

#YMIScotland



FORMULA FUND

Application Guidance
2025/26

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Overview of the Youth Music Initiative

In 2003, The Scottish Government's Youth Music Initiative (YMI) was launched to put music at the heart of young people's lives and learning. It was established in response to the **What's Going On?** report, a national audit of youth music in Scotland.

It currently operates with an annual budget of £9.5 million and supports all musical genres, age groups and teaching methods.

The YMI has two distinct strands:

- **School Based Music Making** – activities planned and delivered by local authorities. Local authorities apply to the [YMI Formula Fund](#) for this activity.
- **Funding for the Youth Arts Sector** – supports freelancers and organisations to deliver high quality projects for the benefit of children, young people and the wider youth music sector. There are three funding routes: [Access to Music Making](#), [Strengthening Youth Music](#) and the [YMI CPD and Training Fund](#). There is also an additional funding for the [Youth Arts Open Fund](#), for wider youth arts projects, which is administered by YouthLink Scotland.

To find out more about our plans, evaluations and funding routes, including accessing the guidelines and application forms, visit our website: www.creativescotland.com/yimi

What is the purpose of the YMI Formula Fund?

All applications must meet the purpose for the YMI Formula fund for the forthcoming year, namely:

1. To meet the YMI Scottish Government commitment: **every school pupil in Scotland should be offered a year of free music tuition by the time they leave primary school**¹.
2. For projects delivered beyond the above commitment, the purpose is: **to address inequity and contribute to Scottish Government's agenda in tackling child poverty by engaging children and young people most in need.**

We recognise that local authorities are facing challenges due to the wider financial context in which they are operating and budget pressures within YMI programmes.

If you have any concerns about meeting the purpose of the fund in 2025/26, please email [Kelsey Jubin, Creative Learning Officer](mailto:kelsey.jubin@scotland.gov.uk).

¹ Equating to a minimum of 12 hours' music tuition per pupil. Where possible, programmes should be sustained over a period of time throughout the academic year and should prioritise whole class delivery in primary school settings. We recognise projects that target children and young people most in need may require alternative delivery models.



Scottish Government
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Key dates and information

For the academic year 2025/26, **£7.2m** will be available for the YMI Formula Fund. This is subject to the 2025/26 and 2026/27 budget confirmation from The Scottish Government. Your local authority allocation will be communicated to you by email.

Who can apply?

Only **local authorities** and **Jordanhill School** are eligible to apply.

When can I apply?

This funding route accepts applications any time up until the deadline of **5pm, Tuesday 25 March 2025**.

When will I hear back regarding a decision?

All applicants who apply by the deadline will receive a decision by **5pm, Friday 6 June 2025**.

Funding Sugeries

In **February and March 2025**, the YMI team will hold information sessions and funding surgeries with individual applicants.

Surgeries will offer applicants the opportunity to meet with a Creative Scotland representative to seek further guidance on the application process, guidelines, or application form.

The YMI Team will be in touch directly with more information.

Alternative Formats, Languages and Access Support

Creative Scotland is committed to offering clear and accessible application processes that are open to everyone. We have several ways of supporting you in making an application.

Alternative Formats and Languages

Our published materials, including funding guidance and application forms, can be made available in other formats as required. We can accept applications and supporting materials which are written in English, Gaelic or Scots.

Access Support

Access support contributes to costs for services to help applicants overcome barriers to applying for our funds.

We offer access support to individuals or the lead applicant of a group who self-identify as d/Deaf, hard of hearing, disabled or living with chronic illness, mental illness or neurodivergence, such as dyslexia, autism or ADHD.

For more information on the types of support available, how to request assistance, and how to include access costs in your funding application, please [visit our website](#).

If you need further assistance, please contact us at: accesssupportrequests@creativescotland.com

If you are a d/Deaf BSL user, you can access our services with the Contact Scotland-BSL programme. Visit www.contactsotland-bsl.org for more information.

Contacting our Enquiries Service

If you require technical support, further information or have any other queries, contact our Enquiries Service by emailing: enquiries@creativescotland.com

Do you have any queries about the YMI Formula Fund?

If you require further information or have any queries about the YMI Formula Fund, email [Kelsey Jubin, Creative Learning Officer](mailto:Kelsey.Jubin@creativescotland.com).

Please keep an electronic copy of your application for your own records and future reference.

What are we looking for in your application?

