

Create Berwick

Creative Action Fund Specification and Guidance

1. Introduction

Creative Action Fund is a grant scheme open to all creatives in Berwick and surrounding wards, needing investment to boost their careers or productivity. And, to creatives, cultural organisations and community groups wanting to produce new creative activity within the Create Berwick zone. The fund is open to artists and creative businesses, partnerships and community groups wanting financial support to test new ideas, build a business, deliver new cultural events, develop skills and training or seed fund projects.

Create Berwick is led by Northumberland County Council and is one of three Culture and Creative Zones funded by the North East Combined Authority.

Create Berwick, Newcastle Central and North Shields Cultural Quarter will pilot creative-led regeneration projects until 2027.

The grant scheme will be open to applications from all businesses and practitioners within the cultural and creative sector based within the proximity of the Berwick Town Walls.

Applications will be considered for each round on a first come first served basis within each priority until all funds are allocated.

We encourage applicants to submit bids by the **deadlines shown on the final page**.

2. Purpose of the Grant Fund

Creative Action Fund is designed to enable creative practitioners and creative businesses within the Create Berwick zone to secure funding for economic and creative development. It can also be used to provide match funding for other grant sources, e.g. Arts Council England that requires 10% match. Creative Action Funds can be used as

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match funding if it develops new projects, content or services, including developing markets and audience.

Create Berwick established the Creative Action Fund as a grant scheme to support Berwick based creative practitioners and creative organisations to help develop new skills, grow businesses, test new ideas and deliver projects which engage people in creative activity. We want to invest in Berwick's creative economy and support ambition, and test new thinking.

Funding must be used towards delivering a creative activity by any artform and includes community events, creative workshops, creating a market for your work or any activity which supports creative enterprise. The event must be seen, exhibited or accessible to an audience in Berwick and help support the development of its creative and cultural economy.

Funding is available for events and activities to take place within Berwick's town walls by creatives, community groups and organisations living and working in Berwick or aTD15 postcode with an English address.

Creative Action Fund understands the creative sector may need funding to secure workspace, attend training courses, test new ideas as well as delivering projects, making, marketing and selling.

3.Location for the Grant Fund

Create Berwick is the name we give the Creative and Cultural Zone and is defined as the area within the Elizabethan walls. Applications are welcome from creative practitioners and creative businesses living and working within the zone as well as those living and working in TD15 postcodes with an English address. Funding must be used to develop projects or activities which animate the zone and promotes Berwick upon Tweed as a dynamic cultural town.

4.Grant Availability and Value

We expect awards to range between £1,000 and £5,000 with an average award of £2,000 and all applications will receive a decision within 8 weeks of the funding deadline.

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You may apply more than once a year, but it must be for different activities and be developmental.

First-time applicants will be prioritised over repeat applicants within one year. Therefore, if you are making a repeat application you must make a strong case to show how your activity will have a positive impact.

5. Eligibility

To be eligible for grant funding, all of the following criteria must apply. Applicants must be Creative practitioners or creative businesses are eligible for funding if you match one or more of the following:

- Be a legally constituted body or be an individual registered with HMRC e.g. a voluntary and community organisation, a social enterprise, a private business, a registered charity, a statutory or non-statutory public organisation, freelancer etc.
- Be able to demonstrate that the project will benefit and be delivered within the project area
- Be able to demonstrate how you will use the grant fund **only if** your intention is to use it to leverage in additional funding from other sources, for example Arts Council England.

Businesses are not eligible for support if:

- They are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made
- They do not qualify under Subsidy Control rules
- They have an outstanding debt with the Council (for example business rates, service charges etc)

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Some of the activity Create Berwick will fund, but not limited to, includes:

- Studio or workspace rent – up to £1k per annum
- Zero waste creative workshops and activities
- Temporary public realm projects animating Berwick town centre
- Pilot project- an event or activity which tests new ideas - **Note***

** Accommodation costs such as rent or rates that can be directly attributed to the project. For example, if a building is used solely for the purposes of the project then the rent and rates for that building can be included in the project budget. If costs need to be apportioned, then they should be covered by the flat rate indirect cost.*

