

YOUTH MUSIC AWARDS '26

PR CAMPAIGN INVITATION TO
TENDER



Photo credit: Tim Whitby

1. About Youth Music

We're a national charity. We help marginalised young people to make and monetise music. Every year, we raise £10 million to fund inspirational grassroots music projects and support aspiring young creatives up and down the UK.



Photo credit: Jack Oliver

We're campaigning to break down barriers for young people facing inequity, exclusion and discrimination. Together with our partners, we're helping the next generation to transform their lives through music. Find out more [here](#).

Vision: A world where every young person can change their life through music

Mission: We are creating a world where every young person can make and monetise music, whatever their background or goal

Values: Bold, Inclusive, Enterprising, Trusting and Responsive

Beneficiaries

We support 0-25 year olds across the UK who face barriers to accessing music because of who they are, where they live or what they're going through. In 2023/24, we reached 80,653 children and young people through our funded partners and direct work with 18-25 year olds.

2. Background

The Youth Music Awards

Young people are the future of the music industries. At the Youth Music Awards, we celebrate the people and projects making sure that future is more diverse, more inclusive and more creative. From young leaders and entrepreneurs to lyricists and producers, the event platforms trailblazers from across the UK.

The Youth Music Awards is the biggest night in grassroots music, and for the past six years we have celebrated in London. However, 86% of our funding goes outside of the capital, equalising access to music for thousands of young people across the UK. So, we know how important and culturally relevant other regions across the UK are. That's why, in 2026, the Youth Music Awards is coming to Liverpool – on Wednesday 28th October. We can't wait to join our community in the North-West to celebrate the projects and people from across the region and beyond, in one of the world's most loved music cities.

The ceremony will feature 12 award categories, including Social Action Award, Young Leader Award, Lyricist Award and Grassroots Hero Award. Winners in the music categories will be chosen by our judging panel, made up of music industry figures and artists such as Sister Bliss, ALT BLK ERA, Bicep and Myles Smith.

As part of Youth Music NextGen, we hire young people aged 18-25 to help plan and execute the event, alongside a team of experienced professionals. Their roles include hosting, video editing, production support and more.

The 2026 ceremony will host around 400 guests, including:

- Award nominees and guests
- Music industry partners, labels, publishers, PRs and managers
- Funders and philanthropists
- Media, influencers and potentially key government contacts

3. PR Objectives

- Increase awareness of the Youth Music Awards as the biggest night in grassroots music.
- Showcase the importance of investment in grassroots music.
- Build understanding of Youth Music's unique position, to support in securing and maintaining crucial partnerships.

4. Target Audiences

Primary audiences

- **Creative/Music Industries** – Brands with partnership potential, and leaders that could influence a change in practice for young people entering the workforce.
- **General Public** – Advocating for the transformative power of music and the inequalities in accessing it.
- **NextGen** – That's what we call our community of 18-25 year old creative career starters.

Secondary audiences

- **Potential donors** - Including high net worth individuals, trusts and foundations.
- **Projects and Professionals** – Our funded partners, and any grassroots organisations working with young people in music.
- **Policymakers** – Advocating for the benefits of music for young people amongst relevant government, local authority and public bodies.

5. Scope of Work

PR campaign around the Youth Music Awards, to include:

Pre-Awards Campaign (August – September 2026)

- Develop and execute a compelling PR strategy and campaign plan for the Awards
- Generate widespread awareness of the Awards and Youth Music's mission within the music industry and music media:
 - Secure proactive feature coverage in music trade press, consumer music titles and platforms



Photo credit: Katie Ho

- Amplify shortlist announcements and nominee stories across music, culture and national media
- Leverage the Liverpool move as a news hook — building relationships with local and regional media in the North West
- Identify and pitch relevant talent stories and human-interest angles to press
- Support with media partnership outreach and coordination (Notion – TBC)
- Secure opportunities for broadcast coverage — radio, podcast and TV – with winners (pitching under embargo)
- Host a training day with our x2 Youth Music NextGen PR Assistants (1 day pre-event), and work with them on the night
- Draft and distribute embargoed winners press releases and results to media in advance

Awards Ceremony (October 2026)

- Coordinate on-the-night press office activity including press accreditation, photographer management, media hosting and red-carpet management
- Manage reactive press enquiries on the evening
- Distribute photography throughout the evening

Post-Awards (November – January 2027)

- Issue post-event press releases to key outlets
- Secure winner profile features and follow-up coverage in music, regional and sector press
- Provide a comprehensive evaluation report including coverage overview, audience reach, key metrics and key learnings

Out of Scope

The following are out of scope for this tender and will be managed by Youth Music directly, though the agency will be expected to collaborate and co-ordinate:

- Social media content creation and management
- Event production
- Video production

6. What We're Looking For

This year, we are seeking an agency that is deeply embedded in the music industry, with established relationships across music media and the wider industry ecosystem. We are keen to partner with an agency that can secure coverage in national showbiz, trade and consumer music press, on music platforms, podcasts and digital channels, and within music industry networks. They should have experience amplifying major music award ceremonies or events.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

The National Foundation for Youth Music, Studio LG01, The Print Rooms, 164-180 Union St, London SE1 0LH
Registered charity number 1075032 / Limited company number 03750674

Music Industry Expertise

Established contacts and relationships with music trade and consumer press, a track record of securing impactful coverage in national music and youth culture media, and understanding of how the music industry operates.

Regional Experience

We particularly welcome agencies with experience of working in or with the North West media landscape or regional music ecosystems in general.

Creativity and Storytelling

The stories at the heart of the Youth Music Awards can help us demonstrate the lifechanging power of music. Young people overcoming adversity through music, passionate music leaders changing lives and communities transformed by creative investment - we need an agency that can find and tell these stories with skill, sensitivity and impact.

Purpose-Led Communications

Alongside music industry expertise, we value experience working with purpose-led organisations. This isn't essential, but it would be an advantage.

Collaboration

The successful agency will report to the Communications team, but it's crucial they build strong relationships with our Events team.

Importantly, the successful agency will believe in our vision of **a world where every young person can change their life through music**. They will share our values around inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility. This includes having an equality and diversity plan (or equivalent) and paying the Real Living Wage. If you are successful, we would encourage you to become a [Real Living Wage](#) employer.

7. Budget

Campaign fee of £20,000 plus VAT.

8. Proposal Requirements

We're looking for an agency with strong connections across national music media (both consumer and specialist/trade), and a proven track record securing coverage around music awards, talent programmes, campaign launches, and music industry issues. To express your interest, please email conall.conway@youthmusic.org.uk with sophia.syed@youthmusic.org.uk on CC by Fri 3 July with:

- An overview of your agency
- Three examples of recent, relevant campaigns (including results)
- Confirmation of alignment with our [equality, diversity, inclusion and accessibility](#) commitment.

9. Timeline

2026

Fri 3 July	Deadline for tender submissions
Mon 13 July	Notify shortlisted agencies and share brief
Mon 27 July	Meetings (at Youth Music offices on Union Street)
31 July	Appoint successful agency
August	Nominee Announcement
w/c 14 Sept	Pre-event at Wingstop, Liverpool
28 Oct	Youth Music Awards