**MAKING MUSIC BRIEFING – APRIL 2025**

**Survey Questions for Arts Council Review 2025: Open call for evidence**

[Arts Council England review - survey questions - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/arts-council-england-review/arts-council-england-review-survey-questions#survey-questions---activity-and-decision-making)

“This Review is an opportunity for a national conversation about the future of Arts Council England and how creativity is nurtured and developed in the future. This survey is one part of that conversation and will enable a broad range of people to share their views and ideas.”

**How to use this briefing**

This document has a note of the questions, with signposting to which of those will be most suitable for you to respond to, depending on your previous relationship with Arts Council England. You can choose to respond to all the questions, but the survey is long and this document will help you be selective about which questions to answer if you are short of time.

We’ve categorised the questions, so you can decide which to focus on, and colour coded them by category. Some questions are not categorised - we don’t think they are relevant to leisure-time music groups. We’ve noted which questions are answered by tick box, and which are free text. This is a Word document so you can type your answers here and copy into the survey.

Throughout the document, we’ve added context where we think it will be useful. Under category 6, Q26 – 28 we’ve made suggestions as to issues that could be included in your answer, that Making Music thinks will benefit leisure-time music. Context and commentary are all *in italics*.

**Question categories**

1 - About you and your organisation

Questions P1 to P15

2 - On application process: for those who have ever applied for ACE funding (received or not)

Questions 11 to 15

3 - On managing the grants: for those who have ever received ACE funding

Questions 16, 17 and 20

4 - On partnership: for those who have ever worked in partnership with ACE / been consulted as a local stakeholder

Questions 18, 19

5 - On the purpose and strategy of ACE: Opinion on the ACE mandate, and their current Let’s Create strategy, opinion on ‘arms length principle’ (relationship with government and local authorities

Questions 1 to 8, and 22 to 25

6 – On future development of : Opinion on the biggest future challenges facing leisure-time music sector / your group and what ACE’s role should be in addressing these

Questions 26 to 28

**Survey questions - profile**

**P1:** Please indicate whether you are responding individually or representing an organisation. [tick boxes]

**P2:** Where are you based? [tick boxes]

**P3:** To help us think about differences and similarities at a local level, please provide the first part of your postcode (e.g. SW1).

**P4:** Do you currently work for Arts Council England (ACE)? [tick boxes]

**P5:** Have you ever worked for ACE? [tick boxes]

**P6:** Which best describes the sector(s) which you or your organisation work in? [tick boxes]

**P7:** Are you currently in receipt of Arts Council England funding? [tick boxes]

If yes:

**P8:** Which type(s) of funding do you receive? [tick boxes]

**P9:** Approximately how much funding a year do you receive? [tick boxes]

**P10:** Have you previously received Arts Council England funding? [tick boxes]

If yes:

**P11:** Which type(s) of funding did you receive? [tick boxes]

**P12:** Have you ever applied for Arts Council England funding? [tick boxes]

If - Responding on behalf of an organisation:

**P13:** How many people work for your organisation? [tick boxes]

**P14:** Where does your organisation work? [tick boxes]

**P15:** If you are comfortable to do so, please state the name of your organisation. [free text box]

**Survey questions - purpose and structure**

**Question 1:** In what way(s) does ACE fulfil its current mandate? - [free text box]

*NOTE: ACE’s mandate is laid out in the Royal Charter:* [*ACE Royal Charter*](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Consolidated_Royal_Charter_2013.pdf)

*“The objects of the Council shall be, for the public benefit, to: (1) develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts; (2) increase accessibility of the arts to the public in England; and (3) advance the education of the public and to further any other charitable purpose which relates to the establishment, maintenance and operation of museums and libraries (which are either public or from which the public may benefit) and to the protection of cultural property; and (4) advise and co-operate, where it is appropriate to do so, with the Departments of Our Government, Our Scottish Administration, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Welsh Ministers, local authorities, the Arts Councils and equivalent organisations in the museums and libraries sector for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (or their successors) and other bodies on any matter related to the objects.”*

**Question 2:** What changes, if any, would you like to see in ACE’s mandate? - [free text box]

**Question 3:** How would you rate ACE’s performance against its mandate? [tick boxes]

**Question 4:** In what way(s) could ACE deliver more effectively?- [free text box]

**Question 5:** On a scale of 1 - 5 how strongly do you support ACE’s current 10 year strategy Let’s Create

*Note: You can read the* [*Let's Create Strategy*](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030) *here.*

