'll hand back to Amy at this point.

**AMY VAUGHAN:** On to the next slide then, please. Thank you. So, the last thing we're going to cover in relation to the applicant guidance is our balancing process. After we've assessed each application on its own merits against the criteria that reflect the information, we're asking for in the application form, so that's the commitment to access and excellence and strength and contribution to supporting the Investment Principles and likely progress against the Investment Principles as well as risk assessing the governance and management arrangements and your financial viability. On the basis of our assessments, we will then determine which applications are fundable. We will then look at all those fundable applications in relation to our balancing criteria and look at the shape of the potential portfolio as a whole. We will use our balancing criteria to help us select a portfolio of organisations, but are more representative of the geography of England both in terms of where organisations are based and where they will be delivering their activity. Whose leadership is more representative of England in relation to disability, race, sex, and includes more people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. That represent a wide range of creative and cultural provision. We're going to look in a little more detail about what we take into account for these three balancing criteria. Next slide, please.

Geography, we will use the location information you provide in your activity plan. We will take into account Levelling Up for Culture Places, our five London Priority Places for London-based applicants, places of historically low Arts Council investment and places of historically low cultural engagement and the spread across the country between rural, towns and cities. For diversity, we'll look at the diversity profile of your leadership using the information provided in your application form. We'll look at whether 51% or more of your board and senior management team are black, Asian or ethnically diverse or disable or female or from a lower socio-economic background. In this definition, we're just looking at whether 51% or more is made up of one of these categories. EG, 51% or more of your leadership are female. We'll also look at how representative of contemporary England the individuals that lead your organisation are. This is looking at the data you provide about specific roles in your organisation, the Chief Executive, artistic director, executive director, chairperson or equivalent positions and disability, race, sex, and socio-economic background. Finally, we'll look at whether your board and senior management team has a mix of people with different protected characteristics and socio-economic background. You'll note that we're not taking into account all of the protected characteristics here. This is because whilst we continue to report on the profile of the portfolio across a broader range of protected characteristics, we can only take account of those characteristics in our balancing process where we have evidence of under representation in our current portfolio. Next slide, please.

Range of creative and cultural provision. Here we will look at the range of art forms and disciplines including the balance of arts organisations and museums and libraries. The types of organisations including building base, touring, festivals, etcetera, the spread of activity across our outcomes and their elements. The spread



of support offered by organisations applying to support others to embed the IPs. That's for IPSOs. So in deciding which organisations to fund, we think about the strength of contribution to our outcomes and Investment Principles and then consider how the portfolio is balanced against these three criteria. Here it is not about the individual application, but the make up of different applications and of course, within the parameters of our budget. On to the next slide, please.

The Relationship Framework sets out how we will work with NPOs and IPSOs. We strongly encourage you and your board or oversight group to read it so that you fully understand our expectations of you and what you can expect of us if your application is successful. The framework describes that NPOs and IPSOs will be expected to meet specific requirements for reporting and monitoring, to enable us to track the progress of our investment programmes and the strategic contributions they are making to Let's Create, our stakeholders and the wider public. Our relationship with NPOs and IPSOs will be conducted mainly through our monitoring and reporting processes. Through these arrangements, we expect to see boards or oversight group take responsibility for oversight of delivery of funding agreements with us. This will involve boards or oversight groups getting regular or at least quarterly and accurate reports from the board about the progress and success measures in your funding agreement and taking steps to work with the executive to improve performance where needed. We will use the reports to your board, to provide us with accurate information on progress. We will then use the reports to help us identify any risks that we believe exist in relation to your organisation delivering its funding agreement with us. We will also expect you to supply accurate, timely and relevant data to surveys that we send you. These provide us and the Government with vital information on the state of the sector and help us evidence the impact of our investment and the progress we're delivering on Let's Create. It will be up to organisations and their boards or oversight groups to decide what type of business plans and specific policies you need to have in place to support the effective operation of your business. We'll no longer be asking you to submit to business plans to us, nor will we ask for other plans or policy in relation to things such as audience development, or digital strategies. We value hugely the work that NPOs do and that IPSOs also do and we recognise that the large majority are well established organisations that are able to manage themselves effectively without too much help from us. We will therefore minimise our ongoing contact with most NPOs and IPSOs. In practise it will mean occasional conversations, if we need something clarified in one of your board reports, holding an annual meeting with you and your chair. We won't be attending board meetings regularly. Next slide, please.

