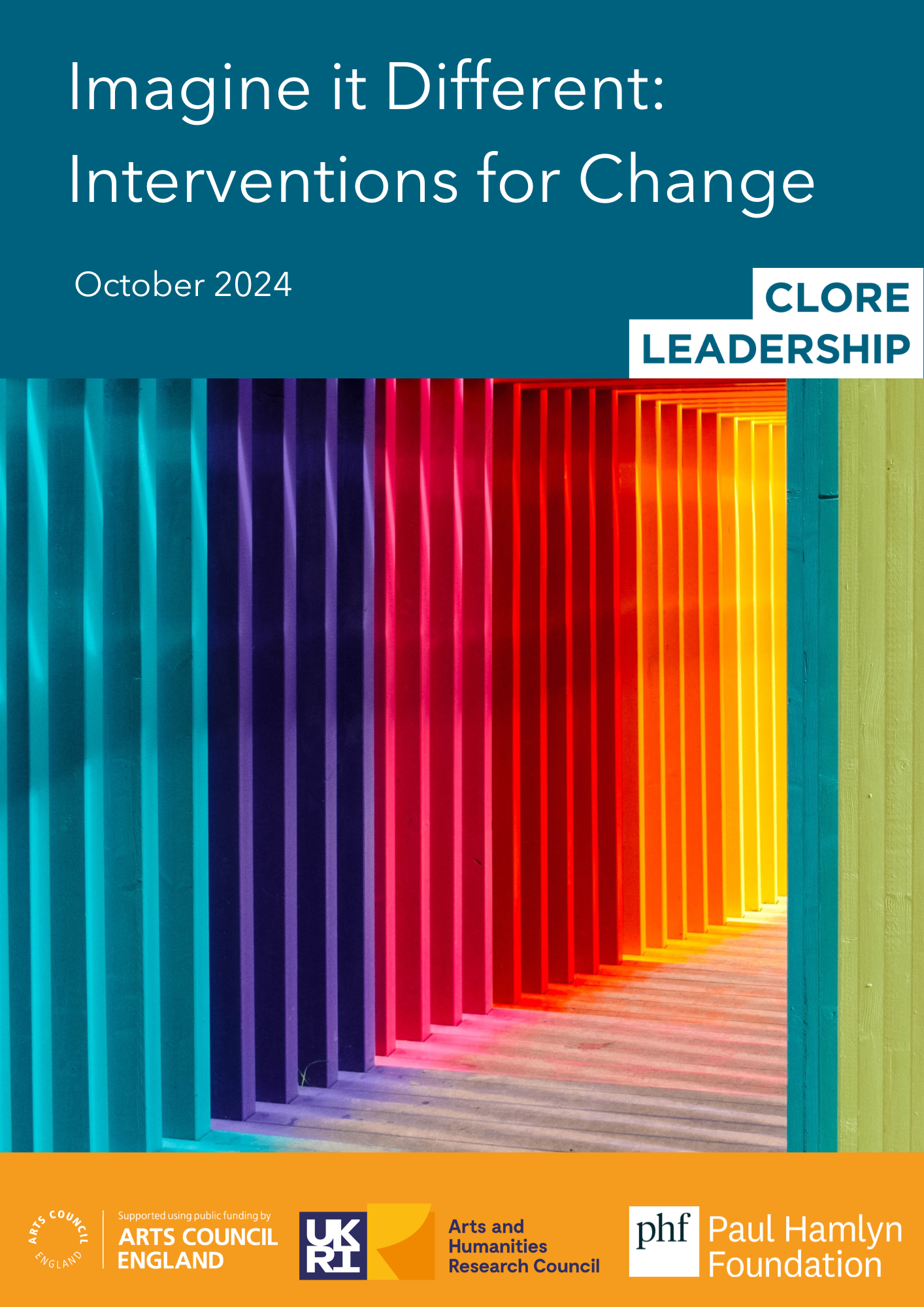
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**Imagine it Different**

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# Prologue

Autumn 2024 sees the first actions of the Labour Party taking the reins of government for the first time in 14 years. With a challenging economic backdrop, both the election manifesto and first statements in office emphasise fiscal constraints and the scant likelihood of additional resources for government departments. New Secretary of State Lisa Nandy moved quickly to announce a change of tone - ‘no more culture wars’ and to affirm the culture, media and sport sectors as crucial to the mission for national growth. Such affirmation is well received by a sector seeking a proactive and positive approach to meet the residual demands of sustained hardships.

