



CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE: ADVOCACY FOR IRISH AND NORTHERN IRISH ARTISTS IN ENGLAND

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 Means we are flagging work for *Irish In Britain* to take up.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

The convener of this paper -and members of the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network- believe that Irish and Northern Irish art, artists, cultural products and organisations in England are being underfunded, under-represented and ignored by way of a poor understanding of Ireland and Northern Ireland's identity within national and smaller agency funders.

We believe this is caused by

- conflation in the monitoring of 'White' people between systems (Census, *Arts Council England*, local authorities, *Office of National Statistics*, the Home Office, etc)
- a lack of senior leader comprehension, structural training and system integrity regarding diversity, especially within Irish and Northern Irish and white diversity as different to 'British'
- a general conflation of any form of Irishness being equivalent with Britishness.

These inconsistencies, assimilations and conflation are depriving Irish and Northern Irish artists, cultural producers and audiences from creating and engaging in work that truly reflects or supports the population's identity understanding and a wider understanding of diversity. This environment is causing further isolation and weakening confidence in national structural systems; which have been further exacerbated by Brexit and response to Covid-19.

Specific barriers for Irish and Northern Irish artists working in England

Artists and creatives are often freelancers, contracted to specific projects for a unit of time/completion targets, though rolling and zero-hour contracts are also a feature of this style of working. Often, artists will work on multiple projects simultaneously, but many do not receive the benefits of full-time employment. Whilst this allows flexible working it holds artists in a difficult position at the outbreak of a pandemic because in England

- they are not able to furlough
- contracts may be suspended and finance withdrawn
- to protect income, many artists studio- or desk-share. Consequently, their own business may not be registered for business rate relief/support, barring access to continuity grants or business development loans
- freelance wages fluctuate considerably, based on big contract pay outs vs monthly income, so anything linked to previous year profits could be unrealistic of a consistent wage of over 12-24 months. Consequently, part-funding percentages of previous earnings can be extremely limiting.

Add to this that -as an Irish or Northern Irish artist in England and particularly if a recent migrant- you are likely to be isolated by your Irishness possibly creating a complex welfare issue. Increased protectionism in recruitment and commissions and further impacts Irish and Northern Irish artists.

If you are only recently self-employed you will not be entitled to any of the HMRC self-employment draw-down, but having also left Ireland or Northern Ireland, you may not be entitled to anything from your previous tax payments. You are also more likely to be renting, because you will not necessarily have been able to gain mortgage finance and so the potential for you to run in to (unprotected) financial hardship is increased.

If your Irish or Northern Irish identity has been used against you since your arrival in England, artists may not be accessing all of the networks or services they may be entitled to, masking their Irishness to 'pass' as British. Whilst this may seem innocuous, it has knock-on effects to national support services, budgets, statistics and policing when considering mental health provision, allocations for migrant care, understanding hate crime and managing risk.

HOW WAS THE ISSUE IDENTIFIED?

Liverpool Irish Festival, *Irish in Britain* and *Comhaltas in Britain* collaborated to consider the needs of Irish and Northern Irish artists in England (see *Why 'only' and England approach* below) in a Covid-19 and Brexit-impacted environment, after

- a set of investigations into *Arts Council England's* fair funding for Irish and Northern Irish creative practice. This was based on analysis of feedback given in rejection confirmations to *Liverpool Irish Festival* and a number of Freedom of Information requests by *Irish In Britain* to *Arts Council England*
- the release of *Let's Create*, *Arts Council England's* 10-year strategy for arts investment, in which there is no mention of 'Ireland' or 'Irish' people within minority referencing.

This is a start point. With this in-train, and some research to evidence our needs, we can also address such matters with trusts and foundations, *British Council*, *Culture Ireland* and many more.

Background

As part of the 2020 *Liverpool Irish Festival*, a *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* was held to introduce Irish and Northern Irish artists to Irish and Northern Irish cultural commissioners and providers, to determine

- the needs of Irish and Northern Irish artists
- barriers they were facing post-Brexit and during Covid-19
- how cultural providers/commissioners could provide value/service in relation to Covid-19/Brexit.

It was an open, online session. Artists known to the *Liverpool Irish Festival's* network were sent personal invites; *Irish In Britain* circulated a member's notice and an open call went out as part of the Festival programme.

