

Arts Council of Wales

Creative Steps
Development Programme
(Stage 1)

October 2011





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Arts Council of Wales operates an equal opportunities policy.

Creative Steps Development Programme (Stage 1)

What are we trying to do?

We have a vision of Wales as a country in which people from all walks of life can enjoy the arts as audiences, participants and artists. This includes a broad range of artists having opportunities to create a variety of work that is relevant to all kinds of people and communities. We are aware from the equalities evidence that we gather that we are not currently reaching as wide a range of people as we could be.

Creative Steps is one part of our plan to make sure that the best artists in Wales have a fair opportunity to create, develop and share their work. Our *Strategic Equality Plan* (to be published in March 2012) will detail what else we have done, are doing and will do.

Creative Steps is about tackling inequality. But it is also about valuing and celebrating the richness of all the cultures and people of contemporary Wales. Through *Creative Steps* we are trying to:

- Get a wider range of high quality artistic work created and presented in Wales, by a wider range of people.
- Make sure more people can experience and enjoy the range and quality of work that is being created.

We will do this by . . .

- Supporting artists and arts organisations from a range of backgrounds to develop their work further.
- Supporting artists and organisations to make links with venues and other people who can help get their work shown in public spaces.

We know that there are artists working in Wales who have the potential to bring a new dimension to the work we support. *Creative Steps* recognises that some of these artists have faced barriers to developing their work and/or sharing it with others. We want these artists to use the *Creative Steps Development Programme* to break down those barriers.

Is this programme for you?

Creative Steps is open to all artists, organisations or groups based in Wales. But the programme is all about expanding the range of artists and organisations that our funding reaches. So we are looking for artists and organisations that are already producing interesting work but have not regularly received money from us before.

We specifically want to support artists and organisations that have come across barriers to receiving funding. For example, your work may be influenced by a culture that is less familiar to us. Or your ways of working may not have fitted well with our usual funding processes. If the quality of your work is high and it can add something different to the range of work we support, we want to get to know you. We want to discover new ways of working together.

We particularly want to work with you if you have faced or are currently experiencing barriers which are connected to the 'protected characteristics' covered under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). We understand some people face barriers relating to more than one of these characteristics.

We will discuss with you whether *Creative Steps* is for you. We will also consider whether funding you will help us to reach a broader range of artists and organisations than we currently reach. We will look at:

- **What our funding data tells us.** Currently it tells us that Deaf and Disabled artists and artists from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds should be a priority. Further details can be found in our [Annual Equalities Report 2010/11](#).
- **What our Arts in Wales Survey 2010 tells us.** This tells us that developing work for and by Deaf and Disabled people, members of the DE socio-economic group, people with no academic qualifications and people aged 65 and over should be a priority. Further details can be found in the Arts in Wales Survey 2010 on our website <http://www.artswales.org/what-we-do/research/current-research/artsinwales-2010>
- **What other research tells us.** We keep up to date with and consider evidence gathered by others. For example, recent research carried out by the Equality and Human Right Commission in Wales indicates that people with mental health conditions, Gypsy Travellers, transgender people and Asylum Seekers and Refugees encountered more negative attitudes, prejudice and isolation than others living in Wales.
http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Wales/not_just_another_statistic_email.pdf
- **What we find out about the experiences and perceptions of people with 'protected characteristics' for which we have not yet started to collect data.** For example, we have not collected data on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people or on religion and belief. But we have begun talking to people. These conversations have told us that we need to think about how the experiences of LGBT people are reflected in artistic work created and presented in Wales.

The examples given are not fixed. They will change as we find out more about who our funding is, and is not, reaching.

What could *Creative Steps* offer you or your organisation?

