



2024/25 Annual Investment Survey (AIS)

Guidance Notes

Summary of completion requirements

Grant Programme	Requirements
Annual Funding Programme recipients	All sections (where relevant to organisations activity and function)
National Lottery Project Funding recipients	Workforce Volunteering and Apprenticeships Finance Activity and Audiences (8.1 only)

Deadline: Wednesday 30th April, 2025

Introduction

We want the data reported in this survey to be as valuable as possible so please complete it as honestly and accurately as you can.

The survey is not an advocacy tool, we use the data to demonstrate the impact our investment has on the work of your organisation and the audiences / participants that benefit from it.

We want you to be able to benchmark your own organisations outputs with others in the sector and use the data for self-evaluation. To help you do this, we publish headline tables that can be accessed via the Arts Council's website.

When completing the survey please remember:

- Access to the survey will be via a private e-mail link sent automatically to your organisations key contact from Qualtrics, the on-line platform ACNI is using to gather this year's survey findings.
- The survey will save your progress (i.e. if you wish to exit the survey and return your answers your progress will have been saved up until the point you exited the survey).
- You can share your dedicated link with other members in your organisation.
- Ensure you remove the '0' before entering data, where applicable.
- Do not enter data in the 'total' columns. The sum of row and columns will be entered automatically.
- Make sure your total for each table in the Workforce section sums the total staff compliment you are reporting on i.e. either permanent or contract staff.
- At the end of the survey, you will be asked to upload your Activity Location Log, so please complete this off-line before completing the survey.

The survey should be completed no later than Wednesday 30th April 2025. All resources associated with the survey can be found [here](#)

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact strategy@artscouncil-ni.org

Organisational Profile and Workforce

The Workforce section is split into 5 sub-sections, the questions are largely similar with last year’s survey, with the exception that classifications for gender, ethnicity and religion have been updated.

To ensure we reflect, as close we can, the gender composition of the Northern Ireland arts sector, we now ask specific questions about the gender identity of those employed.

Contract Type	Definition
Permanent Staff	Staff employed on permanent contracts as at 31 st March 2025. Permanent staff who have left the organisation before this date should not be counted regardless of their length of service. Please count staff on fixed term contracts of 52 weeks or more as permanent.
Contractual, Freelance, and Commissioned Staff	Provide details of all Contractual, Freelance, and Commissioned Staff who have worked for your organisation at any point between 1 st April 2024 and 31 st March 2025 inclusive. This includes temporary staff hired for a specific programme on a short-term contract, e.g. consultants and those self-employed. If an individual was hired more than once in the reporting year, please only count them once. Do not include staff hired through a third-party company, only include individuals which your organisation directly contracted.
Voluntary	Refers to those who receive no wages or salary, or who receive no more than basic expenses, for example travel costs. Please include details of all individuals who have volunteered for your organisation at any point between 1 st April 2024 and 31 st March 2025.
Paid Internships	Please do not include Paid Internships in any of the above categories – this information will be collected separately in question A22.

Staff Type Definitions

Each member of staff should only be represented once. Once you have assigned an employee to a category, please ensure that you assign them consistently throughout the rest of the questions. Where indicated, totals should be the same in all tables.

Specialist staff	Refers to those working within an area of artistic specialism. This includes directors, choreographers, producers, programmers and curators. This category also includes educational, marketing and audience development staff.
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Managers	Refers to executive or senior management staff, for example chief executive, executive director, finance director, chief accountant, general manager, human resources manager and legal advisor.
Artists	Refers to artists, dancers, actors, singers, musicians, writers, composers and designers, as well as any other producing artists.
Other Staff	Refers to both administrative and technical staff, for example finance, reception, box office or ticketing staff, and lighting or sound technicians.
Board/governing body	Refers to elected or appointed members who oversee your organisation's activities.

Agency & Third-Party Staff

We will ask you about the members of staff that your organisation employs. Please note – if you work with individuals sub-contracted through a third party, such as a recruitment agency, their details should not be included.

