

DISCOVER

creative careers

GRANTS GUIDANCE | 2026 FUNDING ROUND

Funding of up to £4,000 for hyperlocal creative careers activities supporting underserved young people aged 11–24 across the United Kingdom.

GRANTS AT A GLANCE

WHO ITS FOR

UK-based creative industry organisations, including SMEs, charities and community interest companies (CICs).

HOW MUCH IS AVAILABLE

Up to £4,000 per grant; smaller requests are welcome.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted by 30 November 2026.

DECISIONS FINALISED

Expected in early December 2026.

ACTIVITIES DELIVERED

Funded activities will take place, 1 January – 31 March 2027.

ABOUT THE GRANTS

The Discover Creative Careers programme is committed to ensuring that there are creative career opportunities for young people across the United Kingdom.

Our grants enable hyperlocal activity to happen with creative industry SMEs, charities and CICs on the ground, in the local ecology so that real pathways into skills and jobs are opened up. The activity can be designed by organisations, as a solution to a gap you have identified in the creative career provision. We are interested in seeing innovative ways that young people can be empowered by skills development and new connections and look forward to using successful activity as case studies for the wider programme.

Projects should focus on underserved young people and respond to a clearly identified need or gap in a particular community. Applications should explain the barriers young people face locally, how the proposed activity will help overcome them and what need the activity supports.

We are particularly looking for grant applications of any activity in the devolved nations. We are particularly looking to fund paid traineeship opportunities across the United Kingdom.

WHO CAN APPLY?

The fund is open to creative industry organisations based anywhere in the UK, including the devolved nations. This includes small and medium-sized businesses, charities and CICs.

Individuals, freelancers and sole traders cannot apply as lead applicants. They can be involved through partnerships led by an eligible organisation, such as an agency, network or not-for-profit organisation. Local authorities, combined authorities and mayoral strategic authorities cannot

lead applications. They may partner with an industry organisation that acts as the lead applicant.

WHAT CAN FUNDING SUPPORT?

The funding supports activity that helps young people access creative careers opportunities and directly engages them. Examples include:

- Industry networking events and related support that connect young people with local creative businesses.
- Skills, awareness and confidence-building programmes, including short placements and paid traineeships.
- Bootcamps or practical experiences in professional creative settings.
- Creative careers outreach delivered in youth hubs, careers hubs and other community settings.
- Online or virtual activities that directly engage young people who cannot attend in person.
- Travel bursaries or subsidies that help young people access existing opportunities.
- New projects or pilots testing ways to overcome local barriers to creative careers.

WHAT CANNOT BE FUNDED

The fund cannot be used for:

- State secondary school work experience already supported through the Discover Creative Careers programme.
- Workshops or audience engagement activities within projects that already have funding.
- General arts projects without a specific creative careers focus.
- Online resources with no direct engagement with young people.
- Core staff delivery costs for activities that are already funded and taking place.
- Activities outside the stated delivery period of 1 January - 31 March 2027.

WHAT MAKES A STRONG APPLICATION?

Explain the local need, the young people you intend to support and the difference your activity will make. Be specific about the place, the barriers to opportunity and how your proposal will build skills, connections or pathways into creative work. You do not need to serve the entire 11-24 age range. You can focus on the ages most relevant to the gap you have identified.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL YOU NEED?

The online application asks for:

- The names of participating organisations and relevant experience in creative careers or working with young people.
- The location of the proposed activity, including postcodes.
- The creative industry subsector or subsectors involved.
- The local gap in creative careers provision and how your project will address it.

- The intended group of young people and whether you have worked with them, or a similar group, before.
- The amount requested and a breakdown of how the money will be spent.

HOW TO APPLY

- Create an account on the [Creative UK application portal](#).
- Visit the [application page](#) to complete and submit an online application.
- Applications must be submitted by 30 November 2026.
- Funding decisions are expected in early December 2026.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Join an online information webinar to learn more about the grants, the application process and to ask questions. Register [here](#) or via the Discover Creative Careers funding webpage.

- Thursday 29 October 2026, 12pm
- Thursday 5 November 2026, 11am
- Thursday 12 November 2026, 11am

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much can I apply for?

You can apply for up to £4,000. Smaller requests are welcome, including support such as travel costs that would significantly improve access to an activity.

Must my project cover the full age range?

No. You may focus on a specific age group within the programme's 11–24 target range, based on the needs you identify locally.

Will there be more funding rounds?

Yes. This is the first phase of grants. Further rounds are planned across the 2026–2029 Discover Creative Careers programme.

Can freelancers or sole traders apply?

Not as lead applicants. They may work with an eligible lead organisation as project partners.

Can local government apply?

Local government bodies cannot lead an application, but may join a partnership led by a creative industry organisation.