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Application Form Guidance Youth Arts Open Fund Round 4

June 2026

Section 3: About Your Project

Question 1 - Please describe how the young people involved in the project will directly shape their own experience, have their voices amplified and input to the design and delivery of the project.

Guidance:

Your proposal must be for youth-led arts activity. By this we mean that children and young people will be fully involved in shaping the project. It will respond to their needs and concerns and empower them as partners in their own learning experience. This is a central theme of the fund and a core assessment criterion. A pre-defined curriculum is unlikely to meet this criterion. Equally, highly speculative approaches whereby “children and young people will decide what they want to do” post-award are unlikely to meet this criterion. Please refer to the examples below from applications that were successful in previous rounds. These examples illustrate robust youth-led approaches with different groups of children and young people facing different barriers.

Example 1: Young people with complex and multiple disabilities

“The children and young people have shaped both the content and format of this new project. They asked for clear start/finish times and calm times, with breaks agreed in advance. We adopted a session rhythm they co-designed: 10-minute intro 30-minute structured activity 15-minute break 30-minute free play activity 10-minute calm/reflect.

In each session, artists will introduce a materials kit as a starting point; young people explore, adapt and amend its contents, add school equipment/materials, or propose alternatives - during the sessions they may construct and create art works or just enjoy the process of playing and exploring. We will support time for reflections to adjust our approach. In Week-8, participants co-create a simple accreditation/recognition outcome and decide how to share with peers/school community. Communication will be led by young people’s preferences with staff support (e.g., Makaton, BSL, symbols, observed behaviour, body language)“.

Example 2: Pre-defined output (specific drama production) that supports and incorporates young people’s ideas and amplifies their voices.

“The play involves local young people taking part in politically engaged workshops to write a script full of their own ideas. The young people feedback on the workshops through short and accessible activities. In rehearsal, the young cast plan the day, contribute creative ideas, and co-create a group agreement



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for rehearsal. When watching the performance, local young people hear their views reflected. The play is co-created with young people at every stage, and their views and opinions are vital to the project's planning, delivery, and creative content. Children are respected as collaborators just like any adult would be.

Example 3: Straightforward and robust

"This project has been developed in direct response to local young people asking for more creative opportunities and a chance to take on facilitator roles in their community. Participants co-designed the programme by taking part in creative "taster sessions", then choosing which skills they wished to develop further. Their community facing priorities including environmental action, renovating local play spaces, and more opportunities to volunteer locally. These ideas have directly informed the design of this proposal.

The project will remain flexible and responsive to participants' interests. Each session will include structured time for group reflection, allowing participants to share feedback and make decisions about future activities, guest artists, trips, and community projects. Creative evaluation methods such as journals and inspiration boards will capture ideas and ensure their voices are central.

By shaping both the design and delivery of the project, participants will take ownership of the programme, feel valued, and gain confidence as leaders and role models in their community.

Example 4: Early years

"This project will be rooted in our rights-based 'Voice of the Baby' approach to listening and responding to the needs and interests of babies and young children through their engagement and participation in arts and creative experiences. This approach allows us to notice and respond to engagement levels. Here are examples of things we notice:

"Most of our non-verbal children tuned into the performance and interacted very freely and confidently with the performer"

"Children who (usually) engage less with adults were very positive towards the artist"

"Lots of non-verbal children interacted for long periods of time"

"At the beginning the children were excited and engaged in more immature play but over time the children interacted in a deeper way"



This approach has informed our proposal to the Youth Arts Fund. Babies and young children will be empowered to choose their engagement level, personal interests and explore creativity in a supportive environment.

Example 5: Youth-led but structured and supported to ensure outcomes for young people

“We have ensured our proposal is youth led by:

Utilising feedback from YP

This proposal is for our 3rd year of our project. We consistently collected feedback from young people throughout year 1 and 2, which has been heavily used to shape this proposal. In our second year the feedback led us to separate our creative activities into a new art dedicated weekly group. This year, the main feedback is around increasing opportunities for hands-on immersive activities, such as using the potter’s wheel, over design work.

Co-Designing Activities

We run 4 youth groups a week, divided by age groups from 8-18. The young people in each group create their own timetables each term. Using this model young people generate activity ideas, narrow these down to the most popular options, and translate these choices into a timetable. Timetables operate a 70/30 split, meaning 70% of content is generated through young people’s suggestions and 30% is reserved for staff input. This ensures activities remain majority youth-led, whilst offering youth workers opportunities to broaden young people’s horizons. This is how we approach all activity planning to keep young people’s voices central.

Question 2 - Please give a short overview of the programme you will deliver. What will young people be doing? How many sessions will you run? How often? If you are an organisation working with a freelance artist/s tell us about this. What makes this a high-quality experience for young people? It should be clear how the programme you describe will support the outcomes for young people that you select in the next section (300 words)

Guidance:

You must describe the elements listed above. Your description should align with your description of a youth-led approach and the outcomes you have selected. Here are some examples from previous successful applications.



