

Arts Council of Northern Ireland



Public Authority Statutory Equality and Good Relations Duties

Annual Progress Report

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Documents published relating to our Equality Scheme can be found at:

[Equality and Good Relations Duties | Arts Council of Northern Ireland \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](https://www.artscouncil-ni.org/equality-and-good-relations-duties)

Signature:

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This report has been prepared using a template circulated by the Equality Commission.

It presents our progress in fulfilling our statutory equality and good relations duties and implementing Equality Scheme commitments and Disability Action Plans.

This report reflects progress made between April 2023 and March 2024

PART A – Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Equality Scheme

Section 1: Equality and good relations outcomes, impacts and good practice

- 1** In 2023-24, please provide examples of key policy/service delivery developments made by the public authority in this reporting period to better promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and the outcomes and improvements achieved.

Please relate these to the implementation of your statutory equality and good relations duties and Equality Scheme where appropriate.

1. Good Practice

1.1.The Equality Monitoring Working Group

The Equality Monitoring Working Group (EMWG) at ACNI has responsibility for ensuring the development and delivery of the Arts Council's Equality and Disability Action Plans under the organisation's Equality Scheme 2019-24.

The group promotes, champions and encourages equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace; across its funded organisations and artists; and monitors the key areas of performance. It also considers the future strategic agenda relating to equality and advises and make recommendations on appropriate initiatives and activities that will help the Arts Council achieve its key equality aims and commitments.

The group acts as a channel to challenge the organisation in terms of our practice, approach and development of equality, diversity and inclusion; in particular where progress is limited or, in support of underrepresented or disadvantaged individuals/ groups.

The group's core functions are to:

- Contribute to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations
- Assist in the identification of issues that may cause disadvantage or discrimination,
- Identify and develop initiatives aimed at finding solutions to issues identified as causing disadvantage and discrimination,
- Assist with the communication and mainstreaming of equality related actions into Arts Council policy and practice,

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- Review the Council's performance and progress in complying with equality legislative requirement and good practice,
- Inform the design of relevant research undertaken to provide a sound evidence base for action or assessment of programme effectiveness.

It provides leadership within the organisation and addresses shortcomings in gathering and evaluation of data within a number of core business areas. The changes made have resulted in more gathering of tailored information, relating to the categories detailed within Section 75, these include:

- Annual Funding Survey (AFS)
- Support for Individual Artists' Programme (SIAP) grant applications
- Sky Grant Making System (Sky)
- General Population Survey (GPS)

These data sources, including the 2021 Census, give ACNI information on the composition of the NI cultural workforce, Northern Ireland wide participation in the arts, and provides insight into the areas requiring improvement of access to funding. The use of these data sources tailors information gathered specifically to the arts sector and aids our understanding of the sector. This work has resulted in datasets providing a more thorough representation of audiences and participants in the arts across Northern Ireland.

Membership of the group was reviewed in March 2024 due to two members leaving the group. These places were then replaced by appropriate representatives within the organisation. The group recently met in April 2024 to get feedback, list any proposed changes and agree department responsible for delivery in ACNI's new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

The group are due to meet again in September/October 2024 with an agenda to be determined. However, it will most likely focus on the new EDI policy and action plan to determine what progress is being made against the actions set out in the first year of the plan (2024/25). There may also be emphasis on launching the second round of the "Measuring Social Class" survey.

1.2. Deliberative Fora

The Minority Ethnic and Rural Deliberative fora were set up to ensure ACNI are aware of Minority Ethnic and rural specific issues to inform programmes and strategies/policies and to promote each type of arts activity.

We decided to continue the fora as they have been helpful in testing and developing key policy commitments; given us the opportunity to engage with institutions, agencies, groups and

artists; and increased our awareness of issues such as simple language for application processes, importance of rural capacity building and ensuring genuine representation across all of our investment.

ACNI feel that the for a provide those voices who might otherwise be overlooked or heard and they provide information and insights to better understand particular challenges and promote specific Minority Ethnic or rural activities.

Meetings of both Forums

All meetings are independently facilitated. Meetings took place in January and May 2023 respectively. The meetings of both groups have proved beneficial for both artists and for Arts Council staff in shaping priorities, policies and programmes that promote and develop the needs of the artists at the Forums and in their respective communities.

The Minority Ethnic (ME) Deliberative Forum was helpful in shaping and championing a dedicated Minority Ethnic Artists' programme. The Minority Ethnic Artists Mentoring Residency Programme was launched in 2020/21 and now has been mainstreamed into one of ACNI's key annual funding programmes for individual artists (SIAP).

Similarly, the Rural Deliberative Forum's input helped the development of the Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP). A largely successful cross community programme in reducing isolation and promoting social inclusion. The evaluation of Round 1 will be published in June 2024.

In the first quarter of 2024 the stakeholders in each group agreed to continue their participation going forward. The fourth meetings acted as part of the consultation process on developing ACNI's new 10-year strategy (2024-34) in summer 2023. This was a key stage of developing the strategy and provided a range of perspectives from rural and minority ethnic backgrounds.

2. Accessibility Initiatives

2.1 Equality and Access Standards Initiative (EASI)

University of Atypical (UofA), an organisation funded by the Arts Council, has been responsible for the delivery of the Arts and Disability Charter on behalf of ACNI for many years. In 2020 the scheme was reviewed and redesigned using a continuous improvement approach and has re-emerged under a new title 'Equality and Access Standards Initiative' (EASI).

The original roll out of the programme was impacted by the Covid Pandemic and the EASI project was relaunched when the arts sector came out of lockdown. The pilot phase is due for

completion in July 2023. The outcomes will include twenty-two arts sector staff receiving QUB accreditation on completion of an equality, access and inclusion training course, and eleven arts sector venues will receive accreditation for the quality of their equality, access and inclusion processes i.e. the EASI charter mark award. EASI has similarities to the Equality Commission's 'Every Customer Counts' but is specifically about the arts and covers physical access, consultation with the d/Deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse community, creative programming incorporating work created by d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists, inclusive representation on Boards and committees, and in employment and volunteering.

University of Atypical also produces 'Social Narrative Videos' © for Cultural Arts and Heritage venues under the EASI umbrella of services and resources. This initiative has been supported by the Arts Council with the aim of enhancing accessible information on arts venues for audiences. Social narratives information was originally designed to provide information for people with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) in understanding the social context of an activity and in developing a new social skill. Working in partnership with a team of people with ASC, University of Atypical developed the Social Narrative video © model. This model provides clear, precise, and manageable chunks of information related to a venue, the social situation, the processes people with ASC will experience in accessing the venue and participating in creative activities. The model provides captions and voiceover in plain English and has British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language versions downloadable from venue websites. By 31st March 2023, University of Atypical had produced fourteen Social Narrative videos © for Culture, Arts and Heritage organisations across NI with a further twenty commissioned by Belfast City Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council.

University of Atypical continues to deliver the d/Deaf and Disabled Artists Support Fund (DDASF) with funds from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. DDASF was previously known as the iDA grant scheme, and provides financial support for individual d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists. From 2021 to 2023, the DDASF has distributed £330,000 in grants to individual d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists.

2.2 Disability Access Card

All In is a new UK arts access scheme for D/deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people designed to ensure culture and cultural experiences can be accessed by everyone.

The scheme is supported financially by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Arts Council of Wales and Creative Scotland, with the partnership officially recognised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The development of the scheme has been informed by a number of research studies to better understand the needs of disabled people, and practicalities of delivery within each of the UK regions, including Northern Ireland.

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All In continue to work closely with disabled people and organisations of all sizes to ensure the creation of a scheme that welcomes everyone. The scheme is championed by Andrew Miller MBE, a cultural consultant and commentator who is currently placed in the Top 10 of the Shaw Trust Disability Power 100 list.

Current focus includes:

- **Website** – [a dedicate website was launched in early 2024](#). Now in the second phase of development, the website contains information and contact details for 44 support organisations and allows organisations/individuals submit an expression of interest.
- **Brand** – a unique brand and logo has been developed and applied to the website and all associated branding. This gives the scheme a clearly defined look and feel that is clearly recognisable.
- **Media** - In January, [All In was mentioned in The Stage 100](#), as part of Andrew Miller's recognition for his long-time contribution to improving accessibility across performing arts, including his key role in developing All In. The next key media moment for All In will be the announcement of our standards provider in which we are preparing a national press release to share updates with the sector.
- **Procurement** – the disability led project team are currently procuring support to deliver key elements of the scheme. This includes a Standards and Accreditation Plan, Digital Membership System, Operator and Training & Support provider.
- **Roll-Out** – regional partners will continue to grow the schemes visibility and identify potential 'gateway' organisations to act as local touchstone. The scheme is to be piloted at venues in the of England before being rolled out across the UK.
- **All-island dimension** – in recognition of the benefits associated with the scheme for audiences and organisations across the island of Ireland, Arts Council Ireland are seeking to join the scheme at the earliest opportunity.

The final scheme will:

- be disabled-led
- be free for disabled users
- be UK-wide with a digital first approach
- introduce a set of national accessibility standards
- offer subscribed organisations a training programme to improve the quality of access and customer service
- be informed by the social model of disability improve representation of disabled people within the sector

2.3 Changes to the Annual Funding Survey (AFS)

There were no substantive changes to the Annual Funding Survey in 2023/24. The results of changes made to the previous years' survey relating to gender, ethnicity, sexuality and political persuasion can be found [on the Arts Council's website](#).

ACNI acknowledge the gaps in equality data in our Annual Funding Survey (AFS) and are committed to encourage completion.

2.4 Review of Investment

ACNI will review our investment in line with new strategy in 24/25. This will include how we capture equality characteristics and ensure we fulfil our strategic outcomes.

3. Continued Monitoring of Sector Specific Data Sources

3.1 Continuous Household Survey (CHS)

The CHS is a Northern Ireland wide household survey administered by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Data from this survey is used for various purposes including monitoring DfC's Public Service Agreement targets as well as helping to inform policy making, for equality monitoring. Data is collected by conducting interviews face to face, and the interviews are spread equally over the 12 months from April to March.

The following section details engagement in the arts, participation in arts activities, types of art activities and attendance at arts events¹.

In 2022/23, over three quarters of adults (77%) had engaged with the arts within the previous year, with over one quarter of adults (28%) participating in arts activities and just over seven out of ten adults (71%) attending an arts event.

Engagement in the arts

In 2022/23, over three quarters of adults (77%) had engaged with the arts within the previous year, i.e. either participated in arts activities or attended arts events, an increase on the 2021/22 figure of 57%

Females were more likely to have engaged with the arts compared with males (79% and 74% respectively).

¹ [Engagement in culture, arts, heritage and sport by adults in Northern Ireland \(nisra.gov.uk\)](#)

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Regarding age, the trend was similar to that for attending arts events, engagement rates tended to drop as age increased.

Adults who do not have a disability were more likely to engage in the arts (81%) than adults with a disability (67%). Similar proportions of adults from a Catholic background and those from a Protestant background engaged with the arts (75% and 76% respectively).

Adults who lived in the least deprived areas were more likely to have engaged with the arts within the previous year than those who lived in the most deprived areas (87% and 71% respectively). Also, those living in an urban area were more likely to engage in the arts compared to those living in a rural area (79% and 74% respectively).

Participation in arts activities

In 2022/23, over a quarter of adults (28%) participated in an arts activity at least once within the previous year, an increase on the 2021/22 figure of 25%.

A higher proportion of females than males participated in arts activities (33% and 23% respectively). In addition, relatively more adults from the Protestant community participated in arts activities within the previous year (29%) than those from the Catholic community (24%). Adults with a disability were more likely to have participated in the arts compared to adults without a disability (31% compared to 27%).

In 2022/23, adults with dependants were less likely to participate in an art activity compared to those without dependants (26% and 30% respectively). In addition, adults living in the most deprived areas were less likely to participate in art activities compared to adults living in the least deprived areas (24% and 35% respectively).

Types of arts activities:

The five most popular arts activities that adults participated in within the previous year were: 'Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting' (10%), 'Painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture' (7%), 'Took photographs or made films or videos as an artistic activity' (5%), 'Sang or played a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsed for performance (5%)' and 'wood crafts such as wood turning, carving and furniture making' (4%).

Attendance at art events

In 2022/23, seven out of ten adults (71%) had attended at least one arts event within the previous year, an increase on the 2021/22 figure of 46%. More women than men had attended

an arts event within the previous year (73% and 69% respectively). There is a relationship between arts attendance and age, with attendance generally decreasing as age increases.

Adults with a disability were less likely to attend an art event than adults without a disability (57% and 77% respectively), while a higher proportion of adults with dependants attended art events than those without dependants (77% and 67% respectively).

Adults who lived in the least deprived areas were more likely to have attended an arts event (82%) than those who live in the most deprived areas (65%). Also, those adults who lived in urban areas were more likely to have attended an arts event than those who lived in rural areas (73% compared to 68%).

The most popular arts events attended by adults over the previous year were 'Film at cinema or other venue' (52%), 'Visited a national or local museum' (28%) 'A live music performance' (34%), 'A play, drama other theatre performance' (18%).

3.2. General Population Survey (GPS)

The GPS builds on previous surveys and focuses on attendance and participation in the arts, as well as public attitudes to the arts in Northern Ireland. The survey is based on a representative sample of 1015 adults using an online panel methodology. The survey was conducted in accordance with the ISO20252:2019 Standard, and fieldwork was carried between 17 May and 7 June 2023.

The main findings of the report are:

Attendance to arts activities

- 74% of respondents had attended an arts activity or event in the past 12 months [this compares to 68% in the period between March 2019 and March 2020].
- 45% had attended a live music event, 35% had attended a live play, drama, musical, pantomime or opera, and 25% had been to a Festival.
- Those more likely to have been a member of an audience or have attended an arts activity in the past year included: those in younger age groups (18-34, 87%; 35-59, 75%; 60+, 61%), those in higher social classes (ABC1, 81%; C2DE, 69%), those with dependents (80% vs. 70%); and, those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 66%; 'medium', 74%; 'high', 79%).

Taking part in arts activities

- 52% of respondents had taken part in in an arts-related activity in the past 12 months. Participation varies significantly by age, social class and area of residence.

- Photography was the most common arts-related activity (30%) that respondents participated in, followed by painting, drawing, printmaking or calligraphy (20%), and crafts-based activities (16%).
- Those more likely to have taken part in arts-related activities in the past year include younger respondents (18-34, 69%: 35-59, 46%; 60+, 44%), those in higher social classes (ABC1, 58%: C2DE, 47%), those with a disability (58% vs. 51%); and those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 37%; 'medium', 44%; 'high', 66%).

Attitudes and perceptions

There were high levels of agreement with the following statements:

'I want people with a disability to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities' (96%).

'Arts and cultural activities create jobs in Northern Ireland' (86%).

'Arts and cultural activities help to bring tourists to Northern Ireland' (86%).

'I want school children to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities' (83%).

'Arts and culture are open to everyone in NI regardless of differences in religion, ethnic origin or social class (83%).

'The arts have a positive impact on the quality of life of my community' (72%).

'The arts improve my mental health' (65%).

'The arts and culture help me understand people around me better' (61%).

The full report can be found here: [Engagement with the Arts in Northern Ireland 2022-2023 \(s3-assets.com\)](https://www.assets.com)

3.3. Annual Funding Survey (AFS)

ACNI is an official statistics provider and its Research and Policy team captures its own equality monitoring data through the 'Annual Funding Survey' (AFS). The most recent AFS results are for the 2022/23 period as the 2023/24 survey was closed in May 2024 and is currently being analysed. Results will be published in September 2024.

