



Co-Chairs' Report Annual Report 2023-24

In 2022, Arts Council England agreed to the Touring Exhibitions Group's (TEG) application to become an Investment Principles Support Organisation (IPSO) and we were granted £160,000 of funding annually for three years which formally commenced from April 2023. This funding has been transformative for TEG with a commitment to develop ourselves as a resilient, professionally led sector support organisation. This means that TEG will be able to deliver more training, more events and have a higher profile in the sector to support individuals and organisations to deliver accessible, sustainable, high-quality exhibitions.

Our application had four guiding principles, and the below report outlines how in 2023-24, the first full year of IPSO funding, we laid the foundations for delivering on those objectives, focusing primarily on increasing our team capacity, developing strategy and preparing the organisation to deliver more:

1. **Ambition and Quality:** To grow our membership and demonstrate our relevance through increased advocacy and impact across both the UK and international sectors

Two in-person Away Days (one focused on Professional Development Strategy and one on overall Strategy and Vision) were attended by both Trustees and the TEG team in December 2023 and March 2024. We conducted a review of the professional development offer, a membership survey and developed a new Marketing and Communications Strategy. This work has enabled the team and trustees to understand the TEG offer better and to understand how it could be improved to meet the needs of members and the sector.

To ensure TEG's capacity is suitable for a larger turnover organisation, new team members were appointed, financial systems and controls were reviewed and adjusted to enable reporting to Arts Council England and a resources audit was carried out. New roles included TEG's first Executive Director, Reyahn King who started in April 2023 and preparations were made to appoint a Marketing Consultant as part of the team who would lead delivery of the new Marketing and Communications Strategy.

Meanwhile TEG continued to progress a partnership with the Art Fund to support the Going Places programme with exhibitions training and similarly worked with the new MAGNET project to support cohort training in community engagement in exhibitions.

As part of our advocacy work and to raise the profile of the organisation, the team attended conferences and events, with stands at the Group for Education in Museums

(GEM) and the Museums + Heritage Show, and TEG representation has included presentations at the 2023 Museums COP at Tate, Arts Council England Museum Leaders' Symposium in Barnsley, and the launch event for the Weston Loan Programme at Derby Museum & Art Gallery. Trustees continue to play an active role in TEG, presenting on sustainable exhibitions at the Museums + Heritage Show, London and ICOM Exhibitions (ICEE) event, London.

Membership has remained static at around 300 for this financial year and one of our primary objectives for the next three years is to see a year-on-year increase on that rising to 450 by the end of our IPSO funding period. Our forthcoming strategy work will be focussed on identifying and clarifying membership benefits which alongside an improved website and marketing plan, we hope will be key to achieving that target.

2. **Dynamism:** Looking at the needs of our membership and sector more widely and adjusting our provision and support accordingly, particularly in our professional development offer.

Following the away day and professional development review, the Professional Development Manager created a Professional Development Strategy for roll out in 2024-25. The Strategy will include four key strategic directions:

1. Positioning TEG as the exhibition sector leader in exhibitions-related training
2. Developing clarity of purpose around the training strategy
3. Building partnerships to deliver our vision
4. Expanding expertise to different groups within the sector

TEG continued to deliver high quality training to members and the sector with 95% of workshop attendees saying they would recommend TEG to colleagues. The Professional Development Manager has progressed our Inclusivity and Relevance principle by implementing more accessibility measures into workshop and training events including: TEG trainers and speakers state their pronouns and give a brief visual description when they introduce themselves; providing automated closed captions and enabling BSL interpretation on request; making workshop recordings available. In addition to the core TEG programme, many workshops have been led and delivered by TEG as part of the Art Fund Going Places and MAGNET programmes.

TEG also provided Consultancy Services to Plus Tate on Sustainable Exhibitions (in partnership with the Design Museum) and to Museum Development Southwest (MDSW) on Strategic Interpretation Planning for Engaging Exhibitions.

In April 2023 a successful TEG Connects event was held at the Maritime Museum, National Museums Liverpool with 104 delegates. Sessions included presentations by the Art Fund, People's History Museum and The Amelia. Panel discussions included representatives from the MAGNET cohort including the Horniman Museum, Sheffield Museums, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery.

3. **Environmental Responsibility:** Driving the change towards reduced environmental impact of touring exhibitions and exhibition-making by providing practical guidance, training and toolkits for organisations.

Arts Council England approached TEG in December 2023 to commission a report to identify meaningful actions to improve the carbon footprint of exhibition loans. The research into levers to encourage environmentally sustainable lending and borrowing practices internationally was begun in 2023-24 with an international forum, interviews and a survey. Interviews and desk research were ongoing into 2024-25 and the report was submitted to Arts Council England in June 2024. The research project opened up conversations internationally and TEG's reputation benefited greatly from being commissioned to do this work. Key partnerships were also put in place this year to create a decision-making tool for more environmentally sustainable touring which will be launched in Autumn.

4. **Inclusivity and Relevance:** Actively seek to diversify our membership and especially our Trustees and Advisory Committee. Develop and implement an EDI Policy and Action Plan for TEG which can also provide an example to support wider sector diversity and inclusion.

The current Board members and team are passionate about the potential for TEG to broaden the appeal of the profession to a wider representation of society and recognise that we need to start with our own organisation. We will work to diversify the board in our next round of trustee recruitment (September 2024) and will create two Early Career Trustee roles by April 2025. We have an EDI Trustee who leads an active EDI working group who meet regularly and we have created an EDI statement and Mission which is available on our [website](#). Work is in progress to create an EDI Policy and Action Plan and will be completed by April 2025 and EDI training will also be undertaken by all Trustees and Advisory Board members

Looking forward, exciting developments for the coming year include the final 5-Year Strategy for TEG as well as a new website and brand identity which will be launched in the coming months to support increased marketing activity. Trustees have agreed that a shift in the organisation's name to **The Exhibitions Group** better reflects the diversity of exhibitions support now offered by the charity. A short presentation on our new brand and identity will be included as part of the online AGM on October 7th. Our newly refreshed professional development offer will also be launched in 2025.

So much has been achieved in our first year of IPSO funding and the journey from a volunteer led to a professionally led organisation is well under way. Yet there is still much to do and huge potential for the organisation to grow and thrive in the coming years. All of this would not be possible without the invaluable support of the Arts Council England as well as our partner funders and sponsors, so heartfelt thanks for your ongoing faith and trust. We would also like to thank TEG's dedicated team of consultants, which while small and nimble, is the powerhouse behind what we do. And on behalf of all the trustees and team, special thanks to Reyahn King for her dynamic and thoughtful leadership at this critical time in the organisation's development. To our fellow trustees and advisory committee members, thank you for your continued engagement and support which is vital in continuing to shape our future direction and vitality. And to our valued members, we hope you continue to see the benefits of your ongoing support for TEG. Everything we do is with our members in mind and we value all your feedback and ideas and trust that you

are as excited as we are with the current and future direction of the organisation. Exciting times ahead!

Miranda Stacey and Alanna Davidson – Co-Chairs
September 2024