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Manandhar

NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT GRANTS INFORMATION SHEET

Supporting Grassroots Music

Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants is our funding programme for arts, museums and libraries projects.

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[artscouncil.org.uk](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

What's inside

This Information Sheet provides **additional information** for your Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants application.

Make sure that you have also read the main **Guidance for applicants**. See our [website](#) for more information about Project Grants.

In this information sheet, we will talk about the following:

What is a Time limited priority?	3
Supporting Grassroots Music	3
How much can you apply for?	5
Who can apply?	5
What can you apply for?	6
Building work	8
Buying equipment.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
What you cannot apply for	10
Case studies	12
Contact us	17

What is a Time limited priority?

From time to time, we may ask for specific types of applications through Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants, sometimes in partnership.

Supporting Grassroots Music is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as part of the UK [Government's Creative Industries Sector Vision](#).

The opportunity to respond to any priority is part of Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants and is not a separate programme. Any application must meet the criteria for Project Grants, as well as respond to the specific characteristics of any priority.

This information sheet relates to the Supporting Grassroots Music Time limited priority.

Supporting Grassroots Music

The Grassroots Music Sector – rehearsal and recording studios, promoters, festivals, and venues for live and electronic music performance – are vital to the music ecosystem: the people and places that support musicians to hone their craft, test new approaches, develop audiences, and gain crucial experience of live responses to their work. Sometimes described as the 'R&D centres'¹ of the music industry, they are key to developing the talent pipeline. When the grassroots music sector is threatened, so is the future health of the UK's music industry; a shrinking talent pipeline will lead to a diminishing industry.

¹ Creative Industries Sector Vision: A joint plan to drive growth, build talent and develop skills (2023): Pg 38.

Funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as part of £8.5m boost to the music industry announced in June 2023 in the UK Government's [Creative Industries Sector Vision](#), £4 million has been allocated specifically to support **rehearsal and recording studios, promoters, festivals, and venues for live and electronic music performance such as grassroots music venues and club sector organisations** to apply for support for projects that help them:

- **bring live and electronic music to the public;**
- and **support the development of talent.**

Although the Supporting Grassroots Music fund is part of our existing Project Grants programme, this £4 million additional budget has been ringfenced exclusively for this type of activity, which we call a Time limited priority. It can therefore **only** be accessed by rehearsal and recording studios, promoters, festivals, and venues for live and electronic music performance.

We recognise that there are some significant challenges facing the grassroots music sector that mean organisations and individuals can often struggle to focus on developing their programmes, their audiences and their business models. And we know that, because of these pressures, this impact is also felt both by emerging and more established artists too.

We don't receive as many applications as we would like from some parts of the grassroots music sector, so this priority is designed to stimulate more interest from - and to build the confidence of - the grassroots sector in applying for public funding, specifically because of the pivotal role it can play in enabling them to grow their businesses, take risks, and develop their workforce and audiences.

This new Supporting Grassroots Music fund follows the success of our Supporting Grassroots Live Music strand within National Lottery Project Grants, which ran from 2019-2023 and enabled us to invest over £9.9 million in grassroots music in England. Through this new DCMS-supported fund we will

invest a further £4 million during the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. We have broadened the scope of this new strand to enable us to support rehearsal and recording studios and festivals, in addition to promoters and venues for both live and electronic music performance who were also eligible for the previous iteration of the fund.

We're using the framework of the Project Grants programme, and this will help prepare applicants to Supporting Grassroots Music to progress on to apply to the wider programme in future.

How much can you apply for?

You can apply to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Music for between £1,000 and £40,000, for projects up to three years in length. If you need to apply for more than £40,000, you can still apply to the main Project Grants programme for activity that delivers grassroots music activity.

If you can, you should try to find at least 10% of the total cost of your project using income from other sources. We call this 'match funding'. This can be cash support, or support in kind - this could be your own contribution (for example: ticket sales, or contributing your own or your team's time to the project if this is already costed to your business), and/or support from any partners in your project. Further information about this is available in our [Guidance for applicants](#).

Who can apply?

This funding is available to rehearsal and recording studios, festivals, promoters, and venues for live and electronic music performance working at the grassroots of the music industry.