Criteria

Your application must clearly demonstrate how it meets the following criteria:

- Alignment of all programme activity with the purpose of the fund.
- Any projects aimed at tackling inequity must be targeted at children and young people who would benefit most, this includes children and young people who:
 - reside in areas of social and economic deprivation, for more information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), visit [The Scottish Government website](#)
 - are experiencing or at risk of experiencing harm and neglect
 - are care experienced, for more information visit [The Promise Scotland](#)
 - are in the early years (0-5) of their life
 - are of the global majority and/or ethnic minorities
 - are children and young people with disabilities/learning disabilities
 - are neurodivergent including autism, ADHD, tourettes syndrome
 - are experiencing mental health illnesses such as depression, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, bipolar, schizophrenia, PTSD, eating disorders and addictive behaviours
 - have experience of the criminal justice system
 - are young carers (as defined by the [Carers \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#)) and/or young parents
 - are experiencing homelessness or who have been homeless.
- Programmes must provide an appropriate offer to young people with additional support needs, disabilities and those in non-mainstream settings (i.e. special schools and secure units).
- Projects should be delivered to whole class groups unless there are specific access requirements that require small group, and 1-2-1 delivery.
- Projects will be provided free of charge with no indirect costs. Indirect costs include but are not limited to instrument hire, music sheet purchase and ticket fees.
- Projects will present no barriers to participation, whether physical, socio-economic, personal or peer related. Barriers include but are not limited to transport requirements, timings out with school hours, selection processes or aptitude tests and the need for participants to actively choose to take part rather than be automatically engaged.
- Activity should be of high quality, delivered by staff who have the appropriate skills and experience. If activity is being delivered by class teachers, applicants must clearly state the level of delivery in project descriptions and provide details of how teachers will be adequately supported.
- Applicants should demonstrate robust planning for measuring your projects impact through monitoring and evaluation.
- Applications should demonstrate strong programme management, including clear structures and adequate resource allocated to project coordination.

- Tutors should be paid appropriate rates, with freelancers being paid in line with [Musician's Union](#) recommended rates. Robust contracts must be in place with all providers.
- Applications should demonstrate how your proposed activity links with your local authority targets relating to the Climate Emergency.
- Programme activities should raise awareness of the impact and profile of YMI within your local area through effective promotion and advocacy. YMI opportunities should be publicised widely across your local authority with YMI funding acknowledged in all publicity materials.

Additional information

Within your application, we ask you to let us know about your aims and ambitions for your YMI programme as well as any upcoming developments and challenges. This is an opportunity to inform us of any relevant information regarding the following:

- Overarching changes or pressures to the wider context in which your YMI programme operates (your music service, department and Council).
- Key areas of focus and development for your YMI programme in 2025/26 as well as any envisaged challenges.

Scottish Government priorities

As part of your application, we ask you to demonstrate consideration of the following Scottish Government priorities:

Fair Work:

In line with [The Scottish Government's Fair Work First guidance](#), all organisations applying for funding from Creative Scotland are required to meet the Fair Work First conditions. This includes paying the Real Living Wage to all directly employed staff, ensuring that appropriate channels for effective voice are available to the workforce and ensuring no inappropriate use of zero hour contracts. Further information on [Creative Scotland's approach to Fair Work is available on our website](#).

Climate Emergency:

Creative Scotland have a statutory obligation to respond to the causes and impact of climate change, which is embodied by our [Environmental Sustainability](#) strategic priority and our [Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan](#). We want to understand how local authorities reflect and connect with their respective local authorities' commitments to achieve net zero, to respond to climate risk and adapt to the impact of the region's changing climate.

If possible, and relevant, we also want to better understand how your proposed programme is raising awareness of the causes and impact of climate change at a local level and contributing to the achievement of your respective local authority climate action aims.

If relevant, please provide detail on how your programme aligns with the wider Scottish Government priorities:

Tackling Child Poverty:

Further information can be found within [The Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26, information about priority families](#), or by talking to the child poverty officer within your Council.

UNCRC (United Nations Convention on The Rights of the Child):

In January 2024, the [UNCRC became an Act of Parliament in Scotland](#), and is now part of Scottish law. The Bill was created to ensure that children's rights are respected and protected in the law in Scotland, as well as ensuring that public authorities are legally required to respect and protect children's rights in all the work they do.

