

Becoming a Chair of our Midlands Area Council



May 2025



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Introduction

We are looking to appoint a new Chair to our Midlands Area Council. We are interested in hearing from candidates who are passionate about the arts, culture and creativity and understand the positive contribution that they can make to our lives, our communities and the economy.

The role of the Area Chair is rewarding and varied. As well as leading the Area Council and acting as an advocate for creativity and culture in the area, you will help to set the strategic direction of the organisation and make key investment and policy decisions. You will also be a member of the Arts Council's governing body – National Council - and a trustee of the charity.

This information pack is designed to answer some of your questions about the role and the appointment process. We look forward to receiving your application.

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for making these appointments in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public

Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will manage the appointment process with support from Arts Council England.

DCMS is committed to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity in its public appointments. We particularly encourage applicants from under-represented groups and applicants who have achieved success through non-traditional educational routes. This ensures that boards of public bodies benefit from a full range of diverse perspectives and are representative of the people they serve.

LEVEL Centre Open Day. Photo by David John King



About Arts Council England

We champion creativity and culture across the country, develop talent in every corner of the nation, and support artists, practitioners and cultural organisations to work in partnership and to be world-leading in their fields. Our Strategy for 2020-30, [Let's Create](#), is an invitation to those who share our beliefs to come together and create new opportunities for every person in England to become creative and enjoy brilliant culture.

We believe creativity and culture not only inspire us, but they bring us together and teach us about ourselves and the world around us, helping us feel proud of the place we live in. In short, they make life better.

We support combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre, and visual art. Through a range of funds, we provide both short- and long-term investment for individual artists and arts projects, arts organisations, museums, galleries, and libraries.

From 2023-26 we'll invest:

- £458.5 million per year in our National Portfolio – this includes National Portfolio Organisations, Investment Principles Support Organisations, Transfer Organisations and Creative People and Places organisations.
- £116.8 million of National Lottery funding per year in Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants, our open-access funding programme.
- £14.4 million of National Lottery funding per year in Developing Your Creative Practice, our programme to support individuals who are cultural and creative practitioners and want to take time to focus on their creative development.
- £50 million per year in our Arts Council Development Funds which will focus on a variety of areas such as: capital investment programme, cultural education, digital culture network, museum development, arts council collection management, UK City of Culture and activities listed within our Delivery Plan.

Dancefest with Kinetika silk flags at Worcester Carnival. Photo credit Clare Wood



The work of Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the development agency for creativity and culture in England. We champion, develop and invest in creative and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

We are an independent charity, registered with the Charity Commission, as well as an arm's-length non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. We were established as a distributor of National Lottery funds under The National Lottery Act 1993.

Our Strategy, Let's Create sets out to create a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of quality cultural experiences.

The strategy focuses around three Outcomes:

- **Creative People:** Everyone can develop and express their creativity throughout their life
- **Cultural Communities:** Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture

- **A Creative and Cultural Country:** England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international

Each outcome is important and will work together with four Investment Principles:

- **Ambition & Quality:** Cultural organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work
- **Dynamism:** Cultural organisations are dynamic and able to respond to the challenges of the next decade
- **Environmental Responsibility:** Cultural organisations lead the way in their approach to environmental responsibility
- **Inclusivity & Relevance:** England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support, and in the culture they produce.

Actors on stage for curtain call, RSC. Photo by David Tett © RSC



How we're governed

We are an independent charity, registered with the Charity Commission, as well as an arm's-length non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. We were established as a distributor of National Lottery funds under The National Lottery Act 1993.

Our [National Council](#) is our main governing body, or non-executive board. National Council members are also the trustees of the charity.

It consists of 15 members, including each of our five Area Council Chairs. The Council membership also has finance and management expertise from both the public and private sector, as well as creative and cultural practitioners and managers.