Clients in receipt of funding under the Annual Funding Programme, 95 organisations in 2022/23, are required to complete an online survey at the end of each financial year, including the composition of their workforce across a number of Section 75 criteria. These organisations include employees, board members and volunteers; providing a robust picture of the arts sector in Northern Ireland. The survey collects:

- Ethnic Background of board members, artistic staff, managers, and other staff based on 12 categories;
- Staff members by age and gender; and

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- The religious group of staff members.
- Sectors targeted in society, including people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and LGBTQIA+ groups
- Venue accessibility

Key findings from the 2022/23 survey include:

- Of those reporting their gender, the workforce can be categorised into either man (50%) or woman (49%)² Those describing themselves as non-binary represents 1% of the workforce. Including all response categories, nearly one-third (29%) were unknown, or individuals preferred not to say.
- Of those reporting their age, those age 25-34 comprised the largest proportion of the overall workforce (29%). This varied slightly by employment category, with those employed in management capacities tending to be older. In contrast, those employed as artists tended to be slightly younger.
- Eight percent of the overall workforce (permanent and contract) had a disability, a reduction of 1 percentage point compared to the previous year. In 21/22, this rate was higher for those employed on a permanent basis (9%) compared to those employed on a contract basis (6%). The proportion of respondents choosing 'prefer not to say' or 'not known' fell, compared to the previous year fell from 65% to 43%. The level of disability by employment type varied, with those employed in 'other' capacities (including administration and technical staff) reporting the highest levels of disability (14%), followed by managers (12%) and specialists (7%). Only 6% of artists reported having a disability.
- Nine percent of the workforce population (combined permanent and contract) was from an ethnic minority background. This was 3 percentage points higher than in 2021/22. There were increases in ethnic minority representation across all four employment classifications with the greatest relating to artists which increased from 8 percentage points to 11 percentage points. Of note at an overall workforce level were increases in representation of mixed ethnic groups (39%), black Africans (13%) and Arabs (9%) as a proportion of the minority ethnic population.

The results of the 2022/23 survey are provided in Annex B and can also be found on ACNI's website: [Official Statistics | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](https://www.artscouncil-ni.org/official-statistics).

3.4. SIAP

ACNI also collects monitoring information for all applicants to its 'Support for Individual Artists Programme' (SIAP). Annually there are over 200 individual artist grants made, and almost as many unsuccessful applicants. Equality monitoring information is collected as an element of the

² Excludes "prefer not to say/don't know"

application process. This provides a picture of the individual artist demographics in Northern Ireland and contributes towards ACNI's understanding of the sector. Equality monitoring information is collected across all nine Section 75 fields.

Some of key findings include:

- The majority of successful applicants have 'no religion', followed by Catholic at 36% and Protestant at 14%.
- The largest cohort are aged 25-34 years at 38% and 35-44 at 31%, with those aged 55+ at only 12%.
- Those who have a disability represent almost 20% of total successful applications, slightly up from last year (2023/24 at 19% and 2022/23 at 18.5%).

Detailed SIAP data from 2023/24 is included in Annex A.

3.5. Measuring Social Class

In October-November 2023, ACNI sent a short questionnaire to 2022/23 Support for Individuals Artists Programme (SIAP) applicants (successful or not) asking them 3 questions to capture information about their social class. In general, the results show that grammar school graduates, least deprived neighbourhoods and Higher and intermediate managerial, administrative, and professional occupations groups are overrepresented, when compared to the NI population.

In more detail, 38 respondents (16.3%) attended school outside of Northern Ireland. 49.6% went to a Grammar school (41% of NI population), 33.2% to a secondary school (55% of NI population), with only 0.8% (<0.5% of NI population) reported attending an independent school.

Just 14% of the sample of SIAP applicants reported living in the most deprived neighbourhoods when they were 14 and 44.9% of SIAP artists came from working class backgrounds. We know from the General Population Survey that 59% of respondents self-identified as working class.

4. Overall monitoring

4.1 ACNI Audit of Inequalities

The data presented throughout the Audit of Inequalities report is based on approved and declined applications to each of ACNI's funding programmes for each of the nine Section 75 categories. A link to the final report can be found on ACNI's website using the following link:

[Audit of Inequalities 2017-2022 \(s3-assets.com\)](https://s3-assets.com)

4.2. Continued communications content that promotes positive attitudes towards Section 75 Groups

Within ACNI's communications schedule in 2023/24, 22 releases highlighted specific sector 75 groups to promote positive attitudes. A full list of covered items is included in Annex C.

5. Strategic Programmes

5.1 d/Deaf and Disabled Artist Support Fund (DDASF)

The d/Deaf and Disabled Artists Support Funds were managed by the University of Atypical for Arts and Disability (UofA) on behalf of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) and the Department for Communities (DfC).

The DDASF is a dedicated annual arts development programme, delivered through University of Atypical, that enables individual D/deaf and disabled artists working across a range of art forms to apply for funding to develop their professional artistic careers. The bursaries provide valuable opportunities for each artist to produce a new high-quality creative work, receive training, or engage with professional mentoring.

There were 20 x £1,000 awards for artists to buy creative time funded by ACNI, administered by the University of Atypical. The scheme is only open to d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists.

Organisations funded by ACNI in the Health and Disability Arts portfolio are Arts Care, Open Arts, Drake Music and University of Atypical. Each of these organisations provide specialist services to improve access to participants with a disability and for artists with a disability. In 2023/24 these organisations engaged with combined audiences of over 60,000 individuals through performance, participation and festival-based activity.

The Arts Council prescribes to the Social Model of disability. It challenges the more widely used medical model, arguing that disabled people face barriers that prevent them from participating in society equally and independently.

5.2. Service level agreement between Arts Council of Northern Ireland and University of Atypical 2023/25

Based on findings from the last Census in 2021, we know that 24% of the Northern Ireland population or 1 in 4 have a limiting long-term health problem or disability, 40% of whom are

aged 65 and over. In comparison, 1 in 13 of the arts and culture workforce in Northern Ireland has a disability.

ACNI has a service level agreement on a range of support that University of Atypical for Arts and Disability (UofA) is able to provide to the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to assist with access requirements, for potential D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse applicants. This agreement and range of services allows ACNI to deliver better access to D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse artists, who may require tailored advice and support to enable them to make funding applications to ACNI Programmes such as the Support for the Individual Artist Programme (SIAP).

There are other services, which will also address the need for communicating the opening of funding programmes, according to the needs of D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse artists. In addition, services such as interpretation methods may be required for Website Accessibility, the use of British and Irish Sign Language Signers and Interpreters for meetings and events.

UofA is able to provide signers and interpreters to translate spoken word / text to make it accessible to BLS and ISL users. UofA also offers a film and video production service to support organisations with accessible information on the organisation, their services/ programmes, documents, or past and forthcoming events. This service provides social narrative format film / videos using moving image, voice over, captions and with BSL and ISL versions. This creates access for those who are D/deaf or HOH or Blind or visually impaired or with learning disabilities e.g. dyslexia. UofA is also able to provide this in other languages given sufficient advance notice.

UofA is able to offer a braille translation service providing translation of single page or multiple page documents from text into braille.

An audio description service supports the access requirements for participants who are Blind or visually impaired. Audio description should be used for events where there is a visual content such as film, dance or theatre. This would include presentations where static or moving images are embedded in the visuals and are an inherent part of the presentation. This process requires time to be allocated to the audio describer to see the event / information in advance or attend rehearsals or run throughs.

Funding programme Access Service This would support D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse Artists with applications to ACNI funding Programmes. D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse Artists are currently experiencing a disadvantage in applying to ACNI funding given the nature of their disability e.g. communication disabilities including dyslexia, literacy abilities. Other issues include, BSL /ISL as first language or blind or visually impaired applicant not being able to read the application form and guidance notes. This service would provide 1-2-1 support with reading and understanding the application. It also provides a review process if this is required prior to submitting the application. UofA is also able to provide a scribe /amanuensis service to complete the application form on behalf of the applicant. The scribe /amanuensis is only able to enter the verbal information provided by the applicant.

Access & Social Narrative Video Service for arts organisations wishing to provide information to the D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse community. This ranges from an introductory message from the Chairperson or CEO, to a walk through guide of their venue or a video on how to book an event or access requirements for an event. UofA uses this approach with joint ACNI-UofA funding programmes and it produce videos on 'How to complete the application form' and 'How to book an application advice session'. UofA would be keen to produce similar videos for ACNI to assist with making information or programmes more accessible to the D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse community. The videos it produces have a voiceover, captions and are available with BSL and ISL versions. This provides information to support a range of disabilities.

5.3.Arts and Older People's Programme

The Arts Council's Arts & Older People Programme (AOPP) was developed to increase opportunities for older people to engage with the arts by providing funding to arts-based projects addressing the related social justice issues of poverty, isolation and loneliness, as well as promoting positive mental health.

The Arts and Older People Programme has made over 250 grant awards and reached 35,000 older people since its launch in 2010. Evaluations carried out during the past twelve years has informed the strategic direction of the programme. Funding secured from the Public Health Agency and Arts Council National Lottery meant that the work was extended to provide opportunities for older people to access and participate in the arts, particularly in dealing with social justice issues.

Informed by AOPP logic model and Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, the evaluator used qualitative case study approaches to demonstrate outcomes. A storytelling approach was used to illuminate defining aspects of the programme.

The latest evaluation was completed in March 2024 which can be found here:

[Arts and Older People Programme Evaluation \(April... | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](#)

ACNI awarded £216,571 to 29 projects during 2022/23. Seven of the organisations funded were new to the programme. A total of 2,173 participants took part and 1,542 contact hours were delivered by arts organisations.

In November 2023 a roundtable symposium was held involving the ACNI staff and representatives from the community, voluntary, private, and statutory sectors. The aim of the symposium was to reflect on the programmes successes, identify how to strengthen support for older people and work collectively towards the same goal.

For PR/marketing of the programme a number of short films were made and are on the ACNI website.

5.4.Creative Schools

Children from schools participating in the Creative Schools Partnership Programme had an opportunity to come together to meet one another and take workshops designed to share learning, teach new skills and build confidence through the arts.

The three Creative Schools Ambassador events were held at the end of March 2023. Belfast Boys' Model, Blessed Trinity College and Mercy College Belfast met at the Duncairn Arts Centre in North Belfast. Ashfield Girls' High School and St Vincent's Centre met at Linenhall Library in Belfast City Centre and St Joseph's Boys' High School and St Cecilia's College met in Derry/Londonderry. The sessions were facilitated by a range of artists: Ayesha Mailey, a dancer with Echo Echo, Shena Kelly, a dancer with Du Dance, DJ Cahir Glen, filmmaker Graham Ginty, singer/songwriter Dan Ferguson and actors Jazzmin McClure, Christina Nelson and Rob Crawford.

The events brought together, for the first time in three years, schools involved in the Creative Schools Partnership Programme – a pioneering cross-government programme funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland through National Lottery funding, the Education Authority and The Executive Office's Urban Villages Initiative. Eleven schools, located in Urban Villages areas in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry, are currently engaged in the programme. Last year they were awarded up to £15,000 each to develop a two-year project that would bring professional artists into the classroom to teach new skills, support educational learning and strengthen community.

Eleven post-primary schools took part in the 2022/23 programme school year, engaging a total of 227 students. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned Annabel Jackson Associates Ltd to conduct an evaluation of the Creative Schools Partnership. The evaluation report can be found: [Creative Schools Partnership Evaluation July 2023 \(s3-assets.com\)](https://s3-assets.com)

5.5. Financial support to meet needs of Section 75 groups

ACNI recognises that there are barriers for certain groups within society to attend and participate in the arts. We provide financial support to arts projects where delivery requires the needs of certain Section 75 groups to be met. As part of the application process, applicants outline these additional costs in the overall cost of the projects they wish ACNI to fund.

Successful applicants who can clearly demonstrate that additional costs are associated with the delivery of their project for people with particular needs as defined under Section 75 of The

Northern Ireland Act 1998. These additional costs incurred through the involvement of Section 75 groups, e.g. carers costs, language translation, visual aids (e.g. Braille), sign language and hearing assistance can be covered.

5.6. Minority Ethnic Artists Mentoring and Residency Programme

The Minority Ethnic Artists Mentoring and Residency Programme aims to support individual artists and creative practitioners from minority ethnic backgrounds and migrant backgrounds at every stage of their career.

It seeks to:

- Support workforce skill development and career pathways for artists of all ages from minority ethnic and migrant backgrounds;
- Contribute to a vibrant and diverse workforce across the breadth of the creative and cultural industries; and
- Increase opportunities for young and emerging minority ethnic artists.

Thirteen ethnic minority artists were awarded grants worth £49,995 to help them develop their creative practice and support their professional careers in Northern Ireland in November 2023.

[Minority ethnic artists awarded Arts Council... | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](#)

6. ACNI Funded Client Organisations / Projects

A number of examples have been outlined below that highlight ACNI funded organisations whose programmes specifically address key Section 75 groups. These provide an indication of the range of work supported by ACNI's funding.

6.1. University of Atypical

University of Atypical is a disabled-led arts charity, taking an empowerment-based approach towards supporting disabled and D/deaf people's involvement in the arts. In addition to the SLA between ACNI and University of Atypical, the organisation specialises in developing and promoting the work of disabled and D/deaf artists in reaching disabled and D/deaf audiences.

Working with all art forms and across all impairments, University of Atypical delivers a year-round programme of exhibitions and events including the annual Bounce Arts Festival, which

presents an exciting range of music, theatre, dance and visual arts by disabled and D/deaf artists, alongside family-friendly activities. The Atypical Gallery shows work by disabled and D/deaf visual artists on a year-round basis. The University of Atypical also manages the DDASF grant scheme for individual disabled and deaf artists, with funds from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and the Arts & Disability Equality Charter, which supports venues to be as accessible as possible for disabled and D/deaf audiences and artists.

In its 11th year, Bounce remains unique as the only festival solely dedicated to the celebration and showcasing of arts created by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodiverse creatives regionally.

The 2023 Bounce programme drew on the most exceptional artists from across these islands and beyond. All Bounce artists are recipients of d/Deaf and Disabled Artists Support Fund awards.

Over the years, Bounce has evolved into a true artistic celebration of diversity. The programme draws on familiar faces and newcomers to the sector, reflecting the Atypical humour and quality of d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists' work. Accessibility is integral to Bounce, where events are made as accessible as possible to d/Deaf, disabled, and neurodiverse audience members. Access requirements are handled during the booking process.

The last Bounce Festival took place during October 2023 and is a free event. For details of this festival see: www.universityofatypical.org/bounce

6.2. Drake Music Project

Drake Music Project in Northern Ireland provides access to independent music making for children and adults with complex disabilities. Workshops in composition and performance skills are afforded by the provision of adapted computer interfacing technology, in order that physical and cognitive ability is matched to an appropriate gestural interface, allowing people with disabilities the opportunity to express their creativity in an independent and controllable environment. The Professional Access Music Tutors of the Drake Music Project Northern Ireland design, implement and deliver music creativity and learning programmes for children and adults with diverse and complex disabilities, to give people with disabilities the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

As an arts organisation that crosses the boards into design and research with assistive technology needed and created for workshops, Drake Music NI are involved in several research projects, and are currently partners in 3 PhD programs with QUB and the Sonic Arts Research Centre. Drake musicians are involved with design programs to create new instruments and controllers for physical control of the creative process, and our musicians have performed in Bern, Hamburg, Dublin, at Acoustic Picnic and many times at the Black Box sessions.

6.3. Kids in Control

KIC is the forerunner in physical theatre for youth in the North of Ireland, with a recognised professional reputation for producing programmes in the community for marginalized youth of all abilities over the last 24 years.

KIC programming is recognised as complimentary and additional to other youth service providers. KIC have an excellent track record and reputation for providing high quality, creative learning programmes, opportunities for public performance, and short community issue-based films that impact positively on the lives of marginalised youth and their communities.

KIC continues to enhance and expand its partnerships both within the arts sector and across sectors, the planned re-brand and new name will accelerate opportunities. Long-standing partnerships with Lyric Theatre and University of Atypical(UoA) are growing, meeting need and filling gaps in the arts ecosystem.

Partnerships with local schools has expanded and the support this provides is critical in reaching some of the most marginalised youth in the community.

