



# Guidance for Applicants

## Youth Arts Open Fund

### Overview:

The Youth Arts Open Fund is administered by YouthLink Scotland (the national agency for youth work in Scotland) and is part of Creative Scotland's wider support for children and young people, funded by the Scottish Government. The purpose of the Youth Arts Open Fund is to support freelance artists or organisations seeking small amounts of funding so that they can deliver youth-led arts activity for children and young people, who would benefit most from, particularly those who face barriers to participation.

Proposals should engage children and young people in high-quality and accessible arts activity that empowers them through self-expression, enhances their health, wellbeing, and personal development, and builds their confidence and skills. Projects should be youth-led and therefore applicants are expected to have involved children and young people in the development of the proposal prior to applying.

Freelance artists can apply for funding up to **£8k** and organisations can apply for funding of up to **£15k**, to deliver up to 12 months of arts activity.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and will prioritise applications from organisations with specific equalities remits and diverse led organisations, for more information on diverse-led organisations, visit pg. 6-7 of Creative Scotland's EDI Funding Criteria: [3-Equalities-Diversity-and-Inclusion-EDI-Fund-Funding-Criteria-July-2023-Update.pdf \(creativescotland.com\)](https://www.creativescotland.com/3-Equalities-Diversity-and-Inclusion-EDI-Fund-Funding-Criteria-July-2023-Update.pdf)



## Who can apply:

Awards from the fund will be made to freelance artists or to creative, third sector or youth work organisations. Applicants must be based in Scotland, experienced in working with children and young people and supporting the delivery of FREE community-based arts activities for children and young people living in Scotland.

Creative Scotland “Multi-Year Funded” organisations are eligible to apply, but any proposed project must be separate and distinct from their existing Creative Scotland-funded activity. However, the fund aims to build capacity among smaller-scale organisations, and applications from these organisations will be prioritised.

As the Youth Arts Open Fund is part of the Scottish Government's commitment to expand the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) to other art forms **we cannot fund music projects** via this fund. Music could make up part of a wider arts offer, but it cannot be the prominent or sole focus of your proposal. The YMI Access to Music Making Fund is currently providing opportunity for music-based projects ([Youth Music Initiative Funding | Creative Scotland](#)).

## Fund criteria:

Proposals must:

1. Be youth-led through incorporating the ideas of children and young people and empowering them in the development, management and running of your project. This is a core criterion as a panel of young people will assess the extent to which your project is youth-led. The youth panel will make final award decisions.
2. Offer free, high-quality activities, which encourage children and young people's access and participation in one or more art forms.
3. Take a proactive approach to addressing inequalities and ensuring the activities are accessible to all. We know that some children and young people have traditionally found it harder to access youth arts activities. These inequalities can be intersectional and can include children and young people who:



- reside in areas of social and economic deprivation, for more information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), visit the [Scottish Government website](#)
- are experiencing or at risk of experiencing harm and neglect
- are care experienced, for more information visit [The Promise Scotland](#)
- are in the early years (0-5) of their life
- are of the global majority and/or ethnic minorities
- children and young people with disabilities/learning disabilities
- are neurodivergent including autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Tourette’s syndrome
- are experiencing mental health illnesses such as depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, bipolar, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorders and addictive behaviours
- have experience of the criminal justice system
- are young carers (as defined by the [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#)) and/or young parents
- are experiencing homelessness or who have been homeless.

4. Achieve at least four of the following outcomes for the children and young people (CYP) participating:

1. CYP facing additional barriers have equal opportunities to access artistic and creative activities.
2. CYP develop wider transferable skills through involvement in youth arts provision.
3. CYP are empowered through their involvement in youth-led activities and their voices are amplified.
4. The mental health & wellbeing of CYP is improved through their participation in artistic and creative activities.
5. CYP feel better able to express themselves through involvement in arts activities.
6. CYP feel better connected to their peers and communities.
7. Partnerships between youth work and youth arts partners are strengthened



8. Youth workers are more confident in embedding creative and artistic projects in their delivery

5. Involve qualified and experienced tutors in the delivery of the art activities. (CVs of delivery staff must be provided). Creative Scotland is committed, through any activities they support, to ensure that artists and those professionals working in the creative community are paid fairly and appropriately for their time and effort. Guidance on rates of pay for artists which is available on the Creative Scotland website: [Rates of Pay Guidance | Creative Scotland](#)