We welcome applications from those who work in all styles of music and genres including jazz, folk, diasporic or 'world' (for example South Asian, Latin American or African), classical and contemporary popular genres such as, but not limited to:

- electronic (including house, electronica, drum & bass, amapiano, garage, techno, experimental)
- hip-hop and grime
- rap and drill
- R&B and soul
- afrobeats, dancehall, reggaeton
- indie and alternative
- metal and punk
- pop

This isn't an exhaustive list. Your programme might fit into one or more of these genres, or you (and your audiences and wider community) might use different ways to describe the styles and genres you work with. All are welcome through Supporting Grassroots Music.

We cannot support applications from individual bands, artists, DJs, managers or agents to rehearse, record, present or tour work as part of

Supporting Grassroots Music, but you can apply to the main Project Grants programme to support activity like this.

What can you apply for?

You can apply to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Music for a variety of types of project that aim to support the grassroots music sector in England.

Projects might involve presenting live or electronic music programming, but they might also include activities that put venues, festivals, rehearsal and recording studios and promoters in a better position to deliver their work in the long term, for example: purchasing some essential equipment, carrying out building work, developing new routes into off-stage roles, building new consortia or partnerships for touring, artist/talent development programmes or business planning. The activity we fund must primarily benefit audiences for grassroots music, and the communities in which they are based, in the short or longer term.

Some examples of the types of activity we can support include:

Developing the resilience and sustainability of rehearsal and recording studios, festivals and venues

This could be trialling alternative uses of spaces and resources, such as offering music related activities to children and young people during non-show times, exploring new initiatives with partners, afternoon performances, renting out space for rehearsals or training activities, paying for support with business planning, or mentoring from other venues or promoter colleagues.

Festival showcasing networking and audience development

This could be supporting local music festivals to programme diverse artists to expand their offer and reach diverse audiences, supporting festivals to network across their programmes to create more opportunity for artists during festival season and to develop the offer for audiences at regular, smaller scale music festivals.

Artistic programming and audience development

This could include developing a season of performances or shows across one or more venues or festivals, or a project to develop more diverse programmes and audiences, for example allowing you to take risks on programming new genres of music, unknown or less commercial artists or new ways of presenting live and electronic music.

Developing and platforming on- and off-stage talent

This could include trialing training and development programmes such as talent development programmes for emerging artists and musicians, running DJ and production schools, teaching young people how to use sound and lighting equipment in studios and live environments, and training young promoters.

Improvements to buildings and infrastructure

This could include upgrading equipment such as PA systems, lighting rigs, mixing desks, turntables, microphones, and backline and other relevant equipment. It could also include things like upgrading toilet or kitchen facilities, improving the layout of your building, putting in a new stage or seating, or improving your building's environmental performance.

Building work and purchasing equipment

We can support some types of building development work and equipment purchase through the Supporting Grassroots Music Time limited priority.

We prioritise the consolidation and improvement of existing buildings rather than investing in significant expansion or new infrastructure however we could support a key piece of equipment that would enable the delivery of a festival or some building work to make a venue more

accessible.

You should read our Building Projects information sheet and our Buying equipment and assets information sheet. You can find these under 'Types of project' in our Project Grants [Guidance library](#).

You need to ask for our permission if you want to apply for £30,001 or more and it includes building or fixed asset costs.

We'll discuss an outline of your plans in this conversation, and we'll review your security of tenure if you are applying for building works or fixed assets. We'll then decide whether to give you permission to apply.

Some important things to note are:

- We are very unlikely to support the purchase of leases
- We can't support the purchase of second-hand equipment in most cases
- You can't apply for equipment if you plan to sell it within the monitoring period.

If you have any plans for asset purchases, they must be part of a project that clearly demonstrates development of artistic activity and benefit to the wider public. Equipment purchases could include production equipment (such as sound or lighting) that will clearly make a positive impact on the artistic activity and audience engagement.

Other purchases or building work could include alterations to venues to make them more accessible to all members of the public. If you do want to make these kinds of alterations, Attitude is Everything have published a [Charter of Best Practice](#) which you may find useful.

What you cannot apply for

This Time limited priority is focused specifically on supporting rehearsal and recording studios, promoters, festivals, and venues for live and electronic

music performance such as grassroots music venues and club sector organisations.