The key strategic aims for company development/sustainability during 2023 – 2024 can be summarised as:

The Company: Re-brand to enhance company profile – Whitenoise engaged, and process has started (secured through BluePrint)

Restructure company core staffing – part time Project Manager (secured through BluePrint)

The Creative Team: Grow Creative Team in KIC unique methodologies, mentor, train & employ 2 emerging professional participatory arts facilitators/artists (training module secured through BluePrint).

Sectoral skill sharing – providing inclusive theatre practice training to ensure unique methodology is shared to benefit society.

Secure New Premises fit for purpose where KIC can bring workshops, operational base and equipment together under one roof.

The Officer is aware that Professional disability art remains under-developed in NI. KIC (through its partnerships) seeks to establish NI as a leader in this field, building platforms to showcase high quality professional inclusive work e.g. Blue Chevy, Brain Injury Matters. KIC is enhancing potential for employment in creative industries ensuring it is increasingly representative of the disability demographic.

There were 20 distinct Programme Strands to the KIC operational activity during 2023/24 and the associated Outcomes are realistic and achievable given the organisations professional track record .The Programme Strands can be clustered under the following 5 Programme Headings

1. Community Outreach Taster and Recruitment Access programme in TSN and Section 75 communities.

2. Developing Creative Equals/Schools Inclusion Programme: All Saints College – tackling local issue of concern Engaging hard-to-reach youth to build skills, confidence and produce projects with good citizenship and social responsibility at the core. Producing a podcast and short film. Belfast Boys Model – introduction to physical theatre – mind and body wellbeing yrs 8&9.

3. In House Programmes. Core Access Programme: Energy Plan, Physical Graffiti. Core Advanced Programme: Adventures in Human Being and All Doors Open

4 Professional Partnerships, Collaborations and Partnership Programme Brain Injury Matter Project with adults with diverse brain issues and resulting disabilities. BLUE CHEVY Adult Project - Blue Chevy Ensemble INSIDE OUT 'Blue Chevy' now a well-established adult all ability ensembles. Queens Law Dept Mock trials for baby barristers and judges – Advocacy & The Vulnerable – National Training programme. KIC/Lyric Theatre All-Ability Programme. Training for the professional theatre industry Inclusive Theatre Practice for Facilitators Blueprint Endorsed by UoA and Lyric theatre. Collaboration with the Lyric Theatre Creative Learning Department. Lyric Theatre School – providing 16 –18 -year -olds an opportunity to sample the disciplines of the Lyric Drama Studio training. Lyric Drama Studio - training for 18 -24-year-olds who are serious about a career in theatre.

5 Training & Development. Weaving throughout all programmes is the development of Peer Leaders, Apprentices, Volunteers and growing KIC staff. Additionally, this year KIC have secured the funds to provide Inclusive Theatre Practice training and mentorship programme with young theatre practitioners who may wish to develop in a role as Assistant Director within KIC.

KIC will continue to provide flexible artistic programmes adaptable to facilitate online, live (indoor or outdoor) and blended learning environments. KIC use a variety of innovative programming mechanisms to engage diverse participants/audiences. Developing and maintaining relationships with key organisations and working closely with partner groups is critical.

Targets for 2023/24 were 405 Workshops, 879 Participants, and 45 Performances Events/Screenings/Pod Casts reaching an Audience of 13,270.

6.4. WheelWorks

WheelWorks (WW) have been supporting young people's social and cultural development through accessible arts and digital technology led programmes over the past 27 years.

WheelWorks (WW) works with children / young people and adults across NI in both urban and rural communities. WheelWorks (WHW) works with children / young people and adults across NI in both urban and rural communities.

Access to and Participation in the arts is maximised through the delivery of structured accessible programmes both on and off the ArtCarts.

Professional artists in a wide range of art forms facilitate all arts activities.

Unique to the organisation are the ArtCarts, mobile art venues.

WheelWorks works in collaboration with arts, youth, community, education and the public sector organisations to maximise opportunities, explore new options and offer arts and technology led activities.

WheelWorks maintain flexible artistic programmes adaptable to facilitate online, live (indoor or outdoor) and blended learning environments. Emphasis is on reachability, accessibility, and innovation, on using radical combinations of art forms and themes delivered by professional artists, being outcome driven and engaging for the beneficiaries.

WW codesigned youth led creative interventions offer young people a safe space to engage in conversations, share their lived experiences, explore their emotions and develop a sense of identity. Emphasis is placed on reachability, accessibility, and inclusion thus breaking down barriers, encourage understanding, which fosters a sense of self, and community.

The organisation has a positive history in being proactive in building new partnerships with cross community and newcomer youth organisation and has collaborations with QUB/Belfast Met/ Alternative education/Rural Network/UJJ/ Mears Housing/looked after support organisations. These partnerships support the creative development amongst young people including those with complex needs, at risk and lived experience of trauma and care.

The artistic programme for 2023/24: consisted of 5 distinct programme strands, across these 5 strands the following targets were achieved 354 Artists, 14 Arts Facilitators, 338 workshops, 5435 participants engaged and audiences of 21740 reached.

ArtCart programme (AC) 2023-24:1. Workshops/events/ School Road show/ festivals/ Outreach sessions to include Traditional and digital arts forms.

Community Transformation Programme (CT) 23-24: 1. Digital animation/filmmaking Sessions and cross community fundays 2. Cross community performance/production 3. Creative workshops using visual/digital arts 4. Workshops and training sessions

Future Focus Programme 23-24: 1. Traditional and Digital arts form led Workshops, Trips and celebrations events. Integrates existing work with at risk, on the street and disengaged young people. Providing ChillCart vehicle WW create a safe mobile social space to breakdown community tensions, build a shared focus and increase participation amongst these disengaged young people through art/technology led sessions.

iProgramme 2023-24:1.Traditional and Digital arts form led Workshops, exhibitions, and celebrations events. The iWill Volunteer programme for 16+ young people are designed to provide new opportunities to be involved in youth arts sector.

Newcomer Arts Programme 2023-24: 1. Traditional and Digital arts form led Workshops, celebrations events and publications. This programme employed creative recreational activities

to enable newcomer young people/community to explore their new environment, be empowered to share their stories and be part of the NI society.

WW measure the impact of all their work over 6 outcomes: 1. Access to traditional and digital arts participation 2. Advancing marginalised young within the creative sector 3. Increase sustainable service offers 4. Advance artists and staff expertise 5. Improving creative capacity in the community 6. Developing young volunteers"

6.5. Outburst

The 18th annual Outburst Queer Arts Festival (15-23 November 2024) continues to raise the bar in showcasing cutting-edge work and engaging LGBTQ+ community, from volunteers to award-winning artists, new commissions, co-productions, international collaborations, and innovative 'fringe' style events. Centring local artists in a global context, Outburst will work with partners in 16 countries, making it one of the widest reaching NI Arts organisations.

Highlights include:

Outburst Literature Programme & CATFLAP: A year-round queer literature programme supporting the development of local burgeoning queer writing talent. Issue 4 of Catflap elevates new queer writing. New edition launched annually at the Festival.

In partnership with British Council NI, Lithuanian Cultural Institute & Finnish Institute, Outburst will host an International Queer Arts Gathering features arts delegates from up to 10 countries globally, sharing ideas, networking and expanding NI's queer Arts network for future opportunities).

Tongue + Heart offers NI based queer makers a tailored programme of commissions, mentoring, peer support, residencies, showcasing and international opportunities.

Belfast 2024 Collaborations:

- (i) Kabosh will produce a high visibility interactive queer promenade work, with Translink, exploring stories of trans lives in NI.
- (ii) Acclaimed screenwriter Stacey Gregg creates a new audio work, *I Want to Dance with Somebody*, shared via QR codes on public transport and works with older lesbian and bi women to explore what "going out" means to queer generations.
- (iii) Venue partnerships include Black Box, PaperXClips (Queer youth-run bookshop), Lyric, QFT. Outburst work with Arts & Business, Theatre NI and Thrive to challenge visible and hidden bias and make arts events and venues more welcoming to LGBTQ+ people.

More info: [Outburst Arts - Queer Art, Revolutionary imagination](#)

6.6 BEAT Carnival

Beat Carnival is Northern Ireland's leading Carnival arts company. It was formed in 1993 and became operational in 1994. Beat encourages Belfast City and others to think big about celebrating creative community life in ways that are ambitious and welcoming to all. It is an independent arts company producing spectacular carnival events in public places with large-scale audiences. Alongside this sits a programme of long-term community participation programmes and the employment of local artists.

The Carnival Centre is a unique production space for the artistic work and provides free workshops and training programmes all year round – from drumming to costume design, dance to puppetry. In this way, we help develop creative skills for all.

Participation in Trans Europe Halles network provides connection to collaboration and methodology development opportunities with independent culture centre partners internationally. Beat builds on worldwide carnival arts experience: from Brazil and across Europe to create “Carnival for All”. There is no other carnival arts organisation of the scale, activity, history or influence in Northern Ireland, where Beat Carnival has introduced many of the artform techniques and trained many of the artists now working across the North of Ireland.

The projected targets for the 23/24 operational period were Artists 276 , Arts Facilitators 156, Audience 48000, Participants 1475, Workshops 695, Events 16, Exhibition 1 and Performances 15. The Officer is satisfied that the artistic programme presented focuses on growing the size of the carnival community and the quality of artistic skills with Carnival Arts.

Programme Elements for 2023/ 2024.

The Beat Space: Beat Youth Programme 130 Youth arts participation and education workshop sessions 5-25yrs.

Beat Carnival Music Specialised Carnival music training and rehearsal sessions, R&D/music production sessions, 1 large-scale music composition.

Big Ideas: Beat R&D & Training for new Outdoor Arts, Carnival and Being Green 15 Masterclass sessions – Artists & Artists in Community; Creativity & Ecology R&D/artistic sessions; Large scale outdoor arts project development.

Outdoor Arts Events For All: Events Production Beat 30th Anniversary event. Week festival featuring music premiere, with community workshops, Carnival Seminar. St Patrick's Day flagship Carnival Parade. Carnival On The Coast. 450, 00 new audience reached.

Outdoor & Carnival Arts Sector: Support & Growth in NI Outdoor Arts Consortium; Carnival Guild. Formation of a Consortium for Outdoor Arts collaboration. 2) Developing Growth of Outdoor and Carnival Arts in NI. 3) Vice Chair of Guild, increased support and sharing for Carnival Arts leadership.

Community Arts with City & Neighbourhood. Beat community arts co-design in the city and with neighbourhoods. Festivals development and support. Participation in Belfast Festivals Forum; North Belfast Festival Steering Committee.

Beat International Participate in European meetings and projects: Trans Europe Halles network of independent cultural centres; International Conferences, Arts Education Hub; Youth Hub; Cultural Transformation Movement. Belfast - Ukraine partner meetings. Maintained and increased participation in international networking and collaboration. 2) Partnership project developed with Izolyatsia culture platform for cultural initiatives, collaboration of Belfast & Ukraine artists. 3) Beat provides increased opportunities to others as cultural hub or platform.

Beat Arts Services 1) Specialist arts services delivered across Northern Ireland. 2) Arts audience increased. 3) Income generated

A major focus this year is Centre improvement to significantly increase (disability) access and programme involvement resulting in Increased access to arts spaces for D/deaf/disabled people and Increased creative workspaces in Belfast City Centre.

Beat provide Arts teaching/opportunities not available elsewhere in Belfast City (and few places in Ireland). The organisation has a record in offering people an informal, hands-on, experimental route into arts for pleasure, without stress of examinations/tests as markers of success. Carnival is multi-arts: benefiting experts, beginners, and all ages from young children through to elderly participants.

Beat has embraced Digital engagement with artists and participants through production of online teaching materials, with audience via social media and website. Drum&Tech provides digital experience for young people. The ongoing digital archiving of work is to be widely accessible and a tool for future artistic developments.

6.7 Greater Shantallow Community Arts

Greater Shantallow Community Arts (GSCA) has been involved in delivering a range of programmes designed to improve the quality of life of all communities in the Northwest of Ireland for 22 years.

The organisation is recognised as a key strategic player/ contributor to the artistic and cultural fabric in Derry City. GSCA have contributed significantly to the co-delivery of the DCSDC new Arts

and Cultural strategy, NW Audience Development Cultural Partnership Forum and DCSDCs Festival & Events Co Delivery Sub Committee.

GSCA provide a wide variety of Arts based classes, programmes, projects and events. The highlighting of local artistic talent provides artists with platforms to grow develop and display their work.

GSCA through the development of Studio 2 offer facilities, services and programmes that target those people at greatest risk of social exclusion and marginalisation. GSCA provide formal and informal creative learning opportunities utilising the services of professional artists and arts facilitators. GSCA develop significant partnerships with Arts groups on a regional and cross border and cross community basis including Carnival groups.

Extensive partnerships are in place with a wide range of stakeholders spanning the Arts, Health, Education, Cultural, Social and Economic Sectors.

GSCA arts facilitators are recruited through an annual public call provides emerging artists and arts teachers the opportunity to become part of GSCA creative vision.

The Outer North area of Derry City has a quickly expanding population of approximately 50,000, one third of the population of the city of Derry. It is a Neighbourhood Renewal area with three wards particularly deprived in terms of child poverty; employment opportunities; income levels, health; social environment and educational attainment.

The Create, Connect and Inspire artistic programme for 2023/24 consisted of 5 distinct programme strands The projected targets for the 23/24 operational period were 386 Artists, 286 Arts Facilitators, 153200 Audience, 10447 Participants and 4447 Workshops.

Art Reaching Communities Programme 23-24 The creation and facilitation of innovative, high quality arts activity a blended menu of weekly classes attracting between 1600-2200 participants of various ages/experience to engage in classes tailored to meet their needs, aspirations and individual abilities in more than 90 weekly classes; including dance, music, drama, visual arts, digital music and DJing and performance.

Our Space Your Place, TBUC Good Relations Programmes Building resilience and capacity in the wider arts sector through training and mentoring of artists and other organisations. TBUC Central Good Relations outreach programme engaged a minimum of 144 participants in creatively exploring and developing their individual artistic skills creating pathways to embrace cultural diversity and creative expression in a welcoming community arts space.

GSCAs Youth Arts & Social Inclusion Programme 2023/24 Creating opportunities for children and young people to engage in creative practice. will support young people to reach their full potential using a diverse programme of youth arts engagement programmes including GSCA's TBUC Musical Theatre Arts Camps, GSCA's Beyond Limits Arts Leadership Camp, GSCA Christmas Dance Camp, GSCA's Summer of Love Arts Camp, Weekly Friday Night Creative Youth Arts Drop-

In Programmes The Viral Project, Spill Your Tee Have Your Say! Project, encouraging skills development and pathways into the creative industries.

GSCA Cultural & Civic Festivals Programme, facilitating local communities to engage in high quality arts experiences, particularly in areas of low engagement (inc rural areas) and areas of social deprivation. The Summer of Love Arts Festival (Aug 2023) Foyle Maritime Festival (July 2023) Fleadh Cheoil Na Galliagh (Aug 2023), Foyle Pride (Aug 2023) Carnival of Colours (Sept 2023) Awakening the Walls (Oct 2023) Foyle Halloween Carnival (Oct 2023) Derry Christmas Carnival (Dec 2023) St Patrick's Spring Carnival, (March 2024)

Recovery to Discovery, Social Prescribing through the Arts Programme. Improving access and experiences within the arts sector for people who are D/deaf/disabled and neurodiverse working with many statutory/community partners to deliver life changing Arts engagement programmes. supporting the health and wellbeing of participants.

6.8. Beyond Skin

Established in January 2004, Beyond Skin (BS) uses music, arts & new media as a tool for cultural education & exchange in an aim to address issues of racism & sectarianism.

Musician Artists at Risk Resettlement Scheme (MARRS) was originally set up in 2021 to support Afghan refugees.

To date MARRS has had many success stories and it is recognized as a successful intercultural arts model, enabling positive outcomes that benefit wider society and Northern Ireland's creative reputation. This project is the first resettlement scheme of its kind with music and arts at the core with a specific focus to help musicians/artists in asylum seeking and refugee status.

