



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

YOUTH ARTS FUND: BURSARY PROGRAMME

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

July 2021

Awarding funds from
 **THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®**

Introduction

This document is supporting information for the **Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme**, and should be read alongside the full guidance for this fund, which can be downloaded from the **Creative Scotland website**.

The Youth Arts Fund: Bursary Programme is a new fund from Creative Scotland (CS) which aims to support early-career artists and creative practitioners aged 18-24, ensuring that practitioners can create work and progress despite the COVID-19 pandemic. It will provide opportunities to create and develop work while being supported by a host organisation.

In developing this Fund, we've looked at some of the learning from previous youth employment initiatives that Creative Scotland has delivered, as well as the wider impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people's lives. This supporting document is intended to bring together some of this learning and share some of what we have heard from young people about the challenges they face and the support they would like as they take the next steps in their careers.

We've used learning and insights from:

- **Understanding Diversity in the Arts 2017**
- **Jerwood Arts' Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts: A Toolkit for Employers**
- **The 2019/20 Creative Scotland Annual Review**
- **Year of Young People Creative Traineeships**
- **Culture & Connections 2018**
- **UNCON 3.0**
- National Youth Arts Advisory Group (NYAAG)/Young Scot Jam; February 2021
- Data from Nurturing Talent Fund awards

We worked with members of NYAAG to pull together some of the key points from these.

NYAAG are a group of young people aged 14 -24 who are interested in representing a voice for young people within arts policy and decision-making. Development of this document was supported by NYAAG members Ellen Wilson, Emma Ruse, Sophia Cotrona, Martha Barr and Laura Walker.

Supporting a diverse range of applicants to apply

Young people have told us that the arts and creative industries can feel closed off and difficult to get into, especially if you face socio-economic barriers. Young artists and creative practitioners want to break down the barriers and make a career in the arts and creative industries viable for everyone.

- 71% of those who responded to the **Arts and Diversity Survey 2017** were degree educated, compared to 31% as an average across Scotland. About 20% of respondents had taken-on unpaid work placements, internships or traineeships, something which particularly affects younger artists and creative practitioners. Education and the ability to take on unpaid work are affecting pathways into the arts and creative industries.
- The recent CS Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO) annual reporting showed that nearly 50% of youth employment initiatives offered within this network since 2019 were unpaid.
- NYAAG felt the need to change the very real perception that young people can't have sustainable or stable income working in the arts and creative industries, or that there is a certain way of doing things. Working in the creative sector can mean different things to different people, it goes beyond being an artist in a gallery or a performer on stage.
- Through the work of NYAAG, we are hearing that young people feel that the sector needs to be seen as more inclusive of people from all backgrounds. Young people feel concerned that they might be judged for not 'fitting in' with the culture of the arts and creative industries.
- This fund should be about creating a space that makes everyone feel welcomed. The NYAAG wanted to make inclusion a priority. In the **Arts and Diversity survey 2017**, more than a half of artists and creative practitioners from minority ethnic backgrounds in Scotland described ethnicity as a barrier they face.
- Through the work of NYAAG, we have heard that young people feel there are a lack of routes into employment and the jobs that exist aren't secure. They said that even job opportunities from well-recognised organisations are only for one to two years and they weren't sure how to plan for this kind of uncertainty.

Supporting a diverse range of applicants to apply (continued)

- We know that opportunities for early-career artists and creative practitioners that include an upper-age limit can lead to young people feeling like 25 is a ‘cliff edge’ in terms of what is available to them. We also know that some young people need a little longer to be ready to get the most out of professional development opportunities. We’ve included the option for organisations to recruit disabled or care experienced young people who are over 25 for their bursary opportunities, as these are young people who are most likely to have experienced disruption within their education pathways.