The fresh optimism and renewed aspiration of governmental change does not diminish the anticipated challenges ahead, yet it has released a new sense of ‘possibility,’ which is tangibly different from the gloomier sentiment in the Spring of 2024 when much of this work was carried out. The underlying issues and challenges remain, and the solutions will continue to demand strong and sustained investment to achieve the critical shifts for a healthy, resilient, and vibrant cultural sector, that can play its full part in sharing the narratives of our nation; underpinning our standing in the international arena; creating opportunities for engagement and participation no matter where we live; and demonstrating its tangible contribution to the agenda for growth. What does feel different is the possibility for change and the potential for renewal which can only realise its full potential if the sector workforce is well supported to create and adapt for change. The time feels ripe for fresh thinking and bold engagement, and we hope that the Interventions outlined below spark the actions and investments to make a positive lasting difference for culture and society.

# Context

Just four years ago, the entire cultural sector shut its doors to the Covid pandemic. Since then, many trends have accelerated to deliver years’ worth of gradual change in a matter of months – or, in the case of home working, a matter of moments. The post-pandemic landscape presents a working environment that continues to shape and re-shape in response to wider drivers and shifts in society and cultural practice.

In seeking to understand, rationalise and respond to the changing landscape, Clore Leadership devised the [World of Work Series](https://www.cloreleadership.org/news-events/news/clore-leadership-and-arts-council-england-announce-series-of-assemblies-exploring-world-of-work/), three phased interventions to explore, with sector partners and leaders, the dynamics and options of the recent environment and the possibilities for change and development. The Series includes:

* **World of Work Survey** (in partnership with the UKRI Arts and Humanities Research Council): combining qualitative and quantitative data to understand how the world of work has changed and what the impact of these changes is for leaders in the cultural sector.
* **Leadership Now** (in partnership with Arts Council England): five Assemblies that brought together the sector workforce for discussion, exchange and shared solution-finding.
* **Imagine it Different** (in partnership with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation): drawing on the breadth and depth of insights surfaced through the Survey and Assemblies to pinpoint key points for reflection, action and change.

The **World of Work Survey** delves into the evolving nature of work and leadership in the cultural sector domain post-pandemic. It draws on survey findings, a literature review and reflections from the Leadership Now Assemblies to explore: How is the world of work changing? What are the needs of the cultural sector? What does this demand of cultural leaders? The Headline Findings from the Survey are shared in Chapter 3 below.

The **Leadership Now Assemblies** were held between January to March 2024 in London, Leeds and Birmingham, and two online. A summary profile of the Assemblies is provided at Appendix 1. The sector responded keenly to the Assemblies, the high demand for places reflecting the strong desire for engagement and change, and we welcomed 70+ people per gathering. We also held two Focus Groups to drill deeper into the issues and challenges faced by D/deaf, disabled/neurodivergent leaders and Global Majority leaders, to better understand the circumstances from leaders with diverse characteristics. The Headline Findings from the Assemblies are shared in Chapter 4 below.

Engagement with the World of Work Series has been full and positive. General sector feedback is that the Series is both timely and strategic. A number of Assembly attendees pointed out how cathartic it was to share perspectives and challenges, and there is also keen interest in the consultation and outcomes from beyond the UK.

Our third phase of activity, **Imagine It Different,** now seeks to draw on the breadth and depth of insights gained, to pinpoint key points for reflection, action and change; priorities that can disrupt embedded trends, respond to, and improve the experience of sector leadership now and in the future.

Yet, the sector faces a significant dilemma – there is a call for radical and systemic change, but circumstances in early 2024 (prior to the announcement of the UK General Election) saw a sector weary with the weight of existing challenges and struggling to articulate the pathways to alternative futures. The opportunity of the incoming Labour government provides a clear prospect for a gear-change, and early messages from government are both empathetic and encouraging. Whilst the financial and core operational constraints are not released there is, perhaps, a moment for mental and aspirational release - the impetus to think outside existing boxes, and dream anew.

# World of Work Survey Report - Headline Findings[[1]](#footnote-2)

In the 20 years since Clore Leadership appointed its first fellow the cultural sector and the landscape it operates in has changed dramatically. The UK’s economy entered and has remained in a long period of stagnation, with a decade of austerity impacting all public services and reducing funding available for the cultural sector. New technologies have changed how we work, communicate and engage with culture and cultural leaders. Attitudes towards work and norms in the workplace have changed, with more of a focus on wellbeing and work-life balance, as well as increasing workforce diversity.