MARRS enables opportunities for musicians/artists to perform/exhibit at public events, festivals, public spaces and be presented with opportunities to facilitate workshops with community groups and schools/colleges with mentoring.

A recent gifted building in Belfast (The old AIB building in High Street) has enabled BS to utilize the space as an intercultural safe space for people seeking sanctuary to collaborate and develop their skills. The gifted building is the only initiative providing free space and resources for people seeking sanctuary to creatively use when they choose anytime of the day free of charge.

The project delivered a) Assisted directly minimum 20 professional musicians/artists in asylum seeking / refugee status b) Provided access to creative activities to 150 adults/young people/children in asylum seeking / refugee status c) Produced four collaborative music video productions / songs led by musicians in asylum seeking / refugee status d) Provided a free accessible space in Belfast to use freely to develop skills and collaborate e) Enabled opportunities for musicians/artists in asylum seeking / refugee status to co-facilitate 25 workshops f) Enabled

opportunities for musicians/artists in asylum seeking / refugee status to perform at 10 public events. g) Nurtured a creative shared approaches to develop and utilise intercultural artforms, skills and resources regarding to mindfulness and wellbeing h) Enabled intercultural arts as a platform for vulnerable people regarding expressing, sharing and healing. i) Assisted shared learning that helps defuse fears and negative stereotypes directed at people who have migrated to Northern Ireland.

The design, format and facilitation of the project enabled participation from people of all abilities, literacy, music skills and physical abilities to be accommodated in all workshops.

The programme was regional with majority of activities across the following council districts. Belfast, Ards & North Down, Antrim & Newtownabbey, Lisburn and Castlereagh and Causeway Coast & Glens. Activities will take place in community centres, faith-group venues, schools, local council owned & public & private spaces.

MARRS directly engaged a minimum of 150 people which is composed of 10% (Children under 14 yrs.) 30% Young people (14 – 30yrs) 60% Adults 90% of participants ethnic minorities (majority in asylum seeking and refugee status) Gender ratio is estimated to be 40% female & 60% male (based on current gender balance BS have been working with in Hotels of Sanctuary).

Supporting the project were professional artists/recording engineers and producers.

BS through MARRS is the primary signposting connection for musicians/artists seeking sanctuary. To date musicians/artists from Eritrea, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, Somalia, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Russia & Sudan have been engaged.

MARRS activities have been designed take place both on location and digitally/online with contingency planning for 100% delivery.

6.9. Streetwise Community Circus

Streetwise Community Circus (SCC) primary core function and focus is on “Social Circus” demonstrating how Circus Skills can be utilised as well as creating new opportunities for the Arts to work in conjunction with other Sectors. Streetwise has expanded their “social circus” programmes to reach out to other marginalized groups including, the homeless community, youth justice programmes, programmes for older people including those living with dementia, refugees and asylum seekers.

SCC were the first circus organisation in N Ireland to develop programmes for people of all ages with learning disabilities.

SCC has always operated as a province wide organization. The 2023/24 programme will be delivered by a combination of “solo” tutors working independently and teams of tutors where applicable.

The development of zoom coaching enabled widespread participation during Covid, Streetwise have maintained this approach to delivery and it has ensured that carers and refugees from different geographical locations have been able to participate.

As the leading proponent of “social circus” in Ireland, SCC works with other organisations within the sector developing skills and sharing experience. SCC met with In Your Space to undertake training for practitioners in delivering sessions on working with Older People, Dementia and Disability and attending training in aerial teaching in “social circus” settings.

SCC met with the BEAT to establish how they can co-operate on local events in Belfast and Lisburn, Streetwise Age-ility and Disability groups to participated in BEAT co-ordinated events in Belfast.

Outside the arts sector the circus programme is delivered in partnerships with local health trusts, housing associations, charities, local councils and local schools and community development associations from across Northern Ireland, all of whom have developed long-term working relationships with SCC.

The targets for the 23/24 operational period Artists 148, Arts Facilitators 108, Audience 79400, Participants 2855 Workshops 1229 and 465 Performances.

Province wide Disability Workshop Programme 1. Increase access to arts activities for adults with learning disabilities across N Ireland 2. Create opportunities for international artists to work in social circus settings 3. Make circus accessible to people with disabilities irrespective of economic background.

Evergreen Disability Programme 1. Allow long-term artistic skill development for adults with learning disabilities 2. Provide performance opportunities for disabled artists. 3. Enable disabled participants to work/ learn from internationally recognised practitioners.

Disability Summer School 1. To increase opportunities for people with disabilities to create and perform their own work. 2. Make artistic opportunities accessible irrespective of economic background 3. Enable disabled participants to work with internationally recognised artists.

Youth Circus Programme. To increase opportunities for young people to gain long-term skill development 2. Enable Young people to participate in circus irrespective of economic background 3. create pathways for young people to become experienced circus facilitators.

Community Outreach Programmes To increase opportunities for circus to be used to have wider social impacts e.g. integration of asylum seekers or cross community work 2. Make circus accessible irrespective of economic background.

Age-ility Circus.1. to increase opportunities for long-term circus skill development in over 55's 2. reduce isolation for older people irrespective of economic background. 3. Provide creative opportunities for older people to participate in local events.

People & Communities Programme To increase opportunities for circus to be used to have wider social impacts e.g. integration of asylum seekers or cross community work 2. Make circus accessible irrespective of economic background.

Arts and Older People Programme Increase access to the arts for people living with dementia 2. reduce isolation for people living with dementia 3. improve physical and mental well-being of people living with dementia.

Primary Schools Carnival Programme Increase access to carnival arts in Primary schools 2. Increase performance/participation in local civic events.

Stilt training and summer scheme workshops 1. Increase access to arts in local summer schemes 2. Provide meaningful skills development for young people 3. Increase the opportunities for young people to perform in local events.

6.10 Youth Action

With a 30-year history of investing in and delivering high quality, youth arts programmes Youth Action (YA) have continued to sustain and enhance their artistic offering to young people across the north of Ireland.

Rainbow Factory is dedicated to giving young people opportunities to engage across all aspects of performing arts and to engage new audiences with theatre. Rainbow Factory keeps young people engaged outside term time, offers a platform to showcase work, and provides a place to come together in a safe way to focus on personal identity, mental health activities etc.

YA Youth Arts Hub at College Square North, Belfast is N. I's only dedicated youth arts resource base. Activities for the 2023 / 2024 included Classes, Rehearsals and Productions, Festivals, Outreach work, Issue Based Theatre, Music Events, Technical theatre training, Radio Production and Youth governance groups e.g., Members' Forum and the Virtual Rainbow Factory of online activities.

The project contributes to the growth of the arts by Promoting Section 75 legislation through targeted programmes.

Artistic Programmes target young people living in Northern Ireland, the border counties and visitors; particularly children, young people, including those from areas demonstrating high levels of social and economic deprivation and isolation from services. From different political and religious backgrounds. From ethnic minority backgrounds. Who view themselves as other than

heterosexual. Who are marginalised, vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion. Who are living with a disability Who would not have had the opportunity to explore creatively or access the arts.

The proposed programme for 23/24 delivered 54 weekly arts workshops (per term*3 terms), 25 youth theatre productions, 45 performances, 22 showcase events, 3 Youth Arts Festivals, attracting 8,500 participating young people and audiences of circa 8000.

The artistic programme for 23/24:

Engaged over 500+ young people each week who wouldn't normally access drama, dance and technical theatre workshops, programmes, and productions. For many this is the first and only contact they have with peers of different religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds.

Trained the next generation – each year former members of the Rainbow Factory regularly progress to prestigious dance and drama schools, Higher Education and the creative arts industry.

Attracted youth audiences who wouldn't normally attend theatre events by ensuring youth work support services wrap around all our activities.

All programmes were open to the public and targets are set to redress imbalances and actions taken. 70% of participants on current programmes reside in the top 25% of disadvantaged wards in N.I. 36% with a physical/mental impairment; 12% from ethnic minorities and 15% LGBT community.

The Spectrum model of work promoted inter-cultural dialogue by engaging young people from ethnic minority backgrounds (Polish, Romanian, and Slovakian) in Belfast and Ballymena. To ensure effective reach into these communities this is free to participants.

The Connections programme is delivered to young people with disabilities who live in rural areas.

Suitcase Theatre performance toured across Northern Ireland drawing in new audiences, developing the reputation of the Rainbow Factory programme and extending partnerships.

Festivals, Open Space and Gig Night initiatives also ensured the development of new youth audiences.

YA have a proven track record in delivering quality artistic opportunities for young people and establishing young artists. YA employ a range of freelance artists to support the delivery of The Rainbow Factory programme.

YA are a recognised educational establishment by the Education Authority, YA encourage a greater alignment between arts and education in the out of school learning environment. A strong focus is placed on peer-to-peer learning and young people are offered opportunities to help others particularly pertaining to mental health.

The organisation enables young people to consider their cultural/political/ethnic isolation through the arts by providing opportunities for contact/collaboration, while raising the profile of youth arts and youth culture within NI via website/social media and an Ulster University module, which employs the organisation's Suitcase Theatre process and performance.

YA have positively demonstrated their capacity to create opportunities for young people to engage in the arts at their level of interest and ability, to connect with and inspire young people and communities in low engagement areas as participants and audience members of the arts.

6.11. ArtsEkta

Artsekta is the sector leader in inter-cultural arts in NI with primary focus on the development of the arts within the minority ethnic sector. In 2023/24 Artsekta delivered a large-scale and ambitious programme across the artforms of music, dance, visual arts, circus, street arts, carnival and drama. The region wide programme included eleven projects which integrate participatory projects with large scale showcases inclusive of Mela and is shaped by participants and audience feedback and successful pandemic driven programming.

Partnerships include an expansive range of councils, Good Relations Officers, housing associations, BAME and indigenous community groups and schools NI-wide. Arts and cultural partnerships include Poetry Ireland and IMRAM Irish language literary festival. The organisation continued to make a significant contribution and impact to the arts sector building resilience and capacity through training, mentoring and engagement and showcasing of artists of all artforms and other organisations. This is inclusive of support of minority ethnic artists from Indian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Latin American, Polish, Irish, African, Chinese and Japanese communities . Engagement includes dancers, musicians, storytellers, visual and craft artists

ACNI AFP funding directly supports Cultural Coach an outreach programme with three elements of intercultural exchanges engaging with schools and community groups across NI in rural and areas of high social need. These programme areas create opportunities for children and young people to engage in creative practice and facilitates local communities to engage in high quality arts experiences, particularly in areas of low engagement. During the period Artsekta staff also participated in accessibility training from University of Atypical.

1. One World Days Global Village Programme: Ages 6-16yrs

An immersive experience for schools and communities building on the success of the One World Day Schools programme, creative work-pack and Teacher's Toolkit and broadening of art form offer per culture to include to include dance, crafts, music and vernacular architecture creating 'pop-up villages.

2. Mending What's Broken Kintsugi Art Project: Ages 7-90 years old.

A storytelling and dance project focused on the artistic process and metaphor of Kintsugi.

Engagement with groups whose needs are aligned to a model of art intervention as therapy and will engage with Refugee and Asylum Women and Migrant Help's women's and men's groups.

3. Myriad: All the Worlds Between- Ages 35-85 from rural areas and particularly targeted at men. Storytelling and poetry projects encouraging participants to explore the works of world-renowned poets inclusive of Heaney, Kavanagh, Yeats, Joyce, Wilde, Tagore, Li He, Sarojini Naidu, Nita Nayyar, Rupi Kaur, Alice Walker and Nandi Jola.

In addition ACNI funded 'Heads and Thread's textile project (Articulate Young People and Well-being programme) in collaboration with MEARS, Cara Friend, LGBTQ groups and Another World/Show Some Love offering creative opportunities to young people struggling with mental health issues and 'The Orchestral Qawwali Project' (ACNI Commissioning) a Sufi-Celtic music collaboration between artists from UK's Qawwali sector and international Irish composer and musician Neil Martin resulting in performance in St Anne's Cathedral in August 2023. Other projects include the Art Route Collective (supporting the health and social wellbeing of refugee asylum seeker, the Belfast Canvas - a public art project, Arabic Arts School, a weekly arts and language group for young people from the Syrian community.

Cultural Coach Programme: Artists supported: 21 Participants: 1,404 Audience number: 5,900

Artsektas Annual Programme (inclusive of Cultural Coach):

Artists supported: 291 Participants: 2,309 Audience number: 82,900

6.12. Foyle Obon

Foyle Obon are an organisation specialising in Japanese art forms through delivery of an annual outreach programme and festival. The organisation seeks to improve social engagement, positive cross-community and intercultural interactions in NI. This organisation is the only Obon festival in Europe and have garnered an international reputation, with the festival attracting world class artists.

The programme aims to increase the visibility of and empower the under-represented groups and the Japanese community in NI. Projects engaged with members of the Japanese Community, LGBTQ+ teens, cross-community rural schools and youth groups in areas of urban deprivation, senior citizens and individuals with additional needs. Partnerships include the Rainbow Project, the Rural Area Partnership (RAPID) for Sperrin, Faughan and Derg, Barnardo's Young Carers, WHSCT (Child Development, Clarendon Medical practice and Altnagelvin Hospital).

In the period Obon's outreach delivered projects continued to focus on the use of Japanese arts as a 'form of prevention and early intervention, as part of a responsive and humane health

service.’ Between 2021-23 Obon participated in a Taiko Outreach and Research Project with the Ulster University, a social prescribing programme which has explored and evaluated the ways in which a long-term programme of regular taiko drumming classes and involvement in a local community arts festival can improve mental health and wellbeing. See <https://foyleobon.com/taiko-research-northern-ireland>

The 2023/24 artistic programme included:

‘Taiko for Carers’ a new pilot programme which aimed to further utilise the therapeutic benefits of the arts through a 18month long taiko drumming project engaging with carers of all ages to improve their mental health and well-being. With engagement levels of 100-150 partnerships for this project are extensive inclusive of Barnardo’s Young Carers, WHSCT (Child Development), Clarendon Medical practice and Altnagelvin Parents of Ward 6 and 16.

Rural Taiko Together: Taiko workshops in association with RAPID with delivery in Sperrin, Faughan and Derg areas. RAPID assisted Obon on the Foyle in identifying groups (parent groups, youth clubs, playgroups, women's groups, MEN sheds, older people groups, schools, and rural WHSCT clinics) most in need including mental health referrals through existing social prescribing procedures in place in partnership with Healthy Living Centre; Derg Valley Care and rural Western Trust rural GP health centres.

Irodori Taiko: LGBTQ+ Taiko teens through classes, residencies and performance. Taiko Festival festival in May 2024.

Taiko Artists: Year-round professional development programme workshops/training, performance

TaikoLove for Carers: Taiko drumming for Carers’ mental health and wellbeing.

Taiko Drumming for Health and Wellbeing in association with Ulster University

Hannari Dance group, Whitehead workshops and performance at Obon festival May 2024

Crossing Oceans: Collaboration with Kodo, Japan. Visit by Obon’s Artistic and Cultural directors have been invited to attend the Earth Celebration festival on Sado, Japan and online training with Obon’s local Taiko teams in Autumn 2023 followed by in person residency by two Kodo members led by Yuichiro Funabashi in Derry/Londonderry (February 2024)

RAW, Canada: In-person workshops with Irodori LGBTQ+ teens Taiko, public workshops and performance at the Obon Festival concert in May 2024.

Festival season: Outreach programme of public workshops in Japanese storytelling, origami, tea ceremony, bon odori dance, lantern dedications culminating in the festival concert of local players and dancers including guest appearances from our international acts.