Jaivant Patel Company, *Waltzing the Blue Gods*.
Photo Jaivant Patel Company



The role of the Arts Council's National Council is to:

- determine and uphold Arts Council England's mission and objectives
- be accountable to the Secretary of State for fiduciary matters and delivering the charitable objectives
- agree high level priorities and strategies
- approve Arts Council England's Grant-in-Aid and National Lottery accounts
- monitor delivery of Arts Council England's strategy against stated priorities
- advocate for the arts and culture

Collectively the Council is expected to embody:

- artists, arts and culture practitioners and managers
- finance and management expertise, public and private sector experience
- the Chairs of the Area Councils

The Arts Council's Chair, Sir Nicholas Serota, is strongly committed to improving the diversity of the Council. Its ability to represent England's diverse national identity and include a range of voices is key to ensuring that the Arts Council's programmes meet the creative and cultural needs of everyone.

Each of [our five Arts Council Areas](#) also have their own Area Council.

Each Area Council consists of 15 members (including the Chair). They consist of five Local Authority members, who are elected local councillors, and 9 other members who offer a range of knowledge and practical experience. All are appointed through an open recruitment process organised in conjunction with the Area Chair.

The role of Area Councils is to:

- Help to ensure that we spend public money in accordance with our agreed strategy
- Make decisions and recommendations on the Area's National Portfolio of funded organisations
- Act as a forum for artists, organisations and stakeholders ensuring their views are heard as we develop programmes and priorities.

Working together our five area councils help to ensure that the Arts Council's work and decisions are informed by a diverse range of perspectives from artists, local authorities and other key stakeholders across the country.

Area Council members who are black, Asian or ethnically diverse are also invited to join our Race Advisory Committee, while members who have lived experience of disability, deafness and/or neuro-divergence can join the Disability Advisory Committee. Both these groups seek to advise National Council and Executive Board on the implementation of its Delivery Plan, the design of the National Portfolio process, and its equality objectives and equality Action Plans among other areas.

The Executive Board

National Council is supported by an executive leadership team, which is led by Darren Henley, the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. Darren Henley leads an Executive Board which includes two Deputy Chief Executives and four other Executive Directors. The Arts Council's Executive Board is responsible for developing the long-term strategy of the Arts Council and for the day-to-day running of the organisation. Further details about our Executive Board are available on the Arts Council website.

Laura Dyer is the Deputy Chief Executive for Places, Engagement and Libraries who leads on the growing agenda around local government, devolution and place-making, as well as overall leadership of all five of the Arts Council's area teams, including the Midlands Area.

A Midlands Area Director leads the dedicated team, based across two area offices in Birmingham and Nottingham.

Becoming an Area Council Chair

Arts organisations, museums and libraries contribute to people's wellbeing; they drive local economies and maintain our international reputation as a nation of innovators. As a Chair, you will play a significant role in shaping the future of our cultural life regionally and nationally.

You will also gain a unique perspective of the broad-ranging benefits of arts and culture and deepen your understanding of our sector's national contribution: the quality jobs we help create and the many direct and secondary economic benefits of our work. You will also see the personal impact we make: lives enriched through individual creativity.

As a country, we are looking to redefine our place on the world stage following the UK's exit from the European Union. Creativity and culture has always been one of our nation's strengths, and we will continue to act as a champion for all that our artists and performers do internationally.

We have embraced our role in promoting the importance of cultural education for our young people, and the social and economic benefits of encouraging lifelong participation for everyone. The Arts and cultural participation has a measurable impact on health and wellbeing. It allows us to express our unique experiences and perspectives, build interpersonal understanding and create cohesive, connected communities, making us proud of the places where we live. Despite the challenges we have faced, and continue to address, we are optimistic.

Within this role you have the chance to carry this optimism into a new era for the Arts Council, to build on the strong relations we have built with stakeholders, and to further develop the resilience of the sector and its approach to identifying new funding streams to help navigate the uncertain times that lie ahead with confidence and positivity.

String! by MishMash Productions performed by Gildas String Quartet at the 2021 Nottingham Chamber Music Festival. Photo by Ali J Photography



Role Specification

All applicants should be able to demonstrate the following essential criteria:

- **Knowledge:** a clear understanding of the work, priorities and challenges of Arts Council England and the context within which it operates.
- **Relationship building:** ability to build strong stakeholder relationships, with the creativity and culture sector and other stakeholders.
- **Communication:** strong communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to listen, accept challenge and constructively challenge others in discussions.
- **Judgement:** effective decision-making skills with the ability to critically analyse a wide range of information to make clear and objective evidence-based recommendations to support the delivery of Arts Council England's objectives.
- A demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion; and tackling inequalities to unlock the advantages of creativity and culture for everyone.
- The ability to effectively Chair meetings and lead the Midlands Area Council.
- Specific knowledge and understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the creativity and culture sector in the Midlands.

