Northern Powerhouse celebrates new £3million



Matt Smith, CEO of Key Fund, and Michael Ellis, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism Matt Smith, CEO of Key Fund

The next phase of the £15m Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund (NCRF) was announced by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Michael Ellis, at the Theatre Royal in Wakefield.

The NCRF was set up by the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport as part of the legacy of the Great Exhibition of the North.

Through the NCRF, £3m will now be available to enterprises across the Northern Powerhouse areas of the North of England to apply for repayable finance (loans and grants) of up to £150,000. The aim is to build resilience among cultural heritage organisations and bolster their potential to be catalysts for economic growth and social good.

Michael Ellis said: “Arts and culture can play a vital role in strengthening communities and improving people’s lives. The Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund will give institutions access to finance so they can deliver innovative projects that use the arts to make a real difference across the Northern Powerhouse.”

Led by Key Fund, the North’s leading investor in social and community enterprise, the NCRF will work in partnership with Creative United, a community interest company that works to help arts and creative businesses grow.

National Lottery support

In a strategic move that supports the NCRF, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has just awarded £250,000 to Creative United for their Enterprise and Investment Readiness Support initiative.

> Supporting the NCRF, Creative United's National Lottery Heritage Fund grant will provide freely accessible capacity-building support to over 80 organisations.

In line with The National Lottery Heritage Fund's new Funding Framework, this will help them to drive innovation, enterprise and resilience, and unlock funding streams in 'left-behind' communities in the North.

Creative United plan to offer a tailored mix of 1:1 advice and group workshops. These will enable cultural heritage organisations to adopt new skills and knowledge, creating sustainable and enterprising business models which benefit local communities.

New steps to help organisations

The launch was attended by the North's leading cultural organisations, local councils and Arts Council England. Also in attendance were creative enterprises from across the North who have already benefited from earlier NCRF Key Fund investment such as Leeds-based East Street Arts and Doncaster's Higher Rhythm.

David Renwick, Head of the National Heritage Lottery Fund for Yorkshire, said: "We are delighted to be taking new steps to help organisations access the funding they need, explore flexible ways of financing projects, and exploring new ways to invest National Lottery players' money.

"Our commitment to Creative United and the NCRF demonstrates this as an early example of the vision set out in our new strategic framework, launched in January."

How to apply

Organisations can apply via the Key Fund website.

The fund will cover the following Local Enterprise Partnership regions:

- Cheshire and Warrington
- Cumbria
- Greater Manchester
- Humber
- Lancashire
- Leeds City Region
- Liverpool City Region
- North East
- Sheffield City Region
- Tees Valley
- York

- North Yorkshire and East Riding

Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

The £15m Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund was launched by government in August 2017 to build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North.

In March 2018, Michael Ellis announced that:

- Blackpool would receive £4m to create a museum celebrating the town's history as the UK's first mass seaside holiday resort.
- £4m would be used to transform the vacant former Bradford Odeon cinema into a 4,000-capacity live music and events venue.
- Nearly £3.3m would be used to enhance the visitor experience at cultural attractions across the Lake District.