Staff with Multiple Positions

It is possible that over the past year a member of staff has held multiple positions, spanning more than one Staff or Contract Type. In such cases, please only count that staff member once, using their position as at 31st March. If they hold multiple posts at this date, assign them to the role which commands greatest use of their time or skills.

Not Known or Prefer Not to Say?

We appreciate that on occasions, it is not possible to collect some staff information. In these cases, you should record those staff as “Not Known”. “Prefer Not to Say” should be available to all respondents to indicate where they do not wish to identify as any of the available categories. Only when a response has not been recorded, or the question hasn't been asked, should that person be counted against “Not Known”.

Full & Part Time Staff

In some parts of the workforce section, we will ask for figures to be separated into full time & part time. We consider full time staff to be those contracted to work 35 hours per week or above. Those working fewer hours than this per week should be considered part time.

Diversity Data

We are committed to having an accurate picture of the diversity of our funded client base. Therefore, there are questions about ethnicity, disability, age, gender, and sexual orientation in this survey. We use this data to compile our annual return to the Equality Commission.

The information must be obtained through official monitoring exercises and held confidentially. It should not be based on assumptions or informal knowledge. We will never release information that could potentially identify individuals by any characteristic. We expect our organisations to safeguard the confidentiality of all staff regarding any personal information. We ask for this information

because we want to better capture and understand the diversity, both visible and invisible, of the workforce in the sector.

We will treat this information in confidence and release data in an aggregated format or, as part of our commitment to open data and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), anonymised - where individuals could be identifiable. Usually, where workforce is concerned, we will anonymise where less than five individuals are counted in a category.

Gender Diversity

We collect data on gender identity. This includes:

- Non-binary, for those whose gender identity does not conform to conventional notions of male and female.
- Gender-fluid, for those whose gender identity is not fixed
- Agender, for those who don't identify as any gender in particular

In the case of Permanent, Contractual, and Volunteer Staff – you will be asked to enter the number of Full Time and Part time staff separately. Gender identity of the Board or Governing Body should simply be entered in total.

Each Gender Diversity question will ask you to:

Please complete the table to show the gender identity of the [Contract & Full/Part Time] staff in your organisation.

- Woman (including cis and trans women)
- Man (including cis and trans women)
- Non-Binary (including androgyne)
- Agender
- Gender fluid
- Other
- Prefer not to say
- Not known

Age

We ask how many of your staff fall into five age brackets. Age should be reported as at 31st March 2025. As with other diversity characteristics, all staff should be given the option not to disclose this information (indicated by Prefer Not to Say). Where a member of staff has not been asked, they should be counted as Not Known. The categories to report against are as follows:

- 0-15
- 16-24 years old
- 25-34 years old

- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old
- Prefer Not to Say
- Not Known

Disability

We work to the concept of the Social Model of Disability.

The social model of disability was developed by disabled people in the 1970's and its basic principle states that people with impairments are disabled by society and its structures, organisational practices and barriers in the environment. These factors are socially constructed and lead to a complex and institutionalised system of barriers which has a negative and discriminatory impact on disabled people. The categories to report against are as follows:

- Disabled
- Non-Disabled
- Prefer Not To Say
- Not Known

Ethnicity

The ethnicity classification is based on the NISRA definitions for ethnicity to ensure datasets are consistent with other sectors and population data. This allows us to better understand how the workforce is comprised and how this compares with national trend analysis.

Please also report the number of your staff who "Prefer Not to Say", and those who have not been given the opportunity to respond as "Not Known".

White

- White
- Irish Traveller
- Roma

Asian

- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani

- Bangladeshi
- Other Asian

Black

- Caribbean
- African
- Other

Arab

Filipino

Mixed Ethnic Group

Other Ethnic Group

Unspecified or uncollected

Not Known

Sexual Orientation

We collect data on sexual orientation. Our categorisation of sexual orientation is in line with practice guidance provided by the Northern Ireland charity [Outburst Queer Arts Festival](#).