- Travel and Expenses
- English Artist Union Rates of pay for fees
- Workshops or creative activity
- Training or skills development courses – *this covers any necessary training for staff skills and development that are absolutely necessary to deliver the project.*
- Open studio events and, or creative markets
- Research & Development
- Attendance at CPD or networking events (inc travel)
- Marketing and sales - *Includes marketing costs such as press releases, social media, events, and publicity materials to promote project activity.*
- New creative collaborations
- Business development – product and market development
- Community engagement projects

Creative Action Fund **will not** support:

- Activities or projects which have already taken place
- Bid writing and project development costs inc. consultancy
- Bank transaction costs
- Travel separate from your core project (e.g. attendance at training courses)
- Subsistence, personal costs & allowances
- Scottish Artist Union Rates of Pay
- Costs that have been claimed from another grant funder
- Training or qualifications which may be funded by some other source
- Individuals under the age of 18 years of age

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- FE or HE students
- Applications from commercial organisations for existing business activity
- Capital costs
- Business deficits
- Applications from outside of Berwick and the English TD15 postcode area (*if you live in any other part of Northumberland, you may attend Create Berwick organised workshops or training events for free, but we are constrained by Creative and Cultural Zone and must prioritise investment in Berwick based creatives*)

Please note – we are working with Creative Guild to deliver peer to peer training for the creative sector in Berwick and will not be able to fund any activity provided by Creative Guild. If you want to find out more about the benefits of being a member of Creative Guild, please contact them directly.

Also, we have arranged for Ceri Hand Ltd to deliver mentorship and coaching for creative practitioners to run in 2023 and 2024 and opportunities will be advertised via Create Berwick website and newsletter. We will not be able to fund any activity covered by the coaching and mentorship programme.

We will organise free training opportunities throughout the year and promote them via our website and social media. Please join our newsletter to receive regular information and updates.

Timescales

Creative Action Fund cannot grant towards projects already underway. A project must start once the application has been formally approved and upon NCC receiving a signed Grant Funding Agreement. If you are using Creative Action Fund to lever in additional funding from another source, you will be asked to provide evidence of a grant offer.

A project plan setting out a timetable for delivering your activity within 12 months is expected upon a grant approval.

If for whatever reason, you are unable to complete your project within the end date of your project you must notify us before your final payment (usually 3 months before your project ends). NCC will review your project and decide to extend the project deadline or withhold any future payment.

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6.Outputs

The grant must contribute towards the delivery of a creative output which could take the form of a physical piece of art; a digital projection; a poetry, play, dance or music performance for stage, TV or radio; an outdoor arts activity; or a community event.

This should be seen or exhibited to an audience within Berwick upon Tweed and contributing to the development of the local economy.

Applicants must also be able to demonstrate that they will deliver against one or more of the following outputs:

- Enterprises receiving support – including pe-starts, start-ups, freelancers and established creative businesses
- Direct jobs created – permanent (minimum of a 12-month contract), full time equivalent (minimum of 35 hours a week) or p/t jobs created resulting from a grant.
- Indirect jobs created – jobs created by freelancers and enterprises etc resulting from taking up workspace
- Direct Jobs safeguarded – existing jobs, including freelancers, which is at risk of being lost prior to grant support.
- Attendees participating in events – visitors to the town or residents who either participate in an event or activity, or attend an event or activity as audience
- Residents supported with skills development – people taking part in workshops or creative learning activities which result in new skills and may lead into new creative careers

7.Procurement

Successful applicants must follow the Public Procurement Principles when appointing contractors/suppliers to undertake the work and provide evidence of the procurement process.

Value of Contracts	Min Procedure
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£0-£9999	Direct Award
£10,000-£50,000	3 written quotes or prices sought from relevant suppliers of goods, works and / or services
Over £50,000	Formal Tender Process

8.Evidence Requirements

For the application to be considered, we require businesses/creative practitioners to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria above.

