

Introduction from Making Music

Arts Council England (ACE) is consulting about its next 10-year strategy, due to run from 2020 to 2030. ACE is urging everyone – from organisations to individual artists to members of the public – to respond to the consultation by 23 September.

Making Music believe that ACE are serious about wanting to hear from as many people as possible, so we encourage you to submit a response.

The consultation questionnaire is long but you don't have to spend a long time responding – you can answer as few or as many questions as you like.

There are three documents on the consultation website. You will find it time well spent to read the 'Introduction to the consultation' document (one page) and the 'Our draft strategy 2020-2030' (22 pages). In the strategy, you can focus on the introductions to chapters and then head for p.10, which summarises the three outcomes and three investment principles around which ACE proposes structuring its funding and development work in the next 10 years. Then you can read more about those outcomes and investment principles in individual chapters in as much or as little detail as you have time for.

We have reproduced some of Making Music's response which seeks to reflect the perspective of leisure-time music groups and their needs. Please feel free to use any of those thoughts for inspiration, if they chime with your views.

Deadline: 23 September

Link to questionnaire: <https://nexttenyears.artscouncil.org.uk/10/1next-ten-years/>

Making Music response to the ACE 10-year strategy consultation

Chapter 1: Testing our proposed vision and the key shifts

Our vision is for England to become a country where the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a rich and remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.

The draft strategy proposes significant shifts from our current strategy, some of which are set out below. Do you agree or disagree that these shifts are important to you?

Widening the range of culture and creativity we support.

Making Music said:

- Very important shift which we support
- There is a huge range of creative activity people undertake for themselves in their community which ACE needs to take greater notice of
- Lack of engagement, in some areas, by some parts of the population, does not mean lack of creativity
- Support is not necessarily needed in terms of money for groups (though that, too, on occasion), but certainly in terms of championing and facilitating
- Support is very much needed for infrastructure, e.g. spaces to meet, practise and perform; music teachers and professionals locally; etc.
- Support would also be welcome in linking up community music activity with funded organisations, including theatres, concert halls, libraries and museums

Stronger focus on partnership working to help creativity & culture build thriving communities.

Making Music said:

- Strongly agree with this shift – but needs to be genuine partnerships, not 'delivery with a bit of consultation attached'
- Often leisure-time musical activity is overlooked by the professional sector and funders - because it's not funded, but these can be significant partners strongly rooted in their community
- Facilitating more local connections between NPOs (National Portfolio Organisations, i.e. organisations regularly funded by ACE) and leisure-time music groups would be appreciated by groups and improve NPOs' reach into their communities
- For a step change in this area the dots between professional/funded and community/unfunded activity need to be finally joined up

Embedding children and young people across our stated outcomes and principles.

Making Music said:

- Agree important to offer excellent opportunities to young people
- But would like to see more in strategy on the importance of creativity and culture to adults in general and older people in particular, given the research on the benefits for everyone of participation in arts for mental and physical health, and well-being; and the ageing population of England.

Increasing our focus on international working.

Making Music said:

- International exchanges can provide life-changing experiences for individuals
- And contribute strongly to the development of a leisure-time music group
- The barrier is frequently is lack of funding – there are plenty of opportunities
- Funding is an access issue because if groups have to self-fund such activity, it may mean excluding those from their group unable to contribute financially

Chapter 2: Creative people



Priority A: Ensuring more people, of all ages and all backgrounds, find, access and take part in a wide range of creative activities, both in their communities and online.

Making Music said:

1) ACE is already a partner in and funding the national Get Creative campaign, including the annual Get Creative festival which this year included 1,690 events at which at least 120,000 people participated. The aim of the festival is to bring everyday creativity to a mainstream audience and offer people in all parts of the country the chance to try something creative for themselves.

ACE also funds Make Music Day, a grassroots-created music festival with an international dimension, always on 21 June, which again empowers communities and anyone and everyone to create or participate in music events, in a public space or

online. Fun Palaces is another such crowd-created event, and organisation 64 Million Artists is also working to support everyday creativity.

These initiatives which reach tens of thousands of individuals in England, often individuals who aren't usually engaged with publicly funded arts activity, should be more strongly funded, championed and promoted by ACE, helping to grow them. All these initiatives act as facilitators and enablers for communities and individuals and as such would make it possible for ACE to reach a large number of 'not the usual suspects' individuals and connect them with other publicly-funded activity.

2) To support this priority, ACE needs to make sure that the local physical infrastructure (i.e. local spaces to meet, perform, practice activities, including music) remain available or are created where they don't exist.

Priority C: The creativity of 4-19 year olds both within and beyond the curriculum

Making Music said:

Making Music and its members would like to contribute more to this priority, but are finding it hard to engage with schools and music hubs, despite having much to offer.

