

Culture is our plan



A cultural strategy for Bradford District 2021–2031

Text only version

Culture is our Plan

The ten-year cultural strategy for Bradford District 2021-2031

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Something exciting is happening in Bradford District

We are experiencing a cultural renaissance and facing the future with new-found confidence and hope. Culture is important in everyone's lives. It can make a sustainable contribution to the prosperity and happiness of everyone in the District and it is vital as we recover from COVID-19 and strive to level up with the rest of the UK.

We are the fifth biggest local authority in England and, while we are proud of our many famous cultural attractions, we don't have the range of cultural activity a place this size demands. We have historically underperformed in attracting national investment and our existing arts, culture and heritage organisations lack the power to engage all our diverse communities. We are determined to use our resources to solve these problems and to work in partnership with national investors to level up the District.

With the support of our national partners and the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, we have a huge opportunity to mobilise our creative communities to drive our recovery. We can become an incubator for creativity, a globally renowned place with a diverse cultural workforce brimming with innovative ideas. We can attract more artists and help people realise their creative visions.

- Eight out of ten people rated culture as 'important to them'
- 94% said culture 'makes Bradford District a better place to live'
- 88% said it 'improves their wellbeing'

And we have a set of conditions that make us uniquely placed to succeed:

01. We're the youngest place in Europe

More than 30% of the District's population are currently under the age of 20. Young entrepreneurial populations create the technologies, businesses and jobs of the future and stimulate wider economic growth.

02. We are cosmopolitan

Bradford is the diverse face of modern Britain. By 2025 half our population will have South Asian, Eastern European, African, Caribbean or Arab heritage amongst many others.

Diverse teams are more successful, and we are determined to harness the creative power of our diversity.

03. We have an acclaimed cultural scene

From The Alhambra to The Brick Box, from Mind the Gap to Kala Sangam, from Cliffe Castle to Impressions Gallery, from Saltaire Industrial Village to the world's first City of Film, we have an extraordinary base to build from. 54% of our visitor economy is already triggered by culture.

04. We have a powerful culture of entrepreneurship

Self-employment here has grown by 23% in ten years and in 2017 Barclays bank named us the best place in the country to start up a business. Our creative sector is collegiate and has shown itself incredibly resilient in the face of COVID-19.

05. We have famous landscapes and many beautiful historic buildings

Our mills and hills extraordinary locations for cultural activity. Compared to other parts of the country, property prices are very affordable.

06. We are at the heart of the north

We are the core of the Northern Powerhouse. We were central to the relocation of Channel 4 to Leeds and our diverse young population is an asset for any business addressing younger, global audiences, particularly in film, TV and digital media.

07. We are bucking national trends

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council is investing in our independent arts, culture and heritage sector, convinced of the value it adds. This has already inspired major new investments by National Lottery Heritage Fund in St George's Hall and Bradford Live; and by Arts Council England in The Leap and Bradford Producing Hub.

Susan Hinchcliffe, leader of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and chair of the Bradford Cultural Place Partnership said:

'I am delighted to see the fruition of Culture Is Our Plan, which has been made with the people of our District over a two-year period. The plan doesn't pretend to have all the answers. But it offers a ten-year vision, ten ambitions and ten targets to help us on a journey of culture-led recovery and regeneration. Every two years there will be a gathering of our growing cultural sector. It will be made up not only of artists, curators, designers, box-office assistants and conservators, but also of those key workers who are the bedrock of our communities – doctors, transport workers, hairdressers, factory workers; in fact, anyone and everyone for whom culture is a part of life.'

At these cultural events we will share our progress and reset our targets to create the next edition of the plan. We will reaffirm our collective belief in the power of creativity to benefit the lives of everyone in the District. So, pencil May 2023 in your diary. Halfway along our journey we aim to become the UK City of Culture 2025. Winning this designation would put rocket fuel in our tank and accelerate our journey to a better future. But whether we win that accolade or not, Culture Is Our Plan will stand, and will be our guide to a better, more creative, inclusive and successful Bradford District for everyone.'

'Now is exactly the moment, as we emerge from COVID-19, to unlock Bradford's untapped creative potential'

Alex Croft and Kirran Shah, Co-Chairs – Bradford Cultural Voice Forum said:

'Too many times, in too many places, cultural strategies have been developed for the creative sector, rather than with them, and we all know what that leads to – a plan that sits in a drawer, ignored or forgotten, until the next one comes along to take its place. Culture Is Our Plan feels different. Right from the start, the views, ideas, thoughts and dreams of Bradford District's cultural sector have been at the heart of developing this plan. It's a plan that's packed with hope and big aspirations, and one that feels relevant. To support the plan's development, we held regular weekly consultations on specific aspects of the plan with Cultural Voice Forum members.

These meetings proved again and again how talented the workforce we already have in the District is, and what huge drive and passion there exists to help achieve the ambitious goals of Culture Is Our Plan. It feels like this plan will deliver real change – both to the lives of people throughout Bradford District and to the makeup of the cultural sector to ensure it's truly representative of our diverse population. Time will tell, but we hope in ten years' time it will mean access to the arts, culture and heritage is opened up to everyone in the District – be that as audience members, participants, or through increased opportunities to study creative subjects and enter into a career in the arts.'

'Ultimately, it feels like all of us in Bradford can be proud to say – yes, this is OUR plan. Now let's get started'

Our District

Artist Tanya Vital welcomes you to Bradford, the jewel in the crown of the Pennines

“Bradford is a place of vibrant culture and monumental history. The beating heart of our ‘broad fjord’ is framed by the celestial body of our mighty moors. Once the playground of giants, our stunning landscapes range from the Wuthering Heights of Howarth to the promontory parent and child of Ilkley. They have provided the perfect canvas for many of Hollywood’s wildest dreams.

