

# CRITERIA

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## LUTON ARTS PROGRAMME: LIGHTNING COMMISSIONS

A PROGRAMME MANAGED BY  
BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

### Funded by:



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



Funded by  
**UK Government**



## Introduction

Luton Borough Council are thrilled to introduce Luton Arts, a two-year arts programme by the Arts and Culture Strategy Group, funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Luton Rising and Arts Council England. Read more [on the Luton Arts website](#).

The Luton Arts Programme commissioning funds are led by the Luton Arts team at Luton Borough Council, with management support from Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF). Luton Arts feeds into the [2040 vision for Luton](#).

## Luton Arts Programme: Lightning Commissions (Up To £1,000)

The commissions are for individual artists at the start of their careers, aimed at helping people try new things and learn new skills, and want to make a positive difference to people in Luton through creative projects. You can apply for funding up to £1,000, and we anticipate awarding around 10 projects. We especially want to support those who haven't received funding before. The Luton Arts team will also offer tailored support to funded individuals and projects to help them succeed.

This programme will commission individuals to:

- Develop a new idea.
- Develop and test out a new working relationship between collaborators and/or with an organisation.
- Create a pilot.
- Test out a new piece of equipment.
- Try out new directions for your practice.
- Attend training and/or networking.

It could also cover:

- Venue and/or studio space costs (if needed).
- Equipment.
- Travel to attend events and/or training.

If you have any queries, please contact Luton Arts at [lutonarts@luton.gov.uk](mailto:lutonarts@luton.gov.uk)

The research and development activity should take place in Luton. Please note venue costs will need to be factored into your budget, please let Luton Arts know if you want support identifying a venue in Luton by contacting [lutonarts@luton.gov.uk](mailto:lutonarts@luton.gov.uk)

**Projects / activity should take a maximum of 6 months and must be completed by 30th June 2026.**

## Key Dates & Timelines

- 15/08/25 Application deadline (12pm midday).
- 30/09/25 Applicants notified of outcome.
- 30/06/26 Projects completed.
- 31/07/26 End-of-project report to be submitted to BLCF.

## We Particularly Encourage You to Speak to Luton Arts and/or Apply If:

- You are new to funding applications and/or have never had a successful application.
- You would benefit from advice / mentoring as you progress your projects and career.
- You consider yourself in the early stages of your career.
- You would like to expand your network of creatives or relevant organisations in Luton.
- You would like to develop skills and experience in delivering creative events.

## What Do We Ask For in the Application Process?

You will be asked to complete a simple application form which you can save as you go. As part of the application, you will be asked to tell us about:

- Your experience as an artist and what you want to do.
- What skills you wish to develop, and a simple budget.
- Any support you might need to ensure you reach your goals.

You will also be asked to provide a Luton-based reference who can speak to your experience as an artist and confirm your identity. If you need help with any of this, please get in touch with [lutonarts@luton.gov.uk](mailto:lutonarts@luton.gov.uk)

**We are only able to consider one application per lead applicant to the Luton Create Fund.**

**We are unable to consider applications from individuals who are not eligible to receive public funding.**

## To Support Your Application, We Will Ask For:

- Proof of address, or proof of connection to Luton.
- Bank statement showing an account registered in the lead applicant's name (transactions can be redacted).
- A document or link to demonstrate your work.
- An appropriate referee who can support your application and verify your identity.

## Budget & Fair Pay

It is important to pay yourself and collaborators fairly, here are some resources as a guide:

- [Independent Theatre Council](#)
- [Visual Art](#)
- [Artists' Union](#)

## Upon Offer of a Commission:

- If you have indicated you will work with collaborators or make purchases (e.g. training and equipment), we will ask for confirmation and quotes.
- We will check with the provided referee to complete checks.

## Monitoring & Evaluation

Successful applicants will be asked to complete an end-of-project monitoring report. We (BLCF) will ask how you spent the funds, including providing receipts, and to let us know how the commission went. All commissioned projects will inform a wider evaluation and learning piece of work, and successfully commissioned projects will be asked to contribute to this overall evaluation through consultation with the Luton Arts team.

## How Will Decisions Be Made?

All applications will be reviewed by a range of stakeholders including community representatives, Luton Arts and BLCF staff, who will score applicants against these criteria. It is important we ensure a diverse spread of funded projects across Luton's 20 wards, and a diverse range of ideas and art forms being funded, so we will take this into consideration.

We welcome applications from new and experienced artists, however, in the event of a high level of applications, priority will be given to emerging local artists. You will not be judged on your experience level; however, you will need to assure us that you are able to deliver your idea. This could be through working with experienced mentors or partners, or it could be through examples of other work.

## Planning & Deadlines

We strongly encourage you to book in a conversation by emailing [lutonarts@luton.gov.uk](mailto:lutonarts@luton.gov.uk) who will be able to support you in forming your application and relevant partnerships. We only accept applications through our online system – [please visit our website here](#). Please get in touch with [grants@blcf.org.uk](mailto:grants@blcf.org.uk) if you need support with the application form.

**The deadline for applications is Friday 15th August 2025 at 12pm midday.**

## Unsuccessful Applications

All applicants will receive feedback if requested, and the Luton Arts team may also be able to offer a one-off conversation and endeavour to signpost other opportunities and funding where appropriate.

## Additional Information

All applications are thoroughly assessed, and only applications which clearly meet the programme's criteria will be presented to our partners (Luton Arts) for consideration. We reserve the right to decline or accept any application according to the donor partners' decision.

We encourage all applicants to explore other funding sources. Your local Community Voluntary Service (CVS) can provide funding advice. For Bedfordshire CVS, visit [www.cvsbeds.org.uk](http://www.cvsbeds.org.uk)

## Equal Opportunities

We commit to promoting equal opportunities and valuing diversity regardless of any protected characteristics.

If you have any queries, please contact us at [grants@blcf.org.uk](mailto:grants@blcf.org.uk)