What the funding cannot be used for

- This funding route will not support applications which propose to deliver projects that directly or indirectly replace activity that a local authority is unable or has chosen no longer to deliver.
- YMI funds must not be used to fill gaps in Local Authority Instrumental Music Services (IMS) – either in delivering instrumental tuition to schools receiving less or no input from IMS, or in schools where tuition in particular instruments/voice are not offered.
- YMI funds will not cover a local authority music coordinator's salary. If relevant, YMI will support a portion of the salary which relates to the coordination of YMI activities only.
- YMI funds will not cover costs for staff employed by the local authority who are unable to deliver activity, for example, maternity, sickness, redundancy or any related costs.
- If your proposed programme includes activity which may be classed as Music Therapy, email [Kelsey Jubin, Creative Learning Officer](#) to discuss further.

Please note, we will not fund any activity which has already started, or which will have started before a decision has been made on your application.

Impact

The purpose of the YMI Formula Fund is to ensure every school pupil in Scotland is offered a year of free music tuition by the time they leave primary school. For projects delivered beyond this commitment, the purpose is to address inequity and contribute to The Scottish Government's agenda in tackling child poverty by engaging children and young people most in need.

In this section, we want to know about the changes that you aim to bring about through your project that align with the purpose and criteria of the fund.

We will ask you to describe the intended impact of your project. This could include the following:

- Ensuring all primary pupils experience high quality, engaging music making opportunities.
- Providing inclusive, positive first experiences of music making to children and young people.
- Increasing opportunities for children and young people who are most in need.
- Increasing access to expertise within the culture sector, including music practitioners and art organisations.
- Develop children and young people's skills for life, learning and work.
- Encourage a deeper connection with participant's culture.
- Creating progression opportunities for children and young people.
- Develop their skills and confidence in those working on the project.

You will be asked to provide details on the methods you will use to evaluate and the stakeholders you intend to consult with. Methods for evaluation may include surveys, focus groups, participation numbers, diaries, recordings, evidence of referrals of participants to projects from external services.

At the end of the academic year when completing the End of Project Monitoring Form, you will be asked to provide the following:

- Quantitative evidence, including participant numbers, participant hours, number of posts funded.
- Evidence on the impact of your programme and how it aligned with the purpose and criteria of the fund.
- Evidence on how your programme contributed to [The Scottish Government Priorities](#).
- One high quality case study, focusing on a particular project or area of development.

Completing your application

There are three elements you need to complete to submit your application: **Application Form, Whole Programme Planner and Budget.**

1. Application Form

Within the form, you will be asked to describe your whole YMI programme, including how it aligns to the purpose of the fund and any overarching developments.

You will also be asked to provide details about any projects which are new to your programme or continuing projects which have been significantly revised or developed. Significant revisions or developments include:

- Considerable expansion or reduction of project scope, participant numbers or budget.
- Major alterations of project content, aims or delivery methods.

Within the application form, you will not be asked to provide details about projects which have been delivered in previous years and which remain largely unchanged. Small changes to projects can be noted within the Whole Programme Planner.

If you are unsure whether a particular project warrants inclusion within the application form, please email [Kelsey Jubin, Creative Learning Officer](#) to discuss.

Within the application form, we also ask for information which demonstrates robust management of your programme and information which enables Creative Scotland to effectively manage the national YMI programme.

2. Whole Programme Planner

Within your Whole Programme Planner, we ask you to provide details about individual projects within your programme. For each project, you will be asked to provide a short project summary and essential information such as estimated number of participants.

Project summaries should be limited to key information about each project such as, project aims, instruments or resources used, who the project will reach, the number of hours of delivery. Summaries should be maximum 100 words.

Please ensure you list all mainstream and non-mainstream primary level settings in your region within your Whole Programme Planner.

If you operate rolling projects that reach all schools over several years, please only show project activity that will be delivered within the 2025/26 academic year.

3. Budget

Please provide a detailed budget for each project within the Whole Programme Budget spreadsheet. Your budget should show costs per project including instrument costs and the FTE of staff. For reference, see [Appendix 1](#) for an exemplar budget.

Please note:

- Creative Scotland will only fund programmes that demonstrate best value for public funds.
- Please state the FTE equivalent for salaried staff or hourly/daily rate for freelancers delivering each project in line with [Fair Work First Guidelines](#) and [Musicians' Union rates of pay](#).
- A breakdown of all costs should be provided.
- Income and expenditure totals must be the same.
- All funding must be spent on YMI activities by the end of July 2026.

