



# Arts Council Customer Charter

## 1. Customer Charter

The Arts Council is committed to providing an excellent service in accordance with the Principles of Quality Customer Service approved by Government.

The principles of consultation will remain central to our work over the lifetime of this plan.

## WHO WE ARE

## 2. Vision

Our vision is for an Ireland where the arts:

- are valued as central to civic life
- where the arts are practiced and enjoyed widely in our communities
- where those working professionally in the arts can have productive and rewarding careers
- where the distinctive societal value of the arts is recognised and provided for politically
- where the Arts Council is resourced adequately to address the breadth of its remit

## 3. Mission

Our mission is to lead the development of the arts in Ireland. We do this in four ways:

- We advocate the importance and value of the arts and promote their practice and development.
- We advise government and others on the arts as required by the Arts Act of 1951, 1973 and 2003.
- We invest public monies allocated to us by government in supporting artists and arts organisations to make work of excellence and in other actions consistent with our remit.
- We work in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and with other government departments as well as with local government and with agencies and organisations within and beyond the cultural sector.

## 4. Values

*Freedom of thought and of expression*

which is essential to the development of new ideas and new work

*Commitment to excellence*

in all aspects of our own work and of that of artists, arts organisations, and others we support

*Integrity, accountability, transparency*

in all of our decision-making and especially in our investment of public monies

*Respect for diversity*

of artistic practice, of public engagement, and of social and cultural traditions

*Collegiality*

communicating and working respectfully with partners, stakeholders, and the whole arts sector

## **OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR CUSTOMERS**

### **5. Official Languages**

We are fully committed to complying with the requirements outlined in the Official Languages Act, 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 2021.

### **6. Our Website, [www.artscouncil.ie](http://www.artscouncil.ie)**

Our website is currently available in Irish and English. It details our work, activities and all corporate information relating to the Arts Council; provides information on funding and governance and a library of publications including a monthly Newsletter.

### **7. Internal Customers**

We are committed to ensuring that staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted.

### **8. Contact by Telephone**

We will be available to answer your calls during office hours of 9.15am to 5.30pm Monday-Friday. Our aim is to answer all calls as promptly as possible. We will identify ourselves and our area of work, be helpful and courteous, and do our best to provide clear and accurate information.

If we cannot provide an immediate answer, we will take details of your query and your call will be returned by an individual who can give you a considered response and/or we will arrange to have information sent to you. Our main telephone number is **00 353 (0) 1 6180200**.

### **9. Electronic and Written Communications**

We will ensure that staff use automated email messages when out of the office to ensure that the customer is given another point of contact within the relevant office.

Where the information you are looking for is not directly available from the Arts Council, we will advise on alternative information sources or resources.

All post delivered to the Arts Council is date-stamped and distributed to the relevant person/team leader. We will ensure all our written replies include the name, address, email address and any other relevant contact details of the staff member who is responding to your correspondence.

## **10. Meetings and Visits to our Offices**

Please pre-arrange meetings with staff in our offices before your arrival to ensure their availability to meet with you and avoid any unnecessary inconvenience you may experience if they are unavailable. Where it is not possible for you to meet during office hours, we will try to be flexible and meet you at a mutually convenient time.

Visitors are requested to sign the Visitors' Book in Reception upon arrival.

## **11. Access for People with Disabilities**

We will ensure our public offices and information are accessible, in-so-far as is possible, and we will provide maximum assistance and support to enable you to conduct your business.

This commitment covers physical access and egress to our public office and other accessibility needs required to engage with us, for example the use of ISL interpreter, and accommodations for those making funding applications.

If you have a disability and require further assistance, please contact the Arts Council Access Officer at: [access@artscouncil.ie](mailto:access@artscouncil.ie)

## **12. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

As stated in our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, we are committed to our public sector duty to ensure equality of opportunity, access, and outcomes for all those living in Ireland regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller community. In addition, the Arts Council also notes the ground of socio-economic background as a further basis for which equality of opportunity, access and outcomes must be guaranteed.

We will treat all our customers with respect and dignity, and we will identify and seek to eliminate barriers to our services based on any of these grounds outlined.

## **13. Complaints**

We aim to deliver the best possible service to our customers. If you are dissatisfied with the quality of service that you have received, you have the right to complain. We recommend that you contact the Arts Council or the manager of the service you have been dealing with to let them know your concerns. The manager will discuss your concerns with you and, if you remain unhappy, you can make a formal complaint by writing to the Council.

Complaints must be made in writing (or equivalent, such as an email) within 1 month of the date the alleged incident occurred and must provide the details of the complaint.

All written complaints will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt and will be investigated by the appropriate member of the Arts Council's Senior Staff. A written response to the complaint will be provided within 20 working days from the date that the Arts Council receives your complaint.

If you are not happy with our reply, you can refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for consideration. We will cooperate with the Ombudsman or any other people or organisations that act for you.

Office of Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

Telephone: 01 678 5222

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie)

#### **14. Appeals**

Applicants may appeal against a funding decision based on an alleged infringement or unfair application of, or a deviation from the Council's published procedures. The appeal process is detailed on our website. Appeals are heard throughout the year and are considered by an appeals panel. The conclusions and recommendations of the panel are forwarded to the next plenary meeting of the Council for final decision.

#### **15. Freedom of Information Acts 2014 (FOI)**

The FOI Acts gives members of the public the right to access to all official records, paper and electronic, in possession of the Arts Council. Access to information under the Act is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits.

More information about Freedom of Information is available on our website.

Should you wish to make a request under FOI for access to records that you believe are held by the Arts Council, you should write to our HR and Corporate Services Officer stating clearly that you are requesting information under the FOI Acts. You may also submit an FOI request by e-mail to: [foi@artscouncil.ie](mailto:foi@artscouncil.ie)

#### **16. Monitor and Evaluate our performance**

We will evaluate our performance against the standards set out in this Charter on a continuous basis.

#### **17. Help us to help you**

To assist us in reaching our service standards, we would be grateful if you could quote any relevant reference number in all communication with us and ensure that application forms are fully, accurately, and legibly completed by the specified deadline (where applicable).

Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of schemes before completing application forms and provide all necessary supporting documentation as required. Please inform us of any changes to your circumstance which may have a bearing on decisions made by the Arts Council.

#### **18. Respect for our staff**

The Arts Council of Ireland is committed to fostering a respectful and safe environment for both our customers and staff. We understand that you may sometimes be frustrated when you communicate with us. However, we believe that our staff have the right to work in a safe environment, free from any abuse or harm caused by others. We do not tolerate abusive behaviour towards our staff.

Types of behaviour that we consider abusive can include:

- Shouting
- Threats
- Intimidation
- Physical harm
- Violence of any kind
- Using language that causes our staff to feel afraid or unsafe
- Using religious, cultural, or racial insults
- Using derogatory remarks based on sexual orientation, gender, age, or abilities

Our abusive behaviour guideline follows a One Strike rule.

- We will warn you to stop the abusive behaviour immediately or we will end the interaction.
- If the abuse continues, we will end the interaction.

Please treat our staff with respect when you communicate with them.