



Youth Arts Training Grant

1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027

Application Criteria and Guidance Notes

Deadline for applications: 6 March 2026 at 11.59pm

General Conditions of Application:

- All applications must be: completed in full, submitted with all necessary supporting information and received by the closing date set out in the advertisement and application form.
- Late / incomplete / retrospective applications will not be considered.
- Applications to the Youth Arts Training Grant will open annually.
- Grants awarded are subject to budget approval.

Applications must be submitted to: artsgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk or to Ards Arts Centre, Town Hall, Conway Square, Newtownards, BT23 4NP

Please read these guidance notes carefully before submitting an application

Contents

Introduction	3
Aims of the Youth Arts Training Grant	
Timescales	
Eligibility	4
Who is eligible?	
Eligibility Criteria	
What is not eligible / exclusions?	
Assessment Process	5
Scoring	
Scoring Matrix	
Assessment Process	
Grant Guidelines	6
What Happens to Your Application?	7
Equality of Opportunity, Freedom of Information, Data Protection	8

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Youth Arts Training Grant Criteria 2026/27

For opportunities taking place between 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027

Application Deadline: 6 March 2026, at 11.59pm

Failure to meet the criteria as listed below in this document will result in your application not being assessed.

The aim of Ards and North Down Borough Council's Youth Arts Training Grant to help support young people (aged 11 – 21 years) in their artistic development through training and development opportunities.

Grants of up to a total of £250 are available per applicant per financial year, subject to budget approval.

Application to the Youth Arts Training Grant 2026/2027 is by an online application form available via our website: <https://andculture.org.uk/funding>

If you require special assistance with this application process, or would prefer to complete a Word version of this application, please contact us before the deadline (no later than 12 noon on Monday 9 February 2026) so this can be arranged. Email: artsgrants@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk for more information.

GRANT TIMELINE

Scheme advertised	January 2026
Scheme open	16 January 2026
Scheme close	6 March 2026 at 11.59pm
Date of Assessment	March 2026 TBC
Award and regret letters issued	4 weeks after application deadline
Letter of acceptance received	4 weeks from the date of letter of offer
Completion of grant period	31 st March 2027
Final Claim to be submitted	Before 31 st March 2027
Monitoring & Evaluation to be Submitted	One month after your project has completed

Who is eligible?

- To be eligible you must meet all the following criteria:
- Resident within the Ards and North Down Borough Council Area.
- Aged 11 – 21 years.
- Applying to, or have been accepted or invited onto, a youth arts training course or youth arts development opportunity.

The applicant must be able to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the creative art form to which they are requesting the grant.
- Can demonstrate sufficient experience in the creative art form.
- Demonstrate how the training or development opportunity will be of benefit to them.
- Clearly show what the training or development opportunity is by producing course programme, details of facilitators etc.
- Training/development opportunity cannot commence before 1 April 2026 and must be completed before 31 March 2027.

Please provide the following essential documentation with your application:

- Evidence of the course/training/activity programme or publication (EG: Course programme information, residency information pack, etc).
- Receipts/invoices/evidence of costs.
- A letter of acceptance or invite onto course/training/activity (where applicable).

It is recommended that you compile the essential documentation in the following formats before completing your application online, ready to be uploaded:

- Evidence of the course/training/activity programme or publication (PDF document is preferable).
- Receipts/invoices/evidence of costs (PDF document is preferable).
- A letter of acceptance or invite onto course/training/activity if applicable (PDF document is preferable).

Failure to supply the requested essential documentation at time of application, or in the formats as requested, may result in your application not being assessed.

What type of training/development opportunity is suitable?

Those:

- That promote and encourage artistic development and skills in young people.
- That ensure quality arts experiences.
- That support wellbeing through creative activity.

Some examples of what we will consider are:

- A young person undertaking a summer residential youth theatre, orchestra or choir training programme.
- A young person undertaking a visual arts or crafts training programme or residency.
- Short-term or one-off courses, residencies and development opportunities.
- Accredited or non-accredited training.

