

Our Strategic Framework 2015-21



Our vision: People in the lead

We believe people should be in the lead in improving their lives and communities. Our approach will focus on the skills, assets and energy that people can draw upon and the potential in their ideas.

We feel that strong, vibrant communities can be built and renewed by the people living in them – making them ready for anything in the face of future opportunities and challenges.

Our principles:

We will be guided in the choices we make by a set of principles:

Confidence, not control

We trust in people's ability to make great things happen, believing that our funding should enable rather than control

Simple processes, good judgments

We use simple, proportionate processes which enable us to make good judgments

The strengths people bring

We start with what people can contribute, and the potential in their idea

A catalyst for others

We listen to, learn from, act on and facilitate the things that matter to people, communities and our partners

Shared direction, diverse approaches

We value the diversity of communities we work with across the UK, are consistent in the quality and opportunities we offer, and support people to tackle inequalities

Using resources well

We make informed choices about the resources given to us by National Lottery players: with knowledge, with people and with money, and in an environmentally sustainable way.

Six key strands of our work to achieve this vision:

Grant-making

People in the lead at every stage of the funding cycle, both in the programmes we develop and the projects we fund, with involvement and ownership by the people our funding supports.

Knowledge and learning

We will continually improve our practice and support others to improve theirs, by openly sharing knowledge and learning internally and externally, and by helping our funded projects and stakeholders to share theirs too

People

Our people will be equipped and engaged in the new ways of working that this vision inspires, and supported to continually grow their capabilities and confidence

Digital and technology

People will be able to access what they need – anytime and anywhere

Communications and engagement

People and communities will be aware of the funding and opportunities available, and able to share their stories, ideas and learning with us and others

Financial stewardship

An operating model which supports the Fund to take a longer term view in how to achieve the vision efficiently and effectively.

Our first steps:

Accelerating Ideas:

a pilot programme providing a flexible route to funding for innovative practice that can be adopted and adapted more widely to grow its impact.

Awards for All: new test-and-learn pilots are underway to simplify our open small grants programme

Digital Community:

a new function of our website which will begin to put digital at the heart of our grant-making. The community will enable people and organisations to network, collaborate and communicate, opening the Fund up to our stakeholders.

What this new framework means for how we work

Our new strategic framework will guide us in the choices we will make. It is ambitious, flexible, and adaptable to the changing context we're operating in. It reflects the fact that what will work today may not work tomorrow, and provides a direction to help us navigate the way ahead. It is informed by the feedback we received from Your Voice Our Vision – a conversation held throughout 2014 with people all over the UK.

As a grant-maker

- Tackling disadvantage by focusing on what people contribute, supporting communities (geographical or otherwise) to be better prepared for future challenges
- Strengthening our blended funding model:
 - Keeping open, demand-led funding at our core – making it more accessible and responding to what people tell us our money can help them achieve
 - Using strategic interventions to tackle specific issues, seizing opportunities to improve and grow great practice, and generating useful learning for us and others
 - Developing the interplay between different funding approaches across our portfolios, sharing learning and building on great practice
- Simplifying processes so they support stronger and better informed judgments about what we fund
- Backing ideas on the basis of flexible, proportionate applications, using a more conversational approach to progress great ideas
- Being more open and participatory in how we fund – for example crowd-sourcing ideas through digital and media channels and involving partners in problem-solving
- Growing a greater presence outside of the office, with stronger local networks and relationships
- Exploring new types of grant-making such as social investment and other funding instruments, opportunities to build on full cost recovery, and options for continuation funding.

As a catalyst

- Developing the skills of individuals and communities to take the lead in civil society, such as building community enterprises and increasing digital capability
- Distributing the majority of our funding to voluntary, community, and social enterprise organisations as our core civil society partners
- Encouraging different parts of civil society – from informal associations to small and medium sized entrepreneurs, through to the biggest charitable organisations – to adapt to current opportunities and challenges
- Backing innovation – giving momentum to people, communities and practitioners with new approaches to thorny problems, prioritising and growing the best ideas and practice
- Creating partnerships with those who can support great community-led activity – civil society organisations, other funders, government, public and private sectors
- Being open and engaged with new approaches and forms of organisation, such as social enterprises, co-operatives and mutuals, and community interest companies, alongside our core civil society partners.

As an organisation

- Strengthening our networks across the UK to actively share ideas, knowledge and evidence from across our funding portfolios and outside the Fund, to enhance our judgment and decision-making and to support others looking to develop ideas and practice
- Collaborating with those who can make a difference, recognising that we can't deliver this vision alone, sharing our skills and characteristics and drawing on the expertise of others
- Being flexible in how we manage our resources and costs to maximise the good causes money available to civil society
- Ensuring that our attitude to risk supports people and communities to make change happen, enabling bolder grant-making in the pursuit of better practice.