Culture has always played a significant role in our District’s history and our arms of internationalism reach far and wide. Bradford is one of the youngest cities in Europe and yet, we have always had a prominent presence. Our community-led disposition has meant we have always been fighting to make the world around us a better place for all – from our radical roots in the Chartist Movement to the birthplace of what we now call the Labour Party. Once the King of Wool, we are nationally and internationally famous for our local attractions. We’re the home of the powerful literary collection at the Brontë Society and the Parsonage Museum; we lovingly preserve some of the most iconic, game-changing moments in film history at the National Science and Media Museum and proudly display our very own miniature Moorish castle, the Alhambra Theatre. It’s a city that has continuously been in the thralls of rebirth and reinvention and I’m proud that the very heart of our home is reinventing itself once again.” Tanya Vital

Being two thirds rural, Bradford District is home to breathtaking landscapes, its industrial heritage juxtaposed with soft rolling hills. Imposing historical buildings and mills nestle amongst the canals and winding rivers. The steam railways of Keighley and Worth Valley, made famous in the movie *The Railway Children*, still draw in crowds. It is one of the few places in the world to have not one, but two UNESCO designations; Saltaire industrial village is a UNESCO world heritage site and, as the world’s first City of Film, we are part of the UNESCO Creative Cities network.

Bradford has a staggering 2,287 listed buildings, including several Grade I treasures such as the fabulous Bradford City Hall, Saltaire Congressional Church, East Riddlesden Hall, Bolling Hall, which gets its first nod in the Domesday book, and Bradford Cathedral, which sits atop an eighth-century medieval site of worship. In a year when public spaces have never been more important, we were a District well prepared, with 36 public parks, ten of

which sit proudly on the Historic England register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England. Seven of them achieved Green Flag Award status in 2018.

The District has eleven National Portfolio Organisations – leading arts organisations recognised and supported by Arts Council England with regular, year-on-year funding:

- Artworks Creative Communities works with a huge range of people and artforms across the District and at its home in the amazing Delius Chapel in the heart of the city centre
- Bradford Literature Festival is one of the biggest, most vibrant and most diverse literary events in the UK
- The Brontë Society is custodian of the Parsonage Museum, home of the Brontë family, and extends the legacy of the family through innovative arts projects
- Common Wealth is a dynamic, socially engaged theatre company based in Bradford and Cardiff, producing exceptional and acclaimed new work across the UK
- Dance United Yorkshire works in communities across the District, changing lives in some of the most deprived places in the country
- Freedom Studios develops innovative new work and talent in theatre making
- Ilkley Literature Festival is the longest running event of its kind in the north and, like Bradford Literature Festival, is a remarkable platform for new thinking and bringing opinion formers to the District
- Impressions is a leading national photography gallery and home of the New Focus young photographer's collective
- Kala Sangam Kala Sangam is an intercultural arts hub in the heart of Bradford with a programme teeming with diversity and energy
- Mind the Gap is one of Europe's leading learning disability theatre companies that creates work for UK and international audiences
- Theatre in the Mill is a legendary studio theatre space at the University of Bradford famous for the development of emerging artists and companies

Meanwhile, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council directly manages several of the District's most important cultural assets including Bradford Theatres, which runs the Alhambra, St George's Hall and the King's Hall in Ilkley, and the Museums and Galleries at Cartwright Hall, Bolling Hall, Cliffe Castle and Bradford Industrial Museum. Alongside all this, many of our artists have national and international profiles. The District has an independent cultural scene that continues to innovate and excite. Most of our cultural organisations are small or micro businesses. More than 40% of our workers in arts, culture and heritage are freelance or sole traders compared with a UK average of 33%.

These creative people are the lifeblood of our sector. They are involved in everything from artist and community-led projects such as Keighley Creative and the newly renovated South Square to cutting-edge music and visual arts projects such as Fuse Arts Space. They turn up in festivals, from the Tech Styles International hip hop festival to the Bradford Fringe Festival and the much-adored Bingley Weekender. These creative people are the lifeblood of our cultural scene. They are behind heritage projects, from Ilkley Manor House to the Keighley Bus Museum to the Peace Museum. And they are at the heart of many extraordinary community projects with culture at their core like Bradford Community Broadcasting, BIASAN (the Bradford Immigration and Asylum Seekers Support and Advice Network) Project 6 and WomenZone.

Madani Younis, former director of Bradford's Freedom Studios and now Chief Executive Producer of The Shed in Manhattan sums up the District's potential;

'Post-war immigration into Bradford represents what a city can become. Its cultural influences play out in the city's streets every day. You hear it in the languages that reverberate around those streets. In the food that we eat and the clothes that we wear and the stories that are told. That city for me is the best of who we are as a country. And that is not said enough. That city represents the potential of what our country is and can be.'

Why Culture?

International evidence has shown the benefits of arts, culture and heritage

It supports our personal wellbeing and makes people feel more content. It helps people feel part of their community, fosters a sense of collective identity, creates space for interaction and shared experience and contributes towards people having a stronger attachment to a place. It increases satisfaction and plays an important role in attracting and retaining talent, in particular graduate companies in the digital and creative industries. It is important in putting places on the map and, where necessary, changing negative perceptions and media stereotypes of the attractiveness of areas as places to live, work and visit.

There are also hard-nosed reasons why we need culture to be our plan. Arts, culture and heritage can be a big part of our recovery now and our long-term economic success in the future.

Prior to COVID-19, the UK's cultural and creative industries – architecture, dance, music, theatre, cultural festivals, product and graphic design, fashion, film, TV, video, radio, photography, gaming and computer services, literature, poetry and publishing, museums, galleries and libraries, visual arts and crafts, advertising and marketing – have been an international success story.

Our Challenge

We have historically underperformed in attracting national investment – something we are determined to reverse. Right now, we lag behind other places of similar size and that has led to stark inequalities in cultural access too.

These inequalities are reflected in other aspects of life. Our District has high levels of poverty, obesity and diabetes, low life expectancy and declining rates of mental wellbeing. Our city and town centres – like many across the north – are struggling in the face of the impact of austerity and the effects of COVID-19. We are ranked the fifth most income deprived local authority in England. We have low levels of educational attainment and many lack the skills businesses seek. We are determined to use our resources to solve these problems and to work in partnership with national investors to level up the District.

We are proud to have our 11 National Portfolio Organisations, but they are all relatively small in scale compared with our peers. Our 11 NPO's share £1.7m from Arts Council England.

The 11 NPOs in Sheffield, meanwhile, are typically much larger companies with a share of £3.5m. National Lottery Heritage Fund made two awards to Bradford District worth £16,800 in 2019. In the same 12 months Sheffield won eight awards worth £684,900, Liverpool 19 awards worth £893,000 and Leeds ten awards worth £341,100. It is a similar story for our national partners at the British Film Institute. We know these national partners are eager to support us to grow the level of investment in the District, but we need strong projects and a coherent plan to help them to back Bradford more.

