

Connect & Flourish

A National Lottery Arts Funding Programme

May 2022



Arts Council of Wales makes information available in large print, braille, audio, Easy Read and British Sign Language. We'll also try to provide information in languages other than Welsh or English on request.

If you have any access needs and are thinking about making an application, we can help to make sure that you're supported during the application process. For example, you might have a condition which makes it difficult for you to articulate your project ideas in your application form. Please contact us at grants@arts.wales to discuss how we can help.

Arts Council of Wales operates an equal opportunities policy.

What to do if you're not able to accept money from the National Lottery?

If you're unable for any reason to accept Lottery funding, please upload a letter with your online application explaining why this is the case. If your application is successful, we'll try and fund your project from money that we receive from other sources.

Contents

Summary	4
Our Vision	4
Fund information	6
How much can I apply for?	8
What can I apply for?	8
What type of costs can this grant support?	9
Access Costs	9
Deadlines	9
The application process	10
Contacting us	11
Appendix 1 – FAQs	12

Summary

These guidelines relate to the fourth round of Connect & Flourish funding. Since its launch in Autumn 2020, 71 projects have been funded to a value of over £6.5 million. An evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the scheme is underway and will inform future funding decisions after this round.

Our Vision

Connect & Flourish offers funding from **£10,001 to £150,000** over a period of **up to 24 months** for the development of collaborative proposals between organisations, individuals, communities and creative professionals working together to make positive impacts on the things that matter to them the most.

We want more people in **communities and places less well-served by the arts** to be able to enjoy and take part in cultural activity. The Connect & Flourish Fund allows a focus on longer term collaborative partnerships that can **explore new and different ways of working** to help the arts reach further and sectors develop, providing impacts, opportunities and benefits that can last well beyond the life of the projects we fund.

Good projects will be collaborative, involve communities, embed the principles of cultural democracy, equality, diversity and fair work in all that they do.

They will be **artist-led but audience or participant- focused**. Encouraging a wider diversity of artists, curators, producers, production and creative teams making and presenting work across all regions of Wales and beyond is vital.

Connect & Flourish focuses on areas of “**protected characteristics**” that are still under-represented in the activities that we fund and support. Protected characteristics refers to the nine categories of people protected under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Whilst Connect & Flourish will still look to support projects that champion the diversity of voices, cultures and languages in Wales, for projects coming to the 2023/24 round, we are prioritising projects that meet one or more of the following priorities:

- Involve and reflect the creativity of **D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people**
- Involve ethnically and culturally **diverse people and communities**
- Supports the **arts sector to respond, adapt and diversify** in the face of new and future challenges
- Have a focus on establishing new **opportunities within the Welsh Language**
- Involve and engage those individuals and communities experiencing and living in **socio-economic inequality**
- Respond innovatively, imaginatively and meaningfully to the **Climate Emergency**

The fund is for projects across Wales, but we are particularly keen this year to support exciting proposals from the North and Mid & West Wales

The best proposals will clearly and directly demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to what we describe as “the 4 P’s”

- ▶ **Potential:** demonstrates a **strong impact on**; communities, audiences, participants, the ecology of the sector, Welsh language, the Climate Emergency etc.

Priority: reflects our **key priorities** in our [Corporate Plan: For the Benefit of All](#) and demonstrate commitment to the principles of the [Welsh Government’s Wellbeing of Future Generations Act \(Wales\) 2015](#) and the “[Cultural Contract](#)”, ensuring cultural and social purpose

- ▶ **Place:** embeds principles of **cultural democracy**, enabling underrepresented communities, whether they be suffering economic hardship or from underrepresented backgrounds, to work with **autonomy and agency** and are able **define and decide their role** within the project
- ▶ **Partnership:** reflecting a relevant and **cohesive partnership** with clear **shared objectives**, demonstrating the potential and an **innovative** approach

The fund cannot support applications that seek to upscale your usual activity, work or arts practice, short term replications of old ways of working or top-down initiatives – the focus is on innovative approaches, reaching deeper into Wales’s communities and encouraging new voices.

When we talk about Community and Communities, we recognise that these aren’t just limited to geography and place. There are many types of Community – artistic and creative.

When we talk about Audiences, we recognise that this isn’t just limited to those attending a performance or exhibition. We also mean those who enjoy, take part in, participate and experience the arts, including those who do so digitally and online.

Welsh Government is calling for a decade of action to help reach net-zero by 2050. This means every business, public body, community group and citizen in Wales needs to embed the climate emergency in the way they think, work, play and travel by 2030. Artists from Wales and from every corner of the globe are engaged in Climate Justice campaigns. We are interested in applications that explore how the arts can inspire change and give hope in the face of climate anxieties.

Fund information

Connect & Flourish is a two-stage application process.

