

Equality Impact Assessment Immersive Arts phase two

Programme Information

Question	Response
Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Immersive Arts phase two
Council/department/project team	AHRC Creative Industries team
Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The second Immersive Arts funding opportunity proposes to recommission the successful consortium from the first phase to oversee a programme of activity supporting the adoption and implementation of creative immersive technologies across the UK's arts and culture sector. This phase introduces an increased focus on creative industries sector growth. As before, the consortium will be required to consider equality and accessibility measures as a core part of its activities.
What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders) Provide a brief summary of the consultation, methods and outcomes. Detailed Outcomes for each group can be detailed in under the protected characteristic table.	As this is a recommission, the outcomes of evaluation interviews with participants from the first phase of the programme are particularly relevant. Participants praised the programme's commitment to accessibility throughout the application process for devolved funding awards. Applications from minoritised groups including women, disabled people and the global majority were awarded at rates above average UK demographics.
Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	This funding activity will affect both potential applicants for the devolved funding to be distributed by the award holders, the Immersive Arts team and potential applicants from higher education Institutions, and cultural organisations who may have sought to apply to lead the programme had it not been a recommission.

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?

As in round one, the programme will be monitored through AHRC's standard MAS reporting processes (including quarterly reporting to funders via the programme board), as well as through an independent evaluation carried out by evaluators with relevant experience in this type of investment. The evaluation team will be specifically required to consider accessibility and inclusion outcomes as part of their contracted work.

Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
1. Disability	Expected to be positive	Based on early evaluations of the first phase of the Immersive Arts programme, we expect accessibility to remain central to the application process for devolved funding, with the assessment process continuing to lead the way for accessible applications. Although this call is open only to the original award holders, we believe their experience in this area and the expertise provided by disability-focussed project partners to outweigh the potential risks to transparency and fairness associated with not conducting a full open funding opportunity.	N/A
2. Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	Minimal impact expected	Gender reassignment status is unlikely to be identifiable in written applications for either the devolved funding or for the main award but may become apparent during interviews. Devolved funding applicants with a trans identity are likely to benefit from the Immersive Arts team's proven track record in positive and inclusive practice.	Specific guidance on equality expectations and practical advice to reduce implicit bias will be included in the panel guidance.
3. Marriage or civil partnership	Expected to be neutral	Marital status will not be identifiable unless explicitly stated by the applicant in their application.	
4. Pregnancy and maternity	Potential Negative	Members of the Immersive arts team with planned parental leave or caring responsibilities may be negatively impacted by the short application	Monitoring by AHRC Creative Industries team to manage any negative impact caused by short application timeframe.

		timeframe which is unavoidable in order to achieve a continuity of funding for the main award. However, applicants to the devolved funding, will benefit from accessible application processes and the flexibility built into the awards, including adaptable timelines.	
5. Race	Expected to be neutral	Global majority applicants to devolved funding and training opportunities may benefit from Immersive Arts programme's proven track record for inclusion and accessibility. However, global majority researchers at institutions that were not successful in phase one, may be negatively affected by the decision to run this as a recommission rather than an open funding opportunity, as they will not have the opportunity to apply.	Specific guidance on EDI expectations will be included in the call text.
6. Religion or belief	Expected to be neutral	Religion or belief information is unlikely to be identifiable in the application process.	
7. Sexual orientation	Expected to be neutral or positive	This information is unlikely to be identifiable during the application.	
8. Sex (gender)	Expected to be positive, small possibility of negative impact	Gender information will be known within the application process. Women who apply for devolved funding are likely to benefit from Immersive Arts' proven track record for inclusion and accessibility	Specific guidance on equality expectations and practical advice to reduce implicit bias will be included within the panel guidance. Gender information will be available following the funding opportunity to determine the funding opportunities impact.
9. Age	Expected to be neutral	This information is unlikely to be identifiable apparent during application.	

Additional diversity characteristics

Additional diversity characteristics	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Geographical location (consider UK and international offices)	Neutral	Should the current award holders be successful in the recommission, they will again form a consortium comprising organisations from across all four UK nations. However, the absence of an open funding opportunity means that institutions outside of England would not have the opportunity to lead the programme. Applicants to devolved funding will continue to benefit from Immersive Arts programme's commitment to funding awards across all four UK nations.	Devolved funding rounds have robust assessment processes to ensure diversity, including portfolio balancing.
Socio-economic status	Expected to be neutral	This information is unlikely to be identifiable during application.	AHRC is aligned with the EDI approaches of all four UK arts councils and will continue to learn from their practice. The funding opportunity's objective (to champion EDI and create a brand which is recognisable and engaging across the creative sector) aims to reach applicants from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.
Education background	Expected to be neutral	The Immersive Arts team will again be required to meet the EDI objective of the funding opportunity, by delivering an open competition to the creative sector. In phase one, the programme offered several different application routes which may particularly benefit individuals from non-traditional educational backgrounds.	

Parent/guardian responsibilities	Potential Negative	Members of the Immersive Arts Team with parent/guardian responsibilities may be negatively impacted by the short timeframe for applications. However, applicants to the devolved funding, will benefit from accessible application processes and from the flexibility afforded by awards including adaptable timelines.	Monitoring by AHRC Creative Industries team to manage any negative impact caused by short application timeframe.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	Potential Negative	Members of the Immersive Arts Team with caring responsibilities may be negatively impacted by the short timeframe for applications and the scheduling of webinars, and similarly for the devolved funding rounds. However, applicants to the devolved funding will benefit from accessible application processes and from the flexibility offered by awards including adaptable timelines.	Monitoring by AHRC Creative Industries team to manage any negative impact caused by short application timeframe.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland)	Expected to be neutral	This information is unlikely to be identifiable during the application process	AHRC is aligned the EDI approaches of all four UK arts funding bodies and will continue to learn from their practice. The funding opportunity's objective (champion EDI and create a brand which is recognisable and engaging across the creative sector) aims to reach applicants in an inclusive manner.

Evaluation

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	It is unlikely that the proposed call will create substantial disadvantage, beyond the limitation introduced by it being an invite only funding opportunity. A key consideration during the funding opportunities development has been the inclusion of equalities-focused objectives as well as the award holder's proven track record as leaders in the EDI space. They have delivered two rounds of highly accessible and inclusive devolved funding awards, as well as open and accessible events and training sessions.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required. (See Annex 1 for template action plan)
1. No barriers identified; therefore, activity will proceed.		
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		

<p>4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.</p>	<p>X</p>	
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<p>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events. Consider whether data might need to be redacted before publication)</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Person completing EIA</p>	<p>Joanna Billingham/Joseph Lewis (AHRC)</p>
<p>Responsible owner (e.g. project board, committee):</p>	<p>Immersive Arts Programme Board/Cathy Kerfoot, Programme Director for the Creative Industries IS-8 Priority Programme (previous AHRC SRO for Immersive Arts Phase one was Allan Sudlow)</p>
<p>Date signed off by owner:</p>	<p>17 April, 2026</p>
<p>Review date (if applicable): (An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity)</p>	<p>01.05.2027</p>

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Joe Lewis	23.04.2026	1.0	Created