Before COVID-19, there were 5,640 workers in the cultural and creative industries sector here compared with 8,000 in Newcastle and 10,445 in Sheffield. We need to level up with the rest of the north before we can start to catch up with the south! These lower levels of investment mean less cultural opportunity too, so it's no surprise we also have fewer people able to engage with art, culture and heritage. Arts Council England data suggests that 55% of Bradfordians have 'low engagement' with the arts compared with 35% for England. These areas of lower engagement precisely match our poorest communities – and this includes some of the most diverse communities in the UK.

Our Opportunity

By contrast, as we have created this plan, we have heard from many people about how central culture and creativity are to their lives.

There is a wealth of creative practice in our District, from filmmakers to poets, photographers to musicians, writers to online influencers, and music promoters to community events organisers. Much of this is happening under the radar, but it forms a rich network of creativity, knitting together generations, communities and artists. We are beginning to win more national investment thanks to leadership and bold investments made by the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council in 2019. And thanks to arts, culture and heritage organisations working together to make effective bids:

- The Leap, our Creative People and Places programme, has won £2m from Arts Council England
- Bradford Live has been supported by £4m from National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Cultural regeneration projects in Keighley and Shipley will be supported by up to £25m each from the UK government's Towns Fund
- Bradford Producing Hub has won over £1m from Arts Council England
- National Lottery Heritage Fund is investing more than £200,000 in development of an action plan for the district, inspired by the work of Culture Is Our Plan

Although we have more diversity in our cultural sector than many parts of the UK, we don't yet have a culture that properly represents the exciting diversity of our District. Jobs in the creative economy also tend to be higher value, better paid and more skilled than the average. The sector's focus on digital technologies also means that jobs in creative industries can be greener, providing for a more sustainable District in the future.

Culture already plays a major role in Bradford District's visitor economy. We have 12 million people visiting each year, which makes 14,000 jobs and an economic impact of £696m. 54% of these visitors already come for culture. But our visitor economy is static. With investment and better promotion arts, culture and heritage can drive growth. Employment in cultural and creative industries had been growing at around 4% per year in the rest of Yorkshire and Humber region, but we have stood still. Meeting this regional growth rate could mean 3,000 new jobs by 2031.

Our Recovery

Culture is important in everyone's lives. It has become even more so during COVID-19 and will be vital as we work to recover from the impact of the pandemic and look to the future.

Along with the new devolved authority for West Yorkshire, Bradford Council has put culture and place at the heart of our economic recovery plan. Ironically, the relatively small scale of many of Bradford's cultural organisations has left them less exposed to the impact of COVID-19 on box office and other earned income. Even so, they, like many others, have been grateful for the support of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) through the Cultural Recovery Fund.

Meanwhile, the majority of our creative community is freelance, a sector that has been severely affected. Bradford Council's fast-thinking #Response funds have not only supported some of those artists but galvanised them to deliver life-enhancing projects with communities online and in person. As COVID hopefully recedes, it is critical that we don't lose sight of the climate crisis. Our arts, culture and heritage sector must think about all of our actions, individually and collectively. We need to consider the example we might set and what we will do to make Bradford District more resilient in the future. This is why this plan endorses the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These 17 goals go beyond the critical headlines of carbon reduction and challenge us also to consider our actions on equalities, decent jobs, education, wellbeing and poverty. We will use these global goals to shape our plans and measure our success.

Our vision

Bradford will offer a new definition of art, culture and heritage that reimagines our District as a place that is knowingly different and radically alternative. A place to realise new ideas, where creativity is celebrated in every home and on every street corner and where we will prove the positive impact of culture in everyone's lives.

By 2031 we want to see:

- People living better and happier lives, having better mental health, skills and jobs
- Our District as a destination of choice for people to experience exceptional cultural activity and for artists to create exceptional work
- A thriving, diverse and sustainable cultural and creative sector playing a leading role in growing economic success of the District

Our targets *We have ten targets to measure our progress over the next ten years*

1. Give every primary age child in the District the opportunity to learn the District's story through co-creation of a Bradford Curriculum
2. Increase the number, range, scale and ambition of arts, culture and heritage activity and partnerships, creating 3,000 jobs in the District and increasing visitor numbers and spend
3. Realise capital projects that will rehouse, reimagine and repurpose the District's cultural and heritage assets
4. Level up national investment per capita to match other major English cities
5. Adopt the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals to measure our success not only in carbon reduction but also in equalities, decent jobs, good education, wellbeing and reducing poverty
6. Regularly engage 70% of people in the District in arts, culture and heritage activities
7. Give 250,000 people in the District's most deprived wards the opportunity to get involved with arts, culture and heritage activities
8. Ensure that 70% of people will be 'satisfied with the range of cultural activities in the District and near to where they live' (50% in 2021) and that 80% of people will feel culture in Bradford 'represents me and my life' (50% in 2021)
9. Draw 50% of Bradford's creative workforce, audiences and cultural leadership from people currently underrepresented in the culture and creative industries sector
10. Create a calendar of high-quality festivals and events with local, national and international significance, with a view to Bradford District being designated UK City of Culture 2025

Ambition: **Creativity thrives in every corner of the district**

From Shipley to Little Germany, Manningham to Keighley, and Buttershaw to Ilkley, we will celebrate the creative people in every street. Our culture will happen in our homes, our mills, hills, streets, markets, moors, community centres, libraries and parks as well as in our cultural venues.

Bradford District is the fifth largest local authority in the UK, with more than 500,000 people. Right now, the District doesn't have the same levels of national investment per head in arts, culture and heritage activity as other places of its size. This means we have less public-funded cultural activity here and what we do have is spread thinly and the benefits and opportunities cannot reach everyone. This lack of opportunity leads to low levels of cultural engagement with traditional forms of subsidised cultural activity too. The nationwide Active Lives Survey put Bradford in the bottom 33% of UK places for arts engagement. Similarly, the Audience Agency's Audience Spectrum data suggests that 53% of the District population have low engagement with subsidised arts, culture and heritage compared with an England average of 33%. In some areas of the District, up to 100% of people may have low levels of engagement. Not surprisingly, these are the same areas where poverty and poor health are highest and cultural opportunity is lowest.

