

Second year of project to engage young people in arts and culture across the UK

Press images: <https://bit.ly/3jc0kuC>

Applications open now until 6 May 2022: <https://www.britishmuseum.org/where-we-are>

Organisations including charities and cultural venues from around the UK are invited to apply for the second year of British Museum young people-focused project *Where we are...*

An innovative national programme for **young people aged 16–24 to co-design meaningful local arts and cultural projects around the UK**, *Where we are...* aims to give young people agency through the creation of cultural projects within their own local communities. Launching a national open call to partner organisations, the programme hopes to inspire cultural and third sector organisations throughout the UK to help co-deliver these projects as part of the British Museum’s National Programmes, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and running annually until 2025.

The first year of *Where we are...* projects in 2021 involved a variety of creative outputs in Edinburgh, Leeds and Leicester – including photography, virtual reality, stop motion, live performance, spoken word, drawing, sculpture, rap, classical guitar and filmmaking. A 2021 participant said it was “a unique and insightful experience. I had the possibility to meet an incredible group of creative people that inspired me to challenge my own perception of myself.” Another 2021 participant said the project allowed them to “unlock my creative potential and flourish in a positive, nurturing environment.”

This funded programme aims to help bridge the plethora of barriers faced by young people preventing them from engaging with arts and culture locally. By **working collaboratively with local organisations**, successful organisations will create bespoke projects that respond to a local community need with input from young people.

To create these projects, **the British Museum is asking cultural organisations and third sector organisations throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to apply**. Successful partners will shape the development and the delivery of the programme with shared decision-making throughout the process. By working in a three-way partnership with the British Museum, local charities and cultural spaces, *Where we are...* aims to connect with young people who are currently under-served by the cultural sector. This partnership will utilise the networks and community connections that third sectors have locally, as well as the local knowledge and collections of cultural spaces. **Interested organisations should apply through the [British Museum website](#) by Friday 6 May 2022** to be involved in the second year of programme delivery.

Key Partners, a central part of the project, will consist of **a cultural organisation and a third sector organisation working together in a local community**; both staff and young people participating in the programme will be remunerated. Organisations who recognise the multitude of benefits that young people can offer and ideally who have worked collaboratively with young people previously will be warmly welcomed. The programme ultimately hopes to support and develop young people’s skills and experience to co-produce their own cultural or arts projects. In a boost for their skills and experience, young people will be involved in project management, communication, creative problem solving and networking.

Where we are... encourages young people to interpret what arts and culture mean to them, their families and local communities. Cultural expressions can be broad, ranging from festivals, food, music and other forms of intangible cultural experiences that might be unique to communities and of interest to young people. It is hoped a more fluid definition of arts and culture will help create more diverse and unique cultural and arts projects relevant to local young people, whilst at the same time challenging the cultural sector and its understanding of these two concepts.

Museums of all types including natural history, science, technology, history and arts, as well as cultural spaces including libraries, theatres and community centres are welcome to apply. Likewise, submissions from any registered third sector organisation that works with young people are wanted – there's no need to be an arts or cultural organisation to apply. Each cultural partner will need to be happy to partner with a third sector organisation and vice versa, indicating which partner they would like to apply with.

Once the Key Partners are recruited, the programme will **seek to engage young people who are traditionally under-served in the arts and culture sector**. Applicants of any background or experience are welcome, especially those who are disinterested in museums in general. By actively understanding what it is that makes arts and culture unappealing, the programme can help increase the accessibility of the sector and work towards removing barriers of entry. This includes young people who define themselves as one or more of the following: LGBTQIA+, from working class backgrounds, neurodivergent, disabled, having a migrant or refugee experience, from Africa, South, East and South East Asian diaspora and ethnically diverse.

This second year of the programme will run from April 2022 – January 2023, with a commitment to these ten months requested from the successful Key Partners. In this first year of programme delivery, three cultural projects will be co-produced with 30 young people and three Key Partners. With the support of the British Museum, each partner will locally manage the recruitment of 10 young people and the co-production of a young people-led cultural or arts project.

Maria Bojanowska, Dorset Foundation Head of National Programmes said, “Young people have been through a huge amount over the last few years. It is so important now more than ever, that our sector finds new ways to connect with young people and create welcoming and inspiring spaces. I'm really pleased therefore that the British Museum, with support from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, is able to open up these opportunities for young people and work with local partners to learn more about what is to be a young person in the UK today. Any organisation in the third or cultural sector that is excited by giving young people a platform should apply – even better if you've never thought about working in partnership with a museum before!”