- Bisexual
- Gay Man
- Gay Woman (or lesbian)
- Heterosexual (or straight)
- Queer (or none of the above)
- Pansexual
- Other
- Prefer Not To Say
- Not Known

Volunteers

By volunteer we mean a person who has provided unpaid help to benefit your organisation. Do not include internships, apprenticeships, and individuals on work experience or board members.

Within the volunteer section of the survey, we ask for the total Volunteer Hours. This should be entered as a single, cumulative number of all the hours contributed by all volunteers in your organisations.

Any hours contributed by your board members should not be included in this total.

Internships, Apprenticeships, and Work Experience

Indicate whether your organisation offered the following schemes between 1 April and 31 March of the reporting year and how many of these led to employment within your organisation:

Paid internships	This refers to paid internships or work placements offering work experience, allied to training that may include in-house programmes devised by the hosting organisation(s).
Unpaid internships	This refers to unpaid (except for travel/subsistence costs) internship opportunities or work offering work experience, allied to training that may include in-house programmes devised by the hosting or partner organisation(s).
Formal apprenticeships	This refers to on the job training leading to recognised qualifications developed by industry and delivered in partnership with further / higher education colleges.
Unaccredited apprenticeships	This refers to on the job training that is not linked to recognised qualifications.
Work experience	This refers to students in school, further education or higher education working in an organisation alongside staff for short periods of time, usually set up through schools/colleges, local business partnerships or informal contacts.

Training and personal development

Specify the number of staff (permanent or contract) receiving training or personal development to enhance skills / creative practice support between 1st April and 31st March.

Finance

Introduction to Finance Section

The finance section is divided into two sections in the survey: income and expenditure. The figures we require are all at a summary level of detail. This allows us to assess the financial health of funded organisations and make reasonable comparisons across different organisation cohorts and over time.

The information you provide should relate to all activity that your organisation has engaged – not just that which is funded by Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Please provide data that is as accurate as possible for the reporting financial year, using statutory accounts where available, or provisional accounts. This should be the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Income

The following tables detail definitions of the terms used in the Income table and examples of what should be included.

Earned income	This relates to all organisation income, generated from the box-office (ticket sales, entrance charges) and other commercial activity. Please indicate income generated in the relevant field. All income generated should be entered excluding VAT. Please note the addition of new earned income sources: training, hire and course fees.
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Arts Council of Northern Ireland Funding

This section collects details on funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Annual Funding Programme	Give details of the total Annual Funding Programme funding received by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.
Other Arts Council source(s)	Give details of all other funding received from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, including both Lottery and Exchequer monies.
Other public funding	<p>This relates to funding awarded to your organisation by other public bodies. Please include revenue and project funding but not capital. Include funding provided by core Government Departments, Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and agencies.</p> <p>Under 'other public sources' detail grants from other arts and cultural bodies, grants from universities or research boards.</p> <p>In relation to European Funding, only include awards made directly from European Sources. Attribute grant amounts allocated via Northern Ireland agents (e.g. Belfast City Council) to the relevant category.</p>

Contributed Income

Sponsorship	Give details of any sponsorship from business organisations as well as income from corporate member schemes.
Fundraising events	Give details of any income generated through specific fundraising events held by your organisation.
Trusts and foundations	Please include all money received from trusts, foundations and legacy bequests.
Donations	Include both regular and one-off donations. May include membership or friend schemes for which no benefit is received in return. If the Gift Aid scheme was used, please include only the gross amount donated.

Capital income

Please tell us how much your organisation secured all sources in capital funding. Capital relates to income secured for the building projects (including construction, restoration, buying, conserving and improving land and buildings)

Expenditure

Please ensure that the total core costs and total programming costs equate to the total expenditure for your organisation

Core Costs

These are the general, central costs involved in running your organisation, such as rent, heating, lighting, administration and management cost, the costs needed to run the central administration and develop the organisation. They are looked at as separate from programme costs, which are the costs directly linked to a particular project.