We will use the information we receive through the board papers to monitor and assess the risk to the delivery of our funding agreement with you. The Relationship Framework sets out clearly that we will monitor risk against the following categories. Your activity, Investment Principles, governance and management, financial viability, and reputational risk. It also explains what we mean by each of these categories. Where we see risk increasing, for example, if you are failing to meet your own targets, we are likely to increase our monitoring of your organisation and deploy a series of interventions that range interest attending board meetings, holding conversations with the chair and board, and asking for further written reports. The Relationship Framework sets out the full range of interventions we could choose to take if we consider you to be in breach of the terms and conditions of your funding agreement and include ultimately, withdrawal of funding.

As I mentioned earlier, we do strongly encourage you and your boards or oversight groups to read the Relationship Framework before submitting your application so that you fully understand the commitments you will be taking on in accepting an offer of funding.

We've come to the end of our slides for now. So it is time for a ten-minute break. So we will see you back here at 11:25.

**(10 Minute Break)**

**DAN SMITH:** Hello everybody. Welcome back. Thank you for joining us for the Q&A session of this session. My name is Dan. I'm man in my mid-30s. I'm in a room with a window and plants behind me and my pronouns are he/him. Thank you for the questions that you submitted so far. The questions we get today will also feed into our online FAQ which we will update after we've completed this series of briefings. You can find them on our website as they are already. So we'll start now. I've got two questions for Amy first, if you want to come on. Hi Amy. The first question is - you ask for a plan to describe how you address each of our IPs. However, you also say you want us to choose one or more IP to focus upon as an organisation for purposes of the application as a whole. These two things seem slightly at odds with each other.

**AMY VAUGHAN:** Okay. So, all applicants regardless of which route they are applying through, so whether they are applying to be a National Portfolio, NPO, or whether they want to apply for an Investment Principles Support Organisation, need to tell us how they will embed all our Investment Principles into their organisation. So, regardless of which route, we will look at that for all applicants and it is all about being able to see that the activity that you're going to deliver, you will have things in place to set your ambitions and assess the quality of what you're doing and you're inclusive and relevant and that you have a dynamic approach to running your business and that you're environmentally responsible. So that sits as a collective effort across the whole portfolio. For Investment Principle support organisations, we're asking you to tell us about the activity you will undertake to support others. So your activity may well focus very, very specifically on a particular feature of an Investment Principle. It might be that detailed. You might be an expert, for example, in workforce leadership and governance. So you might say actually our activity is absolutely about supporting governance to be more diverse across the portfolio and this is the activity we're going to deliver and that sits under inclusivity and we would look at your investment plan to see how you've embedded that. Of course, there is a Venn diagram here. What IPSOs will be delivering is the support between them as a cohort is the support of the whole organisation in going on that journey of embedding Investment Principles into their organisations. I hope that captures it in a way that's digestible and understandable.

**DAN SMITH:** Thank you, Amy. A second one - this person is asking for more information on who as opposed to what, IPSOs are expected to support i.e., are they expected to primarily or solely support NPOs?

**AMY VAUGHAN:** That's a great question. The answer is no, they're not expected to solely support NPOs because NPOs are on this journey of embedding the Investment Principles into their work. They are likely to want to access the support services of IPSOs. However, we're really interested in right across the creative and cultural sector. Activities from individuals or for a particular part of the sector. It might be that what you do really supports libraries or really supports museums and everybody involved in that who aren't necessarily NPOs. So yes, it is a really broad footprint as long as it is the creative and cultural sector. That's what we're looking for.