Hanouf Al-Alawi, National Outreach Manager said, “We welcome applications from cultural and third sector organisations across the UK. We are excited to hear how organisations respond to the programme brief and look forward to meeting prospective partners. If you value young people and want to work collaboratively with them to create meaningful arts and cultural projects then we can't wait to hear from you.”

Notes to editors

Criteria for museums or cultural organisations

1. An accredited museum or cultural organisation in any part of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland).
2. Museums of all types are encouraged to apply including natural history, science, technology, history and arts.

3. Has existing relationships with local community organisations and/or a willingness to explore and establish new collaborative partnerships.
4. Has a strong interest in working locally with young people (aged 16—24) who are under-served in the cultural sector. This includes, but is not limited to, young people who define themselves as: LGBTQIA+; from working class backgrounds; neurodivergent; disabled; having a migrant or refugee experience; from African Diaspora; from South, East and South East Asian diaspora; and/or ethnically diverse.
5. Has a strong interest in assets-based approach to young people's programming. This approach recognises the interests, knowledge, identities and resources of under-served young people. It recognises young people for who they are and not who they are not.
6. Has a willingness to use co-design, co-delivery and co-production of projects with young people. Co-production is the process of collaboratively designing and delivering a project with people with lived experience, by recognising and celebrating the value of direct life experience (rather than only professional expertise) in the planning, designing and delivering of a project.
7. Has internal staff capacity to be engaged in this programme.
8. Can facilitate access to museum resources, including but not limited to, collections or gallery spaces for the young people if needed.
9. Is willing to work collaboratively with a local third sector organisation and the British Museum to co-produce young people's programming.
10. Be able to articulate their ambitions for this youth engagement beyond the life of the proposed project.
11. Optional: Can propose a young people-led arts or culture project idea that serves a local need.

Criteria for third sector organisations

1. A registered organisation in any part of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland).
2. Doesn't need to be an arts or cultural organisation.
3. Has strong experience working locally with young people (aged 16—24) who are under-served in the cultural sector. This includes, but is not limited to, young people who define themselves as: LGBTQIA+; from working class backgrounds; neurodivergent; disabled; having a migrant or refugee experience; from African diaspora; from South, East and South East Asian diaspora; and/or ethnically diverse.
4. Can articulate the needs of young people in their local area.
5. Has adopted an assets-based approach to their programming work with young people. This approach recognises and values the interests, knowledge, identities and resources of under-served young people. It recognises young people for who they are and not who they are not.
6. Preferably has experience in co-design, co-delivery and co-production of projects with young people, or at least an understanding of it and readiness to use this approach. Co-production is the process of collaboratively designing and delivering a project with people with lived experience, by recognising and celebrating the value of direct life experience (rather than only professional expertise) in the planning, designing and delivering of a project.
7. Has internal staff capacity to be engaged in this programme.
8. Is willing to work collaboratively with a local museum or a cultural organisation and the British Museum to co-produce young people programming.
9. Be able to articulate their ambitions for this young people engagement beyond the life of the proposed project.
10. Optional: Can propose a young people-led arts or culture project idea that serves a local need.

The British Museum's National Programmes

The British Museum has a presence throughout the UK by reaching into homes and schools virtually, and by lending hundreds of objects to partner organisations each year. Everyone has the chance to engage with the British Museum's collection and expertise.

With the lead support of the Dorset Foundation in memory of Harry M Weinrebe, in 2020/21 the British Museum lent 1,453 objects to 77 venues, reaching half a million visitors outside

London. Even with pandemic related closures, three times more visitors saw a British Museum object outside of London than in Bloomsbury in 2020/21.

The British Museum is committed to sharing its collection and knowledge as widely as possible and to create positive educational, social and economic impact for people and places across the UK. Facilitating new perspectives on our shared global history with others through Partnership Galleries, these exhibitions reflect diverse viewpoints, lived experiences and collective ideas. The Museum also manages the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in England, recording and sharing British archaeological discoveries to help shape our understanding of the past.



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For more, follow the British Museum blog at blog.britishmuseum.org

Further information

Contact the Communications team:

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High resolution images available at <https://bit.ly/3jc0kuC>