**Question 6:** What is important to you in the Let’s Create strategy? - [free text box]

*Links to relevant sections of Let’s Create*

[Our vision | Arts Council England](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/our-vision) – *“BY 2030, WE WANT ENGLAND TO BE A COUNTRY IN WHICH THE CREATIVITY OF EACH OF US IS VALUED AND GIVEN THE CHANCE TO FLOURISH, AND WHERE EVERY ONE OF US HAS ACCESS TO A REMARKABLE RANGE OF HIGH-QUALITY CULTURAL EXPERIENCES”*

*“…Many people already lead wide-ranging creative and cultural lives: they dance, draw and write; they read, visit museums, and listen to music; and they encourage their children to do the same. Much of this activity is not publicly funded, and has therefore traditionally fallen outside of the Arts Council’s remit. But with this Strategy, we aim to recognise and champion the creative activities and cultural experiences of every person in every town, village and city in this country, and to ensure that, over the next 10 years, we support more people to express and develop their creativity and create more opportunities for them to enjoy the widest possible range of culture.”*

[The strategy | Arts Council England](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/strategy) –

*Outcomes –* [Outcomes | Arts Council England](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/outcomes)

* ***Creative People****, focuses on amateur and voluntary creative activity, including by children and young people.*
* ***A Creative & Cultural Country****, looks at the professional cultural sector, including those seeking to develop a career in the creative industries after they leave full-time education.*
* ***Cultural Communities****, considers how the professional and voluntary sectors can work with each other to help shape stronger cultural provision in villages, towns and cities.*

*Investment Principles –* [Investment Principles | Arts Council England](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/investment-principles)

* *Ambition & Quality*
* *Dynamism*
* *Environmental Responsibility*
* *Inclusivity and Relevance*

**Question 7:** In what ways would you wish to enhance the strategy? - [free text box]

**Question 8:** Arts Council England is the development agency for arts and creativity - How effective is it in delivering this role? What does it do well and what could it improve? - [free text box]

*This section of Let’s Create is about ACE’s role as a development agency:* [*How we will achieve it | Arts Council England*](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030/how-we-will-achieve-it)

**Question 9:** Since 2011 this has included being the development agency for museums and libraries - How effective is ACE in delivering its relatively new responsibilities in relation to libraries and museums? What does it do well? In what ways could it improve its effectiveness? - [free text box].

**Question 10:** What should ACE’s role be in promoting and supporting technological innovation across the arts and culture sectors, and can you share any thoughts on its visibility in this regard? - [free text box].

**Survey questions - activity and decision making FOR THOSE WITH EXPERIENCE OF APPLYING FOR AND MANAGING GRANTS**

**Question 11:** When applying for grant funding from Arts Council England, to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

* 11.1. ACE staff are responsive and helpful and work collaboratively with me to ensure my application is as strong as possible
* 11.2. The guidance and instructions provided by ACE staff are clear and easy to understand
* 11.3. The guidance and instructions on ACE’s website are easy to find and easy to understand
* 11.4. ACE staff are knowledgeable and understand the specific needs of the sectors and regions in which they work
* 11.5. The resources required to engage in the application process are proportionate

[tick boxes]

**Question 12:** Please choose three priority areas where ACE could improve its grant application process.

* Issuing guidance on application criteria
* Application support
* Online application form
* Decision making process
* Timing of receiving decision
* Application feedback
* Receiving initial payment arrangement

**Question 13:** What do you think of the level of data and information requested by ACE in proportion to the amount of funding being applied for?

[tick boxes]

**Question 14:** ACE’s funding decisions are…

* Based on clear evidence
* Reflective of community needs
* Reflective of national priorities and needs
* Transparent in rationale
* Consistent in approach

All with options to choose from:

* Strongly disagree
* Disagree
* Neither agree nor disagree
* Agree
* Strongly agree

**Question 15:** How clear is ACE in communicating, including when sharing the results and reasons for its funding decisions to applicants?