Stage 1 - Expression of Interest – You will receive a decision within 6 weeks. If you are successful, you will move on to stage 2

Stage 2 – Application – You will be invited to submit a full proposal, and will know the final decision within 12 weeks of the closing deadline date

Competition for funding means we won't be able to support all the eligible applications or successful Expressions of Interest that we receive.

Our funding decisions will be informed by any Covid-19 guidance, policies or restrictions from the Welsh Government that apply at the time.

Expressions of Interest and the Stage 2 Invited Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- quality and potential of the shared objectives and the strength and parity of the collaboration and partnership
- strength, innovation and quality of the artistic proposal
- make-up of the creative team
- potential impact of the proposal and its benefit to others, now and in the future
- at stage 2: the strength of the practical and financial plans in place to deliver, monitor and evaluate the project, monitor and evaluate as it develops
- how the project will support us in meeting our corporate priorities
- geographical spread and engagement with priority areas and communities
- the extent to which projects have freelance artists and makers at their heart, and ensures their involvement as full and equal partners in the planning and delivery

The Connect & Flourish fund:

- is open to organisations and individuals working together
- can only consider applications submitted by a ‘host organisation’ and cannot accept applications from individuals
- supports individuals, or groups of individuals to lead on projects
- is not open to applications from a single organisation working on its own
- requires a ‘host applicant’ to lead on the submission of the application on behalf of the collaboration, manage funds and work with us on administrative and reporting requirements
- welcomes examples where artists and creative professionals are leading the collective delivering the activity (‘host organisations’ aren’t expected to be the main driver of the project)
- encourages collaborative bids that include both arts organisations and non-arts organisations (e.g., Health Board, Housing Association, Menter Iaith, community development or environmental organisation).
- requires that projects demonstrate a real connection to local people and communities
- needs to see individual artists and creative professionals fully involved in the project
- is open to applications from members of the Arts Portfolio Wales, however, we’d encourage you to discuss your proposal with your lead officer ahead of making an application

Please see our guidance [National Lottery Funding: what you need to know if you’re making an application](#) for further organisation eligibility requirements.

We’d expect an organisation to be the host for only one application. Organisations and individuals can be collaborators in more than one application. However, each partner should make sure it has the capacity to deliver against the commitments it agrees to undertake on each project. We’ll check, as part of our assessment of applications, that those involved in multiple projects have adequately thought about these issues.

Bank accounts

We’ll need to make some financial checks, so we’ll ask you to provide some evidence of your bank account. We can’t award funds to you without this information. Your nominated bank account must fully satisfy the conditions stated within our online guidance. You can find information on this [here](#).

How much can I apply for?

You can apply for funding of between £10,000 and £150,000. Please think carefully about the level of your application as budget constraints will limit the number of large projects that we're able to support.

Projects can be delivered over a period of up to 24 months

Funding will be allocated through a phased approach. We hope that this will allow you to take a flexible approach to your planning so that you're better able to respond to the needs of the project and your partners.

What can I apply for?

1. **A collaborative project** that's ready to go with partnerships in place, shared objectives clearly defined and potential outcomes identified,

or

2. **A continuation of a development project** that enables the furthering of ambitions and impact around a key piece of work your partnership has previously received Connect & Flourish funding for

As we are undertaking an evaluation of the scheme, applications to support an Initial Development phase are not eligible for Round 4.

The application process and application form is the same for all of the above approaches.

We can't fund the total costs of your project.

The maximum percentage of your total eligible project costs that we can fund is **90%**.

The remainder of your project income must come from a non-Arts Council of Wales source. At least 10% of your project income must come from sources other than National Lottery funding. This can be cash or 'in-kind' support which we'd define as resources or services which are contributed to the project and have a value (that you would usually have to pay for), but which are not cash. We won't accept in kind contributions from your own resources.

What type of costs can this grant support?

We can consider supporting any reasonable cost that will enable you to deliver your project ambitions. There are some costs we can't support, which you can find in our [Help Documents](#). We want to make sure that you're paying yourself, and members of your project team properly. You'll find further guidance on artist fees in our Help Documents.

Access Costs

If your application is successful, we can help to cover access support costs for you, or anyone directly involved in shaping your project creatively, during delivery, e.g., interpreter costs, support workers or specialist equipment or software.

Deadlines

For current information regarding the Expression of Interest (Stage 1) and full application (Stage 2) deadlines, please refer to our [website](#).

The application process

Register on our Portal

The 'host' organisation will need an account on our grant application portal. You can register here if you've not applied to us before or do not already have an account: <https://portal.arts.wales/>

Stage 1: Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest stage will help us determine if your project is a suitable fit with Connect & Flourish. A panel of Arts Council staff and external advisors will assess these.