Our culture is different by nature – from the grassroots energy of Keighley Exchange or The Hive in Shipley to the Qawwali and Ghazal nights taking place in back rooms and community halls across the District. And the rich diversity of the District ensures we have a culture that is beyond the traditional white western neo-classical definitions of what is and isn't 'proper art' too.

Of course, what this data really tells us is that people in these parts of the District don't often show up in box-office databases as ticket buyers at our bigger venues and events. It doesn't tell us the reality of grassroots cultural activity or about the people's creativity, which can go too easily unnoticed under the radar.

'Culture doesn't appear to be a local activity – but it is happening all the time in back rooms of houses and halls – it just isn't valued in the same way; it isn't connected to the capital 'C' kinds of culture or to the city centre'

Its clear culture happens not just in our theatres and museums but in our homes, cafes, outdoor spaces, in our libraries and our places of worship.

'We need to set lots of small fires in many more places'

Let's Create, Arts Council England's ten-year plan, says: *'Creativity is everywhere but opportunity is not.'* We plan to celebrate the creativity of everyone, in every house and on every street across the District.

What we'll do

The Leap is our new Creative People and Places programme funded by Arts Council England and will run for ten years from 2020. It will champion cultural activity in the most underserved communities in the District such as Bradford Moor, Bowling and Barkerend, City, Eccleshill, Great Horton, Keighley Central, Keighley West, Little Horton, Manningham, Royds, Toller and Tong.

The Leap isn't just about providing more cultural activity in these places; it aims to give ownership of arts and culture to the people living there, so they set the agenda and make the choices about what they want to see, make and enjoy. theleapbradford.co.uk

Ambition: **Making the most of what we have**

We will build on our existing assets, revitalising historic buildings, re-energising our high streets, reimagining temporary spaces, our landscapes and cityscapes. Sustainability will be our goal, making reuse, upcycling and repurposing the cornerstones of our creativity and ensuring new cultural assets make a positive impact on sustainable development too.

We know the District doesn't yet have the range of arts, cultural and heritage facilities it needs. But to address this, we will take a radically different approach. We will reuse, repurpose and reimagine our existing assets first. This sustainable philosophy will turn our outdoor spaces, high streets, mills and libraries into creative spaces.

This creative approach will be even more important after COVID-19 has accelerated the crisis on our high streets. Heritage buildings and mills are a part of Bradford's DNA. There are numerous examples across the world of artists and entrepreneurs repurposing buildings, driving local development, increasing social capital and helping reverse industrial and retail decline. Salts Mill in Saltaire, home to a unique art collection and a partnership with David Hockney, is one of the UK's best examples of this approach and is one of the most valued and visited assets in Bradford.

'Value what we already have (please!).'

As ever, the District isn't short of ideas. They range from new homes for the Bradford Peace Museum and the brilliant Impressions Gallery and Fuse Arts Space to the creation of a Green Collections Hub to store and display the Museums and Galleries collections. This is a new model for the UK, combining sustainability with community access and training. There is also ambition for the radical reimagining of the famous Bradford City Hall.

We need to coordinate District capital projects to attract funds for levelling up and future prosperity. Opportunities include the Towns Fund, which will benefit Keighley and Shipley, and the government's levelling-up funds. A coherent capital plan could strengthen Bradford as a visitor destination. Creative workspaces can drive new projects, businesses and skills and training. They can also address the problem of inequality and access to culture. A capital strategy could also be a valuable part of the legacy plan for a UK City of Culture.

What we'll do

The Cultural Place Partnership will coordinate a cultural capital plan for the District.

Meanwhile, 'Springback' is an initiative by City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council supported by West Yorkshire Combined Authority, bringing together culture and economic development to support our high street recovery as we emerge from COVID-19 restrictions and work towards bidding for City of Culture 2025.

'Spring Back' will work with local businesses and our three Business Improvement Districts to put culture at the heart of recovery. The aim is to bring our streets, towns and neighbourhoods alive with everything from street art and festivals to window installations and pop-up markets.

Ambition: **Making the most of who we are**

The people of Bradford are our greatest creative asset. We are a cosmopolitan district, and it is in our differences that we find our richest culture. Our culture will represent our rich diversity and offer something for everyone but not the same for everyone – it won't be one size fits all.

We are the diverse face of modern Britain. A proud City of Sanctuary whose fortunes are built on centuries of international trade and generation after generation of immigration. They range from the European migrants who created the city's famous Little Germany to the South Asian workers who powered its mills and the Syrian refugees who are making the District their home today. We have rich South Asian, East and West European, African, Caribbean and Arab heritages in Bradford, alongside many others. We have many people of Muslim faith with heritage from Bosnia to Bangladesh, making the District one of the most vibrant centres of Islamic culture in Europe. These are amazing cultural opportunities.

We have outstanding examples of inclusion and intercultural excellence. City Park and the great Mirror Pool is a shining example of bringing everyone joyfully together in the public realm. The Bradford Literature Festival has become one of the most celebrated and diverse arts events in the UK. Mind the Gap is an internationally famous theatre company based in Lister Mill and making work for, by and with learning disabled artists. Bradford For Everyone is working with dozens of artists and cultural partners to improve community cohesion and integration. But these are notable exceptions and much of our subsidised arts, cultural and heritage sector is still predominantly white. It is also mainly middle class, while many Bradfordians – brown, black or white – experience poverty, high rates of unemployment and low qualification levels.

Diverse teams are most successful. We are determined to embrace the cultures that make us what we are today, ensuring exceptional creative work that is relevant to more people in the District. Consultation for the plan made it loud and clear that the District needs something for everyone but that doesn't mean it has to be the same for everyone:

'Look and see who is not actively involved now and do something about them... It's a multicultural city – harness it, leverage it, transform us'

'Bradford somehow seems to think providing the same bland vanilla offer to everyone one will work but it's boring and in truth it doesn't interest anyone.'

'I'm a Yorkshire man. I'd like to get back to being a Bradford artist or a Yorkshire artist – my practice is not dictated by my cultural roots.'