- Candidates for the Midlands Area Chair must live or work primarily in the Midlands.

Desirable Criteria:

We would particularly welcome applications from people with expertise or experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Artists and/or Creative Practitioners
- Arts and Technology
- Business/Commercial
- Change Management
- Children and Young People
- Creative Education
- Creativity and Criminal Justice
- Creativity, Health and Wellbeing
- Dance
- Developing community-led cultural activity
- Environmental Responsibility and Innovation
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- FE/HE Education
- Finance and Investment
- International Cultural Exports
- Libraries
- Museums
- Philanthropy

Made With Many -Wellingborough Stories – Poetry and Print workshop. Photo © Michal Spišák



How to apply

Applications are made online via the job advert at

<https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles>

In order to apply you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#).

Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions. To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues
- a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- a supporting statement
- a short professional biography (150 words)

We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

If you have any questions about the appointments process, please contact publicappointments@dcms.gov.uk or Fiona.darcy@dcms.gov.uk

If you would like to speak about the role itself, please contact David.Bryant@artscouncil.org.uk

An information session will also be held on 9th June between 10:30am – 11:15am for anyone interested in the role. [You can sign up here](#).

Geese theatre, Photo by Cuthbert Design,
Ian Cuthbert



Overview of the Application Process

Public appointments are made on merit following a fair and open competition process which is conducted in accordance with the Governance Code for Public Appointments. We will deal with your application as quickly as possible and will keep you informed at key stages.

The assessment process

1. Ministers are responsible and accountable to Parliament for the public appointments made within their department. As a result, they must be consulted at every stage of the appointments process.
2. An Advisory Assessment Panel ("Panel") is appointed by Ministers to assist them in their decision making. The role of the Panel is to decide, objectively, which candidates meet the eligibility criteria for the role.
3. At the shortlisting meeting the Panel will assess applications against the eligibility criteria and decide which candidates have best met the criteria, who should be recommended for interview. Ministers will then be consulted on the Panel's recommended shortlist. If you have applied under the Disability Confident Scheme and you meet all the essential criteria, then you will also be invited for an interview.
4. Once the shortlist has been agreed by Ministers, you will be advised (by e-mail) whether you have been shortlisted. Those shortlisted will be invited to an interview.
5. The Panel will meet again to interview candidates and determine who is appointable to the role. The Panel may invite you to make a brief presentation at the start of the interview and will go on to question you about your skills and experience, including asking specific questions to assess whether you meet the criteria set out for the post. The Panel will also explore with you any potential conflicts of interest or any other issues arising from your personal and professional history which may impact on an appointment decision.

6. Details of the panel's assessment of interviewed candidates are provided to Ministers, including whether they have judged a candidate to be appointable to the role. It is then for Ministers to determine merit and decide who should be appointed. In some circumstances, Ministers may choose not to appoint any candidates and re-run the competition.
7. Ministers may choose to meet with candidates before deciding the outcome. Candidates should therefore be prepared for a short time gap between interview and a final appointment decision being made. Candidates who have been interviewed will be kept informed of progress.
8. Once the decision on the appointment has been made, interviewed candidates will be advised of the outcome of their application, including whom they may approach for feedback. Successful candidates will be issued with their Terms & Conditions and a letter of appointment should they agree to take up the position.

Further information about appointments, including tips on applying, can be found on the Public Appointments [guidance pages](#) on gov.uk.

Diversity and inclusion

We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Boards of public bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve.

We collect data about applicants' characteristics and backgrounds, including information about people's educational and professional backgrounds, so that we can make sure we are attracting a broad range of people to these roles and that our selection processes are fair for everyone. Without this information, it makes it difficult to see if our outreach is working, if the application process is having an unfair impact on certain groups and whether changes are making a positive difference.