Artists supported: 38

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Participant number: 538

Audience number: 1,100

6.13. Sole Purpose Productions

Sole Purpose Productions is a socially engaged theatre company and a Theatre Company of Sanctuary (Supporting the UK City of Sanctuary Vision). The organisation directly engages with Section 75 groups minority ethnic communities, women and adults, older people, children and young people, families, D/deaf/disabled and neurodiverse people. Partnerships included North West Islamic Association, The Rainbow Project, Foyle Pride, Bród Na Gaeltachta and theatres in Belfast, Strabane, Derry, Ballyshannon, Ballybofey, Letterkenny, Sligo and Dublin.

Sole Purpose make a strong contribution to sectoral development through its support of new and emerging writers of all levels through two Theatre Lab Programme (LGBTQ+ and women) and in particular support the development of women writers, lead roles for women, women directors and producers.

The proposed programme in 2023/24 was delivered through live workshops and performances taking place in non-theatre venues such as schools, colleges, community centres and care homes. Focus was on growth of audiences from ethnic minority communities, refugees and asylum seekers, children and young people, older people, women and people with disabilities.

Geographic range of the work proposed included urban and rural areas and areas of high social deprivation Derry/ Londonderry, Belfast, Strabane, Dublin, Ballyshannon, Ballybofey, Letterkenny and Sligo, Donegal, Coleraine, Dungannon, Strabane.

Artistic Programme delivered in 2023/24:

The Sunflower Legacy Project- engaging with individuals impacted by the mother and baby institutions. Print exhibition and film documentary. Participants 10 : Audiences: 420 (Venue based and online exhibition)

Diverse Theatre Group with Refugees and Asylum Seekers- Workshops integrating theatre techniques with English language skills. Participants: 20

Pride Monologues for Foyle Pride 30th Anniversary Festival. Participants: 14 Audiences: 100

The Daughters of Róisín Tour by Aoibh Johnson in partnership with Wee Yarn Productions to tour The Daughters of Róisín, 8 venues across Ireland. Audiences: 916

MakeyUppers Mystery Bag Tour- 10 community groups and venues across NI.
Participant/Audiences: 700

Theatre Lab Programmes x 2 -Artists: 12 (8 writers, 8 actors) Audience: 64

The Marion Hotel by Caitriona Cunningham-Artists: 3; Participants : 27

The Revolution's Promise by The Freedom Theatre for International Human Rights Day

Rehearsed reading - 13 artists, 64 audience.

Total number of artists/facilitators employed: 28

Total participant number: 784 (700 Audience/participants Makey Uppers)

Total audience number: 1544

Venues

6.14. The Millennium Forum

The Millennium Forum remains at the heart of the social, economic, and creative life of the Northwest delivering diverse, inclusive, value for money Arts programming via 200+ Main Auditorium performances to a target audience of 125,000 patrons, attracting 300,000+ people for other workshops, events & festivals combined with exceptional educational, community and Access outreach and engagement. Sector leaders in Access & Inclusion, MF share knowledge with hundreds of Arts organisations and professionals each year. In 2024, they are set to become the first social prescribing Arts venue.

Outreach focussed highlights include:

- Monthly Energy of Light Discos which enable young people living with disabilities express themselves and offers carers respite. Energy Train offers mentorship to Energy of Light Discos participants to DJ at the events.
- AD equipment, training and performances are provided annually, and The Millennium Forum are now the first theatre in Ireland to hold Makaton Status. For the annual Christmas pantomime, Makaton taster training to staff, panto cast and teachers to prepare children in advance of their visit and encourage participation when the Makaton song is performed in the panto by everyone, a new addition to the show.
- The Millennium Forum delivers projects which simultaneously combat social exclusion of older people while improving their physical, mental and social wellbeing e.g. Monthly Dementia Friendly Tea Dances, Moves & Melodies. These projects roll out into rural (Derg Community Centre), CNR (Creggan Day Centre), PUL (Irish Street Community Centre) and Older People's Mental Health Services (Waterside Hospital) settings.
- The Millennium Forum champion children and young people, affording them opportunities to engage in free, high-quality Arts activities e.g.
Summer Youth Musical
InterAct Youth Festival
Happy Stage

In a city that suffers horrendously with high levels of suicide and depression, particularly among young people, the Millennium Forum play a pivotal role in instilling confidence, providing a safe space for creative expression and building skillsets (as well as social bonds) leading to tangible positive outcomes for young people in the greatest need in the Northwest and surrounding areas.

More info: [Homepage - Millennium Forum](#)

6.15. The Playhouse

A sector-leading Arts centre in the Northwest, The Playhouse presents an ambitious 2024/25 programme which builds on a period of strategic development, summarised under three interdependent areas of endeavour:

- Producing Art
- Empowering People
- Making Peaceful Change

Outreach focussed highlights include:

- The Playhouse deliver various Open College Network (OCN) accredited and non-accredited training courses (Culture Citizenship, Performing Arts, Theatrical Studies and Event Management) and this work is integrated into their NW Open Arts Pathway, providing a seamless learning and training trajectory of key youth programmes; *Choice and Voice* (11-14 years), *Bridge* (14-16 years), *The Playhouse Music Theatre Company / Playhouse Young Artists Programme* (16-25 years).
- Empowering underrepresented young people to engage in the Arts and civic issues, the *Making Peaceful Change Programme* includes international training, exchange & research activities across NI, Kenya and Rwanda.
- With a strong Arts, Health & Wellbeing focus, The Playhouse holds long-standing partnerships with WHSCT and NI Creative Health Network to promote greater inclusion amongst people living with diverse conditions to participate in Arts activity. *Song for the Soul* offers choral singing opportunities for adults diagnosed with severe, enduring mental illnesses.
- Developed an emerging piece of music theatre work by LGBT+ young writer Isaac Quinn.

- The *Artitude* programme explores climate action and the circular economy.
- *BluePrint* facilitates an intergenerational co-creation process supporting local climate resilience via creative exchange between Derry and Mayo co-producing a toolkit targeting flood-affected communities.
- More info: [The Playhouse Derry- Londonderry - Your place to play in Derry - Londonderry \(derryplayhouse.co.uk\)](https://derryplayhouse.co.uk)

6.16. The Grand Opera House

The Grand Opera House has a strong track record of delivering work of artistic excellence and is NI's largest Arts sector employer (140 staff).

Outreach focussed highlights include:

- Access for All Scheme (2,518 members), 35 accessible performances, and two Access Open Days which include tours for people with sensory or physical disabilities, workshops for people who are D/deaf and visually impaired.
- GOH will partner with Cr8 and Jordanstown SEN school to further engage deaf communities.
- GOH works with local artists through its Creative Learning Programme (CLP). The Theatre's first anti-racism project will be developed with young people from across Belfast (*Who Am I?*) to explore cultural identity.
- Grand Opera House's Studio Series produced Amanda Verlaque's play *This Sh*t Happens All the Time* - a one woman show about homophobia, stalking and what would now be considered hate crime in today's society.
- The CLP engages over 3,300 people and this year includes: free schools (30) & community groups (50) tours, workshops with the Chinese Welfare Association, two new musical productions for children aged 10-15 years (50 participants per project), and new work with the Amadan Ensemble to engage schools in areas with an historically low theatre attendance.
- Local Productions on the Main Stage: Action Ability's 9th show.
- GOH will partner with The Anaka Women's Collective to create a piece of theatre which can be translated into other languages using the captioning screens from TDNI, increasing accessibility for the refugee community.
- August 2024: The addition of a Family Festival *The Magic of Theatre* offers a week-long programme for families including family ballet on the main stage, creative writing

workshops, Bollywood Babies, puppet-making workshops and technical theatre workshops around lighting and sound.

More info: [Grand Opera House | Belfast Theatre | Theatre Tickets \(goh.co.uk\)](#)

6.17. The Blackbox

The Black Box is a key city centre and leading alternative venue which presents innovative, grassroots, and radical work as well as hosting festivals, promoters, community groups and artists from the greater Belfast area, NI and beyond. The artistic programme is well presented, proposing an eclectic mix of multi art form events, oft experimental in nature and appealing to less mainstream audiences.

Outreach focussed highlights include:

- The Black Box deliver a widely accessible programme for those with learning disabilities, their carers and networks e.g. Express Yourself! Social Café, Black Moon Disco, Mini Moon and Gig Buddies.
- Enhance accessibility via the installation of a new loop station, AD kit and begin phase 1 of the changing place bathroom project.
- Geographic spread extends across the greater Belfast area and outreach activity is delivered regularly.
- The venue is one of the most LGBTQ+ friendly spaces in the city with a policy of supporting queer Arts and is the home for Outburst Queer Arts Festival.

More info: [The Black Box | The Black Box \(blackboxbelfast.com\)](#)

6.18. The Crescent Arts Centre

The Crescent continues to be an inclusive, civic, creative hub with an outstanding range of offers to the ecology of its local and artistic community. Following the development of a new 4-year strategy (2024-2028) the organisation aims to strengthen their role as a neighbourhood resource in South Belfast, the most diverse geographical area in NI.

Outreach focussed highlights include:

- **Crescent Arts Youth Theatre** - talent and education programme open to 14–19-year-olds.
- In line with their commitment to strengthening partnerships with Neighbourhood organisations, they plan to engage Belfast Islamic Society; ACSONI; Accidental Theatre, Forward South.
- The Crescent has identified primary schools in close geographic range and devised programmes according to the needs of the students and parents e.g. 75% of students at Fane Street Primary are newcomer families to NI. The Crescent improves access for D/Deaf/Disabled and neurodiverse, including most recently, completing a Changing Places Facility and by participating in UoAs EASI Programme.
- There are a wide range of free activities on offer and a Pay What you Decide Model for the festival.

6.19. Glasgowbury

A sector-leading rural organisation which enables local communities to engage in high-quality Arts experiences, particularly in areas of low engagement and social deprivation.

- The **geographic range of work delivered by Glasgowbury is critical to the sector** as a core Arts provision within Draperstown/Ballinascreen, rural Co. Derry and the under-represented geographic area (in terms of Lottery funding) of Mid Ulster.
- Many regional service users travel up to 15+miles to engage and Glasgowbury is committed to improving access to the Arts for people with a disability.
- Fees have not been raised post-pandemic, family rates and discounts for low-income families/students are applied reducing financial barriers to participation.
- Glasgowbury offer excellent opportunities for young people and children via extensive youth programming which runs 7 days a week.

6.20. The Strand Arts Centre (NLPF)

Since 2012, the Strand Arts Centre has become essential to the Arts infrastructure of the Inner East Regeneration Area (an area of high deprivation) of Belfast, delivering a high-quality, multi-disciplinary, year-round Arts and outreach programme where heritage, creativity and community come together.

The building will be closed for a major refurb from Summer 2024 and is expected to re-open in mid-2025, in time to mark the Strand's 90th birthday.

Given the timing of the renovation, continuity of off-site programme activity will be critical to maintaining established relationships with key stakeholders and beneficiary groups, as well as the SAC's presence in East Belfast and the NI cultural calendar.

- SAC will participate in 7 festivals and work with over 30 community partners to optimise the social impact of its programme.
- They have secured they a space in Connswater Shopping Centre (the heart of the local community) and there is excellent engagement proposed both in relation to programming, keeping the local community engaged with the refurbishment and keeping them invested for the re-opening of the SAC.
- 556 events, employing up to 507 artists, engaging more than 16,000 audiences (7,481 attendees & 9,266 participants) and carefully considered objectives, rationale and delivery methods are included for each programme element. Key areas for ACNI investment consideration include Adult & Youth Participatory Arts, High Needs activities.

More info: [Home - Strand Cinema Belfast \(strandartscentre.com\)](http://strandartscentre.com)

6.21. Accidental Theatre (NLPF)

Accidental Theatre is an innovative, multidisciplinary Fringe type venue based in Shaftesbury Square, a recognised priority area for urban regeneration, and marked as one of the most diverse and deprived areas of Belfast. As a result, Accidental has become an artistic refuge for the more diverse audiences of South Belfast, promoting new artistic initiatives and emerging artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those communities new to NI. Accidental provides a platform for developing new and existing grassroots in-person & online performances, workshops and community events and serves as a gateway for creatives to showcase more experimental, smaller scale work.

72 events and 160 workshops, projecting audiences of 12,000 in-person and 3,500 online.

The work reflects the diversity of our society to a high level seeking to foster inter-generational & inter-cultural connections via engagement with the Iranian/Persian Community, Brazilian Community, Polish Community and refugees from Sudan & Somalia. This venue plays an

integral role in community building and ensuring that asylum seekers in the community feel at home here.

More Info: [Accidental Theatre](#)

Festivals

6.22. Belfast International Arts Festival

BIAF is an international contemporary Arts festival which premieres new works, celebrates global connectivity, cultural diversity, and artistic innovation. BIAF's 62nd edition (16 October – 3 November 2024) is set to deliver 170 multi-disciplinary events.

- EMBRACE offers participatory opportunities (projected participants = 1,184). 2024 total projected audiences of 55,037.
- Family-focused programming and a media partnership with NI4Kids.
- Reducing barriers to access via free community tickets for marginalised groups and affordable pricing.
- Accessibility via captioned/AD/signed performances, partnership marketing with disability organisations and the free carer ticket scheme.

More info: [Belfast International Arts Festival](#)

6.23. Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (CQAF)

The CQAF is one of the key infrastructure festivals in Belfast and one of the most prominent in NI. The two main phases of activity are:

- (i) Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival (2-12 May 2024) with 150 multi-art form events programmed over a 10-day period in various venues.
- (ii) January 2025, Out To Lunch will host 60-75 events.

The organisation has a history of identifying unusual spaces from which to host creative events, with a particular focus on churches, disused buildings, and retail units. This year, they plan to use the Masonic Hall on Rosemary Street and Riddell's Warehouse.

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The organisation is currently working with DTNI to explore programming in the old Belfast Synagogue. CQAF are a strategic partner for this new North Belfast venue and co-design will involve working with community leaders and organisations such as the Ashton Centre, New Lodge Arts and church committees.

Extended reach and public benefit achieved via *Now Press Play* (25-29th October 2024), the first dedicated NI Festival examining socio-political music documentary, little-seen archive screenings, concert film and music themed films.

CQAF continue offer a rolling programme of 12-15 events throughout the year.

More info: [CQAF 2024 Earlybird 2 - CQAF](#)

6.24. East Side Arts Festival

East Side Arts present a strong programme encompassing the ESA Flagship Festival alongside a significant community engagement programme. The organisation operates with the aim of creating meaningful, open and inclusive opportunities for Arts engagement in East Belfast.

The main summer festival (25th July – 4th August 2024) will present 80+ unique events over 11 days of eclectic, multi-art form programming. Collaborating with 36 partners, ESAF will take place across a variety of venues and public spaces in East Belfast (C.S Lewis Square, EastSide Visitor Centre, Banana Block, ArtisAnn Gallery) and attracts 10-12,000 people annually.

- *Lived Experience and Local Change Makers* to increase representation e.g. 'Still I Rise Storytelling'- storytelling for young people focusing on diversity.
- ESA deliver outstanding public benefit and engagement, offering a broad range of opportunities for children and young people to engage in creative practice e.g. FunKademy and facilitating local communities to engage in high quality Arts experiences, particularly in areas of low engagement and social deprivation e.g. Soda Popz Lunchtime Bop for adults with learning disabilities / dementia, a multi-lingual performance by the EastSide Choir Festival.
- They build resilience and capacity in the wider Arts sector through training and mentoring of artists/organisations e.g. Everyday Creativity 'creative kit' provision for low cost.