Bradford's cultural strength is in its differences; each community is different. It is our differences that we celebrate. It's our differences that make us whole.

What we'll do

In direct support of Culture Is Our Plan, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council has increased its investment in arts, culture and heritage and designed three new grant programmes from May 2021.

1. Small Project Grants

Open to anyone
For new, one-off events and activities
Grants between £200 and a maximum of £1,500
No match funding required

2. Large Project Grants

Open to individuals (up to £5,000) and organisations
For new, one-off events and activities
Grants between £1,500 and a maximum of £15,000
Match funding required

3. Regularly Funded Grants

Open to organisations
Open until 11 August 2021
Core funding to support up to three years of activity from April 2022 to March 2025
Grants between £2,500 and a maximum of £30,000 per year
Match funding required

The aim is for these new grants to be more accessible, especially to grassroots organisers. They are designed to reach all parts of the District, to champion individual artists as well as organisations and to challenge organisations to improve inclusion, reach and environmental sustainability. Award decisions will be balanced to spread opportunity across communities and the District. The increased investment by Bradford Council is also there to encourage entrepreneurialism and bold ideas, to support the growth of the sector and to assist

organisations who are ready to grow, to scale up their activities and the jobs and opportunities that they might generate. This funding will also help the sector to leverage increased levels of national support into the District.

Ambition: **Network capacity**

We are at our most powerful, effective and sustainable when we work collaboratively. By sharing resources, we will build and diversify our sector networks. As a creative community, we will share equipment, knowledge and skills, supporting, championing and mentoring each other. We will work collectively to develop inclusion, talent, participation and audiences. We will ensure every District agenda, from health to planning, education to transport, keeps culture in mind.

Most of our cultural sector is made up of relatively small organisations. 40% of our sector is freelance or self-employed, higher than the national average of 33%

These micro businesses and self-employed creatives give the District's cultural scene a real vibrancy – we are light on our feet. Ironically, this has helped many to navigate the pandemic better than mid-scale businesses who have been exposed by collapse of box-office and retail incomes. But, even in the best of times, most of our cultural organisations have barely the capacity to deliver their own projects. Even the District's best-supported organisations – those in the Arts Council England's National Portfolio – are relatively small. While Bradford's creative community has given the District a famously DIY, can-do energy that is a huge asset, its lack of capacity, connection and profile turns this into a double-edged sword: *'There is so much going on in Bradford under the radar – but it's only good for so long being bloody brilliant underground if no one knows what you're doing.'*

This fragmentation, combined with a lack of coordination, has led in the past to unhealthy competition for resources, over dependence on the District Council and even to Bradford competing against itself for national investments. However, our creative communities are collegial, collaborative and enthusiastic to work together. Without taking away the vibrancy of the sector, we will build capacity through new networks, linking up our local, national and international contacts, to enable us to share resources, expertise, intelligence, equipment, spaces, opportunities, contacts, audiences and data.

'Culture is coming together to work on a common goal'

Bradford Council is changing its relationship with the sector from being a funder to being an enabler. This new approach is already working. An Investment of £1,435,000 in 2019 into sector-led bids like Bradford Producing Hub has already levered £3,560,000 of new investment into the District for culture. The Cultural Place Partnership, which commissioned

Culture Is Our Plan, was set up to oversee the growth of arts, culture and heritage activity across the District. It will coordinate Bradford's response to national opportunities. It is chaired by Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe and membership includes leaders of the major strategic cultural initiatives in the District. This includes representatives from the independent cultural sector nominated by the Cultural Voice Forum, a network open to everyone working in arts, culture and heritage in our District. It brings together more than 250 people to share sector knowledge, experience and opportunity.

Unity will be our strength. To increase investment in the District, we will work together and not in competition. With a shared plan, the arts, culture and heritage sector will attract national investors and partners.

What we'll do

Following its brilliant start in 2019, The Cultural Voice Forum will increase its membership and resources to enable it to play an enhanced role in communication and coordination for arts, culture and heritage. It will provide support services, data and information to the sector and will work closely with partners like the Bradford Producing Hub to maximise training and skills development opportunities. It will also help represent the District's voice in regional and national forums.

Ambition: **Thinking big**

We will be bold and entrepreneurial, encouraging our creative partners to make ambitious work across the District. We will create the right environment for culture to flourish, bringing with it more work and jobs. Bradford will be a fertile ground for visionary projects, partnerships and national and international collaborations.

Our lack of medium-size cultural venues and low national investment means there are fewer opportunities here for people to see work or to make work on a big scale — whether that's a gallery big enough for large sculptures or a stage big enough for a dozen contemporary dancers. There are also no facilities in the District to make large-scale work.

'Where are the jobs? There are some community arts opportunities, which are great, but where are the chances in Bradford to perform professionally at the scale that I've been trained for?'

Meanwhile, the District is regularly acclaimed as one of the most entrepreneurial places in the UK. While we have great cultural entrepreneurs from the Silver family at Salts Mill to the Bread and Roses cooperative on North Parade, we need to encourage more creatives to set up, scale up and create more jobs here. With investment, we can become a destination of choice for regional, national and international artists and co-producers.

We certainly have the talent – however, too often, our boldest works are realised outside the District! In 2019, Common Wealth created a huge immersive performance work in central Manchester to honour the 200th anniversary of the Peterloo massacre. The same year, Mind the Gap, with help from Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence programme, created Zara, a fantastic outdoor performance with a cast of over 100 and a mechanical, moving baby bigger than a double decker bus. It was performed to more than 8,000 people in Halifax and London, but not in Bradford. Bradford is proudly the first ever UNESCO City of Film, but while the District is often backdrop to films and TV series, there are no independent production companies based in the District. We have the young talent but don't yet have the support structures to enable companies to set up and invest in the region.

'Culture is thinking big and bold and sharing a reality and a vision'

Thanks to Bradford Theatres, we have longstanding relationships with national companies including the Royal Shakespeare Company, Halle Orchestra and Matthew Bourne's New Adventures. We should think big with these national partners too.