Many pre-existing trends were accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, delivering years’ worth of gradual change over a very short time span as businesses had to find new models. Half of the adult workforce began working from home overnight and organisations had to develop new ‘workplace’ norms and ways of working. For the cultural sector, much of which is participatory/audience based, Covid-19 and the health restrictions were a seismic shock, posing an existential risk to many organisations and imposing a pace of change that would have seemed unimaginable in December 2019.

The cultural sector and its leaders emerged from the turbulence of this period into a funding landscape described as highly challenging, and a fractious and often hostile political climate. On top of the persistent climate and environmental sustainability challenges (with impacts on global systems, weather patterns, supply chains and migration), global shocks pushed inflation up to the highest level in decades, whilst local shocks (such as harsh cuts in local government funding), amplified the absence of control, with complex, multi-dimensional impacts. At the same time, long term trends like technological developments; generational demographic shifts in the workforce; changing workplace norms; and additional worker expectations, continue to effect work and leadership in the sector.

* With these changes it is no surprise that leaders’ surveyed report that the demands placed on them have grown worse in the last 5 years. While many remain positive about their work and feel confident in their ability to meet the demands and requirements of their roles, growing pressures are leaving leaders increasingly stretched. The survey results tell a hard to read story, of leaders feeling under-siege and overwhelmed.
* Local governments have historically been one of the largest investors in the cultural sector, but with huge pressures on local government local authority per capita spending on the Arts and Culture fell by around 36% between 2009-2019.[[2]](#footnote-3)
* Cultural organisations have struggled due to austerity measures, which have reduced local and national government funding for arts and culture. The vast majority are united in experiencing a negative impact from the political climate, funding availability and funder requirements.
* The growth in social media has been particularly challenging for the sector and has tested cultural organisations longstanding role to comment and artistically contextualise ‘social traditions, religion, science, politics, and history’.[[3]](#footnote-4) This heightened politicisation through social media engagement presents complex challenges for cultural leaders around how to protect and manage the core functions of the organisations, whilst still living by values of activism and social justice in an informed way.
* Looking to the future, leaders expect that the funding landscape and political polarisation will continue to negatively impact on the sector, although they feel more confident in their ability to manage these trends than others. We see a high share of leaders selecting a neutral impact for changes in technology and consumer preferences, and there is a question of whether leaders have had the space to engage with these trends, which we know will exert an impact, and what they will mean in their work.
* Leaders’ responses suggest a continued reliance on traditional, hierarchical leadership styles in the sector, with leaders drawing most often on skills that suggest individual responses and ‘leader-led’ solutions, rather than a systems leadership approach which is increasingly recognised as more effective in other sectors. There are a clear and recognisable set of skills that leaders draw on: strategic thinking, resilience, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and far fewer mentions of things like conflict management, negotiation, influencing and interpersonal skills, all of which are *also* critical in a systems approach.
* The sense that leaders are internalising problems, rather than looking to their teams to develop solutions, comes through when where leaders are getting support from is considered. Leaders are turning most often to peers in the sector for support, looking less frequently to internal sources of support or to other sectors. This contrasts with conversations with other sectors where leaders say that they are responding to change and the challenging external environment by moving to systems leadership approaches, creating connections and collaborations throughout and outside their organisations, and working collectively to solve problems and adapt.

