

NORFOLK **NSM** NORWICH
FESTIVAL

BURSARIES FOR ARTISTS 2026

Led by artists for children
and young people

Image: Jo Hayes



Norfolk & Norwich Festival is delighted to announce Bursaries for Artists, an initiative for artists working to engage children and young people in East Anglia.

Bursaries for Artists will support eight artists with £2,500 each to further their socially engaged and/or community practice with children and young people. Run across seven months, the programme will enable participants to develop artistic work and contribute to their communities, as well as to the creative and cultural lives of children and young people in East Anglia.

Bursary:
£2,500

Closing date for applications:
31/10/2025



Image: Luke Witcomb

Norfolk & Norwich Festival



Norfolk & Norwich Festival is a charity delivering one of the country's longest running arts festivals and a region-wide, year-round programme of creativity and culture for children, young people and their communities.

Norfolk & Norwich Festival takes place in Norwich and around Norfolk for 17 days each May. The Festival is distinctive because we collaborate with artists – from down the road and around the world – to explore the unique physical and cultural identities of our place and to make art which is meaningful to the lives of our audiences.

Festival Connect & Create is the Festival's participation initiative. We work across Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on projects that support and collaborate with educators, artists, young people and their communities.

Our vision

To lead and support celebration, creativity and curiosity in our community to make our part of the world a great place to live, learn, work and play. All of our work is informed by our 'programme principles' – our embrace of:

- **Art relevant to today**, blurring the boundaries between artforms and between art and everyday life.
- **'Festival spirit'** which we bring to our work to celebrate, to share cultural experiences and to bring our community together.
- **Questions and actions about a Social Responsibility** with a focus on: equality, diversity and inclusion; placemaking; and environmental sustainability.

Introduction



Norfolk & Norwich Festival's Bursaries for Artists are for artists who make, or aspire to make, an impact on the creative and cultural lives of children and young people.

We believe that everyone has the right to a creative and cultural life, and as such we are focused on supporting 'Creative Leaders' – educators, artists and young creatives – who actively contribute to the creative lives of children and young people.

We have a broad understanding of who can be a Creative Leader through artistic practice: You might be a performer, a digital artist, or a musician; or you could be an activist, a radio producer, or a community representative. We define Creative Leader as someone active in sharing their passion, skills, knowledge, and understanding of arts and culture with others.

This initiative is to enhance the skills and knowledge of artists based in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Peterborough; specifically, artists who are working to support the creativity lives of children and young people. These bursaries are to help develop your role as a socially engaged artist.

Proposals for bursaries might feature explorations of hands-on delivery and/or research and development. You may devise your own programme of activity, or you may conceive it in partnership with an organisation located in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, or Peterborough.

For example, you could:

- Undertake action research to test your practice working with children and young people. You might work in varied contexts, from an early-years setting to a youth club, or a shared community space
- Attend an event (e.g., conference or festival) where you can meet peers and learn about best practice around engaging children and young people. You could then return to your community and share your findings
- Undertake research and development for a new work which is specifically conceived to engage children and/or young people
- Devise and deliver a workshop/s for other artists in which you share your skills and knowledge about working with children and young people

Partner Organisations



For this year of the artist bursaries, we are asking artists to apply with a partner organisation to ensure the project is well supported with expertise and resources, as well as ensuring it is better connected to the community and/or sector. Therefore, each applicant is asked to identify and apply with an organisational partner located in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire or Peterborough.

Partner organisations are not expected to provide funding for the project but are expected to offer support through in-kind resources such as venue hire, equipment, staff time, etc. It might be the case that you are not yet connected with an organisation at all, or that there is not an appropriate organisation in your community. If this is the case, please let us know in your application form, and tell us about your strategy for building a relationship.

Your organisational partner could be a

- Cultural organisation, e.g. gallery, arts centre, museum
- Education provider e.g. school, university or college
- Community group e.g. youth club, sports club
- Local authority provider e.g. library
- Charity or other third sector organisation.