When you submit your application, your responses are collected by the Cabinet Office and the government department(s) managing your application. The data is used to produce management information about the diversity of applicants. You can select "prefer not to say" to any question you do not wish to answer. **The information you provide will not be seen by the Advisory Assessment Panel who review applications against the advertised criteria and conduct interviews.**

Disability confident

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme. We use the Disability Confident scheme symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability. The scheme helps recruit and retain disabled people. As part of implementing the scheme, we guarantee an interview for anyone with a disability whose application meets the essential criteria for the role, set out in the advert, and who has asked that their application is considered under the scheme.

We Are Epic – ID Dance Company. Photo by Dani Bower

Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will in no way prejudice your application. By 'essential criteria', we mean that you must provide evidence which demonstrates that you meet the level of competence required under each of the essential criteria, as set out in the job-advert. When you apply you will have the opportunity to select if you would like your application considered under this scheme.

Reasonable adjustments

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to make sure applicants with disabilities, physical or mental health conditions, or other needs are not substantially disadvantaged when applying for public appointments. This can include changing the recruitment process to enable people who wish to apply to do so.

Some examples of common changes are:

- ensuring that application forms are available in different or accessible formats;
- making adaptations to interview locations;



- allowing candidates to present their skills and experience in a different way;
- giving additional detailed information on the selection / interview process in advance to allow candidates time to prepare themselves;
- allowing support workers, for example sign language interpreters;
- making provision for support animals to attend.

When you apply you will have the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments to the application process.

About DCMS

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport supports culture, arts, media, sport, tourism and civil society across every part of England — recognising the UK’s world-leading position in these areas and the importance of these sectors in contributing so much to our economy, way of life and our reputation around the world.

The department champions sport for all at every level, supports our world-leading cultural and creative industries, and enhances the cohesiveness of our communities.

DCMS is a ministerial department, supported by [42 agencies and public bodies](#).

If you are not completely satisfied

We aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and to treat all applicants with courtesy.

Please contact the DCMS public appointments team in the first instance if you would like to make a complaint regarding your application at publicappointments@dcms.gov.uk. They will acknowledge your complaint upon receipt and respond within 15 working days.

Eligibility criteria

In general, you should have the right to work in the UK to be eligible to apply for a public appointment.

The Government expects all holders of public office to work to the highest personal and professional standards.

You cannot be considered for a public appointment if:

- you are disqualified from acting as a company director (under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986);
- have an unspent conviction on your criminal record;
- your estate has been sequestered in Scotland or you enter into a debt arrangement programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors.

When you apply, you should declare if:

- you are, or have been, bankrupt or you have made an arrangement with a creditor at any point, including the dates of this.
- you are subject to a current police investigation.

You must inform the sponsor department if, during the application process, your circumstances change in respect of any of the above points.

When you apply you should also declare any relevant interests, highlighting any that you think may call into question your ability to properly discharge the responsibilities of the role you are applying for. You should also declare any other matters which may mean you may not be able to meet the requirements of the [Code of Conduct of Board Members](#) (see Outside interests and reputational issues section below)

Code of conduct for Board Members

The Government expects all holders of public office to work to the highest personal and professional standards. In support of this, all non-executive board members of UK public bodies must abide by the principles set out in the [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#). The Code sets out the standards expected from those who serve on the boards of UK public bodies and will form part of your terms and conditions of appointment.

Management of outside interests

Holders of public office are expected to adhere and uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life and the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. Before you apply you should consider carefully:

- any outside interests that you may have, such as shares you may hold in a company providing services to government;
- any possible reputational issues arising from your past actions or public statements that you have made;
- and/or – any political roles you hold or political campaigns you have supported; which may call into question your ability to do the role you are applying for.

You will need to answer relevant questions in relation to these points when making an application. Many conflicts of interest can be satisfactorily resolved and declaring a potential conflict does not prevent you from being interviewed. If you are shortlisted for an interview, the panel will discuss any potential conflicts with you during that interview, including any proposals you may have to mitigate them and record that in their advice to ministers. Alongside your own declaration, we will conduct appropriate checks, as part of which we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This may include

searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. The successful candidate(s) may be required to give up any conflicting interests and their other business and financial interests may be published in line with organisational policies.