# Leadership Now Insights Report - Headline Findings[[4]](#footnote-5)

* **People and Workforce, Recruitment and Retention:** The sector is grappling with the increasing complexity of workforce dynamics and leadership expectations. Generational differences are highlighting disparities in working styles and expectations among different age groups. There are ever decreasing opportunities for underrepresented groups, including young people, freelancers, and individuals from marginalised communities. There is significant turnover within the sector, resulting in a loss of organisational memory. Shifting priorities, behaviours and expectations in the world of work mean some are choosing to leave positions and/or to work differently. There is increased precarity in the sector, loss of jobs and decrease in capacity to grow due to funding or lack of increased income against rising costs. Leaders are facing new challenges in meeting the diverse needs of their staff, balancing ambition with reassurance, and navigating workload concerns amidst constant flux, high turnover rates, and care needs, leaving many feeling their jobs are impossible to sustain. There is a growing demand for leadership that provides clarity and grounding in times of uncertainty. Innovations in distributed leadership models, such as co-leadership and citizen assemblies, are emerging as ways to share power and foster inclusion within organisations.
* **Boards:** There were many pressing concerns regarding the role and effectiveness of Boards, their ability to deliver, the need for board professionalism, greater diversification, and the reality of recruiting a sufficiently experienced, knowledgeable, and robust board that are reflective of wider society. Paying trustees offers one way to broaden membership and increase diversity. Board development and succession planning need improvement, with calls for enhanced communication, relationship-building, and support for less experienced chairs. Risk aversion among boards - and funders – poses challenges in a climate of growing accountability. There is a need for increased professionalism among trustees, particularly in smaller organisations or those run by volunteers.
* **Business Models and Sustainability:** Discussions emphasised the urgent need to improve management training within the arts sector to equip leaders with essential conflict resolution and change management skills. Mentorship and coaching were identified as powerful drivers of positive change, offering transformative experiences, and fostering leadership validation and confidence. Practical strategies to address competing demands and overload were proposed, including mindfulness training, role, and responsibility reviews, and enhancing decision-making processes and accountability. The findings emphasise the importance of drawing on diverse experiences and external business acumen. Insights from the commercial sector highlighted the importance of merging altruistic goals with financial viability, emphasising the need for flexibility in governance and structure. Community involvement in decision-making processes emerged as a key enabler of idea sharing and development, enriching perspectives, and skill sets.
* **Equity, Justice, and Inclusion:** The environment for speaking out within the sector is characterised by political cautiousness, feelings of censorship and risk aversion, with organisations carefully considering the potential reputational risks associated with public statements. Smaller, diverse-led organisations had these increased risks and felt that larger institutions may opt for silence in what are often positioned as polarising public debates. There is a perceived retreat of power following movements like Black Lives Matter (BLM) and MeToo, geopolitical conflicts, with larger institutions seemingly becoming increasingly risk averse. The war on culture in the UK is driving negativity around social justice and inclusion.

A bigger challenge and concern are the lack of consensus and increasing divergence as well as polarisation of different viewpoints within organisations themselves, which creates a climate and culture of distrust affecting teams. Sector workforce diversity is still of concern in ensuring progress made in increasing the diversity of Global Majority, Disabled and other protected characteristics including Socio-economics factors be sustained and grows, in particular, leadership roles in larger organisations and areas such as museums[[5]](#footnote-6). Peer group support and networks that could provide spaces to share challenges were felt to be instrumental in sustaining staff.

* **Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration:** The arts sector recognises the critical importance of strategic partnerships and collaboration in navigating the seismic changes brought about by evolving socio-political landscapes. Partnerships with local authorities are facing significant challenges due to financial uncertainties and organisational restructuring. While there's a collective acknowledgment of the need for radical thinking to foster partnerships, challenges persist due to resource constraints and constantly shifting priorities. Resource scarcity complicates efforts to collaborate effectively, as finding the energy and vision needed to make partnerships successful becomes increasingly difficult.
* **Wellbeing, Care and Compassion:** The sector is grappling with significant challenges related to wellbeing, care, and compassion, exacerbated by under-resourcing and external pressures. There was a call for new models to address these challenges and foster a culture of wellbeing and compassion within organisations. The current work model was seen as leading to increased stress and burnout among workers. There is a consensus that efficiency measures often result in knee-jerk reactions, emphasising the need for systemic reform rather than individual fixes. Comprehensive care is highlighted as essential yet challenging to implement due to stretched resources. Balancing care with workload poses significant hurdles, with leaders facing difficult decisions amidst limited funding and resources.
* **Advocating for the impact of the arts:** The theme of Advocacy for the sector emerges as a critical priority for driving meaningful change and recognition. Discussions revolved around the necessity for a unified voice that advocates for value and impact. Central to advocacy is the need for evidence-based approaches supported by reliable data and impact assessments. A collaborative language that transcends localised efforts and promotes successes and challenges is sought. There is a call for a more unified approach that extends beyond the arts and culture sector, reshaping evaluation tools to better articulate impact, share value with other sectors and achieve better storytelling within the wider public.
* **AI / Digital:** The discussions highlighted a pressing need for the arts sector to enhance its digital literacy and establish a code of practice for the ethical use of AI. Recognising the potential leadership role of younger generations in AI adoption, there's a call for the sector to lead tech innovation programmes that leverage its strengths in ethics and creativity. There are, however, also concerns regarding the sector's capacity to keep pace with rapid AI and digital developments.
* **Environmental Sustainability Practice:** The overarching political landscape presents significant challenges to environmental sustainability efforts. On top of the existential threats to current norms and practices, conflicting priorities between economic and environmental impacts have stalled progress. Short-term funding cycles exacerbate the issue by impeding long-term strategic planning and tying sustainability initiatives to immediate financial requirements. Attendees expressed concerns about the impact of funding cuts on organisational activities and staffing levels, highlighting the need for sustainable funding models.