The initial idea was born of a complaint made to the *Arts Council* in Feb 2020, further pursued by *Irish In Britain*, which identified that *Arts Council England* can and have conflated 'White Irish' with 'White British' and as such, may not be funding, proportionately

- the work of Irish and Northern Irish artists
- work for English-Irish audiences, who would benefit from it
- Irish and Northern Irish creativity as 'other', which under the *Creative Case for Diversity* (ACE's equality and inclusion statement) seems at odds with its mission.

As well as addressing issues around 'White Irish' terminology and monitoring, other concerns include how Irishness is considered within Irish dual heritage lives and communities across England, Northern Ireland and Ireland. We must additionally ensure these voices are heard, represented and have comparative and proportionate access to funds.

Following the Brexit referendum hate crime across Britain rose significantly, some of which targeted Irish and Northern Irish people. Finding real figures for this is difficult as

- timescales produce different results (e.g., the biggest rise was directly after Brexit in 2016, but resulting hate crime persists today, though the percentages will seem lower averaged over time)
- hate crimes are aggregated by offence and/or under 'mixed white' rather than specific nationality or race, another issue which others Irish and Northern Irish people in England who cannot make their case using national statistics. 📄

Anecdotally, via our communities, we know there has been a rise. Barrister-at-Law, Dermot Feenan, writes an interesting article on the rekindling of anti-Irish racism, here:

<http://dermotfeenan.com/index.php/2019/09/27/brexit-and-the-rekindling-of-anti-irish-racism/>

Post-Brexit, the need to maintain connections to prevent diminishing relations will be more important than ever. The combined impact of this, along with Covid-19, revealed that many artists and creative sector workers would be more heavily affected than most. Many artists are known to work in isolated ways in the best of times, so to have Covid-19 affecting jobs, finance and social life -as well as being away from home and possibly isolated within their Irishness- created a genuine cause for concern.

The *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* was set up so that Irish and Northern Irish art commissioners, such as the *Liverpool Irish Festival*, could hear the needs of Irish and Northern Irish artists directly. It was a pilot to see who would come and what could be learned. What resulted from the inaugural meeting can be broken in to five key areas of work:

1. the formation of an Irish and Northern Irish *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* in England was regarded as timely, relevant and needed
2. learning what is needed from England's Irish and Northern Irish arts decision-makers/leaders; work on it
3. better funding/commissioner signposting (quick deliverables)
4. the development of a national advocacy narrative
5. need for a strategy that improves Irish and Northern Irish artist advocacy, network development, inclusion and good practice that decreases barriers and supports the development of and access to creative practices.

WHAT IS THE RESPONSE?

Having created the hypothesis that Irish and Northern Irish artists and organisations in England are at a disadvantage and subject to a unique set of barriers, this paper

- evidences the barriers and explores the unique conditions Irish and Northern Irish artists and organisations in England (see *Why 'only' an England approach* below) are working in/against
- makes recommendations for what is needed to support their endeavours
- creates an advocacy call, to be submitted to *Irish In Britain*, to take to the All-Party Parliamentary Group to reduce barriers at national level.

The paper is a direct product of the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network. It aims to give the reader an understanding of the day-to-day experiences of Irish and Northern Irish artists and organisations, in England, in the context of finding that there is the potential for a conflation of 'White British' with 'White Irish', reducing access to funds and affecting perceptions of social importance/resonance.

The formation of the network has triggered a number of additional wants for the sector and revealed the need for some terms of reference, definitions and limitation recognition, as well as an appetite for the continuation/formation of a network. Consequently -as well as this paper- the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network intends to

- identify, develop and share good practice for and between Irish and Northern Irish creative and cultural providers, commissioners and platforms
- support Irish and Northern Irish artists working in England; Britain more widely and in Ireland with toolkits, connections and a network
- link the two communities – organisations and independents.

Thus, there are three responses:

- a white paper (this)
- a national advocacy narrative
- a live network, with an active membership and set of next steps.

This paper is, in essence, the white paper, distilling

- the role of the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange*
- the needs of those it represents and evidence substantiating these
- what the network wants *Irish In Britain* to raise with their All-Party Parliamentary Group
- the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange's* next steps.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Why 'only' an England approach?