The *Creative Steps Development Programme* will be set up in two stages. *Creative Steps 1* will open in October 2011 and will give you the opportunity to talk to us about your creative idea and how you want to develop it. If you're accepted onto the programme, *Creative Steps 1* could provide money, advice and guidance to help you to:

- Develop your creative idea
- Develop the business side of your work
- Link in to new networks and/or develop partnerships
- Find suitable platforms through which to present your work

Exactly how you do this will depend on what you need to do to build a solid foundation for your creative idea. *Creative Steps* is a flexible programme. We can discuss what you need to do to develop your ideas, including sharing advice and linking you in with other people who may be able to help. We will make publish how *Creative Steps 2* will work in our Lottery Guidelines in February 2012. *Creative Steps 2* will be about bringing the best ideas developed in *Creative Steps 1* to life and, where appropriate, presenting the work created to the public. For the moment we are focussing on *Creative Steps 1* and this is how it will work:

Creative Steps 1

Step 1 – you contact us and tell us about yourself, or your organisation or group, and your creative idea

We will discuss your idea with you and what you need to do to test it out and develop the skills or organisation structure you need to take it forward. This could include:

- Testing out your idea or creating 'work in progress'. This could help you decide whether it is something that you would like to develop further, and how.
- Having meetings with a person/s who can guide you to develop your approach and skills in a particular area of your work, e.g. marketing or project planning (mentoring)
- Going to see other artists or organisations that we agree you could learn from. This could include setting up discussions with people about how they have developed their careers or organisations. You may already know who you'd like to connect with but

haven't had the time or money to do it. *Creative Steps* can help make this happen.
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- Attending training that will support your development.
- Taking up 'work-shadowing' opportunities.

We will tell you if we don't think *Creative Steps* is for you and, if appropriate, guide you towards other sources of advice or funding.

Step 2- we help you develop your *Creative Steps 1* proposal.

We will work with you to develop your proposal. This will describe what you want to do. We will talk to you about the artistic and business ideas that you would like to develop. If you need any support to write your proposal, we will help you with this. We will also help you work out how much your proposal will cost and tell you how much money you can ask for from *Creative Steps*. We can support the full cost of *Creative Steps 1* so you don't need to look for other funding at this stage. But you would need other funding to deliver your proposal in *Creative Steps 2*. With this in mind, we may suggest that you think about fundraising for *Creative Steps 2* as part of your *Creative Steps 1* proposal.

Step 3 – you give us your proposal

We will ask you to tell us in writing what you want to do. Don't worry – this is not an application process so we won't ask you to fill in a long form. We just need you to tell us some basic details about yourself or your organisation or group, what you want to do and how much you think it will cost. We will have worked with you to pull this together (see Step 2). We might also ask you to give us other supporting materials (for example, pictures of your work, links to a website, a dvd of you telling us about your work etc.). There are no application deadlines to worry about so we can work with you and let you know when we think your final proposal is ready for consideration.

Step 4 – We consider your proposal and let you know whether you've been accepted onto the programme.

By this point we will have already discussed your proposal with you and you will know that it is something we are interested in. But there is a limited amount of money available (£120,000 in total for this year – Oct 2011- March 2012). Because of this, we may not be able to give you all or any of the money you need. To help us make our decisions we will consider the following:

- Whether you are an artist or organisation that we think may have been more likely to have faced barriers to developing your work in the past (see page 2)

- Whether funding you will help us to reach a broader range of artists and organisations (see page 2-3)
- The quality of your artistic work to date
- The degree to which we think you being part of the programme will help you develop your work in the longer term

We will also consider how strong your artistic proposal is. It will need to add a new dimension to the range of work that we fund already. We will have to be excited by your idea and confident that you will be able to make it happen. We will also consider:

- Whether your proposal challenges our thinking about 'diversity' and/or has the potential to challenge stereotypically held ideas about people or communities.
- How your idea could help share interesting approaches to increasing equality of access to the arts.
- The potential for your proposal to help build relationships or partnerships with other artists or arts organisations. We'll look at whether your proposal clearly shows how working together will make your artistic project stronger and benefit all involved.