**DAN SMITH:** Great, thank you, Amy. Can I introduce Alex to the session now, please?

**ALEX MIDDLETON:** Hello everyone. I'm Alex Middleton. I'm the senior manager funded organisations at the Arts Council. I am a white woman in my mid-40s with dark hair and glasses and I'm in a dark blue room.

**DAN SMITH:** Thank you. So I have a few questions for you. The first one "we want to be able to pay the people who sit on the oversight group so as to widen access to those rules. Do the rules mean that we cannot do that?"

**ALEX MIDDLETON:** Our expectations for boards and for oversight groups are that there must be a majority of independent members and by independent, one of the things we mean is that they don't receive regular payment from the organisation. So they're not a salaried member of staff or executive officer. However, you can cover expenses and any access costs for oversight group members particularly for freelancers and this is where you're looking to broaden the range of candidates that you might be able to work with. So, you just need to make sure that this is part of a terms of reference that you develop for your oversight group and it is clear there. Just to mention for any charities, of course, you need to adhere to the charities commission guidelines for payments of trustees where it is a formal board of trustees.

**DAN SMITH:** Great, thank you. Your next question. Can you say something about match funding expectations, please?

**ALEX MIDDLETON:** Sure. So, wildly varied expectations here. It is very different to our project funding programmes where we've got set parameters and requirements for match funding. So, we will look at the whole organisational budget. So, we will look at what other income streams you've got and the diversity of those income streams, but we acknowledge that it is very, very different for different organisations. The type of other income or match funding that they're able to attract in terms of the type of activity that they deliver and the type of organisation that they are. The contribution, the NPO or IPSO funding within the wider organisational budget does vary a lot from organisation to organisation in our current portfolio.

**DAN SMITH:** Thank you. A final one for you, Alex. Can a consortium partnership led by a registered arts charity include as a partner an active community arts organisation that is constituted, but not registered as a charity or company?

**ALEX MIDDLETON:** Yes. As long as they are properly constituted, they can be included. They don't need to be a charity to be a partner. We just need organisations to be properly constituted as listed in the eligibility section of the guidance.

**DAN SMITH:** Lovely, thank you. I think Michelle if you want to come in now for a few. My first one for you, have you ascertained the level of funding available for IPSOs as distinct from NPOs?

**MICHELLE DICKSON:** We haven't formally agreed a budget for these investment programmes with the national council at this point so we can't confirm the exact budget or the split between the two. What I can say is that we expect the overall investment in NPOs and IPSOs to be higher than the current level.

**DAN SMITH:** Great. Thank you. Your next one, should the narrative section of the application reflect a commitment to the Levelling Up agenda and will all London organisations, regardless of the amount they are asking for, be asked if they would consider relocation?

**MICHELLE DICKSON:** Okay. So, your narrative response should be about how you're making a contribution to the Investment Principles if you're applying as an IPSO, but using Let's Create as background as we said earlier. We are clear that at

the moment our investment and the activity that's funded through that investment isn't reaching as broad a range of people as we'd like it to and so, that's not too dissimilar from the Levelling Up agenda. You don't need to discuss Levelling Up specifically unless it is particularly relevant to you, but where you are planning to make a contribution, particularly in Levelling Up for Culture Places then do tell us about that and you can capture that in the location of your activity on the template and or talk about it in your narrative section. In terms of relocation, every London-based applicant will be invited to answer that question. So you'll need to say yes or no about a willingness to relocate, but as I said earlier, ticking yes at this point in your application form doesn't commit you to anything. If you're interested in finding out more and think it might be an option for you then ticking yes is the thing to do at this point if you know absolutely not, we're not relocating, that's not right for us as an organisation, it is fine. Just tick no.