Ordinarily, *Liverpool Irish Festival*, *Comhaltas in Britain* and *Irish In Britain* would work in the context of 'Britain and British' rather than 'England and English'. However, national funding does not work Britain-wide and Irish and Northern Irish populations living in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales differ considerably, having their own ecologies.

Consequently, this document references Irish and Northern Irish artists (see definitions below) working in England, not Britain, because of the way arts funding -using public funds- is allocated by the devolved governments of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, using their national agencies. These are:

- *Arts Council England*, a non-departmental public body of *Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)*
- *Arts Council of Northern Ireland*, a non-departmental public body of the *Department for Communities* within the *Northern Ireland Executive*
- *Creative Scotland* is an executive non-departmental public body of the *Scottish Government*
- *Arts Council of Wales* is a sponsored body, accountable to the *National Assembly for Wales* for dispersing public money and to *DCMS* for dispersing *National Lottery* funds in Wales.

As *Arts Council England (ACE)* are the national funding body for arts practice in England, they are the main subject of research in this work, but it is worth noting that scrutiny could also be made of the *Department of Culture, Media and Sport*, *British Council* and other leading funding bodies such as *Esmée Fairburn*, *Paul Hamlyn Foundation* and many others. ↻

Trusts and foundations in each nation state will differ, often favouring the home country they are registered in, though there is crossover -in all senses- between the support they may offer to British (including Northern Irish) and international (including Irish) artists. However, due to the nature of these differences, and -later- to the connections that must be made with the Republic of Ireland's artist services, this paper will focus on England.

The convener suggests that groups in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales review the issues that Irish and Northern artists face domestically by considering their national agency support for Irish and Northern Irish artists and assessing how monitoring, advocacy and representation are applied. This document *may* provide a model, but it recognised that each will have a unique set of circumstances that mean the environment for Irish artists there is slightly different, which could include (but is not limited to)

- differing Covid-19 self-employment support structures (tax rates, pensions, etc); business rate relief application; funding priorities
- different population and community needs/proportions
- an innate awareness of how Northern Irish, Welsh, Scots and Irish identity sits within their domestic framework, having already come through the process of devolution, which England has not experienced.

Definitions

The paper takes -or means to take- an All-Ireland approach, while recognising the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as distinct and discrete nations.

For the purposes of this work. when speaking about Irish and Northern Irish **"arts and culture"**, the paper means the individual artists/creatives and/or organisations that make, commission or platform the kind of art/creative output that is generated for public good; the kind of work that brings benefits through shared expression, connection and accessibility. It does not mean nationalist work, academic achievement or commercial creative practices; nor welfare practices delivered under 'Irish/Northern Irish culture' mastheads, though there may -at certain times- be some crossover with the latter. This particular network is unlikely to be of interest to those interested in Gaelic sports, for example, though often associated with culture.

Our focus is artistic cultural products, production, producers and commissioners as well as Irish and Northern Irish art promotion and public delivery.

"The convener" is *Liverpool Irish Festival*, in collaboration with *Comhaltas in Britain*, with advice from *Irish In Britain*.

By **"Irish and Northern Irish artists"** the paper refers to

- artists and creatives working and living in England who identify as having an Irish or Northern Irish heritage, as well as those who may have been born in Ireland or Northern Ireland and now live and work in England, working in any creative discipline, but with a focus on public work
- artists and creatives, plus arts and culture organisations, dealing specifically with Irish or Northern Irish cultural representation, such as the telling of Irish folk stories (in any medium), the teaching of Irish artistic pursuits (for instance Irish dance, mythology, traditional music, Gaelic language, etc) and any Irish contemporary creative practice, which is comparable with that of any other country, again with a focus on public sharing and benefit
- artists and creatives working in Ireland or Northern Ireland -or Irish diaspora communities globally- with a product (e.g., play, photography, body of visual art work(s), films, etc) that would benefit 'English audiences' (e.g., those in England at the time of work sharing), including the Irish in Britain. This work will likely have a public role to play, rather than solely commercial.