Image: Malachy Luckie

Budget & Timeline



Each bursary is worth a total of £2,500.

We expect that this will largely be spent on fees (i.e., to pay for your time) however it can also include materials, travel, venue hire, fees for collaborators and/or participants, cost of access needs, etc. Please ensure that the scale of your project is in line with the £2,500 bursary award. At the application stage, the scale of your project needs to be viable and realistic. If successful with your application, you will provide a specific budget.

The activity proposed in your application must take place in the first half of 2026. The life of your project may continue after July 2026; however, the bursary project work fund must be spent in the first half of the year.

Eligibility Criteria



To be eligible to apply for a bursary you must be: **Living in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, or Peterborough** and **Committed to carrying out work in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire or Peterborough.**

Norfolk & Norwich Festival embraces questions and actions about a changing world. We particularly welcome proposals from people who are part of groups underrepresented in the arts in East Anglia, especially people from culturally or socially diverse backgrounds and/or people who identify as neurodiverse, D/deaf or disabled.

Apply as part of a larger project

We welcome applications in which our bursary support can be integrated into a larger programme of activity and included as match-funding.

However, your programme of activity for the bursary must be clearly defined and not simply merged into a larger project.

Applying as a collective

Applications must be made by individuals or as a collaborative team/collective. If applying with multiple individuals, one person must be named as the lead applicant, and it is this person who must complete the application form on behalf of the group. Please note that the level of bursary will remain at £2,500.

Policy on Previous Bursary Recipients

If you have previously received a Bursary for Artist or a Bursary for Young Creatives, you are welcome to apply again with a new or further-developed project. You can find out about past recipients' projects [here](#).

Selection Criteria



Selection Criteria

Our selection criteria are:

- The creativity and originality of your proposal
- The contribution your proposal makes to the creative lives of children and/or young people in East Anglia
- The viability of your proposal
- The strength and relevance of your previous work

Where possible, we will select project proposals which also:

- Provide geographical representation
- Provide a range of artform practices
- Provide a diverse and different cohort
- Impact on sector learning and practice

Selection Panel

The selection panel will be made up of Norfolk & Norwich Festival staff and a representative from a cultural organisation in the sector.



Image: Malachy Luckie

Timelines



Application Timeline

- 1 September 2025: Bursary programme announced and applications open
- 30 September and 7 October 2025: Online Q&A sessions for prospective applicants
- 31 October 2025: Deadline for applications
- 30 November 2025: All applicants notified.

Q&A

We are hosting two virtual information sessions for potential applicants. These will be open and informal online events where you can ask members of the Norfolk & Norwich Festival team any questions.

The information sessions are to be held on:

- Tuesday 30 September, 6 – 7pm
- Tuesday 7 October, 12 – 1pm.

Book a place on one of the information sessions [here](#)

Bursary Recipient Timeline

- December 2025: 1-to-1 artist bursary induction meeting, partner organisation invited (virtual – 45 minutes)
- January 2026: Safeguarding induction session (virtual – 45 minutes)
- February 2026: Artist bursary cohort session (in-person – 2.5 hours)
- March 2026: 1-to-1 artist bursary check-in meeting (virtual – 30 minutes)
- April 2026: Artist bursary and young creative bursary joint cohort session (in-person – 2.5 hours)
- June 2026: 1-to-1 artist bursary check-in meeting (virtual – 30 minutes)
- July 2026: Artist bursary cohort session (in-person – 2.5 hours).



How to apply

To apply complete an Application Form and applicants are also asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring form ([linked here](#)) which is kept anonymous and only used for data reporting purposes. Send your completed application form to fcc@nnfestival.org.uk by 12 noon on Friday 31 October 2025. Please put 'Bursaries for Artists Application' in the subject line.

Deadline

12 noon, 31 October 2025

Queries

If you have any questions about the bursary, require the forms in large print or would like a paper copy posting to you, please email fcc@nnfestival.org.uk



Image: Luke Witcomb