Salaries	Include salaries of all permanent, contract, freelance or commissioned staff during the reporting period April 2023 to March 2024.
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Programming Costs

Programme costs are those which can be directly linked to a particular programme or project.

Artists' costs	List all costs that directly support artists' engagement in your programme of activity, for example course fees, materials, accommodation and subsistence.
Volunteer expense	This includes out of pocket expenses. This is usually limited to food, drink or travel.
Research and Development (R&D) Costs	Give details of costs associated with the development of new ideas and / or the exploration of a new way of working. Only state here the costs associated with the nurturing of the idea and not the costs associated with the subsequent programme of work.
Premium Costs	Costs of delivering to Section 75 groups e.g. Sign Language interpreters to cover expenses.
Venue costs	List details of all costs associated with the hire of one or more venue
Publication, marketing and promotion	Give details of all marketing costs associated with production specific events. This includes promotional material and associated publication costs

Physical (face-to-face) Activity and Audiences

In this section, we will ask you about your audience numbers, how you have extended your audience reach by creating digital versions of your activity, information about groups in society you are targeting, what measures are in place to support audience accessibility, details of your publishing activity (if relevant) and what resource services you are providing, again, only if relevant.

We're asking you this information because we will use it to evaluate the reach of core funded organisations and identify trends in audience engagement.

You should report on the audiences for your entire activity, regardless of whether it is supported directly by Arts Council of Northern Ireland or not. For organisations operating on an all island basis, please also include audiences reached in RoI.

Known or Estimated Engagement

We will ask you to give estimated and/or known attendance figures for each of the engagement types shown. These figures are added together to get the total attendance – the two figures are separate - there should be no overlap.

Known Engagement	Where you know the exact number of people attending your event / consuming your content. These figures are an actual audience count, ticketed (including complimentary tickets) or counted by some other precise method e.g. online analytics.
Estimated Engagement	Where you do not know the exact number of people in attendance, and you are providing an estimate. Do not include the known attendance already entered. This might apply to non-ticketed events such as festivals or exhibitions.

If you know exactly how many people attended your event this should be recorded as known attendance, and the estimated attendance should be entered as zero. Please do not repeat actual attendance figures in the field for estimated attendance figures as this will lead to double counting.

Physical Engagement

The following activity types specifically relate to times when the audience is physically present to experience the activity. Where an event with physical audiences is also viewed or streamed elsewhere (e.g. in a cinema or online), additional details will be captured in the Digital Output section.

Performances/ Events	<p>Description:</p> <p>A performance is a single, time limited event involving physically present artist(s), or presenter(s) / speaker(s) / producer(s) etc., viewed by a physical audience as it occurs. This may include talks or presentations.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Activities where a performance takes place, for example: theatre productions, dance pieces, concerts, readings, lectures, or museum performance events.</p> <p>Exclusions:</p> <p>Please do not include performances which were created purely for online or broadcast consumption.</p> <p>Do not include activity performed as part of a festival or carnival where there are multiple performances occurring at the same time and location – i.e. where the audience is not specific to an individual act or performance (such as a music festival).</p>
Participation	<p>Description:</p>

	<p>Facilitated, creative engagement of individuals usually involving an artist and delivered within a range of contexts including education, community development, art and personal development. Often artists are co-producers of activities designed for participants in education or health settings.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Situations where individuals play a more active role in creative / arts activities that extends beyond observation such as workshops, rehearsals, etc.</p>
Exhibitions	<p>Description:</p> <p>An installation or display of items of interest held over one or more days. An exhibition can be thought of as something to visit rather than an event to attend.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Visual Arts, soundscapes, museum collections etc. An exhibition can be permanent, temporary or touring.</p> <p>Exclusions:</p> <p>Please do not include any exhibitions that were part of a wider festival or carnival occurring at the same time and location – i.e. where the audience is not specific to the exhibition alone.</p>
Festivals	<p>Description:</p> <p>A festival is defined as a single event which may last for more than one day and features multiple activities for which a unique audience does not exist.</p> <p>If you hosted an activity which was part of a festival programme but was a distinct event, this should not be counted here.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Music festivals with multiple acts performing on one or more stages, pop-up exhibitions occurring alongside other artistic activities, street carnival with no clear demarcation between individual activities.</p> <p>Exclusions:</p> <p>Individual activities which may form part of a festival programme but are independent in scope and have a unique differentiated audience.</p>
Cinema Screenings	<p>Description:</p>