Please choose:

* Very unclear
* Somewhat unclear
* Neither clear nor unclear
* Somewhat clear
* Very clear
* Do not know

**Question 16:** Please rate your agreement with the following statements:

* 16.1. ACE clearly defines the intended outcomes and impacts of its funding programmes
* 16.2. ACE collects relevant data to measure the actual outcomes and impacts achieved
* 16.3. ACE transparently reports on the demonstrated impacts of its investments
* 16.4. The information ACE provides about its impacts is easy for the public to understand
* 16.5. ACE’s approach to measuring and communicating impact is effective in holding the organisation accountable

All with the following options to choose from:

* Strongly disagree
* Disagree
* Neither agree nor disagree
* Agree
* Strongly agree
* Don’t know

**Question 17:** What, if anything, do you think ACE could do to better measure and communicate its impact? - [free text box]

**Survey questions - working relationships and partnerships FOR THOSE WITH EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH ACE IN REGIONS, AS LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS**

**Question 18:** Based on your experience or knowledge, please rate the following aspects of Arts Council England’s engagement with local stakeholders:

* 18.1. ACE’s efforts to actively engage with regional stakeholders and other relevant Public Bodies / organisations
* 18.2. ACE’s efforts to actively involve local organisations, and community groups in decision-making
* 18.3. ACE’s incorporation of local stakeholder input when setting funding priorities and program designs
* 18.4. ACE’s transparency in communicating how local stakeholder feedback influences its decisions
* 18.5. ACE’s efforts to engage with diverse communities including in deprived areas

All with the following options to choose from:

* Very poor
* Poor
* Average
* Good
* Excellent
* Don’t know

**Question 19:** Are there ways that ACE could improve engagement and responsiveness to local communities? - [free text box]

**Question 20:** ACE Relationship Managers are often the first and most important port of call for organisations in receipt of ACE funding. If relevant to you, how would you describe your experience working with your ACE Relationship Manager?- [free text box]

**Question 21:** Based on your experience or knowledge, please rate the following aspects of Arts Council England’s collaboration and knowledge sharing:

* 21.1. How effective is ACE at cooperating and sharing knowledge with the United Kingdom’s Arts Councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?
* 21.2. How effective is ACE in fostering international collaboration, and promoting British art and culture abroad?
* 21.4. How effective is ACE at working with other agencies and bodies in the creative sector to promote and enhance the UK’s creative capabilities?
* 21.5. How effective is ACE at working with and bringing different institutions and organisations together to support arts and creativity in places?

All with the following options to choose from:

* Very ineffective
* Ineffective
* Neither effective nor ineffective
* Effective
* Very effective
* Don’t know

**Survey questions - Arts Council England and government**

**Question 22:** How much involvement should the national government have in the work of ACE?

* Limited involvement
* Some involvement
* Moderate involvement
* A lot of involvement
* Maximum

**Question 23:** How much involvement should local governments have in the work of ACE?

* Limited involvement
* Some involvement
* Moderate involvement
* A lot of involvement
* Maximum

**Question 24:** How much influence should each level of government have in funding decisions?

* 24.1. Local government e.g. local councils
* 24.2. Regional government e.g. Mayoral / Combined Authorities
* 24.3. National government

All with the following options to choose from:

* No influence at all
* Nearly no influence
* Moderate influence
* Near total influence
* Total influence
* Don’t know.

**Question 25:** How effectively does the government hold ACE to account?

* Very ineffectively
* Quite ineffectively
* Neither effectively nor ineffectively
* Quite effectively
* Very effectively

**Survey questions - future development**

**Question 26:** What is the biggest challenge facing the arts and cultural sector in the next 10 years? - [free text box]

*Spaces – The spaces that are essential for the making and rehearsal of music in communities are under threat. Music groups use spaces within their communities that they hire, and that are also used for a wide variety of community activity. Church halls, school halls and community or village halls are used by 90% of our members. So they can offer their activity to the widest diversity of people the spaces they use need to be accessible e.g. have disabled access, be serviced well by public transport, be welcoming to people of all faiths, be considered a safe and welcoming place to everyone in the community. They also need to be affordable; not necessarily free but with a hire cost that is not profit-driven and ideally somewhat subsidised. Financial pressures have been mounting on all types of community spaces for ten years or more. The impact of Covid accentuated them, perhaps accelerating some to close down (e.g. social clubs, churches). Local authorities and councils have struggled financially, too, so closures or deterioration of spaces through neglect have also increased. Halls are also often managed by volunteers, many of whom, exhausted by Covid, have given up. Potential additional regulation such as that in the UK government’s* [*new Terrorism bill*](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/terrorism-protection-of-premises-bill-2024) *could be the final straw for many. Look at our campaign page for more detail:* [*Make Space For Music | Making Music*](https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/campaigns-and-advocacy/make-space-music)

