

Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service

Arts Education Fund 2025-26

Application guidelines

THAMES (Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service) has acquired a small amount of funding in order to deliver some additional arts education activities for children and young people. Cultural partners are invited to apply for “**seed funding**” for projects and programmes which support cultural education work in Tower Hamlets and build on the work of THAMES.

The funding will support programmes taking place in the **2025-26 school year**. The deadline for applications is **9am on Thursday 5 June 2025**.

Please note, we request that anyone interested should contact us for a short chat before applying. Please contact becca.linton@towerhamlets.gov.uk (Cross Arts Projects Manager) or alison.porter@towerhamlets.gov.uk (Music Projects Manager).

KEY AIM

The key aim of these Arts Education Funds is to provide activities for children and young people that support their learning and education in music, dance, drama, the visual arts, film & media and museums & heritage. Programmes should enhance the development of skills and knowledge and provide opportunities for progression, artistic development and expression, and the development of personal and social skills. The fund can support projects in Early Years settings, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and Alternative Provision settings.

PRIORITY AREAS

Projects and programmes should provide **inclusive and relevant opportunities** to all young people regardless of ethnicity and cultural background, socio-economic background and disability or additional needs and that embrace the diversity of Tower Hamlets.

The Arts Education Fund will support **educational projects** for young people to develop their artistic and cultural skills and knowledge, particularly supporting the National Curriculum and National Plan for Music Education.

In particular, we are looking for projects to address some of the following areas (NB we do not expect projects to address all of the points below):

- Provide opportunities for children aged 0-5 and their families to experience music and the arts through activity with nurseries and Children & Family Centres.
- Give young people opportunities to work with professional artists and creative professionals and to develop their talents.
- Support young people to build confidence in performing and presenting their work and ideas through performances, exhibitions, showcases or sharings.
- Provide opportunities for young people to see live performances (either taking performances to schools or through external events) or exhibitions, particularly featuring a diverse range of genres, styles and cultures.
- Provide opportunities for youth voice: consulting and collaborating with young people, empowering them to make decisions and have a say in the project, their education and/or the creative opportunities they access.
- Support young people through periods of transition (e.g. moving from primary to secondary school).
- Provide opportunities for young people to explore creative careers and pathways into industry.
- Support the personal development and wellbeing of young people, providing room for self-expression and exploration.
- Support teachers to develop their skills and confidence through CPD, resources and peer networking.

FINANCIAL AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- Arts organisations can apply for “seed funding” towards their work, amounts between **£500 - £5,000** depending on the scale of the programme. *Please note, grants offered are usually in the region of £1,500-£3,000.* Organisations are expected to raise additional funding from schools, organisations and external funders. We encourage applications to include modest income from schools where school budgets allow.
- When reviewing applications, we will be paying particular attention to the value for money of each project. Given that we only have a small pot of funding to distribute, we would like this to benefit as many young people as possible and therefore expect budgets to be modest and efficient.

TIMESCALES

- 9am, Thursday 5 June 2025 – deadline for applications
- W/c 30 June 2025 – successful projects informed
- 1 September 2025 – 31 August 2026 – projects take place
- 31 August 2026 – deadline for evaluation/monitoring forms

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Projects should supplement and extend the work already being funded and developed by and within the Council and not just replace or replicate.
- Partnership or consortium working and/or a joined up approach will be considered favourably. Projects must identify a lead organisation where funding would be directed.
- Funding should be used as seed funding; partners are expected to raise additional funds from other sources.
- Where possible, applications should set out how the project could be sustained in the medium to long term, embedded into longer lasting partnerships and leave behind a legacy.
- Projects should demonstrate a commitment to evaluation and monitoring. All successful applicants are expected to provide evaluations and data as required from time to time.
- All partners are expected to actively participate in network events to promote a joined up approach and to keep THAMES informed of projects’ progress.
- Tower Hamlets Council and THAMES should be fully acknowledged in references to projects either fully funded or part funded by the Council.

Please submit all applications to becca.linton@towerhamlets.gov.uk (Cross Arts Projects Manager) and alison.porter@towerhamlets.gov.uk (Music Projects Manager).

ABOUT TOWER HAMLETS

Tower Hamlets continues to be one of the fastest growing, youngest and most ethnically diverse populations in the UK. With the City of London to the West, Canary Wharf to the South East and the Olympic Park to the East, Tower Hamlets is an area rich in culture and history and one that is constantly evolving.

POPULATION: At the time of the most recent census in March 2021, Tower Hamlets had the fastest-growing population of any local authority area across England and Wales. Between 2011 and 2021 the local population grew by 56,200 (22.1%) to 310,300.

It's the most densely populated borough in England with 15,695 residents per square kilometre compared to an average of 424 people per square kilometre in England.

DIVERSITY: At 34.6%, Tower Hamlets has the largest Bangladeshi population in England and Wales and the largest Muslim population (39.9%) in England and Wales.

It had the fourth smallest White British population and the smallest Christian population in England and Wales.

Almost 1 in 6 households in Tower Hamlets (15.7%) have no one in that household with English as their main language.

DEPRIVATION: 26.5% of children in Tower Hamlets were living in relative low-income families before housing costs in 2023. That was the equal 42nd highest proportion among UK local authority areas (of 361).

In 2023, 20.7% of children in Tower Hamlets were living in absolute low-income families before housing costs. That was the 46th highest proportion among UK LA areas (of 361), placing Tower Hamlets within the top quintile nationally on this measure.

SCHOOLS: Tower Hamlets has 4 nursery schools, 68 primary schools, 16 secondary schools,, 5 special schools, 1 alternative provision provider, 4 colleges, and 7 higher education providers located in the borough.

37,800 pupils attend primary and secondary schools in the borough.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 attainment in Tower Hamlets is above the national average in reading, writing and Mathematics.

SOURCE:

https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lqnl/community_and_living/borough_statistics/Borough_profile.aspx

MUSIC AND THE ARTS IN SCHOOLS:

THAMES works with nearly all schools in the borough as follows:

- There are 4,500 pupils engaged in whole class instrumental lessons (KS1 & KS2 First Access) and 2,500 pupils continuing beyond First Access; 70 pupils receiving a THAMES Award, with 12 of them receiving scholarships through the London Music Fund.
- All costs of in school tuition are covered by schools; costs aren't passed on to families.
- As well as supporting ensembles in schools, we also run a Wednesday Music Centre and a Saturday Music Centre, an inclusive ensemble, a Children's Choir and a Tower Hamlets Youth Orchestra.
- THAMES works with around 40 cultural partners to deliver projects in schools and signpost local opportunities.

In 2023-24, 21 THAMES partnership projects took place involving 10,352 pupils. The total cost of these projects was £314,780. Of these monies seed funding of £51,546 was provided by Tower Hamlets Council via the Arts Education Fund; £1,875 by schools; £261,359 was additional funding brought in by Cultural Partners.