Details of declared political activity will be published when the appointment is announced, as required by the Governance Code (political activity is not a bar to appointment, but must be declared).

Status of appointment

As this is an office holder appointment, you will not become a member of the Civil Service. You will not be subject to the provisions of employment law.

Appointment and tenure of office

Appointments are for the term set out in this advert, with the possibility of re-appointment for a further term, at the discretion of Ministers. Any re-appointment is subject to satisfactory annual appraisals of performance during the first term in the post. There is no automatic presumption of reappointment; each case should be considered on its own merits, taking into account a number of factors including, but not restricted to, the diversity of the current board and its balance of skills and experience. In most cases, the total time served in post will not exceed more than two terms or ten years in any one post.

Expenses

Expenses incurred by candidates during the recruitment process will not be reimbursed, except in exceptional circumstances, and only when agreed in advance.

About the Midlands

The Midlands is proud of its distinctive cultural identity and rich heritage of art and creativity. Across the East and West Midlands, the area of 11,000 square miles is home to a population of 10.9 million people, many of whom live in major cities such as Birmingham, Leicester and Nottingham. Birmingham is the second largest city in the UK, whereas parts of Herefordshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire are among the most rural in the country.

Drawing on many years of history, world class collections and architecture, artists of global influence and reputation (both contemporary and historical) as well as some of England's most exciting and ambitious arts organisations, popular culture has been a central part of life in the Midlands for decades.

With a history of creativity and industry, it is no surprise that the area contains some of England's most exciting, innovative and ambitious artists and cultural organisations. Working at all levels, they engage and inspire audiences, deliver creative experiences which make a difference to people's lives and to their communities, and collaborate with peers nationally and internationally to refresh and grow the Midlands' cultural ecology.

It's been a significant decade for creativity in the Midlands, with Coventry being UK City of Culture in 2021, followed by cultural festivals running alongside the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022 and more recently the Kabaddi World Cup in Wolverhampton, hosted for the first time outside Asia.

Sampad, Asian Spring. Photo by Paul Stringer



The Midlands has multiple award-winning theatres including Curve in Leicester, Nottingham Playhouse and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Together with exciting Collections housed across our many and varied museums. Nottingham boasts UNESCO City of Literature status and Stoke-on-Trent is a designated World Craft City.

Looking ahead, Birmingham aspires to be the National Centre for Musical Theatre at the Hippodrome, which is home to Birmingham Dance Hub, including internationally acclaimed Birmingham Royal Ballet. This year, Stoke-on-Trent is celebrating its centenary and looking further ahead Coventry City Centre Cultural Gateway will become home to a new management organisation, which will care for the Arts Council Collection.

We want the Midlands to be a place where it is possible to live, train and sustain a creative career.

The presence of major cities provides critical mass and momentum which attracts and retains creatives and supports innovation as well as enabling the Midlands to sustain large cultural organisations, conservatoires and events of international standing. Our renowned rural landscapes and post-industrial heritage continue to support a distinctive strength in arts and culture outside of traditional spaces, whether in the form of outdoor arts or the re-use of industrial buildings.

The Midlands continues to put culture and creativity at the heart of place-making, vibrant communities and the future growth of our economy. We currently invest more than £102 million a year of National Lottery and Grant in Aid funding in organisations and individuals across the area.

The Arts Council has nurtured dynamic partnerships with local authorities and councils across the East and West Midlands, who we work with collaboratively to promote cultural growth. We have a range of committed partners in local government, through elected Mayors, in Higher Education, health and the third sector who see culture as a vital part of what they do to improve people's lives.

Major investment through Levelling Up programmes will bring about transformation in cultural organisations in places such as Coventry and North Northamptonshire, with additional investment in Priority Places including Lincolnshire, Mansfield and Stoke-on-Trent.

The recognition of the role of culture and creativity in the Midlands' future is stronger than ever and the Arts Council's 10-year strategy, Let's Create, is providing a firm platform to forge more partnerships to further expand the cultural ecology.



Bolsover Lantern Parade. Photo by Phil Newman, Bolsover Camera Club