*Performance venues - As well as spaces to make and rehearse music, music groups also need spaces to perform. These can be the same halls and churches they use for rehearsing but also includes the concert halls in their area, or in the wider region as aspirational venues for larger events; our members mount performances in venues as large as Glasshouse Gateshead or The Bridgewater Hall Manchester. Concert halls are facing similar challenges; the* [*2024 British Association of Concert Halls report*](https://www.4barsrest.com/news/61606/concert-halls-multiply-investment) *stated that “concert halls are currently grappling with rising performance, supplier, energy and workforce costs at the same time public investment is shrinking”. Rents are soaring, and buildings closing. The threat to music groups is concerning – renting space is their biggest cost after professional fees (for conductors, accompanists, soloists etc).*

*Inequity in participation/access – Despite actions to widen out the diversity of people accessing and taking part in funded arts activity, arts engagement remains unequal across society. All the work undertaken by ACE and the organisations they fund has made little impact on the demographics of who accesses culture. The cost of living increases in recent years only exacerbate the issue. This article on the DCMS participation survey points to the current data:* [*UK music participation: what the data tells us | Making Music*](https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/news/uk-music-participation-what-data-tells-us)

*Music education – The degrading of music education in schools has a knock-on effect to adult leisure-time music, and the issue has become concerning. The Labour government is working on its manifesto promise to improve access to music learning in schools; see the launch of a National Centre for Arts and Music Education* [Young people to benefit from creative education boost - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/young-people-to-benefit-from-creative-education-boost) *But access to out of school music opportunities for young people are also crucial to set them off on a journey of life-long music making as a hobby activity, not just as a pathway to a profession. Our campaign page on music education has more detail:* [*Music education | Making Music*](https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/campaigns-and-advocacy/music-education-everyone)

**Question 27:** What are the most important things Arts Council England should focus on? - [free text box]

*Spaces and Venues – Working with UK government and Local Authorities to understand the vital infrastructure required for equitable arts delivery across the country. Working to protect and maintain this where it exists, and develop it where there are gaps.*

*Inequity in participation/access - ACE should work with UK Government and Local Authorities to understand and address the various factors that impact participation. The Social Biobehavioural Research Group from University College London have created a framework that identifies the factors that affect arts engagement* [*A Framework of the DetermInants of Arts and Cultural Engagement (RADIANCE) - SBRG*](https://sbbresearch.org/projects/radiance-framework/)*. To optimise engagement, they suggest a consideration of all these interconnected factors which include individual-level barriers and the social and societal context that creates those barriers.*

*Youth music learning and participation – Supporting and funding extra-curricular youth music activity that leads young people into lifelong music participation, as a hobby activity as well as professional opportunities.*

*Access to small investments of income - Making Music member groups, and volunteer led groups of amateur musicians like them, are largely self sustaining, with their income coming from membership fees and subscriptions, and from ticket sales and other income generating activities. This is not the case for all community music, some of which is reliant on funding where participants are unable to fund their own participation. But whether self-sufficient or not, all music groups benefit from some small investments in their development, to make purchases and fund activity that are outside their normal activity. This could be the purchase of expensive instruments, the funding to commission new music, or to enable equal access (free or subsidised places, or tickets to concerts). As these funds are applied for by volunteers and not fundraising professionals, they need to be easy to apply for and straightforward to manage.*

**Question 28:** What changes would you like to see regarding ACE? [free text box]

*This is the place to make any other suggestions on changes that you have not been able to include anywhere else in the survey.*

**Survey questions - statutory functions**

**Question 29:** Does Arts Council England carry out its statutory function to operate and maintain Acceptance in Lieu effectively, and do you have any thoughts on how it could improve? - [free text box]

**Question 30:** Does ACE carry out its statutory function to administer the Cultural Gifts Scheme effectively, and do you have any thoughts on how it could improve? - [free text box]

**Question 31:** Does ACE carry out its statutory function to administer the Government Indemnity Scheme effectively, and do you have any thoughts on how it could improve? - [free text box]

**Question 32:** Does ACE manage the process of licensing for cultural goods (including those judged to be of outstanding national importance, and therefore subject to deferral) effectively, and do you have any thoughts on how it could improve? - [free text box]