WHAT CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE MEMBERS WANT

- Greater advocacy for the services Irish and Northern Irish artists can access (funds, centres, producers, government offices, etc)
- Increased advocacy from England's Irish and Northern Irish art promoters for the collective work, the Irish and Northern Irish creative ecology and its artists
- Active links made between Irish and Northern Irish artists with other artists, areas of interest, commissioners, funders and tools
- A network that connects independents and commissioners (e.g., regular forum formation); and shares ideas, links collaborators, reduces work duplication by generating collaborations valued at more than the sum of their parts. It may have specific task groups, e.g., lone artists forum; organisers committee, etc
- A go-to statement that reflects the importance of Irish and Northern creativity in England, to be used by Irish and Northern Irish artists in support of applications 📄
- Better representation for Irish and Northern Irish artists at national level 📄
- Better connectivity with digital (e.g., Zoom and latency improvements)
- A warmer environment that welcomes Irish and Northern Irish art (such as ceramics, theatre, film, music, rap, poetry) as creative, contemporary and diverse, comparable with the way Irish literature is received in England and advocated for today
- Peer-to-peer/critical appraisal of Irish artists within England's arts sector
- Better emergency support for "desk-renters"/studio-sharers, a common set-up for independent and small arts businesses 📄
- Better information on when and how the *Irish Diaspora Strategy* is being released, its implications for creatives and who within it has ownership of its cultural aspects? (This has since been released and is accessible here: <https://www.dfa.ie/global-irish/support-overseas/diasporastrategy2020/> Last accessed 16 Dec 2020)
- Better awareness of the diversity within the Irish and Northern Irish population in England and Irish and Northern Irish diversity. 📄

Better signposting/Quick deliverables

- Toolkit/address book of England's Irish and Northern Irish arts/cultural commissioners/producers/platforms
- Funder list and contact details for those who do and will support Irish and Northern Irish work
- Grant writing toolkits for different funds.

EVIDENCING DISPARITY

In 2011, the population of England was 53,013,000 (*Office for National Statistics, (ONS)*):

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/2011censuspopulationandhouseholdestimatesforenglandandwales/2012-07-16> (accessed 10 Nov 2020)

Using *Irish In Britain's* analysis of the ONS findings (Table 1, page 6,

<https://www.irishinbritain.org/cmsfiles/Downloads/Reports/Irish-Census-Analysis-Report---London.pdf>), we see 395,182 of the population were born in the Republic of Ireland with 206,735 from Northern Ireland.

Population: England only, 2011 census linked information

Total population	53,013,000	%
Republic of Ireland-born population in England	395,182	0.75
Northern Irish-born population in England	206,735	0.39
% of England's population that are Irish born	601,917	1.14
Cross checker	1.14	

Fig. 1

As Fig.1 shows, 1.14% of England's population are Irish and Northern Irish born.

Even considering Republic of Ireland figures alone, we see a population value of 0.75%. This is a considerable difference (0.71%) to the 0.04% funding Irish work receives in England, across grant, national portfolio and cultural recovery programmes (evidenced in the table below). If 100% of funding was thought to represent 100% of the population, then the funding attributed to Irish work receives just 5% of what it ought to.

What is also noticeable, is that average grant amounts across the count are almost £33,000 compared to the average grant awarded to Irish work, which totals just 55% of this at £18,124. If the 20 grants that had been awarded were provided at the average level, then 0.07% of ACE's funding would have gone to Irish work, vs 0.04%. If 0.75% of ACE funding went to Irish work, in line with population representation, it would receive £884,744 per year rather than £45,309.75.

Headline figures for ACE's total awards and Irish breakdowns

These figures are based on averages over 8 years, from 2013-2020 inclusively

All inclusive

Total funding awarded 2013-2020	£943,727,052
Total awards granted 2013-2020	28,619
Average grant amount based on total/awards	£32,976
Average of total funding awarded 2013-2020	£117,965,882
Average no. of awards per year	3,577
Average £ awards	£32,976

Irish only

Total no. awards given to Irish work 2013-2020	20	0.07	% of 2013-2020 total
Average no. of awards per year for Irish work	2.5	0.07	
Total £ awards for Irish work 2013-2020	£362,478	0.04	% of 2013-2020 total
Average £ awards for Irish work 2013-2020	£18,124	55	the value of average annual award

Fig.2

Further breakdowns of all of the awards can be seen in Fig.3, below.

ACE AWARDED GRANTS 2013-2020 FOR IRISH LED/GENERATED ARTS

Search terms to identify entries = 'Ireland', 'Eire', 'Ceit' and 'Irish'. One hit for 'Ireland' has been removed as it was the name of a playwright, not an associated characteristic of the work or maker.