1. Start your **Expression of Interest** form, which you can access through our online portal [here](#). You can find details of the questions you'll need to answer in our [Expression of Interest Help Document](#)

Submit your Expression of Interest by the **Stage 1 deadline** published on our [website](#). After we receive your Expression of Interest, we'll send you an acknowledgement

2. We will let you know in writing within six weeks of the deadline date if you have been successful or not
3. Successful Expressions of Interest will be invited to develop and submit full applications to the next stage

Stage 2: Invited Applications

1. If you're successful in Stage 1, you'll be invited to complete and submit an online application form. We'll send you the application form questions in advance of the portal opening
2. Submit your application by the **deadline published on our website for Stage 2**. After we receive your application, we'll send you another acknowledgement
3. Your application will be assessed against the published criteria and the artistic quality of the proposal. All applications are subject to the same rigorous checking and assessment by a panel of Arts Council staff and external advisors
4. We'll give you a decision on your application within **12 weeks of the Stage 2 deadline date**. If your application is successful, you'll need to accept your grant offer on the portal and note any additional conditions that apply to your offer. If you've not been successful, we'll write to you to explain why
5. Once you've accepted the offer (and addressed any conditions that may apply), we'll pay a percentage of the award (depending on the needs of your project). We'll pay the final 10% after the project/activities have been completed and we've received a Completion Report

***Please note, an invitation to submit a full application does not guarantee success.**

What if I have a question?

If you want to clarify if you or your application is eligible, or you wish to discuss other questions about this fund, please contact our **Grants and Information Team**.

You can do this by email, through our website or social media:

Email: grants@arts.wales

Web: Fill out a form on our [website](#)

Twitter: Send us a tweet [@Arts_Wales_](#)

If you're already sure that you're eligible and that your project is a good 'fit' with our priorities, you should get in touch with our Development Team to discuss your project in more detail. They can be contacted via the online enquiry form on our [website](#), by emailing development@arts.wales, or phoning 03301 242733 (select option 1, then option 4).

We'll do our best to respond to all enquiries as promptly as we can. If you want us to call you back, please provide your contact number and we'll arrange to get back to you as soon as possible.



03301 242733



9.00am — 5.00pm Monday — Thursday
9.00am — 4.30pm Friday



www.arts.wales/about-us/contact-us



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[celfcymruarts](#)

Appendix 1 – FAQs

Can you clarify what you will support under Childcare Costs?

We can contribute to funding childcare costs where this is necessary to allow individual freelancers to take part in the project.

In some circumstances we'll support reasonable childcare costs – particularly where participants are unlikely to be able to afford attendance without this support – or for activity which enables the involvement of people from underrepresented groups. Please explain why this support is required.

Childcare costs should be included within the expenditure section of the budget attachment to your application

As a freelancer, why can I not be the lead on the project?

As a freelancer you can be the lead on the project, however for financial management reasons we ask that an organisation be the 'host' of the project.

As a freelancer how can I ensure I have parity in the project?

We expect all collaborative parties to work from a partnership agreement, this agreement will need to clearly demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of each party. Your budget should reflect all pre-agreed fees etc.

Is Connect & Flourish open to Festivals?

Yes, festivals can apply where they meet the Connect & Flourish criteria.

Do partnerships need to be new or can we apply for current partnership activity?

No partnerships do not need to be 'new'. Applications can be made for existing partnerships where they already embody the ethos of Connect & Flourish.

I'm not ready to submit an application now, will there be other opportunities?

It is envisaged that Connect & Flourish will operate on an annual basis moving forward. However, there are other forms of funding available on our [website](#) for both individuals and organisations which may be relevant to your ambitions.

I've not worked with my partners for long, will this hinder my application?

No, within each proposal we are looking for the potential of the partnership, you will need to clearly state your shared objectives and what has brought you together. We would expect for relationships to grow, and we will work with you in supporting your proposal.

As an organisation can I lead (or be host) on more than one application?

No, unfortunately, you can only lead on one proposal/application, however, you can be part of multiple proposals.

Can we apply to other Lottery programmes as well as Connect & Flourish?

As long as you meet the eligibility criteria, you can apply to other programmes, even if you have made an application to Connect & Flourish. If you currently have a 'live' National Lottery grant open with us you are still eligible to apply.

Will it be possible to make more than one application within a two-year period?

Currently rules allow for a host to have one live project, we would expect a grant to cover the life of the project.

Will it be possible to make more than one application within a two-year period?

Does a host organisation have to be based in Wales?

You can apply to us if you're based in Wales or other UK nations where there is a clear benefit to Wales through the funded project.

Can different service areas/departments within local authorities/universities be classed as different partners in applications? Does the same apply in terms of being the host organisation of different applications?

We would define different service areas/department within a local authority or university as different partners for the purposes of this fund. This means that different service areas/departments could host different applications or be partners in different applications to us. We still expect to see individuals as part of any collaborative application and ideally an additional external partner to the local authority/university to support with the potential of the proposal.