- The Lived Experience, Local Change Makers and East Belfast Stories strands give space for queer, Global Majority and PUL residents to explore their own and others' perceptions about their identity, heritage and culture.
- ESAF 2024 will focus on increasing access to the d/Deaf community, working with Paula Clarke and Kristina Lavery to deliver a series of events that are suitable for d/Deaf people, with BSL interpretation.
- ESAF offer an **Artist Development** programme including facilitation training and specialised training to meet the needs of East Belfast communities e.g. Compassionate facilitation training in Trauma Informed Practice and LGBTQIA awareness.
- The year-round programme uses a mixed model for pricing – free / pay what you want / full price and any profit made is put back into the programme to increase the amount of accessible opportunities. More info: [Eastside Arts: Belfast, Northern Ireland](#)

6.25. Féile an Phobail

1 August -11 August 2024

The flagship August Féile (1 August -11 August 2024) is Ireland's biggest Community Arts Festival, attracting upwards of 100,000 participants, presenting over 600 eclectic arts and cultural activities in 50+ venues citywide over 11 days. August Féile now also incorporates two new fringe festivals developed in North Belfast (Féile an Tuiscirt) and South&East Belfast (Féile na hAbhainn). While programming is not yet complete, a 'fringe' Irish Traditional Music Festival also runs alongside the August Féile platforming Irish and Ulster Scots musicians in 100+ sessions throughout the City and annually.

- Féile an Éarraigh participates in the Island Wide Seachtain na Gaeilge Initiative. Spraoi Cois Lao 2025 will be **the first Irish language Arts fun-day** of its kind to take place in Belfast City centre, specifically engages the 7000+ young people who are currently going through the Irish Medium education sector across the North.

Féile is the only Festival in the City that delivers a year-round Community Arts Programme.

- (i) Community Engagement Programme;
- (ii) Community Cohesion Leadership Programme
- (iii) Arts and Wellbeing

- Féile creates opportunities for children and young people to engage in creative practice (20,000+ participants) including Féile Unplugged (May 2024), Halloween Festival Draíocht (Oct 2024) and the newly established Féile Christmas Winter Wonderland Festival (December 2024).
- The Youth Committee enables young people to plan and evaluate Féile's tailored youth programme and is invaluable to those most marginalised and at risk.
- Féile deliver unique diversionary youth Arts programmes, particularly at times of high need (11th-13th July / 8th & 9th of August) in partnership with relevant individuals and agencies (PSNI, BCC, Community safety reps, local political reps, Youth Justice, Housing Executive) to tackle anti-social / anti-community and sectarian activity.
- Féile's delivers outstanding public benefit, increasing the number and range of people who can experience the Arts by ensuring accessibility and affordability. 95% of over 650 events across all Art forms throughout the year are FREE of charge, 20,000+ free tickets given to local communities and heavily discounted rates are applied. 95% of activity is focused in areas of high socio-economic deprivation; a wide range of events remain within heart of the local community in accessible venues to address geographic barriers.
- Féile work closely with disability organisations to ameliorate all facets of programme and provision, they have a long-standing creative partnership with Action Ability Belfast, who partake in the Carnival Parade annually.
- Féile targets non-traditional audiences by advocating socio-cultural inclusion and partnership work with relevant organisations (ArtsEkta, Beyond Skin).
- Féile hold a unique, position within the ACNI AFP Festivals portfolio as a body with a Community Arts emphasis which actively develops the traditional Irish arts as well as **the Irish language** on a major scale in Belfast, with a **shared Island approach** as evidenced by strong, fruitful relations with sectoral stakeholders locally (An Chultúrlann, Glór na Mona, Radio Fáilte) and nationally (CCÉ, Foras na Gaeilge, Conradh na Gaeilge).

More info: [Féile an Phobail – Ireland's Biggest Community Arts Festival \(feilebelfast.com\)](https://feilebelfast.com)

6.26. Open House Festival (NLPF)

Despite being NI's third largest conurbation, Bangor had virtually no Arts infrastructure until the completion of the Court House restoration in October 2022. Following a £1.7m redevelopment and serving as a permanent base for the Open House team and events, the Court House

ushers a new, exciting era in cultural output. THE ambitious and inspirational transformation of Bangor Court House into an arts and cultural hub has won a major UK-wide award. The Court House has been crowned the 2023 National Lottery Project of the Year, beating 4,000 other projects and buildings from around the country.

It is estimated that over 48,750 people attend the August Open House Festival

OH contributes significantly to the growth of the Arts in the community for new and existing audiences and reflects the diversity of NI society to a high level. Combined Festival and Court House programmes will deliver Arts events for 100,000 people in the coming year, providing performance and development opportunities for 1,000+ artists plus hundreds of technical and production staff. OH advocates for access/participation in the Arts for Section 75 groups, ensuring Festival events and the Court House are accessible to all. Venue staff receive a range of specialist training.

Free events in the Court House as part of Bangor Pride engages LGBTQ+ communities.

The Festival and Court House audiences, and Festival Choir, reflect the ageing population in Bangor with around 25% over 65 years of age and 30% of the organisation's volunteer base are 65years+. This year, additional outreach projects to older people include a *Digital Collection Day* (VE Day celebration) in partnership with Bangor Museum, NI War Museum, local assisted living, independent & residential homes for older people.

More info: [Open House Festival - Music & Arts Festival in Bangor Co. Down](#)

6.27. Imagine! Belfast (NLPF)

A multi-disciplinary Art form festival, which at its core explores ideas and politics, Imagine! offers a broad range of events, talks, workshops, theatre, poetry, exhibitions, and tours. Imagine! will plan and deliver, in a year-round programme of activity, involving 100+ physical, hybrid and virtual events, 250+ speakers and performers, and a total audience of 10,000+.

- 65% events were free and 98% of respondents felt the festival satisfied their expectations.
- A comprehensive evaluation showed that 50% of audience members were attending a festival event for the first time and 42% of the sample had never been to the festival venue before thus confirming Imagine!'s unique selling point, as a civic participation festival in Belfast which reaches new audiences and introduces them to new cultural venues and creative partners.

- 21% of the sample considered themselves to fall into the category of 'disadvantaged' which suggests the festival significantly engages with vulnerable and less well-off sections of the community.

More Info: [Home - Imagine! Belfast \(imaginebelfast.com\)](https://www.imaginebelfast.com)

6.28. Stendhal Festival

4-6 July 2024

Stendhal Festival is a one-of-one in the ACNI Festivals portfolio. It is the only weekend-long, greenfield Music and Performing Arts Festival in NI and its strong track record of delivery proves that SF is on-par with the crème de la crème of similar scale outdoor Festivals on the island of Ireland. By developing and promoting community, education, participatory and voluntary Arts & Culture events, creative opportunities and artistic practice in Co. Derry, SF play a pivotal role in building a confident, vibrant Arts infrastructure which inspires, connects, and leads, within a rural setting. Stendhal offers massive inspiration to the local community and is considered the jewel in the crown of Limavady's annual cultural calendar.

The organisation **is based in an under-represented geographic area** in terms of Lottery funding (Causeway Coast & Glens) and is therefore of strategic significance.

- Public benefit is strong, rurally, and regionally, increasing the number and range of people who have the opportunity to participate in high-quality Arts activity, which is accessible to all.
- Each year, over 2,500 children (under 16) experience a fully immersive creative escape like no other in NI via SF's multi-art form, family-focused and friendly programme which offers bespoke opportunities to engage in creative practice with professionals e.g. dance shows (Chinese Lion Dancer), Circus productions, craft work (clay, mask making, puppetry), music making (drumming, vaudeville style cabaret for kids, singalongs) and storytelling (Annan's Arch mythology sessions).
- SF address financial barriers to participation by keeping ticket prices at the lowest possible level and Stendhal Community delivers creative projects for over 2,000 participants per annum

More info: [Stendhal Festival 2024 | Chapter 14](#)

- 2** Please provide examples of outcomes and/or the impact of equality action plans/ measures in 2023-24 (*or append the plan with progress/examples identified*).

Please see Equality Action Plan (EAP) and Disability Action Plan (DAP) attached with relevant progress updates (Excel Spreadsheet attached). Note that 2023/24 is the last year of the reporting period for the EAP and DAP. A 10-year EDI plan has been launched in 2024/25 with 3-year action plans which will be reported on in future reports.

- 3** Has the application of the Equality Scheme commitments resulted in any changes to policy, practice, procedures and/or service delivery areas during the 2023-24 reporting period? (*tick one box only*)

☒ Yes ☐ No (go to Q.4) ☐ Not applicable (go to Q.4)

Please provide any details and examples:

There has been a change in that ACNI will actively encourage underrepresented artists from particular groups to apply and this note will be in the SIAP guidance notes.

- 3a With regard to the change(s) made to policies, practices or procedures and/or service delivery areas, what difference was made, or will be made, for individuals, i.e. the impact on those according to Section 75 category?

Please provide any details and examples:

It will hopefully encourage artists from different S75 groups to apply. ACNI hope that the numbers of applications from these groups will increase.

- 3b What aspect of the Equality Scheme prompted or led to the change(s)? (*tick all that apply*)

☐ As a result of the organisation's screening of a policy (*please give details*):

☐ As a result of what was identified through the EQIA and consultation exercise (*please give details*):

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- ☒ As a result of analysis from monitoring the impact *(please give details)*:
- ☐ As a result of changes to access to information and services *(please specify and give details)*:
- ☐ Other *(please specify and give details)*:

Section 2: Progress on Equality Scheme commitments and action plans / measures

Arrangements for assessing compliance (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 2)

4 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within job descriptions during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☒ Yes, organisation wide
- ☐ Yes, some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- ☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

An appreciation of Equality of Opportunity issues, as they relate to access to the arts, employment is an essential criterion of all relevant posts advertised. Responsibilities are also reflected in Personal Performance Agreements and are integrated into the staff induction process.

5 Were the Section 75 statutory duties integrated within performance plans during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

- ☒ Yes, organisation wide
- ☐ Yes, some departments/jobs

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- ☐ No, this is not an Equality Scheme commitment
- ☐ No, this is scheduled for later in the Equality Scheme, or has already been done
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

Responsibilities are reflected in Personal Performance Agreements where relevant. Section 75 training is offered to all staff members each year.

Completed S75 related courses include:

Neurodiversity Awareness training August 2023 (by University of Atypical);
On-line Disability Awareness session Oct 23 (by Employers for Disability);
Racial and Diversity Awareness Session January 2024 (by Craic NI);

On-Line Deaf Awareness session March 24 by Anthony Sinclair Sign Source Learning.

6 In the 2023-24 reporting period were **objectives/ targets/ performance measures** relating to the Section 75 statutory duties **integrated** into corporate plans, strategic planning and/or operational business plans? *(tick all that apply)*

- ☒ Yes, through the work to prepare or develop the new corporate plan
- ☒ Yes, through organisation wide annual business planning
- ☐ Yes, in some departments/jobs
- ☐ No, these are already mainstreamed through the organisation's ongoing corporate plan
- ☐ No, the organisation's planning cycle does not coincide with this 2023-24 report
- ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

ACNI's 5-year framework (2019-2024) identified needs highlighted through consultation with the sector. Actions within the 5-year framework reflect the arrangements ACNI have put in place to have the greatest impact on section 75 groups that have the lowest engagement in the arts.

ACNI procured external services to identify key performance indicators to address the issues highlighted through the 5-year framework consultation and based on data that can be

reasonably captured through ACNI's existing monitoring processes. ACNI's 2023/24 business plan was also written to reflect the KPIs that relate to the 5-year framework. Section 75 considerations were central to the business planning process.

In the development of the new 10-year strategy, ACNI consulted with internal staff and the wider arts sector during May to August 2023 on our organisations future mission, vision and values. The feedback has been used to develop a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy with new objectives and actions to ensure that we fulfil our statutory obligations regarding Section 75 groups. This is further reflected in the new business plan for 2024/25. It should also be noted that there is a monitoring tool with 52 KPIs that have been developed which include equality specific targets. This can be found here:

[Draft Performance Monitoring Tool 2024-2034 | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](https://arts council-ni.org/Draft-Performance-Monitoring-Tool-2024-2034)

Equality action plans/measures

7 Within the 2023-24 reporting period, please indicate the **number** of:

Actions
completed:

5

Actions ongoing:

0

Actions to
commence:

0

Please provide any details and examples (*in addition to question 2*):

See attached Equality Action Plan (EAP) for further information. As 2023/24 was the final year of ACNI's EAP all of the actions have been completed. There were 10 actions in total with 5 resulting in final completions in 2023/24.

8 Please give details of changes or amendments made to the equality action plan / measures during the 2023-24 reporting period (*points not identified in an appended plan*):

The equality and disability action plans were revised and consulted upon in 2019/20. These plans have been acted upon throughout the 2023/24 period where possible. No changes have been made.

New Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy and action plan has been developed to replace the current equality and disability action plans. This was developed alongside ACNI's new 10-year strategy (2024-2034). It was consulted upon with the sector and includes actions to be completed in 3-year cycles over the duration of the strategy.

9 In reviewing progress on the equality action plan/action measures during the 2023-24 reporting period, the following have been identified: (*tick all that apply*)

- ☒ Continuing action(s), to progress the next stage addressing the known inequality
- ☒ Action(s) to address the known inequality in a different way
- ☒ Action(s) to address newly identified inequalities/recently prioritised inequalities
- ☒ Measures to address a prioritised inequality have been completed

Arrangements for consulting (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 3)

10 Following the initial notification of consultations, a targeted approach was taken – and consultation with those for whom the issue was of particular relevance: *(tick one box only)*

- ☒ All the time ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

11 Please provide any **details and examples of good practice** in consultation during the 2023-24 reporting period, on matters relevant (e.g. the development of a policy that has been screened in) to the need to promote equality of opportunity and/or the desirability of promoting good relations:

ACNI ran engagement discussions with the arts sector in the development of our new 10-year strategy. Twenty-four sessions were delivered in total. Fourteen sessions were delivered by RF Associates and the Director of Strategic Development (ACNI) and ran from 17th July 2023 to 10th September 2023 with some sessions delivered face to face across various locations in Northern Ireland and some offered online. The remaining sessions were delivered by the Director of Strategic Development (ACNI) in partnership with resource organisations. Engagement was sought across individual artists and organisations, in a range of locations across urban and more rural locations and with as wide a range of art forms as possible. The team also made significant effort to reach and engage with typically under-represented groups as part of this process. .

In total, there were 262 attendants across the 24 engagement sessions. In a few cases, people participated in more than one workshop representing themselves as artists or another organisation. Feedback was gathered after each workshop so the team could continue to improve upon the effectiveness of the sessions.

A wide range of issues were discussed in the sessions. The discussions included some examples of possible activity within the priority areas, including elements that would require additional budget for ACNI. These are included for illustrative purposes only; detailed comment is not provided on these individual elements.

Not everyone in each group came to a consensus on themes. We valued everyone's perspective and used the insights to inform the final stages of strategy development. Time was taken in the sessions to explain the background to the strategy development so far, the strategic context and challenges, as well as to explain how the outcomes are worded with a focus on a journey where change can be tracked over time. Draft outcomes were developed based on research, previous engagement and internal engagement and to help structure the sessions. Groups were informed of further consultation opportunities later in the year once the strategy had been developed.

Public consultation on the new strategy and EQIA report took place from Friday 12th January - Friday 5th April 2024. Please note that the vast majority of the public agreed that our strategy did not impact Section 75 groups.

Consultation responses – a summary of responses received from individuals and organisations, to ACNI's EQIA can be found here:

[ACNI 2024-2034 Strategy Consultation Responses \(s3-assets.com\)](https://s3-assets.com)

With supporting documentation here:

[Strategy Consultation 2024-34 | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](https://artscouncil-ni.org)

12 In the 2023-24 reporting period, given the consultation methods offered, which consultation methods were **most frequently used by consultees**: *(tick all that apply)*

- ☒ Face to face meetings
- ☒ Focus groups
- ☒ Written documents with the opportunity to comment in writing
- ☒ Questionnaires
- ☒ Information/notification by email with an opportunity to opt in/out of the consultation
- ☒ Internet discussions
- ☐ Telephone consultations
- ☐ Other *(please specify)*:

Please provide any details or examples of the uptake of these methods of consultation in relation to the consultees' membership of particular Section 75 categories:

Annex D provides a list of all the sessions held as part of ACNI's strategy development.

PART A

- 13** Were any awareness-raising activities for consultees undertaken, on the commitments in the Equality Scheme, during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The feedback from consulting with the arts sector July-September 2023 was presented to the ACNI Board in October 2023. Four additional sessions were subsequently scheduled in November to provide everyone with an update on how we used the feedback to inform the strategy development.