	<p>Film screenings relate to screenings of feature length or short film, television programmes, or moving image, where there is a physical audience presence. Each activity should relate to the number of unique viewing experiences</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Cinema screenings, one-off pop-up screenings, virtual reality experiences.</p> <p>Exclusions:</p> <p>Do not include screenings of film or moving image which are part of a wider activity piece such as a screening occurring on a loop or repetitive basis as part of an exhibition or as a backdrop or constituent part of a physical performance where screened activity is not the primary activity.</p>
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Face-to-face contact time

<p>Participation based contact hours</p>	<p>Description:</p> <p>This measure has been included to demonstrate the extent of participant engagement work carried out by funded clients. It relates specifically to the face-to-face contact delivered between an artist and individual(s) delivered within a creative context either in person or online.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>An artist works as a project facilitator with a group of 15 young people once a week for 2 hours over a 12 week period.</p> <p>15 (number of young people) x 2 (hours per week) x 12 (number of sessions) = 360 hours</p> <p>Exclusions:</p> <p>Please only include contact time delivered as part of participation based activity, delivered face-to-face / in-person.</p>
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Digital Output

This is where we'd like you tell us about the *use of technologies to deliver all artistic or cultural experiences, or content through online and offline environments*. This includes new and existing material and activities that were specifically and originally created for these distribution methods

Distribution types are defined as follows.

Screening	This is when a recording or live stream of your activity is shown in a communal setting. For example, in a cinema, gallery, library or public screen. It could also include virtual or augmented reality (VR/AR) experiences which are experienced offline.
Television	This is where the activity is distributed via television broadcast, with a specific broadcast time. If it was distributed via television and then made available online, please record the appropriate elements of the activity in both television and online sections. Please do not double count any audience numbers.
Radio	This is where activity is distributed via radio, with a specific airing time. If it was distributed via radio and then made available online, for example 'Listen again', please record the appropriate elements of the activity in both radio and online sections. Please do not double count any audience numbers.
Online	This includes activity that was made available online. This should include distribution of creative content only.

Examples of Digital Output

Example 1: You have staged a performance for an audience in a theatre. You have made a recording of this performance, as you are going to screen it in a cinema to extend your audience reach.

Example 2: You have staged a performance, which has been recorded for the primary function of sharing it via a television broadcast. You would record the data as a television broadcast in this section.

Example 3: You have an exhibition, which is open to the public. You have created a digital walkthrough version of this exhibition, which is available on your website.

Tickets

The tickets question is presented as a single table split into columns of Activity Types for which you can provide box office information. The activity types are: performances, exhibitions, festivals, screenings and digital output.

The table contains several auto-calculated rows (in green) which you will not be able to change – these should help you identify any possible errors.

Total number of tickets available	Please enter the total number of tickets available in the year. Calculate by multiplying the number of available seats by the total number of ticketed performances. Available seats are the total number of designated places for performances etc., available to be occupied, including seats, wheelchair places and standing places.
Number of full price tickets sold	Enter the total number of tickets sold, not including concessionary and discounted tickets
Number of concessionary/ discounted tickets sold	Enter the total number of concessionary and discounted tickets sold
Number of complimentary tickets given	Enter the total number of complimentary tickets that were given without fee
<i>Number of tickets for carers and support workers</i>	Of the total number of complimentary tickets given, how many were given to carers and support workers
Total ticket yield (£)	Enter the 'total gross income' for total ticket yield. This is the amount of income received before any deductions are made, for example VAT, credit card charges, booking fees etc.
Average ticket yield	Auto-calculation of total ticket yield, divided by the total number of tickets sold and the number of concessionary tickets sold

Targeting

As with previous years, responses to this question are not expected to total 100 per cent. If activity is focused across two groups, for example 10 percent of your work is aimed at minority ethnic and older people, record 10 percent under both groups.