# Changing the Landscape

The Headline Findings from the Reports identify many challenges facing the arts and culture sector. These challenges are multifaceted, requiring innovative and intentional approaches to address them effectively - a reimagining of structures, processes and paradigms. A sector-generated renewal, to better align with the evolving needs and realities of today's world, and to future-proof cultural leadership through building skills and knowledge for the challenges ahead. But the sector can only realise its full potential if its leaders are well-supported to adapt to change; and we need diverse leaders prospering in order to ensure opportunity for all and to surface the very best ideas. Diverse leadership is the mechanism to unlock opportunity for the next generation, by being champions and forging pathways and progression. The focus on leadership support and development is crucial for the culture sector because culture plays a key role in growth, innovation and the development of proactive ecosystems. It matters for telling our nation's story; for economic growth; international trade; to ensure that in this new era of change and possibilities everyone in this country has the opportunity to engage in cultural activities and sees themselves included.

Essential to changing the environment will be a tangible change that enshrines values-based leadership within everyday practice; to coach and facilitate shifts in the collective mindset, refreshing the story the sector tells itself about leadership and what it means to lead in this changing world.

Embracing experimentation, innovation and calculated risks can foster resilience and adaptability, enabling organisations to thrive in this dynamic environment. However, the tipping point seems near, and taking risks is imperative before organisations become too vulnerable to do so. Leaders must be enabled to step outside their comfort zones, challenge the status quo, and embrace uncertainty as an opportunity for regeneration, growth and transformation.

It was notable during the Leadership Now Assemblies that participants generally found it hard to be solutions focused. Individual leaders were and are shouldering more responsibilities, highlighting the urgent need for better connections and networks. Those within the sector are experiencing high levels of burnout and overwhelm, in some cases exacerbated by increased demands from funders; by the widespread reductions in resources; and also due to a sense of self-reliance, which isolates leaders from access to broader sources of support. It is the combination of challenges that deepens the difficulty – it might be that a leader can deal with decreasing availability of funds OR increased reporting requirements from funders OR the challenges of social media/culture wars OR changing trends in tech OR changing expectations from the workforce… but to manage ALL of these challenges pushes leaders to feel “increasingly stretched”, “under siege” and “overwhelmed”. The pressure is particularly acute for Global Majority, D/deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent leaders, who face the added burden of being the ‘expert by lived experience’ and the added obstacles of representation, access to information, and overcoming systemic barriers.

What is clear is that it will be essential to address people-related challenges in multiple ways, including increasing access to training, particularly in HR management, to improve leaders' skills profile. Providing time-poor leaders with practical, easily digestible ‘how to’ case studies; sharing and creating the spaces for sharing learning will better empower leaders to navigate complex challenges and drive meaningful organisational change.

For areas related to partnerships, governance, diversity, equity, justice and advocacy, an investment in accessible resources, best practice case studies and frameworks are vital. Provision to address racist, Islamophobic and anti-immigrant perspectives remains important. Critical too is the need to strengthen peer networks to facilitate knowledge sharing, capacity building, and collective problem-solving. This will be a major part of enabling leaders to make informed decisions and implement effective strategies that address the specifics of their creative, local and social circumstances.

# Interventions for Change

The priorities below scope a range of Interventions for systemic change – some creating immediate impact, and others where initial actions begin to shift the dial but achieve full transformation only over time. A ‘Three Horizons’ framework captures the impact of this evolution and change:

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated

* **Horizon 1 Impact: Respond & Release**

These interventions seek to address critical needs and respond to the pressure points raised in the research and insights reports. They achieve immediate outcomes, release pressures and encourage the embedding of strategic change. There is a need for open acknowledgement of the current constraints by the new government, by funders, and by key infrastructure organisations increasing the investment in capacity building and reducing the now onerous obligations that have built up over time. Re-establishing the arms-length principle for non-government department bodies; more flexible and open commissions for funding; and opportunities for knowledge sharing complement the requirement for enhanced management training to support workforce solidarity and cohesion.

* **Horizon 2 Impact: New systems and Practice**

These interventions flow from the refreshed conditions for change that create and support new practice and new systems of leadership in the mid-term. Investment in new thinking and experimentation, and sharing those experiments as examples of learning, facilitate future-proofing and engender new business and organisational models to grow and thrive.