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It will also engage other groups targeted by hate crime, ensuring that young people from both legally protected characteristics and wider experiences of exclusion can work together to challenge prejudice, foster understanding, and celebrate diversity. The programme will provide progression pathways, creative skills development, and youth-led leadership opportunities through four key strands:

1. Creative Tasters: Short, low-pressure sessions led by staff/youth volunteers stepping into freelance roles.
2. Creative Courses: Full-day courses led by professional artists. This includes conceptual photography (XX), conceptual collaged furniture installation (XX), stained-glass (XX), and trip to Glasgow Print Studio.
3. Youth-Led Volunteering Projects: Weekly sessions working on a project designed by young people, with support from artist (XX). Possible outputs include animations/illustrated postcards/web page for sharing creative work. Building on hate crime awareness activity, participants will work towards a community-facing output to educate, include, and connect the wider community. Final formats developed entirely by young people.
4. Exhibition: A co-curated public event showcasing artworks that reflect identity, inclusion, and belonging.

The project is a bold, youth-led, hopeful response to marginalisation. By fostering creativity, connection, and collaboration, young people will build confidence, develop transferable skills, and strengthen relationships, shaping their place in the world, demanding space, while leaving a lasting impact on their community.

Section 4: Participant and Programme Details

Question 3 - This fund supports arts experiences for children and young people that face additional barriers to accessing these opportunities. Please tell us about the barriers faced by the children and young people you hope to support.

Example answer 1:

“The young people we work with have arrived in Scotland unaccompanied by a parent/guardian and are seeking asylum. Most have experienced trauma on their journey. They find themselves alone in a new country, learning a new

language, faced with complex legal systems and an uncertain future. The process of claiming asylum for most of the young people we work with is complex, lengthy, and uncertain and it often requires them to revisit numerous traumas that they have experienced on leaving their country of origin and journeying to the UK. All the young people we work with are in a vulnerable position, away from family and support networks. They are all care experienced – some living in children’s units, others in foster care placements or supported accommodation. They live precariously, vulnerable to poor mental health, social isolation and re-trafficking.

Our programme offers a safe space that can be accessed almost immediately. Our work grows confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing in young people. They develop friendships and a sense of community, reducing feelings of isolation. Our artforms rely on non-verbal communication and co-creation with professional artists – removing barriers so young people can claim their right to participate freely in the arts; and placing control in the hands of young people who have little control in other areas of life.

Why is this a good answer?

It is very specific to the young people that the applicant will work with. Poorer responses tend to give generalised statistics and information on barriers, often referring to a national picture rather than how this translates for young people in local communities. It also gives confidence that the applicant is knowledgeable about the specific issues and barriers that the young people they will be working with face.

Question 5 - How will you reach the young people you will be working with? We expect you to be specific about your engagement plans and if you are working with partner organisations to facilitate this, we expect that you will have agreed this in principle.

Example answer 1:

“We will connect with new and existing local/national partners, including LGBT Youth Scotland,(X) Champs, (X) Young Carers, Rise FV, Central Scotland Regional Equality Network, GR Housing, local schools, Progressive Pathways, and local authority teams (youth/learning and employability) to reach those most at risk of marginalisation. We already work with these organisations/groups supporting targeted individuals. Participation will allow young people to share varied and intersectional identities. These organisations will assist with referrals and wrap around support. We will also use peer networks/word-of-mouth to



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engage those disengaged or harder to reach. Participation will be free, local, and welcoming, with no prior experience required.”

Example answer 2:

“Our work is delivered in partnership with Guardianship Scotland, a specialist statutory service providing Independent Child Trafficking Guardians to all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, victims of trafficking and children vulnerable to trafficking who arrive in Scotland. They refer young people to us and offer specialist advice to ensure our approach is accessible and inclusive. Our work is culturally sensitive and artforms are non-verbal to enable participation. We connect with social work, children’s units and foster carers to further engage young people and provide travel support. We have a high staff ratio so young people have adequate support to participate confidently.”

Why are these good answers?

They describe a clear plan, it’s not general, it’s very specific re partners and existing relationships. It gives confidence that this is not purely speculative and that partners are already onboard.

Question 6 - Please describe how you will apply a safeguarding approach to this specific project.

To answer this question well you should tell us how your safeguarding policies and procedures will be applied to the project you’d like funding for. Excellent answers refer to emotional safety and wellbeing and specific project level risk assessment.

Example answer 1: Organisation

“All staff and volunteers involved hold up-to-date PVG Scheme membership and receive regular safeguarding and child protection training. We follow a robust Safeguarding, Child Protection, and Lone Working Policy, with clear procedures for responding to disclosures, reporting concerns, and maintaining professional boundaries. One-to-one sessions are never delivered in isolation — venues are always staffed, with visible supervision, and delivery includes scheduled check-ins. All community spaces are risk assessed. Young people co-design their own Access and Safety Plans, including how they want to be supported and what makes them feel safe.”

Example answer 2: Freelance Artist

“I am committed to creating a safe, supportive environment for all children and young people. I hold PVG membership and operate under a robust Safeguarding



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and Child Protection Policy, aligned with national standards.

All activities will take place in safe, supervised venues with appropriate staff ratios. Clear codes of conduct, risk assessments, and reporting procedures will be in place, ensuring transparency and accountability. I will work in partnership with (partner youth organisation), following their safeguarding protocols, and drawing on the expertise of trained youth workers to ensure young participants are protected at all times.



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Until January 2026