Accessibility

This question displays a number of measures commonly implemented to support audiences and improve accessibility. In each case, you should simply select the measures which you do provide

Partnerships

This question is about partnerships your organisation has engaged in over the year in order to deliver activities.

Some you will have formal partnership agreements with, others you will have engaged with in a less formal, but no less valuable way. We would like to know how many of the below types of organisations you have worked with or had meaningful engagement with.

By 'engaged with' we mean that there is a tangible outcome from your relationship, or that influence (in the form of advice/support/engagement) has had a positive impact in any area of your or their organisation and/or outputs.

Activity outside Northern Ireland

This questions relates to activity delivered outside Northern Ireland.

Report a value against each activity and select the international region(s) associated with the activity type.

Depending on the type of activity, the location associated may be either where the activity took place or originated from, the number reported on will also change depending on Activity Type.

Activity type:	Report on number of:	Provide Location of:
Co-productions / co-commissioning	Partners	Where partners usually reside
Arranging work for NI based creative practitioners	Practitioners	Region(s) Visited by UK Practitioners
Touring productions/exhibitions (including loans)	Productions/ exhibitions	Region(s) Toured/ Loaned to
Stand-alone activity, not part of a tour	Activities	Region(s) activity took place in
Borrowing collections for exhibitions or loans in NI	Objects/ collections	Originating Region(s)
Hosting creative practitioners in NI from other countries	Practitioners	Region(s) practitioners usually reside.
Research with partners from other countries	Partners	Where partners usually reside.

Activity Location Log

Please use the Excel Template to record the physical location details for all activity delivered between 1st April, 2024 and 31st March, 2025. It is important the full postcode is provided as we won't be able to use it otherwise.

Where an activity is not location specific or delivered outside a venue (e.g. a parade or festival) please give an approximate postcode reflecting the starting point or primary location if possible.

Homebase postcode	Enter your home base postcode only if your organisations has a dedicated performance, exhibition or participation space and is owned or held on a long-term lease. Do not enter a postcode if premises are an administrative centre.
Activity type	From the drop-down list select the activity type the location relates to. The options correspond to those described in Q8 (physical engagement) and help us classify the data you provide accordingly.
In person (face-to-face) or digital	From the drop-down list select whether the activity was delivered face-to-face or digitally
Outreach	Specify whether or not the activity delivered at the location can be considered outreach. By outreach we mean activity specifically designed to widen engagement in arts and culture based activity, perhaps targeted at sections of the community not able to get involved due to access issues. This activity can be delivered at both your homebase and locations within the community such as libraries or community centres.
Venue name	Because postcodes can include a number of specific premises / properties, this variable allows us to pinpoint where your activity took place.
Venue type	To help us understand where activity is being delivered, select the venue type from the drop-down box that best describes the location. The options here have been expanded to reflect the increasingly diverse locations activity is being delivered in.
Number of activities delivered at venue	This is a count of the number of activities delivered at this location and can be grouped into performances, workshops, exhibitions etc.
Full postcode	Please include the full postcode for the location using the following format: BT99 QWE. Postcodes should be provided for activity delivered in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.
Country	Where activity is delivered outside Northern Ireland, please include the country it is delivered in.

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Linen Hill House
23 Linenhall Street
Lisburn
BT28 1FJ

artscouncil-ni.org

T: +44 (28) 9262 3555

E: info@artscouncil-ni.org

Alternative formats of this publication may be available on request.
For further information, email: info@artscouncil-ni.org

