

BUILDING PLACES AND SPACES

Community
arts officer

Community arts officers are becoming more and more important in regeneration. Their job is to liaise with and support community arts groups; get involved in strategy and decision-making; source funding opportunities; and promote events to the public. You need to be confident, outgoing and able to relate to people with a variety of issues, as you'll work on the front line, often in deprived communities. You'll also need to be organised since you may be in charge of large cultural events such as carnivals, which means working with the police, fire service and other local services. An arts-related degree is useful, and many community arts officers are creative artists.

Degree needed

A degree in an art or arts-related subject has become the norm in recent years. In addition some higher education institutes offer specific courses in arts administration.



Peta Murphy-Burke at work

Arts development officer, Stoke-on-Trent City Council



Good courses

- BA (Hons) Arts Management and Administration – Oxford Brookes University
- MA Arts Administration – Goldsmiths College, University of London
- BA (Hons) degrees in Fine Art are still regarded as a conventional route into the profession. Fine Art degrees are taught extensively throughout the UK.

Facts and Figures

Starting salary

Salaries start at between £20,000 and £24,000.

Working hours

On average around 38 hours per week.

Days' holiday per year

On average 25 days.

Skills and experience

Good communication skills are crucial and an ability to relate to people and empathise with a varied set of problems and issues is essential.

Would suit

Someone with a commitment to and understanding of the issues that affect communities.

Likely employer types

- Local authorities
- Arts Council and regional arts bodies
- Voluntary Arts Wales
- Voluntary organisations
- Primary care trusts
- Publicly funded bodies involved in community regeneration initiatives

How many jobs available?

More than 80 of the 410 local authorities in England and Wales employ community development artists, though the number of employing councils in England has fallen in recent years.

There is anecdotal evidence of increased demand from voluntary organisations and other publicly funded bodies.



Meet the expert

Peta Murphy-Burke,
Stoke-on-Trent
City Council

Visit AskWhatIf.co.uk to watch video diaries and get opinions from other real people doing real jobs.



"We work with schools and different community groups - a really diverse range of people. It's exciting when big public arts projects come off. Their economic and community impact is huge."

Did you know?

Peter Hewitt, chief executive of the Arts Council, started his career as an arts officer at North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council.

More information

- Find out about the role the arts play in the community from the Arts Council www.artscouncil.org.uk
- The National Association of Local Government Arts Officers has useful information on local authority employment of arts officers www.nalgao-goodcompanion.org.uk
- Voluntary Arts Network has extensive information on art projects throughout the UK www.voluntaryarts.org

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