To do this, you will need to declare the following in the application form:

- Company registration number (if applicable) or UTR Number
- Subsidy Control compliance declaration (confirmation that the business has not exceeded the allowable limits of public sector funding)
- Confirmation of eligibility to the grant schemes outlined above
- A copy of the business bank statement within the last 3 months
- A copy of the business' latest financial accounts
- Evidence of availability of funds from other sources such as confirmation of applications submitted if decision outstanding or grant agreements/ offer letters if funding secured

Audit checks will take place and you may be asked to supply additional evidence to support the information in your application.

Should you be unable to provide satisfactory evidence, your application may be refused, or you may be required to return the funding to Northumberland County Council if this has already been paid.

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We reserve the right to request additional evidence at any time.

9.How to Apply

We are working with Berwick Community Development Trust who will provide administrative support for the Creative Action Fund. Application forms can be found on the Create Berwick and Berwick Community Development Trust websites and should be completed and returned to Berwick Community Development Trust.

E mail bmurray@berwick.trust.org.uk

We will contact you if we require further information before the application goes to the Panel for decision.

We expect to receive many applications therefore it is important you set out clearly what you want to do and why it will grow your creative practice and how it will help sustain or develop your creative business. If you are a community organisation then you must explain how it will help engage local people in creative activity.

Please explain how your project will deliver one or more outputs for Create Berwick

Make sure you have costed up your proposal and the amount you are requesting is realistic and appropriate for what you want to do. Please provide a cv, website or link to social media to help us understand your work and make an informed decision about your application.

We ask you read this Specification and Guidance document carefully before you submit your application. It describes the grant process, from submitting an application form to receiving payment. The document sets out the terms and conditions for funding, for example we expect to receive you to complete an evaluation form on completion of your project. This is important as we must show our funder, NTCA, how CCZ funding is used to support the creative economy in Berwick.

Our panel will discuss your application, score it and decide if it should receive the grant.

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Before we make our decision, we may have some queries or may need some clarifications. If this is the case, we will contact you and you will need to provide clarifications within a given deadline.

Applicants will then be issued a grant offer letter to be signed and returned

10. Application Assessment Criteria

When completing your Grant Application Form, please provide as much detail and supporting evidence as possible about your project to enable the panel to assess the strength and deliverability of your proposal.

The panel will assess and score each application on the extent to which it meets the following criteria.

- Only those projects scoring highly against all criteria will be considered for funding. Please make sure your project is tailored to the criteria.
- Demonstrates good Local Strategic Fit with the objectives and priorities of the project
- Meets all eligibility rules set out in of this document, delivers on at least one of the projects strategic objectives, and delivers at least one of the eligible activities
- Additionality: Delivers outputs, outcomes and benefits that are additional i.e. would not happen in the absence of the project.
- Deliverability: Projects demonstrating that they can complete delivery by 31st March 2026 or within 12 months on receipt of funding.
- Will achieve value for money on project costs in terms of the quantified outputs and benefits the project will deliver.
- Can evidence need and demand for the project.
- Please note that following submission of your application form, NCC may ask you to provide further detailed information in support of your project

All decisions on applications are final.

All applications must be completed in full to be considered. Please do not attach additional documents unless you have been asked to do so, and make sure your contact details are correct.

The Council reserves the right to withdraw the scheme or vary the terms of the scheme at any time, and without notice, should it be necessary to do so.

Where there are exceptional circumstances, the Council reserves the right to award a grant in excess of the stated grant values.

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Berwick Community Development Trust will contact you after the Panel have met to assess applications and make a final decision. If you are unsuccessful because we had more applications than we could fund we will recommend you resubmit your application for consideration at the next round.

If we feel your application could be improved, Andrea Oliver, CCZ Manager will provide feedback to help you develop your proposal prior to resubmitting.

11. Payments

Payments will be made directly to approved applicants' bank accounts by electronic transfer. Terms to be agreed.

Applications must be sent to bmurray@berwicktrust.org.uk

Please title your e mail Creative Action Fund

NB: Grant Funding Agreements and Payments will be issued by Northumberland County Council

2025/26 Deadlines

31 st January 2026 - CLOSED
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