You shouldn't select Supporting Grassroots Music as a Time limited priority if your application is for:

- activity that does not benefit the grassroots elements of the music sector
- artists' own gigs or tours or the work of management companies and/or agents supporting them
- artists' own rehearsal or recording time.

You may still be able to apply to Project Grants to support these types of activity but should not apply as a Supporting Grassroots Music Time limited priority.

As Supporting Grassroots Music is still part of the wider Project Grants programme, all applicants must still meet the main eligibility criteria. Our [Guidance for applicants](#) covers what we cannot normally support through Project Grants. Some things that might relate to Supporting Grassroots Music applications are:

- day-to-day running costs like rent or utilities
 - You can include management costs associated with the delivery of your project but these need to be directly related to the activity you are delivering and only cover the time period of your project
- activities where the outcome is fundraising whether for your organisation or for others (for example: fundraising events)
- any activity that is already fully funded, either by the Arts Council or through other sources
- activity that doesn't benefit the public or communities in the short or longer term

- activity that is intended to make a profit within the project timeframe (we can only support self-contained projects that do not make a profit)
- legal fees and/or any other costs associated with challenging or contesting local business (e.g. planning) decisions.

Case studies

Below are some examples of successful projects funded recently through Project Grants that give you some sense of the range of activity we hope to support through our Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Music Time limited priority.

Electronic Sound Magazine, Norwich – received £33,900

Funding supported the creation of a space within the Electronic Sound editorial offices to enable both emerging and established artists to participate in come and play sessions. The award specifically supported the running of the inaugural season of sessions, which were captured digitally and hosted on the new Electronic Sound website.

The investment proved transformative. Having artists come into the space meant relationships were strengthened with artists and their teams. The project involved the organisation working with artists in new ways, amplifying their work, and at the same time reaching new audiences for Electronic Sound itself. Ensuring that high quality video and production values were applied to activities, and that marketing plans went beyond the magazine itself has meant that Electronic Sound magazine now fits into a broader, larger, more ambitious structure of activity which will reach much larger audiences.

Forum Music Studios, Darlington – received £40,000

The project supported 44 local artists and musicians who had written songs during lockdown whilst simultaneously developing and maximising the skillset of Forum Music Studios' exiting workforce. The programme, Release From Lockdown, involved commissioning session musicians, producers and the in-house technical team to develop the music, professionally record it and live stream a showcase event. The investment also triggered a new artwork commission, funded by Creative Darlington, with a local artist creating the artwork for the Release from Lockdown album. The project allowed local people to develop and express their creativity.

The project meant that the venue worked with industry professionals they would not otherwise have been able to engage with, as well as upgrading their recording studio to improve the quality of their studio recordings. The project gave the in-house technical team experience and confidence in live-streaming, which was a new experience for many of them and offered significant future potential for the individuals involved. Being ambitious but keeping it local was key to this project's success.

Matt and Phreds, Manchester - received £14,989

During lockdown, Matt and Phreds opened a social media platform directly to musicians so they could perform from home with a 'PayPal' link for viewers to 'Pay What You Can'. This initiative led the team to create a series of online, live performances streamed from the venue, called Club+.

The investment the venue received supported both the cost of purchasing camera equipment as well as related set up costs. It enabled them to develop a membership area of their website to host Club+ content, including live streams as well as catch-up content. Running Club+ membership directly through the venue also meant they were able to develop ongoing relationships with audiences who engage with the series.

Training and enhancing the capabilities of the sound engineers - including supporting them to develop new approaches to lighting and presentation, as well as sound mixing for video and live events - meant that the team developed new skills to support their future careers.

Baby Rock Sampler, Manchester – received £15,000

Baby Rock Sampler is a series of daytime, family friendly gigs in Manchester. Arts Council investment supported the promoter to pilot live music events targeted towards parents/carers of children aged 0-5 years. The project provided additional revenue opportunities for touring artists, reached new audiences that are generally unable to attend evening gigs, and created amazing opportunities for young children to experience live music for the first time.

