



Recharge Fund: Racial Equity Applicant Guidance

Contents

Section one: Recharge Fund overview	3
Application process	3
Programme start dates	3
Music organisations.....	4
Application support	4
A note about language	4
Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in applications	5
Section two: Am I eligible?	6
Your organisation	6
Your practices.....	7
Who can't apply.....	9
Current Funded Partners	9
Section three: Programme fit	10
Eligible costs	10
Ineligible costs.....	11
Section four: Budget planning	12
Budget rules	12
Personal Access costs.....	13
Section five: How we make decisions	15
Section six: What happens next?	17
Unsuccessful applicants.....	17
Successful applicants.....	17
About Youth Music	19
Application checklist	20

Section one: Recharge Fund overview

The **Recharge Fund: Racial Equity** will provide core funding to creative organisations who are led by communities who experience racial injustice and who work with children and/or young people.

This fund has been created in response to the structural inequalities faced by people from these communities. Black and Global Majority creatives make significant cultural and economic contributions. Yet have faced historic and systemic barriers within the creative ecosystems they've helped to shape.

The fund aims to redress this inequality by supporting the development, resilience and wellbeing of those organisations through long term and core funding. Organisations can apply for up to £120,000 for a four-year period. For more information about what can be funded, please refer to "Section Three: Programme Fit".

We aim to invest a total of £2,400,000:

- Across England.
- In a diverse mix of organisations.
- For work with children and young people (aged 0 to 25) of different ages and backgrounds.
- Across a variety of artforms.

Application process

- This is a one-stage online application process.
- Applications can be submitted between 10am on Friday 16 October until 5pm on Friday 4 December.
- You can find the [application form questions on our website](#).
- You can submit your application via our [online grants portal](#).
- You'll find out if you've been successful by the end of March 2027.

Programme start dates

The start date of your programme should be between 1 June 2027 and 30 September 2027. Programmes must last for four years.

Music organisations

This fund has been designed to support organisations working across a wide range of artforms. Only a small proportion of the overall investment will go to organisations who work exclusively in music.

Application support

There is a range of support available to help you with your application:

- If you have any questions, check out the [FAQs on our website](#) to see if your question has already been answered.
- For questions about eligibility, grants portal troubleshooting, or clarifications about our guidance - you can **call or email the grants team**. Email grants@youthmusic.org.uk or call 020 7902 1060 (option 1).
- You can also:
 - **Book a 1:1 call with a member of our team** to discuss your proposal and programme ideas.
 - **Attend an online Q&A session** to ask your questions and listen to what others are asking. This will be recorded for those who can't make it.
 - Sign up for one of two **application support workshops**. [Visit the Recharge Fund page for more information and to sign up.](#)
- If you identify as d/Deaf, Disabled, neurodivergent or have a long-term health condition and need support to make a funding application to Youth Music, you can apply to our **Youth Music Application Access Fund**. Visit the [access support page](#) on our website to find out more about what we cover and how to apply.

Future Funding

Unfortunately, this is a one-off fund. We don't currently have the available resources to re-run it. We want to be clear with you about this from the start, to make sure it informs how you design your proposal.

A note about language

There are many different terms used to describe the communities we want to support with this fund, i.e. people who experience racism and racial injustice. These include BAME, Global Majority, people of colour, Black and Brown

communities, ethnic minorities, minoritised communities; and those who have been racialised as ethnic minorities.

In referencing these communities we will sometimes use the term "Black and Global Majority". This was the most favoured option in our consultations. We know that no single term feels right for everyone, because individuals have different identities and experiences of racism. Many are uncomfortable with grouping communities by race or ethnicity because of the harm these labels can cause. We recognise that this term is therefore imperfect and not everyone will identify with it.

In making decisions, our focus is on communities who experience racial injustice – not terminology. We believe it's important to name racial inequality directly, because these communities have been underfunded for a long time and still are.

Read more about [the insights that have shaped this fund](#) on our website.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in applications

You may use AI tools to help you draft your application, but your answers:

- Must be your own.
- Should accurately reflect your work.

AI-generated text is often too general or vague, which can weaken your application. Make sure everything you submit is specific, truthful and clearly describes your organisation and practice.

Section two: Am I eligible?

Your organisation

To be eligible for this fund, you'll need to answer yes to every statement in this section.