Scoring

The answers to each of the questions will be given a score out of 10 using the matrix detailed in the Table below. NB: weighting x 2 will be applied to question 12. This is done to reflect the importance of the question but is still aligned with the scoring matrix below:

Applications will be scored on the following criteria:

- Experience of applicant and commitment to artistic development (*scoring 0-10*)
- Quality of course/residency/training opportunity, including value for money (*scoring 0-10*)
- Applicant demonstrates how the course/residency or training opportunity will benefit their artistic skills/development (*scoring 0-10 x 2*)

A pass mark will be agreed and set before applications are assessed. Those who do not reach the pass mark will not be awarded.

In the event of the grant stream being oversubscribed against maximum funding available, allocation of funds will be awarded to successful applicants based on ranked scores, until the maximum available funding is reached.

Score	Measure
10	Exceptional response that fully meets and exceeds all criteria.
9	Excellent. Very strong response that meets all criteria with only minor, non-critical gaps.
8	Very Good. A solid application that meets most criteria well, though there may be some areas for clarification or development.
7	Good. Generally good response, meeting the majority of the criteria. Some aspects may be underdeveloped, unclear, or require further detail.
6	Satisfactory. Acceptable application with some strengths, but key elements are missing or inadequately addressed.
5	Fair. Meets some basic criteria but lacks depth, clarity, or cohesion. Shows some potential, but significant development needed.
4	Weak. Does not adequately meet several criteria. Application lacks coherence or clear rationale. Limited potential demonstrated.
3	Poor. Major gaps in response. Application fails to address core requirements and lacks clarity or focus.
2	Very Poor. Severely lacking across all areas. No clear artistic rationale, feasibility, or impact.
1	Inadequate. Completely fails to address the criteria. No artistic merit or relevance apparent. Application may be incomplete or off-topic.
0	Not Applicable. No response provided to relevant criteria, or application is ineligible or disqualified.

Grant Guidelines

- Grants of up to a total of £250 are available per applicant per financial year. The Youth Arts Training Grant can represent up to 90% of the total course/residency/training opportunity costs.
- Applications are welcome irrespective of an individual's religious belief, political opinion, racial group, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, whether they have dependents or not, or whether they have a disability or not. Please be advised that those applicants who have indicated that they have a disability or a physical or mental impairment will be required to provide more detail if their application is successful to ensure their needs may be met through putting in place reasonable adjustments (if applicable).
- Grants awarded are subject to budget approval.
- **This grant is for short term courses/residencies/development opportunities. Short term courses are deemed to be those which are no longer than 3 months in length and must take place within the grant financial year (1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027).**
- Grants will not be given for costs relating to courses/residencies/development opportunities that form part of the curriculum for long term or full-term opportunities.
- An application can cover any aspect of the cost of a training programme or course in a related subject.
- Up to 20% of the requested grant aid may be used towards payment of travel and accommodation of the applicant only but must not form the core content of the course/residency/development opportunity. Payments towards costs of a guardian to accompany the applicant (for travel, etc) will not be covered.
Receipts/invoices/evidence of costs must be provided at the time of application.
- Applicants should note that while careful consideration will be given to each application, it may not be possible to assist every applicant even if all the criteria are met.
- A condition of the Award is that successful applicants will be required to provide Ards and North Down Borough Council's Arts Section with a short evaluation on how they used their award and the benefit they gained from it.
- Ards and North Down Borough Council cannot accept applications for training or activity already undertaken (retrospective funding).
- Applications received after the stated deadline will **not** be assessed.
- Training/development opportunity cannot commence before 1 April 2026 and must be completed before 31 March 2027.
- All money must be spent before 31 March 2027.

What Happens Next?