Thinking big can have amazing results: In 2016, Cartwright Hall started to consult with David Hockney and hundreds of local school children about what a gallery to celebrate the early work of the great artist should be like. The questions posed to him by children of Bradford led to the creation of a £300,000 gallery and an 85% increase in visitor figures. It also transforms how people see their horizons: A Year 4 teacher at Bradford's St Oswald's Primary School said, *'It shows Hockney as an inspiration to Bradford school children, they are now aware that people from Bradford can be world leaders.'*

Thinking Big is about providing more opportunity for national and international artists to make work in the District but also to develop the talent already here.

'It's all about opportunity. The artists and their skills and talents are already there'

What we'll do

Launch the new screen strategy for the District in 2021. As Seen on Screen offers the District a bold and ambitious vision for the future. Screen business is booming across the UK, but our screen sector is currently small and lagging behind the rest of our region, so there is real scope for Bradford to play a bigger part in this success story, becoming far more than a great film set. As Seen on Screen aims to stimulate local screen production with particular emphasis on short-form, TV, mobile, digital and games – and on the diverse young people and stories that make Bradford so attractive to broadcasters and media businesses such as Channel 4.

The strategy aims to level the playing field and establish a maturing, joined-up screen sector by 2025. It will be well connected to the wider screen sector but have its own distinctive style, giving a stronger voice to Bradford's people both on and off screen. It will:

- Reimagine our UNESCO City of Film as a dynamic, creative screen hub and production centre
- Provide a joined-up, lifelong screen education and skills pathway
- Build partnerships with broadcasters and content creators regionally and nationally
- Strengthen our relationships with national funders and supporters
- Connect local content creators to one another
- Show great content on screens across the District
- Create clean-growth screen-sector jobs
- Showcase the real Bradford to the world
- Give our people a stronger voice

Ambition: **Live life better**

Our arts, culture and heritage will become part of the District's City of Research. We will use the unique data from Born in Bradford and our partnership with Bradford Institute for Health Research to prove the positive benefit of art, culture and heritage on everyone's lives.

Having examined all of the data available on audiences across the District, we now know enough to know what we don't know!

We can see that the conventional tools to measure cultural engagement don't help us understand either the breadth of cultural activity in the District or people's level of engagement with it. Even within our professional National Portfolio Organisations, very few operate box-office systems. The picture they can paint is partial at best. Bradford needs to devise its own means of collecting and understanding data about cultural engagement. Fortunately, we have a unique asset to help us do this – and a great deal more besides. At the Bradford Institute for Health Research, Born in Bradford is a world-leading study that has been tracking the lives of 13,500 babies and their families – around 30,000 people in total – for more than a decade. It is helping unravel the reasons for ill health and using the evidence to save lives. On top of this, the Connected Bradford project holds anonymised data for approximately 700,000 citizens across the Bradford and Airedale region.

An evidence summary by University College London (UCL) on the role of arts in improving health and wellbeing concluded that many of the benefits of arts and culture are scientifically proven. Published by the Department of Culture Media and Sport in September 2020, the summary said the arts had positive impacts on child development, social skills and social cohesion, including a reduction of loneliness and isolation, an increase in prosocial behaviours, a decline in aggression and discrimination, and an improvement in social consciousness. Bradford Council's COVID-19 #Response funds have helped people cope with isolation, fear and poor mental health and to find their own creative voice. You can find out more in the case study.

Professor John Wright, who leads this work, calls Bradford a 'City Co-laboratory' in which the key determinants of health can be measured and acted upon. These determinants include art and culture.

Not all of the benefits of arts and culture are yet proven beyond doubt. The UCL report

concludes, for example, that *'evidence on the effects of the arts on social inequalities remains for future studies to explore'*.

Where better than Bradford to put this to the test?

What we'll do

The Bradford Cultural Place Partnership will co-commission a UK-first, ten-year study using the unique Born in Bradford data. Working with the team at Bradford Institute for Health Research, we will get a better understanding of people's engagement with culture. The study will give us evidence of the benefits of arts, culture and heritage to everyone's lives.

Ambition: **Creating an explosion of opportunity**

Working with families, schools, careers service, universities and college partners we will create a critical mass of coordinated training and employment pathways for young people. We will champion and evidence the viability of creative careers to mobilise a whole generation of young, talented, digitally native people and ensure they take the lead in shaping the future success of the District.

The young, diverse and enterprising population of Bradford District represents an extraordinary opportunity – socially, culturally and economically. It is cited as one of the reasons for Channel 4 locating to its new headquarters in Leeds City Region.

Young people are already at the heart of many exceptional cultural projects in the district:

- The New Focus group at Impressions Gallery was set up in 2012 and has worked with over 120 young people on 20 award-winning projects
- FilmMakers 25 matches young content producers and filmmakers from the District with an industry expert over six months. It addresses the screen industry's need for more diverse employees and helps local producers get a bigger slice of the media cake
- Impact Gamers turns young gamers into games makers, using art, maths and imagination to create fun social games of their own

Despite projects like these, there is little joined-up work between the cultural and educational sectors. Few young people take up or are even aware of the opportunities waiting for them in the cultural and creative industries. Born in Bradford study notes *that 'over half of our children will leave school without a low C in English or Maths... which starts to explain why we have some of the worst social mobility within the UK... with all of the long-term physical health and mental health problems that brings...'*

There is patchy provision of creative education across the District's schools. This leads to a poor understanding from a very early age of the cultural sector and routes to employment. The University of Bradford and Bradford College have low levels of students on cultural and creative courses compared with peers in the region. The cultural and creative sector itself has skills to share but is made up of small organisations that lack the capacity to run training and apprenticeship programmes alone. Meanwhile, a third of our businesses cite a lack of digital expertise as a major block to their growth. Almost a quarter of them say an enhanced local skills pool will help them unlock some of the multibillion-pound investment expected to

accompany the West Yorkshire devolution deal.

‘Arts and culture has enough opportunity that it becomes a mainstream option for young people’

We need to bring the District’s cultural sector together with everyone working in education, skills and career pathways for the cultural and creative industries. Together, we will raise awareness about the rewarding opportunities on offer to Bradford’s young people.

What we’ll do

Bradford Cultural Education Partnership will bring the District’s independent cultural sector together with schools, with further and higher education and with the Careers and Technical Education Partnership. Working together, they will advocate for cultural and creative careers and maximise opportunities for young people across Bradford.

