

Cultural Commissioning Funding 2025-26 - Challenge and Innovation Fund - Round 2

Up to £3,000 funding for cultural projects. Closing date for applications – 23rd November 2025

Information for Applicants - Key headings in this document

- 1. What is Cultural Commissioning and the Challenge and Innovation Fund**
- 2. Eligibility for funding**
- 3. What you can apply for**
- 4. What are the criteria we will use to make decision on applications**
- 5. How to apply**

1. What is Cultural Commissioning and the Challenge and Innovation Fund

Cultural Commissioning is the Council's programme funding culture in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

The funding supports a broad range of creative and cultural projects that benefit people living in the Borough.

Projects can range from directly creating and delivering creative and cultural activity for and with our local community, to longer term support for organisational change, research and development, and sector support and engagement. We prioritise organisations that are based in the borough. The fund aims to support the delivery of Culture Richmond, the Borough's cultural framework.

We are pleased to announce a new strand of Cultural Commissioning Funding. The Challenge and Innovation Fund will support small scale projects that help diversify the funded cultural activity in the borough.

We are looking for projects that engage underrepresented communities, or that focus on young people, or that test new ways of working.

If you think you have a project that offers innovation and challenge to the existing cultural activity of the borough we want to hear from you.

2. Eligibility for funding

We will only fund organisations that are:

- Providing services or activities that benefit the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and its residents. We primarily fund organisations that are based in the Borough, but we can consider applications from organisations that have a regional or national remit, as long as the proposed work benefits Richmond Borough and cannot be delivered by other organisations based in the Borough.
- Not for profit - We cannot fund organisations that make a profit. However, we can fund social enterprises and other organisations that generate surpluses, as long as the organisation's governing documents show that the surplus is reinvested into the organisation for charitable purposes. This must be reflected in the accounts the organisation gives us. Companies Limited by Shares are not eligible.

- **Constituted** - Organisations we fund must have a constitution, governing document or set of rules that is signed and dated and defines how the organisation will operate.
- **Trustees/Directors/Management Committee** - The organisation must have at least three unrelated and non-cohabiting Trustees, Directors or Management Committee who are legally responsible for the governance of the organisation. (Note: This is separate from any management committee that sits below a board of Trustees/Directors).
- **Financially solvent** - Organisations funded by us must not have liabilities that are more than their current assets. Please note organisations must have a bank account in the group's name authorised by at least two non-related signatories, who live at different addresses.
- **We will accept applications from organisations working as a consortium, partnership, network or group.** For non-constituted consortiums or groups, one organisation must act as the lead organisation and send us the application. If the application goes on to be successful, this organisation would then be accountable for the grant.
- **All funded partners need to commit to the terms of the funding which includes attending all the three partnership meetings held each year.**

We do not fund:

- Community Interest Companies (CICs) that have been in operation for less than two years.
- Schools or Parent Teacher Associations
- Churches or other organisations where the monies will be used for religious purposes.
- Projects where the monies will be used for political purposes.
- Recoverable VAT.
- Any work or activities that any other person/organisation has a statutory duty to provide or undertake (i.e. are delivered by other public funding).
- Organisations that are already funded by the Cultural Commissioning or Challenge and Innovation Funds.

3. What you can apply for

We support activity that fits within one or more of the following:

- Visual arts, Theatre, Dance, Music
- Combined arts – including outdoor arts, festivals and carnivals
- Literature, Spoken Word
- Film & Video, Digital
- Place based public realm
- Museums, collections development and community history
- Cultural activity in Parks and Green & Blue Spaces
- Cultural activity relating to Sports, health and wellbeing

We fund projects that help us deliver Culture Richmond, but we don't want to be too prescriptive. We want new ideas, to hear what organisations need and how they think our funds can help them develop within this framework.

Above all we want people to be involved in the cultural life of Richmond upon Thames.

4. What are the criteria we will use to make decisions on applications?

The application form includes a top sheet of key information about your organisation and then a statement from you about the programme of work you intend to deliver and how this supports the aims of Cultural Commissioning. Please use the following headings for your statement.

Essential information: is your organisation eligible and ready to deliver this project

- A description of your organisation, its structure, funding and description of overall activity. You can attach a summary of your current business plan.

Tell us about your project

How the project will deliver benefits for people in the Borough

- Are you clear about the people you plan to work with and reach?
- Is the planned work inclusive and relevant?
- Does the work complement your existing programme?
- Are you aware of the risks involved

How the project will innovate in one of the three identified areas

- Reaching underrepresented communities
- Engaging young people
- Testing new ways of working

How the work will support Culture Richmond

- Which objectives from Culture Richmond will your work support?
- How is your organisation connected to the Borough and its people?

All applications will be evaluated against the criteria outlined above and assessed on their merits, and how well they meet local priorities against the amount of funding available

Projects must be initiated and all funding drawn down before March 2026

At the end of the project you will submit a short evaluation report in the form of a case study, describing what the project has achieved and what your organisation has learned.

5. How to apply

You can download an application form online at
https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/arts/arts_development

The application is a word document and can be read and completed using assistive technology.

It is not expected or required but If you would like to talk to someone about your project then please email artsinfo@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

Send the completed application into artsinfo@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk before end of 23rd November 2025

Cultural Commissioning is administered by Culture and Leisure of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames