Sheffield Arts & Culture Fund Guidance Notes

South Yorkshire's Community Foundation are delighted to launch this new fund on behalf of Culture Sheffield and Sheffield City Council for 2026-27.

This programme supports small and grassroots arts, culture, and heritage organisations in Sheffield to strengthen the city's cultural infrastructure in line with the aims of Sheffield's Culture Strategy.

Grants can support both organisational development and the delivery of culture and heritage activity. The fund is designed to help organisations and creative practitioners build resilience, develop skills, test new ideas, reach new audiences and create opportunities for future growth.

We particularly welcome applications from organisations that are developing their practice, strengthening their foundations or taking their next step towards larger funding opportunities.

How much can I apply for?

Grants of up to £5,000 per organisation are available. The programme hopes to fund up 15-20 groups in this round.

When can I apply?

Applications to this first round will open at 9am on Monday 2nd November 2026 and close at 9am on Monday 4th January 2027.

Decisions will be made by a local and expert panel of individuals from Sheffield. The panel will meet in February 2027, and decisions will be communicated by via email soon after.

Activities and expenditure should start no earlier than April 2027 for work lasting up to 12 months.

Who can apply?

This fund is open to not-for-profit groups based in Sheffield and for arts, culture and heritage projects and programmes that benefit the residents and communities of Sheffield. Other eligibility criteria include:

- Maximum turnover of £275,000 in the latest financial year
- If groups are a CIC; they should have

    - at least three unrelated Trustees/Directors with nobody in a position of significant control, (if there are set rights, they should be equal across all Directors)
    - have a clear asset lock or distribution clause, in
    - have clear finances showing income and expenditure,
    - and have a bank account with two unrelated signatories, in the name of the group.

Please see SYCF's Due Diligence Guidelines for more information or contact us to discuss.

What can I apply for?

This fund encourages grassroots culture and heritage organisations to test creative ideas that create opportunities for future growth.

Applications should meet one of the following fund outcomes:

- Stronger and more resilient organisations through improved planning, governance, financial sustainability, and organisational development
- More culture and heritage activity takes place in Sheffield, with diverse programmes, cultural experiences, events, and projects taking place
- Increased skills, knowledge, leadership development and career progression opportunities for staff, volunteers, trustees, artists, and creative practitioners, helping organisations to build their capacity and build skills and confidence
- Greater organisational capacity to develop, sustain and grow arts, culture, and heritage activity for Sheffield residents and communities
- More connected and inclusive cultural activity through partnership working, collaboration and engagement with diverse groups
- Pathways to future investment with organisations developing the experience, evidence or track record needed to access larger funding opportunities
- Supporting organisations to strengthen inclusive leadership, governance, and decision-making

Eligible applications could include:

- Staff, volunteer, trustee and artist training and development
- Business planning, governance reviews, and organisational development
- Activities involving fundraising, income diversification and financial sustainability
- Partnership development and collaborative working between organisations
- Networking, peer-learning and knowledge-sharing activity
- Audience development, community consultation and co-design initiatives and programming
- Activities that improve accessibility, inclusion, representation, and participation
- Research, experimentation or pilot projects that test new approaches, partnerships, methods of audience engagement or organisational models
- Testing new ideas, artistic approaches or ways of working
- Developing or testing new cultural / heritage activity that may lead to future investment
- Early-stage projects that help organisations build experience and evidence for larger funding opportunities
- Developing creative health partnerships that seek to improve wellbeing through engaging in the arts, culture and heritage

<u>What cannot be funded?</u>

The Sheffield Arts & Culture fund cannot fund be used for:

- Groups based outside Sheffield and/or with the majority of beneficiaries resident outside the city
- Groups who do not meet all the eligibility criteria stated above
- Organisations without appropriate safeguarding, governance or financial processes and policies
- Companies and/or CICs limited by shares or any profit making non-charitable entity
- Retrospective funding i.e. activity and costs that have already taken place or repayment of money which has already been spent
- Capital costs for large items, renovations, refurbishments or building projects (small project related capital items are acceptable, but cannot form a significant portion of the budget)
- Projects already funded through other means
- Activities primarily for the benefit of animals rather than people

- Activity that promotes a particular political or religious point of view
- Activity linked to gambling or the purchase of alcohol
- Activities that do not have a clear culture or heritage focus

How do I apply and what information do I need to supply?
Groups should complete the online application form linked on our website, and requested evidential documentation which will include:

- Your governing document (if you have not applied to SYCF within the last 12-months)
- Your latest set of accounts showing us your income and expenditure for your most recent financial year
- A redacted bank statement showing the name and account details for payment, if your application is successful
- Link to or attachment of your safeguarding policy

We welcome applications from across all artforms and creative disciplines including visual arts, music, theatre, dance, literature, festivals, crafts, digital arts, film and screen, creative health and combined arts. Applications are also welcome for heritage activity. Applicants should identify the primary artform(s) represented within their proposal.

Applications are via our online application system. Please see our use of AI policy on our website to see more information about how we use AI tools, and advice we provide if your group are considering using these tools to support your application.

Access and Support
We can arrange to provide application forms to you in another format if required. Please contact us to discuss any access needs that you have.

What happens after I apply?
The Grants Team at South Yorkshire's Community Foundation (SYCF) will read all applications, received before the deadline. Your application will be assessed against the criteria, aims and priorities noted above and we may contact you to ask some additional questions or for missing information, so we fully understand everything that has been sent in. Please ensure you attach or email the essential requested additional documentation when you submit your application to

prevent delays to this process. If we do not receive everything we need, we will not be able to put your application forward for a decision. Sometimes we read or see an application that does not meet the fund criteria, and we will have to withdraw that application for the fund. We will feed back if we have had to do that, with clear reasons why.

All applications that are eligible will be sent to our panel of independent volunteers who will spend dedicated time together to discuss and consider each application and to decide where the money should be spent. They will do their best to make sure the money is spent as fairly as possible across Sheffield and a range of different activities. We anticipate that we will have more applications to read than we will have money for so we will have to turn down some applications.

The Grants Team at SYCF will contact every group who applied before the deadline to communicate our decision and provide feedback if the application has not been successful. Please note that the panel's decision is final.

If your application is successful, we will be in touch with the good news and when payment can be expected. Successful applicants will need to agree to the grant terms and conditions. There is also a requirement to complete an online End of Grant monitoring report after your project has finished.

Contact us.
If you would like more information or to discuss your application, please contact the Grants Team via grants@sycf.org.uk. We can chat on the phone, come and meet you or meet online – whatever suits you best.

We also offer an open drop-in session every Wednesday on Teams between 4pm – 5pm. You are welcome to join any of these to ask questions or discuss your application.