- 14** Was the consultation list reviewed during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not applicable – no commitment to review

Arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of policies (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

Please find screening document for new 10-year strategy which was completed in November 2023 and EQIA report completed in March 2024.

[Strategy Screening Report 2023-24 \(s3-assets.com\)](#)

[EQIA Equality Impact Assessment January 2024 \(s3-assets.com\)](#)

- 15** Please provide the **number** of policies screened during the year *(as recorded in screening reports)*:

1

- 16** Please provide the **number of assessments** that were consulted upon during 2023-24:

0	Policy consultations conducted with screening assessment presented.
0	Policy consultations conducted with an equality impact assessment (EQIA) presented.

1

Consultations for an **EQIA** alone.

- 17** Please provide details of the **main consultations** conducted on an assessment (as described above) or other matters relevant to the Section 75 duties:

As part of ACNI's strategy development, we consulted with our staff in May/June 2023 and the arts sector in July and August 2023. A screening report for the strategy was completed in December 2023 and approved by the ACNI Board. Following this stage, an EQIA was carried out and went out for a 12-week public consultation period alongside the final draft of our new 10-year strategy. Feedback from the public consultation was incorporated into the final strategy.

- 18** Were any screening decisions (or equivalent initial assessments of relevance) reviewed following concerns raised by consultees? *(tick one box only)*

☐

Yes

☐

No concerns were raised

☒

No

☐

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples: N/A

Arrangements for publishing the results of assessments (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

- 19** Following decisions on a policy, were the results of any EQIAs published during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

☐

Yes

☒

No

☐

Not applicable

Please provide any details and examples:

The final EQIA was published on ACNI's website after the 2023-24 reporting period in April 2024.

Arrangements for monitoring and publishing the results of monitoring (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 4)

- 20** From the Equality Scheme monitoring arrangements, was there an audit of existing information systems during the 2023-24 reporting period? *(tick one box only)*

PART A

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No, already taken place |
| ☐ No, scheduled to take place at a later date | ☐ Not applicable |

Please provide any details and examples:

An audit of inequalities 2017-22 was completed in January 2023. This analysed 5 years of equality data across ACNI's programmes, including SIAP, AFS and emergency Covid Programmes. Applications to all of the programmes were analysed on an approved and declined basis to ensure no bias across the nine Section 75 categories.

ACNI are continually reviewing and updating our data collection systems to capture equality information more accurately. Consultation has taken place with a range of public bodies on how they collect data in line with Equality Commission NI. As a result, we removed 'other' and called it 'not listed, please specify' to give everyone an option to self-identity under equality characteristics as well as amending any categories that were outdated.

21 In analysing monitoring information gathered, was any action taken to change/review any policies? *(tick one box only)*

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| ☐ Yes | ☒ No | ☐ Not applicable |
|------------------------------|--|---|

Please provide any details and examples:

The audit of inequalities confirmed that ACNI was already targeting under-represented Section 75 groups across NI through its funding programmes.

Part of the review of the AFP demonstrated how funding was being distributed to different groups including those with a disability and young people and children.

22 Please provide any details or examples of where the monitoring of policies, during the 2023-24 reporting period, has shown changes to differential/adverse impacts previously assessed: N/A

23 Please provide any details or examples of monitoring that has contributed to the availability of equality and good relations information/data for service delivery planning or policy development:

Changes have been made to the gender and ethnicity categories in ACNI's AFS to reflect best-practice. Worth noting especially, the inclusion of the category 'Prefer to describe myself in another way (open text box response option)'

Gender Identity question category response options:

- Woman (including cis and trans women)
- Man (including cis and trans women)
- Non-Binary (including androgyne)
- Agender
- Gender fluid
- Prefer to describe myself in another way (open text box response option)

Ethnicity question category response options:

Addition of 'Roma' option and open text response option under each category.

White

- White
- Irish Traveler
- Roma

Asian

- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Asian not specified, please specify here

Black

- Caribbean
- African
- Other
- Black not listed, please specify here
- Mixed Ethnic Group
- Ethnic group not listed, please specify here

Staff Training (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 5)

- 24** Please report on the activities from the training plan/programme (section 5.4 of the Model Equality Scheme) undertaken during 2023-24, and the extent to which they met the training objectives in the Equality Scheme.

All new starts were asked to complete S75 e-learning.

Completed S75 related courses include:

PART A

Neurodiversity Awareness training August 2023 (by University of Atypical);
On-line Disability Awareness session Oct 23 (by Employers for Disability);
Racial and Diversity Awareness Session January 2024 (by Craic NI);

On-Line Deaf Awareness session March 24 by Anthony Sinclair Sign Source Learning.

25 Please provide **any examples** of relevant training shown to have worked well, in that participants have achieved the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the stated objectives:

Training sessions in point 24 above worked well in that they resulted in better understanding and awareness of some S75 groups.

Public Access to Information and Services (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 6)

26 Please list any examples of where monitoring during 2023-24, across all functions, has resulted in action and improvement in relation to access to information and services:
N/A

Complaints (Model Equality Scheme Chapter 8)

27 How many complaints in relation to the Equality Scheme have been received during 2023-24?

Insert number here:

7

Please provide any details of each complaint raised and outcome:

1 issue related to data capture

4 issues with Feile Festival

1 issue related to Russian Opera

1 issue related to funding process

Section 3: Looking Forward

28 Please indicate when the Equality Scheme is due for review:

The lifespan of the current Equality Scheme is until 31st March 2024. ACNI have developed a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy to replace its old Equality Scheme. It covers the same period as ACNI's new 10-year strategy, 2024-2034. The associated action plan will run in 3-year cycles to ensure flexibility and achieving our desired outcomes.

29 Are there areas of the Equality Scheme arrangements (screening/consultation/training) your organisation anticipates will be focused upon in the next reporting period? *(please provide details)*

Continue to measure socio-economic background and social class following the pilot survey to all SIAP clients in October 2023.

Provide advice and leadership to arts sector i.e. signpost organisations to use various networks and free resources to encourage greater diversity on Boards

Increase engagement with underrepresented groups - actively work on improving response rates in equality data sets (artists and via AFP survey)

Review the Minority Ethnic/Global majority and Rural forums –

- Refresh membership of current Ethnic/Global Majority and Rural Deliberative Forums
- Create a new Deliberative Forum for d/deaf, disabled, neurodiverse artists and Disability Organisations

Arts Council staff and Board members are aware of current EDI issues - Deliver Section 75 training to all Arts Council staff (including Board members) by experts within that field.

Distribute our Annual Funding Survey (AFS) to National Lottery clients so that we are collecting the same equality information across all of the organisations ACNI fund. AFS does not collect data for three out of nine of the Section 75 categories including, political opinion, marital status and dependants. The reason for this is proportionality and to ensure that we use the data provided, rather than just collecting for the sake of it. ACNI collect core equality related data (including recent adjustments to the categories) and is up to date and in line with local classifiers.

30 In relation to the advice and services that the Commission offers, what equality and good relations priorities are anticipated over the next (2023-24) reporting period? *(please tick any that apply)*

PART A

- ☐ Employment
- ☐ Goods, facilities and services
- ☐ Legislative changes
- ☐ Organisational changes/ new functions
- ☒ Nothing specific, more of the same
- ☐ Other (please state):

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended) and Disability Action Plans

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been

5

Fully achieved

0

Partially achieved

0

Not achieved

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Level	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
National ⁱⁱⁱ	Development and launch of the Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2020-2024	National	Development of the Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2020-2024
Regional ^{iv}	Enable participation by disabled people in policy making groups such as the deliberative forum to better reflect the needs of unrepresented audiences and participants	Regional	Visible commitment to better understand the needs of underrepresented or unrepresented audiences and participants.
Local ^v	Ensure that our clients and other organisations promote positive attitudes towards disabled people by adopting principles, conditions and policies that meet the duties outlined in legislation.	Local	Ensure that our clients and other organisations promote positive attitudes towards disabled people by adopting principles, conditions and policies that meet the duties outlined

PART B

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Deliver disability equality training to all Arts Council staff (including Board members) using suitably qualified trainers	Board members are offered dates to attend Equality Commission online training sessions when they join ACNI. All new starts were asked to complete S75 e-learning. Completed courses include: Neurodiversity Awareness training August 2023 (by University of Atypical); On-line Disability Awareness session Oct 23 (by Employers for Disability); Racial and Diversity Awareness Session January 2024 (by Craic NI); On-Line Deaf Awareness session March 24 (by Anthony Sinclair Sign Source Learning).	Staff will be able to identify discriminatory forms of practice and challenge negative stereotypes.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
1	Increase the visibility of disabled artists work by embedding it in media output	There were 22 stories published on ACNI website and subsequently shared on social media and in fortnightly	Increased public awareness of disabled artist's work

PART B

		external e-newsletter in relation to section 75 groups.	
--	--	---	--

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to '**encourage others**' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
2	Enable participation by disabled people in policy making groups to better reflect the needs of unrepresented audiences and participants	There is representation of people with a disability in both ACNI's rural and minority ethnic deliberative forums.	Opportunity to contribute to share insight with public sector organisations and lead to more inclusive policy development.

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
1	Arts Council of Northern Ireland to participate in research to establish the feasibility of a national disability access card	All In is a new UK arts access scheme for D/deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people designed to ensure culture and cultural experiences can be accessed by everyone. The scheme is support financially by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Arts Council of	Encourage participation by disabled people in public life

PART B

		Wales and Creative Scotland, with the partnership officially recognised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).	
2	3 Support the careers of disabled artists by: 3a) Providing grants through SIAP 3b) Improving access to application process; and 3c) Funding key arts and disability organisations	• SLA with University of Atypical, £10,000 -2023-2024 • DDASF (D/deaf and Disabled Artists Support Funds 2023/24) 20 x £1,000 awards for artists to buy creative time funded by ACNI, administered by the University of Atypical. The scheme is only open to d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists. • Organisations funded by ACNI in the Health and Disability Arts portfolio are Arts Care, Open Arts, Drake Music and University of Atypical. Each of these organisations provide specialist services to improve access to participants with a disability and for artists with a disability. In 2023/24 these organisations engaged with combined audiences of over 60,000 individuals through performance, participation and festival based activity.	The Fund aimed to provide financial support to d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse artists/creative practitioners Allows ACNI to deliver better access for D/deaf, disabled and Neurodiverse artists, who may require tailored advice and support to enable them to make funding applications
3	Deliver disability equality training to all Arts Council staff (including Board	Neurodiversity Awareness training August 2023 (by University of Atypical); On-line Disability Awareness session Oct 23 (by Employers for Disability);	Staff will be able to identify discriminatory forms of practice and challenge negative stereotypes.

PART B

	members) using suitably qualified trainers	Racial and Diversity Awareness Session January 2024 (by Craic NI); On-Line Deaf Awareness session March 24 by Anthony Sinclair Sign Source Learning.	
4	Implement a revised Premium Payment programme to remove barriers to engagement by disabled people	ACNI have not run a premium payments programme since 2019/20 but do offer additional funding on top of all grant programmes for individuals of up to £2,500 to cover personal assistance related to their disability requirements.	Funded activity is more accessible enabling marginalised groups experience the arts

3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones/ Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	N/A	N/A

5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

Meetings, focus groups, surveys are used to contribute towards policy development and the assessment of existing actions.

The deliberative fora have contributed towards policy development and capture a variety of perspectives.

ACNI also evaluate all of our programmes to ensure that they have been effective in what they have set out to achieve. The most recent evaluations to be completed are for Creative Schools, Arts & Older People and the Rural Engagement Arts Programme. Please find links to our website below:

[Creative Schools Partnership Evaluation Report 2023 | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](https://www.artscouncil-ni.org/creative-schools-partnership-evaluation-report-2023)

[Arts and Older People Programme Evaluation \(April... | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](https://www.artscouncil-ni.org/arts-and-older-people-programme-evaluation)

[Rural Engagement Arts Programme \(REAP\) - Round 1... | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](https://www.artscouncil-ni.org/rural-engagement-arts-programme-reap-round-1)

(b) Quantitative

Annual Funding Survey (AFS), Sky Administrative Programme, Section 75 Monitoring Information from SIAP Awards.

ACNI also use NISRA/DfC's Continuous Household Survey Arts and Culture module in addition to internal monitoring tools. ACNI also launched a General Population Survey (GPS) in June 2023 capturing information on how people consume the arts.

PART B

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- Made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or...
- Taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

If yes please outline below:

	Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
1	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation's annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

No

Annex A – Support for Individual Artists (SIAP) Equality Monitoring Information 2023/24

Disability	n	%
Yes	64	17
No	273	71
Prefer not to say	21	5
Not answered	28	7
Total	386	100

Gender	n	%
Agender		0
Female (cisgender and transgender)	162	42
Gender fluid	1	0
Male (cisgender and transgender)	158	41
Non-binary	8	2
Not answered	24	6
Not listed	7	2
Prefer not to say	26	7
Total	386	100

Dependents	n	%
Yes	111	29
No	235	61
Not answered	40	10
Total	386	100

Religion	n	%
Protestant	39	10
Catholic	102	26
Islam/Muslim	1	0
Jewish	1	0
Buddhist	2	1
No religious belief	138	36
Not answered	21	5
Not listed	21	5
Prefer not to say	61	16
Total	386	100

PART B

Politics	n	%
Unionist generally	13	3
Nationalist generally	110	28
Apolitical	76	20
Not answered	21	5
Not listed	37	10
Prefer not to say	129	33
Total	386	100

Ethnicity	n	%
White	328	85
Black African	2	1
Black Caribbean	1	0
Black not listed	1	0
Chinese	2	1
Mixed Ethnic	9	2
Ethnic group not listed	5	1
Not answered	22	6
Prefer not to say	16	4
Total	386	100

Marriage	n	%
Married	135	35
Divorced	13	3
Separated	4	1
Widowed	3	1
Co-habiting/living with partner	49	13
Civil partnership	3	1
Single/unmarried	143	37
Not answered	25	6
Prefer not to say	11	3
Total	386	100

Age	n	%
16-24	14	14
25-34	138	36
35-44	113	29
45-54	59	15
55-64	33	9
65+	10	3
Not answered	14	4
Prefer not to say	5	1
Total	386	100

PART B

Sexual Orientation	n	%
Heterosexual/straight	223	58
Bisexual	33	9
Pansexual	6	2
Gay woman/Lesbian	8	2
Gay man	24	6
Queer	18	5
Not listed		0
Not answered	26	7
Prefer not to say	48	12
Total	386	100

Sex	n	%
Male	171	44
Female	178	46
Not answered	29	8
Not listed	0	0
Prefer not to say	8	2
Total	386	100

Annex B – Annual Funding Survey (AFS) 2022/23

Gender identity, permanent & contract, FT & PT staff & Board Members	N	%
Woman (including cis and trans women)	2,839	50
Man (including cis and trans men)	2,823	49
Non-Binary (including androgyne)	55	1
Agender	1	0
Gender fluid	1	0
Prefer to describe myself in another way (open response option)	1	0
Prefer not to say	356	
Not known	1,121	
Total	7,197	
Total answered	5,720	100

Age, permanent & contract, FT & PT staff & Board Members	N	%
0-15	0	0.0
16-24	454	10.7
25-34	1,078	25.4
35-44	1,054	24.8
45-54	851	20.1
55-64	520	12.3
65+	285	6.7
Prefer Not To Say	343	
Not known	2,372	
Total	6,957	
Total answered	4,242	100

Disability, permanent & contract, FT & PT staff & Board Members	N	%
Disabled	244	7.7
Non-Disabled	2,917	92.3
Prefer not to say	286	
Not known	3,578	
Total	7,025	
Total answered	3,161	100

PART B

Ethnicity, permanent & contract, FT & PT staff & Board Members	N	%
White	3,754	68
Irish Traveller	2	0
Roma	3	0
Chinese	19	0
Indian	34	1
Pakistani	8	0
Bangladeshi	1	0
Other Asian	0	0
Asian not listed, please specify here	8	0
Black Caribbean	13	0
Black African	37	1
Black Other	0	0
Black not listed, please specify here	6	0
Arab	26	0
Filipino	2	0
Mixed Ethnic Group	107	2
Other Ethnic Group	10	0
Ethnic group not listed	19	0
Unspecified or Uncollected	1,492	27
Not known	1,484	
Total	7025	
Total answered	5,541	100

Sexual Orientation, permanent & contract, FT & PT staff & Board Members	N	%
Bisexual	63	2
Gay Man	104	4
Gay Woman / Lesbian	125	5
Heterosexual / Straight	1,859	73
Queer	57	2
Pansexual	7	0
Prefer to describe myself in another way (open response option)	322	13
Prefer not to say	71	
Not known	4,417	
Total	7,025	
Total answered	2,537	100

PART B

Religious Faith Orientation, permanent & contract, FT & PT staff & Board Members	N	%
Catholic	710	50
Protestant	336	24
Buddhist	6	0
Hindu	4	0
Islam/Muslim	11	1
Jewish	0	0
Sikh	5	0
Other Religious Faith	49	3
No Religious Faith	289	20
Religious faith not listed specify here	6	0
Prefer not to say	519	
Not known	5,090	
Total	7,025	
Total answered	1,416	100

PART B

Audience accessibility measures (n=sum of organisations)	Number of organisations providing service	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Braille	7	5	1	1
Large print	29	16	5	8
Induction loop	25	11	8	6
Captioning	30	26	4	0
Audio Description	22	16	6	0
BSL interpreter	21	19	2	0
ISL interpreter	8	7	1	0
Communication Mean	20	14	4	2
Wheelchair access	89	12	24	53
Accessible toilets	85	8	21	56
Lifts	69	7	21	41
Physical Mean	81	9	22	50
Signage	72	14	22	36
Maps	50	15	18	17
Navigation Mean	122	29	40	53
Relaxed performances	45	27	13	5
Dementia friendly	41	31	8	2
Multisensory workshops	35	29	5	1
Activity Mean	121	87	26	8

2023-2024

News releases published on ACNI Website and subsequently shared on social media channels and in our fortnightly external e-newsletter.