* **Horizon 3 Impact: Transformations**

These game-changing interventions have a slower burn, achieving effective transformation and systemic shifts over the longer term. Priorities for wellbeing, an online resource hub, for example, foundational interventions create secure building blocks on which true transformation can flourish – transformation in organisational models; creative output; modes of delivery; and value propositions of the sector to changed audiences, consumers and participants.

In the tables below, it is notable that the mapping is heavily weighted towards Horizons 1 & 2 - immediate actions, suggesting that current responses are focused on helping leaders navigate the world as it is now, rather than creating the changes for the world we want to see. More thinking, and perhaps more time is necessary - a two-pronged approach that tackles the critical challenges restricting progress, alongside a qualitative ’breathing space’ where collaboration, creativity and clarity can support an appetite and capacity for risk-taking and further underline the innovations necessary for systemic change.

As Convenor of this World of Work Series, Clore Leadership is ready to champion this work. But if whole sector transformation is to happen, collaboration and partnerships are essential, and we actively seek strategic and creative partnerships to create the difference the sector needs to see.

**The World of Work Series affirms the essential need to change, and the collective will to connect, collaborate and create new futures. Together, let us accept the challenge to imagine and make it different for current and future generations.**

The Interventions for Change are clustered around four core themes: CPD; Boards / Governance; Models/Organisational Development; and Advocacy.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Continuous Professional Development** | | | |
|  | **Horizon 1 Impact:**  **Respond & Release** | **Horizon 2 Impact:**  **New systems & Practice** | **Horizon 3 Impact: Transformations** |
| **Government / Local Authorities** |  | * Endorse and support new models of cultural sector apprenticeships, encouraging employer/university partnerships |  |
| **Arts / Culture / Heritage Funders** | * Encourage and support CPD priorities for wellbeing in the workplace * Support capacity building, training and skills development | * Prioritise investments that resource ambitions for an inclusive sector – targeted investments for Global Majority (GM) and D/deaf/disabled and neurodivergent (D/d/d & N) leaders | * Targeted investments for wellbeing in the workplace * Integration of new systems and practice from Horizon 2 |
| **Infrastructure Support Organisations/Networks** | * Convene formal and informal opportunities for sector leaders to gather for creative and recuperative exchange * Enhance training in Management Systems, Processes and Practice * Ensure training and skills development in fund-raising, commerciality, entrepreneurship and innovation | * Strengthen Human Resources Management (HRM) training to support workforce management challenges * Increase access to training for governance, advocacy and models of working * Create sector partnership(s) with a nationally recognised training body such as [ILM](https://www.i-l-m.com/)/[IOD](https://www.iod.com/) or national cultural institution for access to ongoing management training | * Create a comprehensive Online Resource Hub (ORH) for leadership learning and development. Examples include Clore Leadership [Learning & Development](https://www.cloreleadership.org/our-resources/), Cultural Governance Alliance [Practical Guide](http://www.culturalgovernancealliance.org), ACE’s [Transforming Governance](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-creativity-and-culture/transforming-governance/transforming-governance-webinars-and-resources) programme, Arts Marketing Association’s [culturehive](https://www.culturehive.co.uk/). |
| **Cultural Organisations/ Leaders** | * Encourage/facilitate CPD and positive approaches to wellbeing at all levels * Encourage a shift from leader-led solutions to organisation-wide/systems leadership approaches * Convene / share information on formal and informal peer-led networks, mentoring and Action Learning Sets to consistently support informal CPD * Amplify the availability of core resources such as the [Cultural Governance Alliance](https://culturalgovernancealliance.org/) (CGA), [culturehive](https://www.culturehive.co.uk/) and other online resources | * Consolidate strategies to encourage cross-sector CPD, collaboration, knowledge exchange and inter-generational learning * Facilitate knowledge exchange within and across organisations * Support capacity building, including modelling effective ways to manage with reduced resources * Increase risk appetite and commercial awareness alongside existing approaches | * Focus on wellbeing - consolidate strategies to avoid siloed leadership solutions * Acknowledge and address the additional burden on GM and D/d/d & N leaders in the workplace * Consider core frameworks for CPD based on organisation size, to create consistency of approaches / access to CPD across the sector as a whole |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Boards / Governance** | | | |
|  | **Horizon 1 Impact:**  **Respond & Release** | **Horizon 2 Impact:**  **New systems & Practice** | **Horizon 3 Impact: Transformations** |
| **Government / Local Authorities** | * Expand and deepen the range of Tax Relief benefits for cultural activities * Encourage the Charity Commission to further explore avenues for payment to Trustees | * More public funding / investment in arts and culture, supporting creative organisations to fully contribute to economic growth, increase employment and broaden engagement in culture * Review charity regulations and structures to support fresh thinking and innovation | * Support implementation of different governing structures, |
| **Arts / Culture / Heritage Funders** | * Continuing investment to diversify governance * Prioritised investment in the ACE Transforming Governance programme | * Increase resources for governance practice and development acknowledging that existing budgets cannot resource desirable innovations such as payments to Trustees | * Work towards accreditation as Living Wage Funders, enabling grantees to pay the real Living Wage * Support integration of innovative changes enabling better engagement with audiences and communities |
| **Infrastructure Support Organisations/Networks** | * Promote / amplify sources of Trustee appointments e.g., CGA website / Trustee Tuesdays / [NVCO](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/) / Association of Chairs etc. * Support Board Trustees to better understand/engage with Charity Commission Guidance * Enhance capacities for political influence | * Seek out opportunities for better advocacy and championing of sector issues and more diverse sector voices * Invest in training/development on how to manage Boards * Create/support learning spaces for Chairs and trustees with peers – placed-based, art/culture networks and/or groupings by scale of organisation | * Establish an open and accessible matching process for trustee roles |