In addition to project funding, part of the YMI allocation can be used to support associated programme costs such as:

- Meeting transport and other support costs for young people who would face barriers to participation.
- Evaluation costs.
- Communication costs (such as marketing costs for targeted projects).

It is important that you include any partnership funding in the budget (cash or in-kind) as this information demonstrates the contributions that are leveraged because of YMI funding. See the [Appendix 1](#) for examples of cash and in-kind contributions.

If you are aware of additional in-kind contributions which are provided by the local authority but are unable to calculate the monetary value of these contributions, please simply provide a short description of the areas of support, e.g. use of Instrumental Service instruments to deliver YMI projects.

Supporting materials

When submitting your application, please provide the following supporting material:

- Remits/job descriptions for any **new** staff who will support the management or delivery of your programme.
- CVs or detailed biography of any **new** freelancers involved in project delivery.
- Letter or emails of support from **new** partners outlining their support and/or involvement in delivering projects.

Who should sign the application form?

The application form should be submitted and signed by the local authority officer with delegated authority to enter into a funding agreement with Creative Scotland.

Safeguarding and Dignity at Work

Safeguarding

Safeguarding ensures that participants and employees, are protected from harm, abuse and exploitation. Guidance on safeguarding when working with children, both in-person and online, is available [on our website](#).

If your work involves children, young people or vulnerable adults (either in-person or online), you must have a safeguarding policy in place, and we would encourage you to take expert advice on this – our Creating Safety guidance can help, and other organisations such as NSPCC also have guidance for individuals undertaking this work. All individuals involved should be members of the PVG scheme run by [Disclosure Scotland](#).

Dignity at Work

Everyone working in Scotland's creative and cultural sectors is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, whether they are an employee, freelancer, contractor, board member or volunteer. Creative Scotland does not tolerate bullying, harassment, or victimisation under any circumstance, and expects the same of any organisation that we support with public funding.

Those applying for activity that involves employing other people should ensure that they have appropriate safeguards in place to ensure dignity at work, including approaches to ensure best practice in areas such as equality and diversity, harassment and bullying, disciplinary procedures and whistle blowing.

Creative Scotland has produced guidance on what we mean when we describe dignity at work and what our expectations are of those we fund. You can read this [on our website](#).

While we are primarily a funding body rather than a regulator, we expect all grant recipients to adhere to safeguarding and dignity at work standards. Failure to do so could result in payments being suspended or grants withdrawn.

Our Decision-Making Process

Assessment process

Once you have submitted your application, we will review it to ensure that you've provided all the information necessary for us to assess your application. If there are any issues with your application, a member of the Funding Team will be in touch to explain these and if applicable, seek any additional information.

Once your application has been checked for completeness it will be assessed, based on the information provided in your application and any supporting materials submitted. If required, a member of Creative Scotland staff may contact you during the assessment period to request clarification or further information regarding specific questions or sections within the application.

All assessments and recommendations are then reviewed by a panel who will consider the individual merits of each application as summarised by the assessor.

Once a decision is made

Once we have reached a decision, we will contact you by email to let you know the outcome of your application. If you are successful, we will send your Funding Agreement by email. At this point we will also detail any special conditions of the award. We require successful applicants to confirm that they are adopting Fair Work practices in line with the Scottish Government's [Fair Work First Guidance](#). You will be sent a form to complete, sign and return to us.

The fully signed Funding Agreement, Fair Work form and any response to special conditions must be lodged with Creative Scotland by **Tuesday 26 August 2025**, failing which Creative Scotland reserves the right to withdraw the funding offer and you may have to reapply.

If your application is unsuccessful, we will contact you by email to let you know why and offer you feedback. At this time, we will provide you with information on how to reapply.

Changes to your programme

We understand, due to unforeseen circumstances, project plans may alter over the course of the academic year.

If you are unable to deliver an aspect of your YMI Formula Fund programme as laid out in your application form for any reason, please email [Kelsey Jubin, Creative Learning Officer](#), who will be able to offer support and advice.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

Creative Scotland is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions. For more information, visit our website: [Freedom of Information | Creative Scotland](#)

We are listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks to see them under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act.

Please see the Freedom of Information website at www.foi.scot for information about the Act generally and the exemptions. We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.

