

Frequently Asked Questions

Transform National (Host Organisations)

1. Who can apply to become a host organisation?

We welcome applications from visual arts organisations based in England whose boards and senior leadership teams are committed to supporting emerging leadership and organisational development. Organisations should be willing to reflect on their practice, explore opportunities for change and meet the commitments outlined in the open call.

You do not need to be an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) or a Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) to apply.

2. How will host organisations be selected?

Applications will be reviewed against the programme's eligibility and selection criteria.

Shortlisted organisations will be invited to an online interview to explore their interest, proposed area of organisational development and capacity to support an AED. Four host organisations will be selected.

3. How long will the AED placement last and how many days will they work with us?

Each Associate Executive Director (AED) will undertake a paid placement of approximately 15 months within their host organisation, as part of a wider 18-month leadership development programme.

During their placement, AEDs will spend 90 paid days working with their host organisation, averaging approximately six days per month.

4. Will AEDs be recruited from our local area?

Yes, the intention is for AEDs to be recruited from within or close to the geographical area of their host organisation. This reflects the programme's commitment to people and place, supporting emerging leaders to develop their experience and contribute to the cultural communities and places they're connected to.

5. Will host organisations be involved in recruiting their AED?

Yes, host organisations will be involved in the recruitment and selection of their AED, as well as preparing for and welcoming them into the organisation. Further details about the recruitment process will be shared ahead of AED recruitment.

6. What level of support will our organisation need to commit?

- Identify a clear and meaningful area of organisational practice for the AED to review.
- Provide access to the information, people and discussions needed to undertake the review.

- Give the AED defined responsibilities and opportunities to contribute to organisational thinking and decision-making.
- Dedicate two named people to the placement: one responsible for line management and day-to-day support, and another responsible for overseeing the AED's development and progress of the organisational review.
- Commit both named supporters to participating in workshops led by New Art Exchange and DASH, with relevant board members and senior staff joining where appropriate.
- Provide opportunities for the AED to shadow board meetings and develop an understanding of governance and organisational decision-making.
- Protect time for mentoring, professional development and peer learning.
- Participate in independent programme evaluation.
- Share the AED's final recommendations with the board, actively explore implementation options and provide a reasoned response to each recommendation.

7. What is the financial commitment for host organisations?

Each host organisation will contribute £4,000 towards the programme, paid in two instalments of £2,000 in 2026/27 and £2,000 in 2027/28.

AED placements will be funded separately through Transform National. Each AED will receive a fee of £21,700 for 100 paid days. This includes 90 days working with their host organisation, alongside 10 additional days for conference preparation, research and reporting. AEDs will also have access to a dedicated £2,000 professional development budget to support their individual development needs following the placement.

Details of contracting arrangements, payment schedules and travel expenses will be discussed and agreed with host organisations and AEDs ahead of the placements.

8. What support will our organisation and the AED receive?

Host organisations will receive support through organisational assessments, leadership workshops, access audits and the development of Inclusive Leadership and Change Plans.

AEDs will have access to mentoring, coaching, peer learning and professional development. Programme partners will also provide ongoing coordination and support throughout delivery.