Your plans to support artists and creative practitioners to develop and present/share their work

- We’re seeing an appetite from young people to ‘get their names out there.’ The Nurturing Talent Fund awards highlight just how ambitious Scotland’s young artists and creative practitioners are, with funding being awarded to international, collaborative, and multi-artform projects in the last year alone, all from young people under the age of 25.
- However, because of the impact of COVID-19, degree showcases, final performances and art shows over the last year have been cancelled, leaving young artists and creative practitioners without the opportunities to show their work through these important platforms and pathways.
- Creative trainees reflected on the benefits of being given opportunities to go beyond the ‘core skills’, and being given time and space for reflection for their interests to emerge and to take on independent projects.
- **“Take us seriously”** – NYAAG members emphasised that young people of all ages want to be treated as professionals, as artists and as creative practitioners. They want to encourage everyone to be ambitious in their expectations of young artists and creative practitioners

Your plans to support artists and creative practitioners to develop and present/share their work (continued)

- Data from the Nurturing Talent Fund suggests 72% of applicants since 2018 have been aged 20-25, with the proportion increasing each year. Meanwhile, through our RFO reporting, we have seen that artists and creative practitioners aged 16-24 only make up 8% of those commissioned to produce artistic or creative work.

Your plans to support artists and creative practitioners

- **“I would love for there to be a space where I could walk in and learn and say up front that I don’t know how to do it and I’ll be given support to learn how”.** NYAAG members reflected on feeling like they need to ‘fake it until you make it’ when applying for opportunities. They would like to feel safe in telling people that they don’t know how to do something, without worrying about repercussions.
- Creative Trainees identified there was a whole host of practical support that organisations can provide in getting to grips with ‘the things you don’t know you need to know’. This included information about funding routes and applications; progression pathways; the practicalities of working as a freelancer, such as tax, **“National Insurance and all those things I never thought about.”** They also welcomed the opportunities for developing their ‘soft skills’, such as professionalism and collaboration; getting on with colleagues; problem-solving; persuasion and networking.
- More networking opportunities so that young people can connect with professionals and peers that have experience in the same field as them. As we progress through the COVID-19 recovery period, young artists and creative practitioners will be looking to network and collaborate in ways that haven’t been possible in recent months. Even before COVID, young people feel dedicated spaces where they could meet professionally were less common.

Your plans to support artists and creative practitioners (continued)

- NYAAG spoke about 'Lockdown Links' as the connections that have been made within the context of lockdown. While the lockdown has been challenging for many, there is an acknowledgement that good work has come of it, through social links and new projects. Projects funded to deliver Youth Arts Fund Bursaries could encourage these links to be built on as this brought the sector closer together.
- Some previously funded projects have facilitated communication and experience-sharing among young participants, e.g., by continuing to host sharing events, support to deliver a final event and/or to maintain contact on completion. For example, the creative trainees found this kind of support and networking to be hugely valuable.

Application and selection process

The Youth Arts Fund: Bursaries Programme is an opportunity for organisations to reflect on the ways that they work with young artists and creative practitioners. They are encouraged to try something new and think about what could be done differently.

This toolkit explores a range of ways to make recruitment more inclusive:

Socio-Economic Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts: A Toolkit for Employers – Jerwood Arts.

- Having an open and accessible application process is seen as a key opportunity that this fund provides. Is it possible for applicants to talk to someone before applying?
- Young people have spoken about how application processes could be a development opportunity for everyone who applies, with feedback and pointers for those who have been unsuccessful: **“I’ve heard the words underdeveloped so many times... What do they actually want?”** Try to consider what skills and experiences young artists and creative practitioners are likely to have, and why they might be interested in these opportunities in the first place. This should help avoid hidden criteria.

Application and selection process (continued)

- Some young people have spoken about how they aren't sure how to clearly articulate what their practice is yet and would benefit from support in this area.
- Young people are hungry for opportunities. Since 2019, there have been more than 500 applications for the Nurturing Talent Fund. The 2018 Creative Internships Programme saw over 100 applicants for just one of the roles. Demand is high, so it will be important for organisations to consider how to manage that.



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Waverley Gate
2-4 Waterloo Place
Edinburgh EH1 3EG
Scotland UK

The Lighthouse
Mitchell Lane
Glasgow G1 3NU
Scotland UK

www.creativescotland.com
enquiries@creativescotland.com



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