Don't worry if you don't think your proposal can achieve all this – you might just want to focus on one of the points listed above. That's fine. We will talk to you about this in Step 2. You will have been able to ask questions and know what we're looking for before you give us your proposal.

We will tell you whether you've been accepted onto the programme within a month of you giving us your final *Creative Steps 1* proposal. The decision will be made by a group of Arts Council Officers. If you are not accepted onto the programme we will tell you why.

Step 5 – You carry out your development programme and tell us about it

When we agree that you can join the *Creative Steps Development Programme* we will discuss with you how you will carry it out and how you will let us know how it's going. This will be different for different people, depending on what you are doing and for how long. But we will agree how we will keep in touch regularly. You may find that things go well. You may come across some difficulties or change your mind about exactly what you want to do. *Creative Steps* is flexible and we can discuss any changes you want to make with you – just keep in touch!

At the end of the *Creative Steps 1* we will ask you to tell us how it went and whether you want to continue to develop the idea and bring it to life. You might decide that you've achieved what you set out to do or that you don't want to take it any further – that's OK. If you want to develop the idea further we will talk to you about what you need to do next.

It might be possible to develop your proposal through *Creative Steps 2* or we may suggest an alternative funding route. We don't expect to be able to support everyone to proceed to *Creative Steps 2* so we reconsider how your proposal fits with the points detailed in Step 4 above in comparison with others. *Creative Steps 2* will be funded through Lottery and information about this will be published in our Lottery Guidelines in February 2012.

For more information and to talk to us about this programme please contact:

Jennifer Stoves
Project Officer
Planning and Development Team
Arts Council of Wales
Bute Place
Cardiff
CF10 5AL
Tel: 029 20441341
E-mail: Jennifer.stoves@artswales.org.uk

Some examples of the types of proposals we could support

We thought it might help to give you some examples of the types of project we think will be suitable for this particular programme. We hope you'll be able to think of many others! We will consider any proposals that can demonstrate how they will help achieve the scheme's aims and which fit with the scheme criteria.

Example 1: You are an artist of Caribbean descent who has accessed funding for training or small projects in the past. Lots of people have commented on the high quality of your work yet you've had difficulty accessing opportunities to present your work. It's no problem to find platforms during Black History Month or at 'culturally diverse' events but, outside of this, it's hard to raise the profile of what you do. You feel pigeon holed and want your work to reach and be appreciated by a wider audience. You need presenting venues to understand that your work could have resonance beyond the communities they perceive are your core audience. Development support could help you engage with these potential partners and sustain your practice.

Example 2: You are an arts organisation that has a good track record of delivering projects. Your work addresses issues relating to identity and it is widely acknowledged that it reflects the experiences of people whose stories are often hidden or misunderstood. You recognise that you cannot continue to survive on 'project funding' but you do not have access to the kind of funding that would enable you to employ specialist staff on an ongoing basis to help take the organisation forward. Development support could help you put in place a business plan and test its viability over a period of time, drawing on specialist business or artistic expertise (or both).

Example 3: You are an arts organisation or individual artist who is concerned that there is not enough artistic product available in Wales that is specifically relevant to Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual people. You want to work with others (e.g. LGB artists, venues or other arts organisations) to help address this issue. You need to explore the possibilities first before deciding how you'd like to do something to help change this.

Example 4: You are a Deaf or Disabled artist who has established a track record. You tend to work in isolation, perhaps because of barriers you face as a Deaf or Disabled person or maybe just because of the nature of your practice. You'd like to engage with other artists to help you consider how you take your practice forward but there seem to be limited opportunities to do this. You'd like to bring a group of artists together (perhaps other Deaf or Disabled artists or artists working in your art form) to explore and experiment, maybe with a view to collaboration or maybe with a view to re-invigorating your own individual practice. You would like there to be potential to take any ideas coming out of this exploratory stage forward.