



Culturapedia[®]

Artist-led
(performing arts)
National Portfolio Organisations
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Report summary for Central School of Speech and Drama

ALNPO are a fledgling group of artist-led, performing arts companies who are all part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio.

In Spring 2021, with funding from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, the group engaged Robert Howell from Culturapedia to conduct some research and prepare it to advocate further for the sub-sector, recognising its current work and its innovation which informs future practice across the board.

The report brings together insights from a group survey and focus groups along with desk-based research.

Defining the place of ALNPOs as a distinct sector in the wider cultural ecology

ALNPO members demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:

They are performance-based with the practice of a founding creative entrepreneur at the heart of their work. They create new work with a degree of radical innovation and are peripatetic with a non-geographical focus. They are horizontally integrated micro-businesses and engage in co-creation at levels appropriate to the founding practice.

They are the innovation powerhouse for the performing arts in England and beyond. Their experimentation and innovation informs and shapes the wider sector's practice and drives the ever-evolving ecology of the performing arts.

Developing a shared best practice model

It is recommended that the ALNPO group should commit to the following to improve sector representation of people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

- Sign up to The Living Wage Foundation
- Pledge to pay freelancers their travel expenses for auditions, rehearsals and other project work.
- Audit and compare pay levels across the group for both staff and freelancers.
- 'Fess up' about unpaid hours!
- Include agreed minimum pay rates as part of their next NPO applications.
- Commit to undertaking a full review of recruitment procedures

Developing a shared methodology for collecting and sharing information

A map of evaluative information and methodologies is presented. It, or elements of it, should be adopted collectively to benchmark impact and to advocate further for the sub-sector.

In addition, the report recommends

- That the group considers a name that better defines it
- That the group formally constitutes itself as a non-incorporated organisation with a bank account, executive and criteria for membership. A nominal membership fee of £100 would provide initial resources to provide administrative support
- Associate membership could be offered, at a smaller fee or free of charge, to companies that fit the criteria but are not NPOs.
- Regular dialogue should be maintained with Arts Council England at a senior level with an annual meeting of individual relationship managers to advocate for shared understanding and regional consistency of approach
- That the group finds a way to highlight and celebrate the artistic output of individual members through monthly emails to Arts Council officers and other

industry bodies such as ITC and the funders of this report, Central School of Speech and Drama