Recipient	Activity name	Award amount	Award date	Decision quarter	Area	Local authority	Main artform
Total grants awarded		28619 , of which were Irish: 20		% total 0.07			% total LIF received 25.00
Total funds awarded		£943,727,052.00 , of which were Irish: £362,478		0.04			£125,499 , of which were LIF: £125,499
Year 2013-14 - Grants for the Arts		Total awards 2162	Total fund £43,057,543.00				
Debbie Waistell	Celtic Christmas (working title)	£4,692	18-Dec-13	O3	North	Hambleton	Dance
Felling Irish Association	Finnegan's Wake	£7,750	08-Jan-14	O4	North	Gateshead	Theatre
Year 2014-15		Total awards 4012	Total fund £75,216,606.00				
Tyneside Irish Cultural Society Ltd	Celli Play: The Irish on Tyneside	£9,770	11-Sep-14	O2	North	Newcastle upon Tyne	Theatre
Year 2015-16		Total awards 3908	Total fund £73,083,182.00				
World Heart Beat Music Academy	Celtic & Gypsy Violin to Access Jazz	£14,825	03-Sep-15	O2	London	Wandsworth	Music
Liverpool Irish Festival	New productions and commissions	£15,000	19-Aug-15	O2	North	Liverpool	Combined arts
Year 2016-17		Total awards 4085	Total fund £75,031,989.00				
No awards made to Irish arts	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Year 2017-18		Total awards 3825	Total fund £69,901,557.00				
Alan Kent	No 2 The Incredible Babi Celtic Carpet Ride	£13,050	02-Aug-17	O2	South West	Cornwall	Theatre
Liverpool Irish Festival	Liverpool Irish Festival 2017	£30,000	31-Aug-17	O2	North	Liverpool	Combined arts
The Glass Hub	Northern Irish Masterclass Project	£6,636	05-Jul-17	O2	South West	Wiltshire	Visual arts
Tyneside Irish Cultural Society	Tyneside Irish Festival	£6,000	13-Sep-17	O2	North	Newcastle upon Tyne	Music
Keira Mari Martin	Good Blood - development of a new Irish Contemporary Dance Duet.	£14,940	14-Mar-18	O4	North	Leeds	Dance
Irish Arts Foundation	Exploring the Irish musical traditions of County Sligo, Roscommon and Mayo'	£15,000	21-Mar-18	O4	North	Leeds	Music
Year 2018-19 9 moves to National Lottery Project Grants		Total awards 4079	Total fund £79,543,046.00				
Almanac Arts	To Have to Shoot Irishmen, National Tour	£15,000	06-Jun-18	June	North	Liverpool	Theatre
Rosie Watt	Indian & Irish dance commission - Spin Arts	£14,992	21-Jun-18	June	North	Leeds	Dance
Liverpool Irish Festival	Liverpool Irish Festival 2018	£14,999	25-Jul-18	July	North	Liverpool	Combined arts
Year 2019-20		Total awards 4535	Total fund £100,315,447.00				
P & O Celtic Arts	Legends of Folk-Rock	£4,357	18-Jun-19	June	Midlands	Warwick	Music
Keira Mari Martin	Good Blood - a new Irish & Contemporary dance and music production	£14,968	17-Jul-19	July	North	Leeds	Dance
Liverpool Irish Festival	Liverpool Irish Festival 2019/LIF2019	£14,999	11-Sep-19	September	North	Liverpool	Combined arts
Irish Arts Foundation	Exploring the musical traditions of County Leitrim and County Fermanagh	£15,000	12-Dec-19	December	North	Leeds	Music
Year 2020 - Cultural Recovery Funds		Total awards 2013	Total fund £427,577,702.00				
Irish Cultural Centre	Irish Cultural Centre	£90,000	R1	R1	London	Hammersmith	Combined arts
Liverpool Irish Festival	Liverpool Irish Festival	£50,500	R1	R1	North West	Liverpool, Riverside	Combined arts

Fig.3. This only accounts for ACE. Further research should be done into British Council and other leading arts funders in England. 