Bradford Cultural Education Partnership will focus on creative digital skills with two major strands:

1. Digital Creatives will introduce creative skills to secondary schools in support of Digital Makers, a programme to provide all young people in the District with digital skills. The initiative comes from Bradford Institute for Health Research, which is responsible for the Born in Bradford study of over 13,500 children born at Bradford Royal Infirmary
2. Digital Storytellers will give families and primary-age children the opportunity to tell stories about the place they live and co-create a Bradford Curriculum

Ambition: **Having fun**

We will build a calendar of exceptional festivals and events, celebrations and one-off moments across the District – from the hyperlocal to the global. We will show that Bradford is open for business, building capacity, giving permissions, unlocking spaces and encouraging innovators. We will make the District a great place to live and a host of choice for national and international cultural events and partnerships.

Festivals and events bring people together, creating excitement, joy and energy. At their best, they share ideas and experiences that can extend people's horizons and transform their lives

We have a proud track record of creating exceptional festivals which continues today with not just one, but two famous literature festivals in Ilkley and Bradford. But in recent years other festivals in the District have struggled. Austerity has taken its toll on Illuminate, the Bradford Festival and Bradford International Film Festival amongst others. Organisers of events complain of difficulties in gaining permissions and finding partners. Meanwhile, Bradford Council's own programme of activity in City Park has struggled to attract national investors.

Many people look back fondly to the 1980s and 90s and the legendary Bradford Festival and Mela. While that event is in the past, its spirit isn't, and Bradford is still a place where fresh festival activity continues to spring up from its grassroots:

- Keighley's Arts and Film Festival got off to a flying start with a pilot in 2019 and will return post-COVID in 2021
- Haworth's 1940s weekend grows from strength to strength
- In 2020, young women artists spontaneously banded together to celebrate South Asian Heritage Month and pulled off an amazing series of events over Zoom at the height of the pandemic
- Each year, the Tech Styles International Festival brings international hip hop artists to Kala Sangam to meet and inspire our artists
- For several years, Cecil Green Arts' annual Lantern Parade in Lister Park has beguiled all ages
- Running throughout July since 2019, the Bradford fringe festival is a grassroots, volunteer-led, DIY festival

- Yorkshire Games Festival is the National Science and Media Museum's five-day bonanza of games and gaming culture, with more than 7,000 visitors and a mission to inspire future digital creators

We can also give a distinctively Bradford twist to existing global brands: TEDx Bradford, organised by 30 Chapel Street, has hosted 46 speakers since 2011, while the Women of the World (WOW) festival, organised by Common Wealth and Speakers' Corner, came here in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

'Culture for me is centered around people and places — live music, food and art'

The bid to become UK City of Culture 2025 has created the momentum to raise the quality of our festivals and events calendar. We aspire to attract new audiences and participants, made up of visitors and locals alike.

What we'll do

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council will move from directly delivering events and festivals to collaborating with partners. Working with Bradford 2025 City of Culture Bid, The Leap, Bradford Producing Hub and independent organisers and promoters, it will develop a new calendar of festivals and events that will:

- Make the most of existing grassroots activity, promote projects with the potential to grow and attract partnerships and media attention
- Be rooted in and relevant to the communities of the District
- Be of the highest artistic quality, prioritising original, distinctive work made here
- Build capacity in the District to mount future festivals and events

The Council will redeploy its festival funds as leverage to increase national investment, while streamlining the licensing process to make creating festivals and events easier for everyone.

Ambition: **Bradford will know itself better**

We will share the District's history and the diversity of our cultural heritage with pride. Our culture will speak honestly and openly, won't tolerate racism or discrimination and will have difficult conversations when needed – giving confidence to our communities, celebrating difference, bringing people together, boosting pride and promoting mental and physical wellbeing.

Knowing our story and taking pride in our place in the world is critical to our sense of self and mental wellbeing

'Culture is noticing and admiring difference'

We have a rich and diverse history, built by rapid industrialisation and immigration we needed to make international trade.

'I think that the heritage is really complex, very deep and engrained in the culture of the place and is one of the, if not the greatest, asset in setting out Bradford's road to a uniqueness and distinctiveness as a place'

Heritage is also much more than buildings, objects and artefacts. It's our landscape and our parks – places that defy barriers of age, class and ethnicity. And it's the stories we all tell that help shape our past, present and future.

- Bradford Community Broadcasting lets local people play a role in their District by giving them a voice in the media
- Bradford Museums and Galleries has saved the Belle Vue Studio archive of 17,000 glass negatives of luminous portrait photographs, documenting 20th-century immigration to Bradford from around the world
- The Bradford Stories Festival's Living Library presents real people as 'books', allowing young people to meet inspiring role models, from Ambreen Sadiq, one of the first female Asian Muslim boxers, to Dr Geetha Upadhyaya, the founder of Kala Sangam
- Peel Park Primary School and Nursery won one of only eight Historic England Champion Heritage School Awards for its commitment and excellence in teaching pupils about their local heritage

But for a lot of Bradfordians, the story of the District isn't told loudly enough, especially where those stories are inconvenient or uncomfortable. For others, the dominant story isn't

their story at all, it's someone else's; a Victorian story, a white, male, heteronormative story. This is a story that ignores many of the people and achievements that have made Bradford remarkable. While other cities make much of their radical credentials, Bradford underplays its role in social reform.

Our history ranges from the 19-week strike in the Manningham Mills, which ended in 1891, to the conference at Bradford Labour Institute on Peckover Street in 1893 when Keir Hardie was elected first chairman of a new Independent Labour Party. It includes Margaret McMillan's campaign for free school meals in the 1890s, the University of Bradford's creation of the UK's first department of Peace Studies in 1973 and the Bradford 12's resistance to the far right in the 1980s.

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's 2020 review of statues and monuments, a response to the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter, revealed more of this picture. It showed the District as a stronghold of non-conformist philanthropists, many of whom were abolitionists. The review concluded: 'This is a story we want to tell more fully... to bring some of these stories to life and help promote Bradford as a pioneering and inclusive city on the world stage.'

What we'll do

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and The Leap will launch a new partnership with National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2021. This will develop a heritage action plan for the District and pilot new ways of distributing heritage funding direct to grassroots and hyperlocal projects and organisations. The Heritage Action Plan will build on the importance and potential of all types of heritage whether tangible – things like buildings, objects, landscapes – or intangible – our stories, sense of community and the contemporary heritage work that is shedding a light on important aspects of our modern lives.