Audience Figures (1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024)

Website visitors: 42,922

External e-newsletter subscribers: 3,193

Facebook page likes: 23,980

Facebook followers: 28,607

Twitter followers: 27,113

Instagram followers: 8,589

LinkedIn followers: 4,436

1. 29 March 2024

Landmark show that places deaf artists centre stage set to open this weekend at The MAC

An innovative new theatre show which places deaf artists centre stage is set to open this weekend at The MAC, Belfast, as part of the Deaf Arts Festival NI.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/landmark-show-that-places-deaf-artists-centre-stage-set-to-open-this-weekend-at-the-mac>

2. 6 March 2024

The artist who painted in secret, Beyond Skin celebrates International Women's Day with inspirational Afghan artist Alina Gawhary

Afghan female visual artist and musician, Alina Gawhary is visiting Northern Ireland this week as part of Beyond Skin's International Women's Day celebrations, supported by The National Lottery through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. During her visit Alina will share inspirational talks with students in schools and youth groups about her experiences of living in persecution from the Taliban in Afghanistan, both as a female and as an artist, and having to paint in secret before fleeing to Bangladesh on a university scholarship.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/beyond-skin-celebrates-international-womens-day-with-inspirational-afghan-artist>

3. 28 February 2024

Seamus Heaney HomePlace hosts Mid-Ulster writing workshop helping communities combat rural isolation

The workshop with poet Maura Johnston is one of a range of arts activities planned for the rural Mid-Ulster area and supported at the HomePlace, thanks to the Arts Council's National Lottery Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP).

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/seamus-heaney-homeplace-hosts-mid-ulster-writing-workshop-helping-communities-combat-rural-isolation>

4. 27 February 2024

Funding boost for Omagh drama group will benefit young people's mental health

Thanks to funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's National Lottery Young People and Wellbeing Arts Programme, Golden Apple Players will offer 40 young people aged 12-18 the chance to be involved in a very special drama project, 'The Tiniest Lifeboat'. The project is specifically targeted at young people in the area, living with mental health conditions or at risk of addiction.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/funding-boost-for-omagh-drama-group-will-benefit-young-peoples-mental-health>

5. 15 February 2024

Boost your mood with a song! The Pick Me Up Choir is calling for singers of all abilities to get involved!

A community choir based in rural Northeast Antrim, is calling for people of all abilities and ages from the area, to join their Pick Me Up Choir, a project which aims to address the social isolation and loneliness that can often be experienced by people living in rural areas. The Pick Me Up Choir is presented in partnership with the Northern Area Community Network and is funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's National Lottery Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP).

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/boost-your-mood-with-a-song-the-pick-me-up-choir-is-calling-for-singers-of-all-abilities-to-get-involved>

6. 16 January 2024

Bardic Theatre's inclusive arts project for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds living in rural Tyrone

Bardic Theatre, a community theatre company and theatre school based in rural Donaghmore Co. Tyrone, has been bringing young people from ethnic minority communities together through a series of drama and music workshops based on the much-loved musical, West Side Story. The project was supported by the National Lottery through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's National Lottery Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP). Some of the young project participants will now put their new

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skills to use as they join the cast for a production of West Side Story at the Bardic Theatre from 1-16 March 2024.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/bardic-theatres-inclusive-arts-project-for-young-people-from-ethnic-minority-backgrounds-living-in-rural-tyrone>

7. 18 December 2023

Millennium Forum, a leading light in bringing isolated older people together to enjoy the Arts, thanks to The National Lottery!

The Millennium Forum in Derry-Londonderry has been hosting a series of dementia-friendly tea dances over a 12-month period for older members of the local community. The aim of the tea dances is to bring older people affected by dementia together to enjoy the arts, music, movement and dancing.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/millennium-forum-a-leading-light-in-bringing-isolated-older-people-together-to-enjoy-the-arts>

8. 15 November 2023

Minority ethnic artists awarded Arts Council National Lottery investment to support career development

Thirteen ethnic minority artists have been awarded grants worth £49,995 to help them develop their creative practice and support their professional careers in Northern Ireland. The investment announced today has been made by the Arts Council of Northern through the National Lottery Minority Ethnic Artists Mentoring and Residency Scheme and will support artists working across a range of disciplines including music, visual art, community arts and literature.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/minority-ethnic-artists-awarded-arts-council-national-lottery-investment-to-support-career-development>

9. 13 November 2023

Stories of LGBTQI+ people living in rural North West celebrated in an audio installation at the Foyle Film Festival, supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Cinema for the qu(ears) is an audio installation featuring soundscapes from the lives of LGBTQI+ young people living in rural areas of the North West and will premiere at the Foyle Film Festival on Sunday 19 November. This innovative project is funded through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's National Lottery Rural Engagement Arts Programme, a funding scheme established in 2022 with the aim of providing an integrated, cohesive approach to the needs of rural communities as they emerged from the global Covid-19 pandemic. The overarching theme of the programme is to tackle isolation and loneliness and promote social inclusion and wellbeing through participation in the arts.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/stories-of-lgbtqi-people-living-in-rural-north-west-celebrated-in-an-audio-installation-at-the-foyle-film-festival-supported-by-the-arts-council-of-northern-ireland>

10. 25 October 2023

The Belfast Ensemble presents, The Headless Soldier, as part of the Outburst Queer Arts Festival, supported by The National Lottery

The award-winning Belfast Ensemble will premiere their upcoming production, 'The Headless Soldier', at the Lyric Theatre from 9-11 November. This captivating three-part operatic experience, a creation of Mark Ravenhill and Northern Irish composer, Conor Mitchell, is a co-production between The Belfast Ensemble and Outburst Queer Arts Festival, supported by The National Lottery through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/the-belfast-ensemble-presents-the-headless-soldier-as-part-of-the-outburst-queer-arts-festival>

11. 25 October 2023

Older people to benefit from £169,994 arts funding for 22 creative projects, supported by The National Lottery

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has announced £169,994 funding to support 22 arts organisations across Northern Ireland in delivering a series of community-based arts projects benefitting older people. The funding is part of the National Lottery Arts and Older People Programme, a pioneering initiative funded by The National Lottery and Public Health Agency, which aims to tackle loneliness as well as promote positive mental health and well-being among older people, through engagement with the arts.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/older-people-to-benefit-from-169-994-arts-council-ni-funding>

12. 19 September 2023

Bounce Arts Festival returns with extraordinary celebration of diversity

Northern Ireland's leading celebration of artistic diversity and inclusion – the Bounce Arts Festival – returns from October 6 to 8 with a packed programme of more than 30 events.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/bounce-arts-festival-returns-with-extraordinary-celebration-of-diversity>

13. 12 September 2023

Belfast drag star's remarkable story set to open at the Lyric Theatre

Based on the real-life experiences of Matt Cavan and his drag persona Cherrie Ontop, Mirrorball, a musical production from Replay Theatre Company, will open at the Lyric Theatre this month for a week long run (15th-21st September).

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/belfast-drag-stars-remarkable-story-set-to-open-at-the-lyric-theatre>

14. 4 September 2023

Arts Council announces £400,326 for 63 rural arts projects

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Sixty-three community groups and arts organisations in rural-based communities across Northern Ireland are set to benefit from the third round of the Arts Council's National Lottery Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP). The National Lottery Rural Engagement Arts Programme, worth £400,326, was established in 2022 with the aim of providing an integrated, cohesive approach to the needs of rural communities as they emerged from the global Covid-19 pandemic. The overarching theme of the programme is to tackle isolation and loneliness and promote social inclusion and wellbeing through participation in the arts.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-announces-funding-for-63-rural-arts-projects>

15. 9 August 2023

Enniskillen Youth Arts Project helps Support Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

A youth group in Enniskillen is bringing young people together to express themselves and connect through the arts, thanks to National Lottery funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/enniskillen-youth-arts-project-helps-support-mental-and-emotional-wellbeing>

16. 10 July 2023

Iconic International Festival invites Iranian Musicians Living In Belfast

Iranian musicians Omid Shir Mohammadi & Nasim Heidari, who came to Belfast last year have been invited to perform at a prestigious festival in July, WOMAD.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/iconic-international-festival-invites-iranian-musicians-living-in-belfast>

17. 29 June 2023

New Stained-Glass Window will celebrate Diversity at Malone College

Self-portraits created in stained glass by students from Malone Integrated College will soon go on display as a permanent fixture in the school.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/new-stained-glass-window-will-celebrate-diversity-at-malone-college-2>

18. 20 June 2023

Ukrainian singer, Masha Myndru, releases music to mark Make Music Day 2023, supported by Beyond Skin and The National Lottery

A music video produced by a collective of musicians and choirs based in Northern Ireland, is set to be released online to celebrate Make Music Day on 21 June. The video called, Сестра (translated as 'sister'), features Ukrainian singer Masha Myndru, who got involved thanks to Beyond Skin's MARRS programme, punk rock band, Cut Rubber, Lisburn Harmony Choir, the Early Birds Choir, the PwC Choir and Sing and Tonic. Make Music Day originated in France 1982 as Fête de la Musique and has become

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the World's largest DIY music event celebrated around the world. Everyone in NI is invited to take part in Make Music Day on 21 June, whether you're in a school, a choir, a solo act or a band, just visit their website to find out more.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/ukrainian-singer-releases-music-to-mark-make-music-day-2023>

19. 7 June 2023

Stage Beyond is 'Unstoppable' in new variety show performance, thanks to The National Lottery

Stage Beyond, the Derry-based theatre company for adults with learning disabilities, supported by National Lottery funding through the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, is gearing up to raise the roof with their variety show 'Unstoppable' in St Columb's Hall on Saturday June 24th, 2023 at 7.30pm.

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/stage-beyond-is-unstoppable-in-new-variety-show-performance-thanks-to-the-national-lottery>

20. 15 May 2023

Mental Health Awareness Week

It's Mental Health Awareness Week and we are taking a look back on some of the projects which ACNI has supported over the past year which touch on this theme.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/mental-health-awareness-week-2023>

21. 5 May 2023

Arts Council Board meets artists from the Musicians Artists at Risk Resettlement Scheme at Duncairn Arts Centre

Musicians and artists from Iran, Somalia, Syria and Afghanistan recently had the opportunity to meet and share their talents with members of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland Board at the Duncairn Arts Centre in North Belfast, an arts organisation supported by the National Lottery through the Arts Council.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/arts-council-board-meets-artists-from-the-musicians-artists-at-risk-resettlement-scheme-marrs-at-the-duncairn>

22. 26 April 2023

Africa House launches new arts initiative

Last week, Africa House launched a new arts initiative designed to help and support people coming to live in Northern Ireland, in particular those seeking sanctuary, students including health professionals, children and young people.

Read more at: <https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/africa-house-launches-new-arts-initiative>

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ANNEX D

Work shop	Who organised it?	Sector/Group	Date	Venue	Attendance (ex project team)
1	Community Arts Partnership and strategy team	Community arts	11th August	CAP offices	10
2	Arts and Business and strategy team	Businesses	23rd August	MAC	17
3	Craft NI and strategy team	Crafts	10th August	Clotworthy House, Antrim	14
4	University of Atypical and strategy team	Artists with disabilities and D/deaf	28th July	Ledger Studio, UoA	20
5	Theatre and Dance, Olwen Dawe and strategy team	Performing arts / freelancers	2nd August	Crescent Arts Centre	16
6	Visual Arts Ireland and strategy team	Visual arts	25th July	109 - 113 Royal Avenue, Belfast	9
7	Young at Art and strategy team	Children	10th September	MAC	28
8	Youth Action and strategy team	Adolescents	2nd August	Youth Action Building College Square North	30
9	Rural Deliberative	Organisations and artists in rural	25th July	Online	5

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	Forum, Nigel McKinney and strategy team	settings			
10	ME Forum, Alf Desire and strategy team	ME organisations and artists	25th July	Online	4
11	RFA and Strategy team	Session 1 Medium to large arts organisations	17th July	Cultúrlann, 216 Falls Road, Belfast	14
12	RFA and Strategy team	Session 2 Medium to large arts organisations	17th July	Cultúrlann, 216 Falls Road, Belfast	5
13	RFA and Strategy team	Session 3 Medium to large arts organisations	20th July	The Millenium Forum, Derry/Londonderry	11
14	RFA and Strategy team	Session 4 Medium to large arts organisations	24th July	Grand Opera House, Belfast	12
15	RFA and Strategy team	Session 5 Small to medium organisations	2nd August	Online	6
16	RFA and Strategy team	Session 1 Individuals / organisations involved with key Lottery funded projects	31st July	Online	7
17	RFA and Strategy team	Session 2 Individuals / organisations involved with key Lottery funded projects	3th August	Online	4

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18	RFA and Strategy team	Session 3 Individuals / organisations involved with key Lottery funded projects	4th August	Online	10
19	RFA and Strategy team	Session 4 Individuals / organisations involved with key Lottery funded projects	8th August	Online	5
20	RFA and Strategy team	Creative Industries	24th July	Grand Opera House, Belfast	8
21	RFA and Strategy team	Local Authorities Art managers	8th August	Online	5
22	RFA and Strategy team	Voluntary sector, arts and education, universities, amateur artists and organisations	1st August	Online	10
23	RFA and Strategy team	Freelance artists who could not attend their sector-specific sessions with resource organisations	19th July	Seamus Heaney Homeplace, Bellaghy	3
24	RFA and Strategy team	Freelance artists who could not attend their sector-specific sessions with resource organisations	20th July	The Millenium Forum, Derry/Londonderry	9

ⁱ **Outputs:** defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome/Impact:** what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.

ⁱⁱⁱ **National:** Situations where people can influence policy at a high impact level e.g. Public Appointments.

^{iv} **Regional:** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at a middle impact level.

^v **Local:** Situations where people can influence policy decision making at lower impact level e.g. one off consultations, local fora.