

# The Culture White Paper

## Introduction and background

Over the last 50 years, our understanding of culture has changed. It no longer simply means being acquainted with a set list of works of art or architecture, but also encompasses the accumulated influence of creativity, the arts, museums, galleries, libraries and archives upon our lives. Culture is also diverse; each community has its own culture. What is local and unique has a special value.

The UK government has a role in promoting and supporting the cultural sectors across the UK and abroad. It provides public funding for bodies with UK wide remits, such as the British Council, the British Film Institute and the national museums and galleries. It retains responsibility for the cultural sectors in England, including funding for England-only bodies such as Arts Council England (ACE) and Historic England.

Culture brings many benefits. Firstly, evidence suggests that it has an intrinsic value through the positive impact on personal wellbeing. Data shows that engaging with culture significantly increases overall life satisfaction. Secondly, culture has important social benefits in terms of health, education and community cohesion. Health benefits include physiological and psychological changes, a decrease in the amount of time spent in hospital and improving mental health. Engaging in culture can increase the likelihood of a young person going on to further and higher education. One study showed that 16-18 year-olds who participated in the arts and those who visited heritage sites or libraries were more likely to progress to further education. Research has also found positive links between cultural participation and improved social skills as well as engagement with the wider community. There is even evidence that culture has a part to play in tackling crime. Thirdly, culture has clear economic value. In 2014, the economic contribution of museums, galleries, libraries and the arts was £5.4 billion. This is up by 59 per cent in nominal terms since 2010. Heritage tourism accounts for 2 per cent of GDP, contributing £26 billion each year. The number of people employed in the cultural and creative sectors has been increasing since 2011 and now stands at 321,000.

This White Paper, based on four key principles, sets out how the government will support our cultural sectors over the coming years and how culture will play a role in building a fairer and more prosperous nation. The electronic version of the full document includes links to case studies of initiatives across the cultural sectors. This summary focusses on the first of the four principles which is of particular relevance to education and young people.

## Key points

### The four principles

- The four key principles which lie at the heart of the White Paper are: everyone should enjoy the opportunities culture offers, no matter where they start in life; the riches of our culture should benefit communities across the country; the power of culture can increase our international standing; and cultural investment, resilience and reform are key priorities.

### Culture and education

- The government believes that culture should be an essential part of every child's education, both in and out of school. It also believes that a lifelong relationship with culture should begin when people are young.
- All state-funded schools have a duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils.
- Experiencing culture is integral to education; it can lead to lifelong passions and open doors to careers in the cultural and creative sectors and elsewhere. Without cultural knowledge and skills, many children from disadvantaged backgrounds are excluded from meaningful engagement with their heritage.
- The national curriculum sets an expectation that pupils will study art and design, music, drama, dance and design and technology. Ofsted inspectors take account of pupils' cultural development, including their willingness to participate in cultural opportunities, whether artistic, musical or sporting. They also look at what extra-curricular opportunities are available to extend pupils' knowledge and skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities.
- Artsmark is a scheme which recognises excellent arts provision in schools. So far, it has been awarded to over 1,700 schools and over 1,200 more are working towards it.



- The government has introduced a range of initiatives to provide quality cultural experiences for pupils. In 2012, it created the national network of 123 Music Education Hubs, new partnerships to improve music education in local areas. Other schemes include the In Harmony programme, Music for Youth and the National Youth Music organisations. The government also funds national youth companies for dance and musical theatre, and the Heritage Schools Programme which helps children to engage with the history of their area. It also supports the Sorrell Foundation's National Art and Design Saturday clubs which provide free opportunities for 14-16 year olds to study art and design at higher education institutions. The Clore-Duffield Foundation supports learning spaces in museums, galleries and local heritage buildings across the country.
- Through Arts Council England (ACE), the government has invested in a network of Bridge organisations which act as brokers between schools, the arts and heritage organisations. The ACE's Museums and Schools Programme is increasing the number of high-quality educational visits by schools which have lower than average engagement.
- Most organisations supported by ACE and the Heritage Lottery Fund are committed to working with children and young people. Schemes such as the Family Arts Festival and the Summer Reading Challenge introduce young families to their local cultural organisations, particularly libraries.

#### **What the government will do**

- While the government considers that many of the elements needed to provide quality cultural opportunities for children and young people already exist, the network of provision remains patchy and a clearer focus is needed on who is least well served.
- From September 2016, ACE will work with cultural institutions to engage actively with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in a wide range of arts and cultural experiences so that they will be inspired by their experiences and encouraged to inspire others. The programme will be piloted in three areas and by the end of the third year it is expected that it will be operating in up to 70 areas across the country reaching 14,000 young people a year.
- The government will work with the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) to encourage schools to use the pupil premium to promote cultural education as a means of raising the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- This year the government has placed culture at the heart of its Pupil Premium Awards. These awards celebrate schools which excel in raising the achievement of their disadvantaged pupils. More than 20 organisations will contribute prizes including workshops, exhibitions, tours and talks, to educate and inspire pupils.

#### **Access to skills development and pathways to talent**

- While a cultural education offers initial opportunities for talent to express itself, it must be supported in its development by clearer pathways, i.e. by clear joined-up routes for skills and careers in the cultural sectors, for both technicians and performers. Pathways into the cultural sectors need to be better defined and supported, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

#### **What the government will do**

- The government will work with ACE to understand the barriers which prevent people from lower income households and under-represented groups from becoming professionals in the arts. It will work with ACE's Bridge organisations to encourage inspirational individuals from across the cultural sectors to talk to pupils about their experiences.
- The government is developing reforms to technical and professional education, working closely with an Independent Panel to plan the creation of a small number of technical and professional routes in the cultural sectors which will support more people into skilled employment.
- The Heritage Lottery Fund will make a further investment of £10 million in its Skills for the Future programme with a particular focus on attracting more diverse new entrants to the heritage workforce.
- Historic England will create its own heritage apprenticeships, addressing areas of greatest need and complementing the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future and the investment in traditional building skills by the Churches Conservation Trust.

#### **Publicly funded culture should reflect diversity**

- Genuinely diverse cultural sectors will use all our national talent and young people from minorities and with disabilities will be able to identify with them and see themselves working within them.
- While progress has been made on addressing gender balance and LGBT representation within the cultural sectors, overall figures on diversity still do not reflect national averages and too few people from black or minority ethnic backgrounds or who are disabled, work at the highest levels in cultural organisations. Campaigning organisations such as Act for Change have highlighted a lack of diversity at all levels in the theatre.
- ACE has recently made a big change in its approach, launching the Creative Case for Diversity. This asks any organisation which it funds to make itself and its work reflective of the communities which it serves. Progress on this will affect their future funding. ACE will also commission new research to improve understanding of disabled people's experiences in the cultural sectors.

#### **What the government will do**

- The government will ask ACE, Historic England and the national museums and galleries to develop and share strategies for tackling the lack of diversity in leadership across the cultural sectors and to provide reports on what has been achieved.
- The government will examine the role of networks to make pathways into the cultural sectors easier for people from black and minority ethnic groups and for disabled people.
- The government will also ask the heritage sector to build on the foundations of successful programmes such as the Young Roots programme so that more young people outside formal education settings can enjoy and learn about heritage.

The full document can be downloaded from  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/culture-white-paper>