New partnerships also enabled more ambitious programming and led to new audiences for the company's shows. The investment also gave the team the freedom and confidence to try new approaches to running their events, including testing new and different ways to price tickets, and agreeing a box office split and venue hire deal with a new partner venue, Band on the Wall.

Team Black Promotions at the Hope and Ruin, Brighton – received £14,999

Ruinfest was a collaborative project which enabled six local DIY promoters to create six unique 'All Day Festivals' in this well-known pub venue. Each event showcased an individual promoter and their unique approach through the acts booked, new artwork created to promote the event and the workshops offered.

The investment enabled a different and more thorough approach, enabling bigger risks to be taken with line ups including giving some less commercial artists a platform. Having each promoter's events spread over a whole day encouraged more people to attend from out of town, while subsidising the ticket price meant the event was affordable and accessible to more diverse audiences.

Komeida, Bath - received £14,382

Komeida is a community owned venue in Bath which hosts over 400 events each year including comedy, music, cabaret events and club nights.

Whilst already having a large, well-equipped 780 capacity auditorium, the venue wanted to develop a professionally equipped second 100 capacity space so they would be able to work with a more diverse range of artists who couldn't appropriately be accommodated in the main auditorium. Programming a broader range of genres and artists led the venue to attract new and diverse audiences and extended their reach into their community.

The venue's application was for investment to support the installation of PA and lighting equipment as previously there had only been a vocal PA and minimal stage lighting, and using the space for live music had been prohibitively expensive due to the cost of additional equipment hire. Consequently, the funding received by Komeida not only had a positive impact on its short-term business opportunities, but also on its long-term financial sustainability.

Sound & Vision, Cambridge – received £15,000:

After a successful debut in 2022, Cambridge-based Sound & Vision, a local multi-venue festival, received support to deliver the second edition of its festival and conference. Investment specifically enabled the organisation to provide platforms and showcases focussing on music and the creative industries, as well as professional development for emerging artists and creatives.

In delivering their project, Sound & Vision aimed to develop artists and arts professionals, as well as audiences in and around Cambridge, and the local infrastructure for the creative industries more broadly. This ambitious programme is delivered through their programme of over 60 events across three days of showcases, each of which offers performers the opportunity to develop their work and audiences the opportunity to discover new creative talent.

The investment received supported the organisation to build on the success its inaugural event, offering local young people, artists and creative professionals the opportunity to develop a conference programme that directly meets their needs, including tackling issues of equality in the creative industries and providing vital local professional development, networking and career development opportunities.

Nottingham Community Artist Network – received £37,193

The Nottingham Community Artist Network (Nottingham CAN) received investment to support delivery of their project, 'Let's Build Fam' at 'MIMM' studios, a grassroots arts venue in Nottingham. The project encompassed delivery of ten electronic and live music events and talks featuring well-known DJs and artists in collaboration with local grassroots promoters, artists, DJs, and bands.

The project also secured funding from Youth Music, which allowed Nottingham CAN to offer eight local young people aged 18 to 25 access to a music mentorship programme, and a further 30 Further Education students

participated in monthly live sound workshops and event shadowing alongside their public facing events. In providing mentorship to these aspiring young creatives, many from marginalised backgrounds, the organisation's professional partners were able to provide high quality live music industry insights and experience to help set them on the path to a future career.

Dubrekk Studios, Derby - received £35,000

The owner of Dubrek Studios, a busy rehearsal and recording studio and live music venue in the middle of Derby, applied for support to develop 'A Vibrant Sound', an innovative and diverse programme of concerts, with a focus on multicultural and female artists.

The project had an emphasis on interaction and collaboration and took an innovative approach to enhancing connections between artists and the community through its residency programme and outreach work at the Lost in the Hills festival and through local community interest company Down To Earth's project to bring new life to reclaimed inner-city spaces.

Dubrekk Studio's new interactive engagement strategy expanded the reach of the venue and improved the visibility of the artists involved in the programme, building on the buzz associated with this exciting, independent grassroots live music venue in a city which has limited opportunities for diverse artists.

Contact us

Phone: 0161 934 4317
Email: enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk
Website: artscouncil.org.uk

Post: Arts Council England
The Hive, 49 Lever Street
Manchester
M1 1FN

You can also Live Chat with our customer services team by clicking the icon
our Project Grants page on our website.