CONCLUSIONS/WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Assessing the evidence

Irish and Northern Irish artists and art in England are woefully represented in terms of population ratio and funds per capita. Though it is recognised that *Arts Council England* would never monitor or disperse their funding in terms of population percentages, as an indicator of an imbalance in representation and opportunity, we believe this demonstrates a significant point. This is all the more galling when considering public spending and the pounds spent by these populations commercially and paid to 'England Plc' via tax, which is neither rewarded or represented in the cultural offer they might enjoy and benefit from. 🍷

The *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* revealed that its artists presume Brexit will draw a curtain between the work of Ireland and Northern Ireland and England with funding for such work being withdrawn. Sector suggestions make more import of preventing communication breakdown and diminishing relations. We are doing our utmost to counter this potential damage to protect and improve relations. Advocacy, planning and public strategy would help in this, e.g., does *British Council* have an All-Ireland plan for arts and cultural exchange? Does *Culture Ireland* have a reciprocal plan? Will the new Cultural lead for the Irish Embassy have a steering group on this and if so, who are its members? 🍷

NB: The Convener and new cultural lead for the Embassy met on 20 Jan 2021.

More evidence required

Evidence is needed to underwrite

- that Irish and Northern Irish creativity in England is important and is acknowledged as separate from English, Scots, Welsh or other work. In doing so, we recognise the value of each as individual and worth upholding, recognising and valuing 🍷 – could this be part of a go-to statement?
- that Irish and Northern Irish artists and organisations *should* celebrate and claim their specific Irishness as part of an understood and protected characteristic, because it will be welcomed and associated with quality practices, diversity and representation within blended communities
- that there is a systemic inequality -or issues within a system- that appear to be creating barriers and misrepresenting Irish and Northern Irish creativity in England, compared to the population make-up and creative production available. 'Evidencing disparity', above, provides some evidence to demonstrate some of the inequity currently suffered.

Better signposting/Quick deliverables

Liverpool Irish Festival will generate updateable funder information, contact toolkits and general information that may be pertinent to Irish or Northern Irish artists, or -indeed- other artists who want to engage in Irish or Northern Irish creative practices. This work will begin in 2021, following the acceptance of this paper by the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network.

Liverpool Irish Festival will host a bi-monthly, online network-meeting with Irish and Northern Irish artists and commissioners to discuss new or ongoing projects; relate Embassy/national directives and consider collaborative projects, as agreed at the Tue 19 Jan 2021 meeting. The networks general purpose is to advance this paper and

- conduct further consultation about knowledge gaps and skill development
- permit network links, contacts and funder updates
- identify toolkit needs and contact lists
- share workloads and generate collaborations.

Further meetings are scheduled for: 23 Mar 2021, 25 May 2021, 20 July 2021, 26 Oct 2021 (as part of Liverpool Irish Festival) and 14 Dec 2021 (all Tuesdays, at 2pm). Please note, these dates flex to accommodate the Convener's schedule.

CULTURAL CONNECTEDNESS EXCHANGE'S NEXT STEPS

Initially, the Convener shared this paper with the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network, for comment and inclusions. Feedback has been incorporated. Amendments and additions will be made and issued to the group, discussed and approved at the January meeting and submitted to *Irish In Britain* to take to their All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting (date to be advised). A distilled set of advocacy points and questions can be found below.

After the paper's updates, the convener expects to lead on the following tasks:

- create toolkits and upload to the website, including funder lists or signposts to existing lists, England's Irish and Northern Irish creative cultural commissioners contact list, etc. This work could be shared across the network
- contact Irish and Northern Irish creative and cultural commissioners with this document and try to engage them in the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network. We will approach all *Irish In Britain* members and *Emigrant Support Programme* recipients to consider if and how they work with artists, whether they could collaborate with other Irish/Northern Irish led cultural organisations and if they could help platform work, based on protected day rates (using ACE's *Paying Artists* guidance)
- engaging the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network in raising awareness of Irish and Northern Irish commissioning organisations and funding bodies in England that may support independent work. Artists will be supported to understand the resources available to them and their ability to apply. This will be worked through by sharing the proposed 'Quick deliverables' toolkits, cited above; hosted online and freely accessible. Network partners will be invited to use, contribute to and share the link
- *Liverpool Irish Festival* and *Irish In Britain* will sustain working relationships with ACE and the Irish Embassy to monitor changes over the next four years
- Pursue the queries raised in the above sections with those identified therein. Once these lines of enquiry have been made, they will be reported on via the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network.