Complaints

As an organisation, we will always listen to and respond to any concerns that you may have. If you would like to make a complaint about either the service you have received from Creative Scotland or the way we have handled your application, we have a process that you can use.

Please note that Creative Scotland does not have an appeals process and for this reason, we are unable to accept complaints that relate solely to the decision we have made rather than how we have made it. For more information, please visit the [complaints section of our website](#).

Data Protection

Creative Scotland requires some personal information about you/your organisation to consider your application for funding. Without this information we will be unable to process your application. If you would like to see a breakdown of the personal information we require, why it is required, what we do with that information and how long we keep it, please refer to our [Privacy Notice on our website](#).

Creative Scotland may share your personal information with third parties to comply with the law and/or for our legitimate interests and/or the third parties concerned.

Where the personal information you have provided to Creative Scotland belongs to other individual(s), please refer to our Privacy Notice. Please ensure you share this Privacy Statement and Creative Scotland's Privacy Notice with the respective individual(s).

You have some rights in relation to the personal information that Creative Scotland holds about you under data protection law. Our Privacy Notice contains information on how to exercise these rights, or you can contact our [Data Protection Officer](#).

If you have any concerns with how we have processed your personal information, you should contact our Data Protection Officer in the first instance, as we would welcome the opportunity to work with you to resolve any complaint. If you are still dissatisfied, you can submit a complaint to the [Information Commissioners Office](#).

Subsidy Control

As a public body Creative Scotland must comply with the subsidy control rules in the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the UK Government and the European Union. More information can be found at: [UK subsidy control regime – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-subsidy-control-regime)

Any award made through this fund will require the recipient to acknowledge that the grant comes from public funds and confirm that the support provided is compliant with the Subsidy Control rules.

Any award made through this fund will require the recipient to acknowledge that the grant comes from public funds and confirm that the support provided is compliant with the Subsidy Control rules.

Where applicable, the recipient must agree that Creative Scotland will publish information relating to the grant and that the recipient will keep reasonably detailed records to demonstrate compliance with the Subsidy Control rules and shall provide a copy of such records to Creative Scotland upon reasonable request. If it is deemed to be non-compliant with the Subsidy Control rules, the recipient may be required to repay the entire grant (and any other sums due) immediately.

Appendix 1: Whole Programme Budget

Below is an example of how we would like you to lay out your budget. Please list all project items separately, ensuring costs are clearly accounted for and that FTE of staff time/hourly or daily rates of freelance practitioners is included per project. If you are unsure of the monetary value of any in-kind contributions, please just provide a description of the contributions at the end of the table as shown.

Whole Programme Budget 2025/26			
INCOME	Cash	In Kind	Detail
Creative Scotland Funding	£138,241		
Funding from Council	£10,000		
Management costs of programme		£9,906	0.2 FTE Head of Music Service
Office space		£2000	Estimated in-kind costs for office space at arts centre
Venue hire, Project 1		£1000	40 hours @ £25ph
Instructor CLPL provision		£600	In-service training x 3 ½ day sessions
Print, Project 2		£1000	Estimated printing costs for parent letter
SUB TOTALS	£148,241	£14,506	
TOTAL INCOME CASH + IN KIND		£162,747	
EXPENDITURE	Cash	In Kind*	Detail
Coordination costs of programme	£15,200		0.5 FTE Creative Learning Officer
Management costs of programme		£9,906	
Office space		£2000	
Project 1			
Salary costs	£128,511		3 x FTE staff @ £42,837 per instructor
Mileage	£450		1000 miles @ 45ppm
Equipment	£1960		98 instruments at £20 cost per unit
Venue hire		£1000	
Instructor CLPL provision		£600	
Project 2			
Freelance music tutor	£1440		£42.50 per hour x 2 hours x 15 sessions; plus prep
Mileage	£180		400 miles @ 45ppm
Resources	£500		100 booklets @ £5 each
Print		£1000	Parent letter and posters
SUB TOTALS	£148,241	£14,506	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE CASH + IN KIND		£162,747	
Check		OK	

Please describe how you have calculated any in kind income or expenditure:

*In-kind expenditure has been calculated with reference to the rates provided for commercial hire of the venues used. Approximately 10 Additional Support for Learning staff and volunteers provide in-kind support for Project 1. It is not possible to calculate an accurate monetary value for this support at this time.



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