**DAN SMITH:** Thank you. There was a second question on the application narrative reflecting Levelling Up and I think you've just answered that as well. Finally, one more question for you. "We are a small business with six members of staff and a single managing director. Based on the presentation, the fund seems geared towards larger organisations. Is this correct? If so, would we not be eligible?"

**MICHELLE DICKSON:** You are eligible. There is no requirement in terms of size of organisation or minimum level of turn-over or anything like that. So, you know, as long as you're eligible in the ways that we've already covered then you're eligible. So then it is a question of is this right for you and your organisation and can you submit a strong application? As Amy was saying, we're interested in deep, strong contributions and I think it is entirely possible that smaller organisations can and do that. We'd welcome applications from smaller organisations and the current NPO portfolio includes a very broad range from very small, smaller than that organisation up to very large ones. I think it is really important that you and your board take the time to read, not just the guidance, but the Relationship Framework which really does set out what it will be like to be an IPSO and NPO and to give you a sense of that ongoing relationship between the Arts Council and your organisation and make sure that that feels right and appropriate for your organisation and the scale that it is. The minimum amount of money that you can apply for and be awarded through this programme is £50,000 a year. So, obviously that needs to be right. If you're looking for a lower level of investment or a lighter touch kind of way of having support then Project Grants might be a better route for you. If you're interested in exploring an IPSO application, but still not sure that you want to do it, it is fine to book an introductory conversation and explore it in that conversation. If you're not familiar with Project Grants, it is worth looking at that. That can fund multi-year activity and at a range of funding levels, but it doesn't have as much ongoing relationship management as being an NPO or an IPSO does.

**DAN SMITH:** Great, thank you, Michelle. I'm just double-checking. Those are all the questions that we received. Oh, I think one might have come in. We'll take this one and I think I'm going to bring it to Alex. So "financial viability is clearly an acutely difficult issue for all of us. Does this mean you have reviewed the benchmark in terms of what is acceptable? I appreciate this might be a slightly odd question, but there is a risk of us defaulting in one way or another at the moment."

**ALEX MIDDLETON:** I think that's a good question. In general we can say that we do understand that organisations are in very different and very difficult circumstances compared to what they were a few years ago. We will be taking that into account when we look at applications and we are saying, in the applicant guidance that we

expect you to be realistic in terms of what you can deliver within the available budgets as well. Yes, whilst we're not formally reviewing a benchmark, I think we can say that we are taking the difficult circumstances into account when we are assessing.

**DAN SMITH:** Thank you. Sam, do you mind bringing up the final slide on the presentation? Thank you. So before we go, we just wanted to remind you of the steps that you can take now as you prepare your applications before submitting. The deadline for applications is 12pm, midday, Wednesday 18th May. We strongly advise that you don't leave submitting your application to the very last minute. Try to get it submitted a week before the deadline. A summary of the report available to you now is on our website, but in brief, it includes steps to take first. So let us know if you have any access requirements. Take a look at some of the background reading. Get set-up on our portal, Grantium, or make sure that your profile is up-to-date. Introductory conversations, if you haven't booked one yet, you can do. These are mandatory for new applicants, but optional for current NPOs. When it comes to making an application, take a look at those essential documents including the Guidance for Applicants and the addendum and the application templates. You can also look at the supporting documents including information sheets, blank templates that you can use in your planning as well which are there if you need them. So, remember, if you have any questions, please visit the FAQs page on our website. Like I said earlier, we update this after every series of briefings that we host. They contain a wealth of information on specific queries. That's your first port of call, but if you still need support, get in touch with us. Our Customer Services Team are here to help. Finally, we will be in touch with everyone who joined us today with a link to a survey asking you about your experience today. We would be most grateful if you took a few minutes to complete so we can improve the service that we're delivering to you and that's it. No more questions have come in. So, I will say goodbye and let you all go 15 minutes earlier. Thanks very much for coming.