6. Safeguarding – Ensure that participants are safe and protected from harm, abuse and exploitation. Specific safeguarding obligations and legal requirements apply when working with children and young people, so projects must have robust approaches in place. These should include a Safeguarding or Child Protection Policy and membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme. As a guide, your policy should include:

- Clear procedures for reporting and responding to concerns with a named person who is responsible for safeguarding and their contact details.
- A Code of Behaviour for staff and volunteers.
- Safer recruitment practices to demonstrate that appropriate policies are followed when appointing staff or volunteers, and that regular training is offered to reduce the risk of harm or abuse. This includes appropriate background checks, such as PVG scheme membership for regulated roles.
- A clear process for reviewing and updating your policy to reflect current legislation, guidance, and learning.

Guidance on child protection for individuals and organisations is available on the Creative Scotland [website](#).

### **Fair Work First:**

Fair Work First is the Scottish Government's flagship policy for driving high quality and fair work across the labour market in Scotland. There is an expectation that grantees will pay the Living Wage to directly employed staff members.



## What we do not fund:

### The Youth Arts Open Fund does not support the following:

- Proposals that do not meet the fund criteria
- Events or activities taking place outside the 12-month funding period
- Capital costs exceeding 15% of the total amount requested (includes property, vehicles, equipment, clothing, etc.)
- Excessive management overheads or core cost recovery
- Training courses for staff or volunteers
- Applications from schools or associated organisations (e.g. Parent Teacher Associations)
- Competitions or participation in competitions
- Applications primarily focused on travel or trips
- Activities that have already received Creative Scotland funding

## Funding period:

All funded activity must be delivered between November 2024- November 2025

All project reports must be submitted one month after project completion.

## Timeline:

- Fund opens 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025
- Deadline for applications – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2025
- Decisions communicate – mid November 2025
- Project delivery – December 2025 – December 2026
- Project reports due one month after project finish date

## The assessment process:

Applications will initially be checked for eligibility by YouthLink Scotland and scored against the fund criteria by a team of assessors at Creative Scotland. Short-listed applications will then be passed to a panel of young people who will make final award decisions.

## Young person panel:



The young people involved in the panel will be recruited via the YouthLink Scotland Youth Hub. Previous panel members included young people who self-identified as as:

- Living in poverty /or from low-income households
- Neurodivergent
- Having health needs
- Being disabled
- LGBTQ+
- Having experience of homelessness
- Having experience of domestic abuse and violence
- Black or minority ethnic
- Young Carers
- Living rurally

The Youth Panel will look specifically at the extent to which short-listed applications demonstrate a youth-led approach. You should therefore ensure that your application is written in as accessible a way as possible.

### **Applicant information sessions:**

Online applicant support sessions are available on the dates below.

To book a place, please contact: Jane Dailly, National Grants Manager, YouthLink Scotland [jdailly@youthlink.scot](mailto:jdailly@youthlink.scot)

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August = 10.30am – 11.30 am

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> August – 1.30pm – 2.30pm

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August – 11.30am – 12.30 pm

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August – 10.30am – 11.30am

### **Closing date for applications:**

All applications must be submitted by no later than **5pm on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August**

### **Information you will need to complete your application:**

To complete the form, you will require the following information at hand:

- Bank account details
- Programme budget with breakdown of costs



You will also be asked to upload electronic copies of the following documents

- Annual accounts / Receipts and Payment Statement
- Bank statements (for organisations who have been operating for less than one year)
- Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- CVs of freelance/delivery artists

## **Information on completing the online application:**

We use an online application process. Once you have logged into the system you can choose to save and return to the application at any point prior to submission. Please take the time to complete every question, the programme does not allow you to submit the application form otherwise.

Once you have completed the form you must select the SUBMIT option, you will then receive email confirmation that your application has been received. If you do not select the SUBMIT option, your application cannot be processed or considered by the assessment panel.

Should you experience any difficulties with the application process please contact: Jane Dailly, National Grants Manager, YouthLink Scotland  
[jdailly@youthlink.scot](mailto:jdailly@youthlink.scot)

## **UNCRC:**

The fund outcomes are informed by the following articles of the UNCRC:

- Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously
- Article 13 (freedom of expression) Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law
- Article 29 (goals of education) Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.
- Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups) Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.



- Article 31 (leisure, play and culture) Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.