In particular we aim to look at the role of heritage and sense of place in mental wellbeing and recovery. It will connect work already under way such as the Review of Statues and Monuments, the new vision for the District's Libraries review, the emerging plans for Bradford's Museums and Galleries. It will also connect to independent projects from the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway and Saltaire Collection to Windrush Generations and South Asian Heritage Month. It will embrace partners including the Canal & River Trust and both of the District's UNESCO designations.

Ambition: **We will tell our own story**

We will tell the world new stories about the District's incredible people and distinctive places. Culture will take a lead in our District's sustainable regeneration and will redefine us in the eyes of regional and national neighbours. We will bid to be UK City of Culture 2025 and leverage our global networks to become a regional, national and international cultural destination.

'If we don't tell our stories, no one else will'

Despite the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic, Bradford District is experiencing a cultural renaissance and facing the future with new-found confidence and hope. But meanwhile, Bradford remains one of the most misunderstood and underestimated places in the country. Those in the know, like Zayn Malik, see us for what we really are:

'Bradford has a character and soul that makes it totally distinct from any other place in Britain, it's a multicultural hub and the people are unapologetically patriotic. It's a place that has seen its fair share of hardship and wears its scars boldly. A place with a long history of survival, an essential beat in the heart of what makes Britain great.'

But beyond any slogan or marketing campaign, we need to be bold in our actions to reposition Bradford in the public imagination – regionally, nationally and internationally. We need a combination of highly visible deeds alongside a determined and collective effort to manage our own narrative.

'A city that values art and culture in specific time and place that is in the here and now'

The bid for UK City of Culture in 2025 is so important and timely. It will add rocket fuel to this change and permanently shift the dial on how the District is understood. And it isn't just about the UK City of Culture. An estimated 12 million people are visiting the District each year, sustaining around 14,000 jobs and bringing £700m to our economy. Already more than 54% of savvy visitors are coming here for cultural reasons – whether that's to visit Saltaire, walk Ilkley Moor, see a brilliant show at the Alhambra or to create a show at Theatre in the Mill. But this economy is static and ripe for focussed and determined destination marketing. That includes identifying other designations, conferences and events we should compete for in order to invite the rest of the world to Bradford.

With the support of our national partners and the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, we have a huge opportunity to mobilise our creative communities to drive our

recovery. Now is the moment for Bradford to unlock its creative potential and to tell its own story to the world.

What we'll do

Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture Bid, chaired by artist and broadcaster Shanaz Gulzar and led by Richard Shaw, will lead the District's bid to be UK City of Culture 2025. The UK City of Culture competition happens every four years and is designed to encourage the use of culture and creativity as a catalyst for change, promote the development of new partnerships, encourage ambition, innovation and inspiration in cultural and creative activity and create a lasting legacy for the winning city.

The initiative is administered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and was created originally to 'build on the success of Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture 2008, which had significant social and economic benefits for the area'.

The inaugural holder of the award was Derry-Londonderry in 2013. In 2017, Kingston upon Hull took over the title. A report by the University of Hull in March 2018 found Hull's status as the UK City of Culture attracted more than 5 million people, £220m of investment and 800 new jobs. On 7 December 2017, it was declared that Coventry had been chosen to host in 2021. We anticipate that the competition for 2025 will be announced shortly after Coventry's year as UK City of Culture commences in May 2021, following a delay caused by the pandemic. It is traditional that the winner of the next designation is announced as the current holder's reign comes to a close, which will be May 2022.

Share: **help make culture part of everyone's plan**

- Tell your friends about the plan — share some buttons on your social channels or pass on the links to www.cultureisourplan.co.uk
- You can find more versions of Culture Is Our Plan on the website www.cultureisourplan.co.uk This includes:
 - Easy Read (PDF))
 - Easy Read (Audio)
 - British Sign Language
 - English (Audio)
 - Polish (Audio)
 - Urdu (Audio)
 - Punjabi (Audio)
 - Summary (PDF)
 - Summary (Print Friendly PDF)
- Let us know what you think of the plan so far. You can email us at info@cultureisourplan.co.uk
- Support Bradford's bid to become UK City of Culture 2025 by joining the mailing list [Bradford 2025 \(list-manage.com\)](http://Bradford2025(list-manage.com))
- If you are an artist or work in the arts, culture or heritage sector join the Cultural Voice Forum by emailing hello@thebrickbox.co.uk
- Apply for funds from City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council for your creative project here [Arts, Culture and Heritage Grants | Bradford Council](#)

- You can find out more about Arts Council England, including their Let's Create strategy here [Let's Create | Arts Council England](#)
- More information about the National Lottery Heritage Fund can be found here [Welcome | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)

Who we are

The Bradford Cultural Place Partnership commissioned Culture Is Our Plan with funds from City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and Arts Council England. The Partnership is chaired by Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe and membership includes leaders of the major strategic cultural initiatives in the District alongside representatives of the independent arts, culture and heritage sector:

- Arts Council England
- Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture Bid
- Bradford College
- Bradford Cultural Education Partnership
- Bradford Producing Hub
- City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
- Cultural Voice Forum
- The Leap, Creative People and Places programme, led by Bradford Institute for Health Research
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- University of Bradford

The independent sector representatives are nominated by the Cultural Voice Forum, a network open to everyone working in arts, culture and heritage in our District. It brings together more than 250 people to share sector knowledge, experience and opportunity.

Thank you

Culture Is Our Plan is an ongoing conversation with people across Bradford District. So far, almost 3,000 people have participated. We'd like to thank everyone who has been involved, who has given their time and ideas, completed a survey or shared their own creative work and would like to give special thanks to:

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Contributors

Lead for Cultural Partnerships: Nicola Greenan Research

Mapping and assessing the economic value, scope and impact of Bradford District's Cultural and Creative Assets: BOP Consulting Bradford

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Visitor Economy Research: NGI Solutions Audiences

Engagement and Participation Study: Indigo

Bradford City Night time economy: Sound Diplomacy

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Words: Aina J Khan, Andrew Dixon, Nicola Greenan, Mark Dobson, Mark Fisher, Richard Shaw, Tanya Vital