| **Cultural Organisations** | * Acknowledge current constraints on sector organisations and leaders – support capacity building * Encourage a shift form leader-led solutions to organisation-wide/systems leadership approaches * Encourage engagement with philanthropy in addition to funder engagement and resource the time for relationship building | * Prioritise the impact of Climate Change and environmental sustainability on sector practice and encourage responsiveness / future-proofing * Increase risk appetite and commercial awareness alongside existing approaches * Explore co-leadership and distributed leadership models, including co-chairing of Boards | * Work towards accreditation as Living Wage employers to address low wage challenges * Support implementation of strategies and new practices |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Models / Organisational Development** | | | |
|  | **Horizon 1 Impact:**  **Respond & Release** | **Horizon 2 Impact:**  **New systems & Practice** | **Horizon 3 Impact: Transformations** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Government / Local Authorities** | * Re-apply the ‘Arms-Length’ Principle for non-governmental departmental public bodies | * Encourage cross-departmental working and a broad appreciation of the contribution of culture to society * Encourage / facilitate new budgetary alliances with other industries to bolster spending on cultural and creative activities | * Enable sector self-reliance and financial viability with changed financing models * Support strategic / mutually desired relationships with devolved administrations to enrich cultural engagement nationally |
| **Arts / Culture / Heritage Funders** | * Reduce the burden of heavy application procedures with shorter decision-making cycles and lighter touch /staged processes * ACE to reduce the reporting burden, particularly for smaller organisations * Acknowledge current constraints on sector organisations and leaders – support capacity-building to enable cultural organisations to transform | * Return to longer term funding periods, and support for spending on core infrastructure items, to build capacities and longer term partnerships * Amplify & encourage engagement with the broad range of organisational structures available, including co-operatives / flat structures etc. * Share case studies and support explorations of new operational models | * Create shared evaluation tools to streamline compliance with funder reporting requirements * More open programmes to support experimentation, ideation and sector-generated creative ideas * Provide advice and support for mergers and shared services |
| **Infrastructure Support Organisations/Networks** | * Improve digital literacy/tech maturity - address the AI ethics questions so the pragmatic benefits can be embraced | * Promote shared evaluation tools for better articulation of impact * Consider the impact of Climate Change and environmental sustainability on sector practice and encourage responsiveness / future-proofing * Connect and collaborate on the Good Work initiative to ensure sector alignment | * Secure the pipeline into cultural sector job roles through connections and advocacy into schools and career development networks * Promote ‘field-building’ capacities to strengthen the space for innovation and collective development |
| **Cultural Organisations / Leaders** | * Share case studies of good collaborations to demonstrate what is possible * Share good practice on EDI - case studies that demonstrate 'how' - the sector has progressed beyond the 'why’ * Enhance strategies that address recruitment and retention challenges including CPD for AI-vulnerable roles * Encourage a shift from leader-led solutions to systems leadership approaches, including co-leadership and distributed leadership models | * Acknowledge the changing workforce, generational shifts, and new priorities including de-growth * Promote ways to learn from innovations in other sectors * Ensure staff are supported to adopt trustee roles in other charities * Acknowledge and create capacity / resources for increased fluidity and exchange across employee and freelance workforces | * Explore more shared services / mergers / exchanges, including across scales of organisational and, potentially, across regions/areas optimising local synergies * Encourage experimentation with progressive financial models for discrete areas of activity * Pool resources e.g. for finance, insurance, HR and governance * Develop / maintain strong networks beyond the cultural sector to keep abreast of fresh ideas/approaches |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Advocacy** | | | |
|  | **Horizon 1 Impact:**  **Respond & Release** | **Horizon 2 Impact:**  **New systems & Practice** | **Horizon 3 Impact: Transformations** |
| **Government / Local Authorities** | * Galvanise shared campaigns to increase government investment in culture | * Streamline the range of place-based reporting infrastructures to avoid competing priorities |  |
| **Arts / Culture / Heritage Funders** | * Acknowledge current constraints on sector organisations and leaders – support capacity building * Promote culture’s endemic contribution to sense of self, community, place and national identity | * Encourage / facilitate new budgetary alliances with other industries to bolster spending on cultural and creative activities * Continue to make the case for increased investment in culture |  |
| **Infrastructure Support Organisations/Networks** | * Develop coordinated resources for reaching key stakeholders * Strengthen political influence - opportunities for better advocacy and championing through convening access for diverse voices/rep of small orgs * Share data to build the case for sector enhancements * Create spaces for cross-sector dialogue, exchange and galvanisation | * Optimise the opportunity of devolved government infrastructures for regional enhancements * Continue to advocate for culture within place-based governmental agenda * Strengthen 'sector voice' (and the diversity of voices and perspectives) for advocacy and industry development and perspectives * Create and share key tools for advocacy | * Develop mechanisms for consistent channeling of key messages to government and key organisations * The ORH can become a shared resource for policy sharing and advocacy |
| **Cultural Organisations / Leaders** | * Share data to build the case for sector enhancements * Reflect our shared and diverse narratives as part of growth, strengthening international connections, inclusion and engagement in communities | * Support/champion the artist/creative voice to key influencers * Determine key targets for advocacy and distill key arguments to channel cases for support * Promote shared campaigns to amplify impact |  |