- All grant applications will receive an automatic email as soon as your online application has been completed and successfully submitted. A receipt for your response will be emailed to you from the address **no-reply@mail1.citizenspace.com** with the subject "**Response received - Response ID: XXXX-XXXX-XXXX-X**". If it doesn't appear in your inbox within a couple of minutes after submitting your application, please check your "spam" or "junk" folder.
- All grant applications will receive an acknowledgement email after the date of the deadline from the Arts Service of Ards and North Down Borough Council, along with information on the next steps.

- Fully completed and submitted applications received by the closing date and time will be assessed against the criteria detailed in the Criteria and Guidance Notes by an assessment panel.
- Scoring criteria and details of a situation where the amount of grant funding exceeds the available grant budget are outlined on page 3 of this document.
- All applicants will be informed by email of the outcome of the assessments once this process has been completed.
- A Letter of Offer and Form of Acceptance will be issued to successful applicants

How to draw down the grant:

- 100% of the grant will be paid to successful applicants on receipt of a completed 'Form of Acceptance'.
- **Any money not utilised or accounted for must be returned to Ards and North Down Borough Council.**
- Evaluation forms will be forwarded to successful applicants and must be returned one month after the completion of the course/residency/training opportunity.

What happens to your Application?

- Applications to the Youth Arts Training Grant are assessed after each application round by a panel made of members of the Ards and North Down Borough Council Arts and Heritage advisory panel.
- All training/residencies/courses must take place between 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027. Completed applications should be submitted via the online application form by the relevant deadline.
- Applicants should note that while careful consideration will be given to each application, it may not be possible to assist every applicant even if all the criteria are met.
- A pass mark will be agreed and set before applications are assessed. In the event of the grant stream being oversubscribed against maximum funding available, all applicants who have scored above the pass mark will be awarded a percentage of their overall requested grant aid.
- You will be contacted by email to inform you of the outcome of your application. This usually takes four weeks from the application deadline.
- Please refer the council website regarding appeals procedure.
www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

ANDBC Policy

Equality of Opportunity, Section 75 and Good Relations.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is required to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- men and women generally
- persons with a disability or without
- persons with dependants or without.

In addition, without prejudice to the obligations above, Council is required to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

Council is committed to fulfilling the Section 75 statutory duties across all functions (including service provision, employment and procurement)

Freedom of Information

Ards and North Down Borough Council is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act came into operation on 1st January 2005. Applicants should be aware that the information provided in the completed application document could be disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Council will proceed on the basis of disclosure unless an appropriate exemption applies. No information provided by applicants will be accepted "in confidence" and Ards and North Down Borough Council will not accept liability for loss as a result of any information disclosed in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Ards and North Down Borough Council does not have a discretion regarding whether or not to disclose information in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, unless an exemption applies. Decisions in relation to disclosure will be taken by appropriate individuals in Ards and North Down Borough Council having due regard to the exemptions available and the Public Interest. Applicants should be aware that despite the availability of some exemptions, information may still be disclosed if the Public Interest in its disclosure outweighs the Public Interest in maintaining the exemption. Applicants are required to highlight information included in the application documents which they consider to be commercially sensitive or confidential in nature, and should state the precise reasons, why that view is taken. In particular, issues concerning trade secrets and commercial sensitivity should be highlighted. Applicants are advised against recording unnecessary information.

In accordance with the Lord Chancellors Code of Practice on the discharge of public functions, Ards and North Down Borough Council will not accept any contractual term that purports to restrict the disclosure of information held by the Council in respect of the contract or grant process save as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act. The decision whether to disclose information rests solely with Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Ards and North Down Borough Council will consult with applicants, where it is considered appropriate, in relation to the release of controversial information.

Data Protection

Ards and North Down Borough Council values the right to personal privacy. We collect this information solely for the purposes of this application and do not share it with anyone. We comply with the DPA (Data Protection Act) 2018 and UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), ensuring that information is collected fairly and lawfully, is accurate, adequate, secure, up to date and not held any longer than necessary.

For further information our Privacy Statement can be viewed at
<https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/privacy-and-cookies>