Ongoing work

Liverpool Irish Festival and *Comhaltas in Britain* will keep working to provide *Irish In Britain* with information to advocate, pressure (appropriately) and work with *Arts Council England* and the Irish Embassy to identify the ways in which Irish and Northern Irish work may be identified/recognised via applications and reporting. It is important to establish where monitoring takes place and how that is ranked, e.g., is it

- the (solo, dual or multiple) nationality/ethnicity (self-identified) of the artist
- the cultural organisation leading/promoting the work
- the subject of the work
- all of the above (this paper's recommendation)?

As of 13 Nov 2020, a date for a discussion between ACE, *Liverpool Irish Festival* and *Irish In Britain* on the subject of data and representation remains to be set by ACE, with a proposed agenda of:

- What ethnicity data monitoring will ACE be following; how does Irishness sit within that and how does this inform ACE selection/reporting? How will ACE identify Irish/Northern Irish-centred from Irish-generated work, etc?
- Should we be advocating for Irish and Northern Irish artists in England or dual heritage English-Irish artists to make more of their Irishness as a factor within the *Creative Case* and, if so, where would ACE most like to see this?
- How can we help ACE to achieve *Creative Case* goals by understanding and articulating Irishness, alongside dual heritage/blended communities and the data sets already in use?

It is worth noting the formation of the *Northern Culture All Party Parliamentary Group* (Nov/Dec 2020), which the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network should ensure it accesses, especially as large concentrations of Irish and Northern Irish people live in Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool and other northern cities in England.

See note regarding next *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* network meeting at 2pm, 19 Jan 2021, above.

NATIONAL ADVOCACY AND *IRISH IN BRITAIN* (TEAR AWAY PAGE)

The following section condenses the document above in to what the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* is asking *Irish In Britain* to take forward to the All-Party Parliamentary Group and highlights research needed to underpin the advocacy. Following the 19 Jan 2021 meeting, it was determined the Convener and Ruairí Cullen (*Irish In Britain*) would take this 'offline' to work on, feeding back to the next network session.

All-Party Parliamentary Group questions

- is Irishness/Northern Irishness in England understood and reflected by its national agencies? If so, how so?
- why aren't/should Irish and Northern Irish artists and organisations use and celebrate their national identity more? **What are the barriers/benefits to doing so?** (latter question possibly one for the network)
- how do ACE /others identify if Irish and Northern Irish artists are applying/failing? What are the/are there any common weak points that could be improved or is this linked to a lack of recognition that 'Irish' is not the same as 'British'?
- how do we use Brexit to galvanise connections, create better networks and promote Irish and Northern Irish relations in England to prevent diminishing relations?
- how do we make or retain links with Irish communities across Europe and how can creatives be used to help Irish and Northern Irish audiences do and value this?
- hate crimes are aggregated by offence and/or under 'mixed white' rather than specific nationality or race, another issue which others Irish and Northern Irish people in England who cannot make their case heard using national statistics. Can this be amended so we have better understanding of the issue?

Further research

Can *Irish In Britain* advance research that must identify

- is there merit in identifying as Irish or Northern Irish or in generating Irish or Northern Irish related work or has this counted against Irish and Northern Irish artists, leading to them bypassing national agencies and inadvertently minimising their success/reach/representation? Commercial work is a positive marker, but does not necessarily speak for -or to- wider community audiences about matters of identity, social cohesion or community welfare/connectedness
- any funding dis/parity made in respect of Irish and Northern Irish work by other bodies, e.g., *British Council*, *DCMS* and top five charitable foundations (specialising in arts and cultural funds)
- the domestic revenue gained from Irish/Northern Irish migrants vs public spend on relevant cultural product
- what the *British Council's* (or other agencies) All-Ireland plan is for arts and cultural exchange, if one exists. Does *Culture Ireland* have a reciprocal plan? If not, can we create one to ensure relations don't fall away?

Can *Irish In Britain* develop a go-to statement about the intrinsic value of Irish and Northern Irish creativity in England, that artists can employ in their funding applications or commission application statements?

CONTRIBUTORS

This paper has been compiled by *Liverpool Irish Festival*, with contributions from Patrick Morrison at *Comhaltas in Britain*. It draws on the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange* session, held on 15 Oct 2020 and 19 Jan 2021, both are which are available via the Past Events pages, to be found at: <https://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com/past-events/> (accessed 02 Feb 2021), convened by the *Liverpool Irish Festival*.