**Clore Leadership**

**Appendix 1: Summary Profile: Leadership Now Assemblies**

In January to March 2024, Clore Leadership, in partnership with Arts Council England, delivered five Leadership Now Assemblies in London, Leeds and Birmingham, and two online. In each instance the high demand evidenced the strong desire for engagement and change, and we welcomed 70+ people per gathering.

The Assemblies were attended by cultural sector leaders from across England:

* All Assemblies reflected a national attendee profile, with attendees from beyond the region/Arts Council Area.
* An average of 42% were NPOs/IPSOs.
* There has been good art form, culture and heritage sector representation throughout, with attendees representing all sizes of organisations and a range of roles including Artistic Directors, CEO/Director, Programme Leads/Managers, Trustees, and Consultants/Freelance.
* Reflecting participation in our wider programmes, attendees were on average 75% female.
* 19% identified as D/deaf, disabled, neurodivergent or have a long-term health condition.
* 8% were from a global majority background.
* 66% were Heterosexual.
* 22% accessed free school meals; 19% preferred not to say.

Across the 5 gatherings, a significant range of issues and challenges were raised, with the most common of these being:

* **Funding precariousness/scarcity**
* **New funding / leadership models**
* **People/workforce** – succession planning / burnout / wellbeing / mental health
* **Leading teams through change**
* **Equity, justice and inclusion**
* **Boards/governance**
* **Place based culture**
* **Partnerships and collaboration**
* **Hybrid working**

We were careful to ensure that the topics debated were those that had been selected by attendees and each table discussion was led/chaired by a leader who had volunteered a topic of their choice.

In addition, acknowledging the discrete challenges facing diverse personnel, a further two focus groups were held, one of Global Majority leaders and the other of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent Leaders.

The Leadership Now Insights Report, produced by Samina Zahir of Hybrid Consulting, outlines the key discussions and findings.

1. [Cultural Leadership in a Changing World of Work: research paper](https://www.cloreleadership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/World-of-Work-Metro-Dynamics-Full-Research-Report-with-Cover.docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Inequalities in local government spending on cultural, environmental and planning services: a time-trend analysis in England, Scotland, and Wales](https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-023-15179-9). BMC Public Health 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Strategies applied by different arts and cultural organisations for their audience development: A comparative review, Alnasser et al, 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [Leadership Now – Insights Report](https://www.cloreleadership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Leadership-Now-Assemblies-Insights-Report-Final-with-Cover.docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: A Data Report](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-and-data/diversity-data/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-data-report-2021-2022), 2021-2022, Arts Council England [↑](#footnote-ref-6)