ACE could play a more significant role in connecting community music activity with formal music education activity in school and other settings.

This would also help to start embedding the idea for young people that music-making doesn't stop at 18 if you're not going to become a professional - you can carry on enriching yourself and your community with musical activity for your whole life.

Chapter 3: Cultural communities



Priority A: Place-based partnerships which deliver shared outcomes, i.e. to strengthen and connect communities, and support inclusive growth.

Making Music said:

The draft strategy, despite talking about involving local communities, is still a lot about delivery *to* communities. It is great that you are encouraging professional arts organisations to engage with the communities they are part of. But what is really needed for cultural communities?

- 1) Recognition of the volume and breadth of cultural activity already happening; how can that be connected with and supported; what do community organisations actually want and need; not: what do professional organisations wish to give them
- 2) Professional organisations by becoming a more integral part of their communities will gain as much support as they will be giving; e.g., if local lobbying is needed
- 3) There needs to be the infrastructure to enable community-based cultural activity. NPOs can help. Why is this theatre closed until the evening whilst there is a choir struggling to find a space during the day? Can the library host performances? Here is a school with a space, and here a music group to inspire pupils

Priority C: Place-based cultural education that is co-designed with young people and others, and delivered through local partnerships of cultural organisations and education providers.

Making Music said:

Whilst this is not explicitly stated, the inference is that this is mainly about young people. We would like this explicitly also refer to adults, to encourage cultural organisations and education providers to consider adults in cultural education.

Priority D: Cultural initiatives that achieve health and well-being benefits for people of all ages

Making Music said:

The implication is that this is activity 'cascaded down' to people who are recipients; in this case not 'just' audiences, maybe also participants, but nonetheless the activity is designed by people other than them and 'offered'.

We believe what is most beneficial for health and well-being is cultural activity initiated by people themselves. Where professionals and organisations can be helpful is by supporting the cultural activity people want to do or need help with. There's a difference in terms of the resulting benefits, depending on where the ownership lies.

Chapter 4: A creative & cultural country



Priority A: Support for independent creatives that enables more people from all backgrounds to sustain careers in the creative sector

Making Music said:

Making Music promotes young musicians to the leisure-time music sector, and supports and engages with music-creators (commissions, Adopt a Composer project etc.). Furthermore, of its 3,600+ member leisure-time music groups, 87% engage soloists to sing/play with their group; 76% engage conductors; 94% of vocal groups

engage accompanists; 82% of instrumental groups engage orchestral leaders. 12% are promoters presenting professional solo artists or small ensembles.

We estimate £21.6m spent by our members on professional musicians in a year; 65,754 engagements of professional musicians in a year; £1.6m - spending with music publishers annually.

Making Music members offer professional musicians a valuable platform to practise their craft and are an intrinsic part of their portfolio careers. We would like to see ACE to help offer more opportunities to musicians and composers to work in the leisure-time music sector.

Priority C: Ensuring the country's collections are dynamically managed, researched, curated and shared to the highest standards

Making Music said:

If collections here includes sheet music and music sets held by public libraries, then we'd like to see more support from ACE for the innovative solutions currently being pioneered by us and some local authorities in order to make such resources accessible to music groups but financially sustainable for the local authority (as is necessary, given their mostly very difficult financial situations).

Priority D: International, national and local collaboration that harnesses and develops the best talent, expertise and ideas, and can open up new markets

Making Music said:

Making Music is one of the co-founders and Co-chair of the UK-wide steering group for Make Music Day, an annual crowd-generated grassroots music festival on 21 June which takes place globally in over 120 countries. Our latest evaluation for this event shows that the international connection is a big draw for people to get involved in that day, linking the hyper-local with the global.

A lot of this activity is community-based, and there is real value in connecting this activity up with similar activity across the world; so we would like ACE to think of international collaboration also in terms of community musical activity, not just professional artists and organisations.

Chapter 9: Further thoughts

Making Music said:

Making Music warmly welcomes the shift in this strategy to an emphasis on inclusion, access and relevance to everybody, and on communities. What also comes across is a determination of making sure that these principles are taken seriously.

We also warmly welcome the focus on facilitating and enabling everyday creativity, and the recognition that process and activity can create excellence, as well as a finished work.

This strategy signals that ACE is serious about funding activity and work with, by and for everyone, and this is very much in line with Making Music's ethos.

We would only caution against giving the impression that 'participative activity' still means decision/provision/delivery by a professional organisation to 'an audience'. We believe ACE, especially with the learning from the Creative People and Places programme, does understand about the difference between delivery and co-creation,

between provision and facilitating what a community itself is interested in or would like to make happen. But this knowledge still sometimes isn't fully reflected in the language of the strategy.