1. Your organisation is 'led by and for' communities who experience racial injustice.

- You work with a majority of people from these communities.
- Decision-making and influence sits mainly with people from these communities.

As one indicator, we'd typically expect at least 51% of trustees, senior leaders, staff, or key decision-makers to be from these communities. There is also space in your proposal to tell us how and why you think you meet these criteria. We know that numbers don't always capture the full story.

2. You are based in England, have been legally constituted and delivering activity for at least one year by December 2026.

- Sole traders and individuals can't apply to this fund.
- If you're a voluntary group not registered with Companies House or the Charity Commission, you'll need a constitution and management committee.
- You must have been delivering activity for at least a year by December 2026.

3. You have a history working creatively with children and young people in England.

- You'll need to show you've been delivering creative work with children and young people for at least one year.
- We welcome applications from organisations working across any or multiple artforms.
- We can only support organisations who work with children and young people (aged 0 – 25) in England.

4. Your turnover was £500,000 or less in the last financial year.

- We aim to support a mix of different sized organisations.

- We estimate that around 75% of funded organisations will have a turnover or annual income of £250,000 or below.

5. You have a bank account in the organisation's name.

We can only pay grants into the bank account of the organisation that submitted the application. You'll need to give us those details if you're offered a grant.

6. You have recent financial records.

You'll need to provide financial records showing:

- Your total income and expenditure for your most recent financial year (2025–2026).
- Any assets, savings, debts, or other financial commitments your organisation holds.
- That your organisation has been actively delivering work for at least one year before the application deadline.

These should be no more than 18 months old and uploaded with your application. Examples include:

- For companies and charities: annual accounts.
- For voluntary groups: management accounts or other internal financial records.

7. You have the correct insurance in place and comply with all relevant statutory legislation.

- This includes employers' and public liability insurance as a minimum - copies must be available on request.
- Statutory legislation includes company and charity law, [data protection legislation](#), and [the Equality Act](#).

If you do not yet have these insurances in place, please budget for them in your application.

Your practices

To be eligible for this fund, you'll need to answer yes to every statement in this section.

We know underfunded organisations often have less time and resource to develop these practices fully, so we don't expect everything to be in place already. If you're still working on improving practices outlined below, we suggest you budget for using some of the funding to help develop them further.

1. Safeguarding is an essential part of your culture and ways of working, and you meet [minimum safeguarding standards](#).

- You prioritise the safety, wellbeing, and rights of everyone you work with.
- You have a safeguarding policy (and/or other safeguarding documents) that show your approach to safeguarding. You will need to upload this with your application.
- Your safeguarding practices are well understood, continually developing, and shape your ethos and behaviours.

You can find more information and supporting resources on our [Safeguarding hub](#).

2. You are committed to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access (IDEA) in your organisation - this includes youth voice and participation.

- Your organisation works in inclusive and equitable ways with children and young people, reducing barriers to access and prioritising their views and needs.
- You're accountable to the communities you serve, and you can show how children and young people meaningfully influence the way you work. This might include advisory boards, co-creation approaches, lived experience in leadership, strong community relationships, or other structures.

3. You provide fair working conditions and pay for staff and freelancers.

- All staff and freelancers paid through this grant must be paid at least the [Real Living Wage](#).
- You create a respectful working environment, where your team feels safe, valued, and supported to develop.
- Volunteers are welcome as part of your project, but their roles should be distinct from paid staff, not a substitute for them. The [NCVO guide on volunteering](#) has more information.

More information is available in our [Fair Work Framework](#).

4. You're committed to good governance and building your organisation

- We want to fund organisations that take governance seriously and are keen to keep developing. This means having structures in place, even if they're still evolving, to support good decision-making, manage risk, and meet legal duties.
- It also means being reflective: responding to learning and feedback, working collaboratively, and being honest about what is and isn't working
- Where an organisation has low reserves or limited organisational systems, we'll consider this in the context of historic underinvestment and the current funding crisis, rather than treating it as a weakness.

Who can't apply

- Schools, academies, children's centres, and nurseries - including primary, secondary, PRUs, and special schools.
- Local Authorities.
- Universities.
- Music Hub Lead Organisations and Music Services.
- Organisations with an annual income or turnover over £500,000.
- Funded Partners with a Catalyser or Shift the Scene Fund grant that ends after March 2028.

Current Funded Partners

Please speak to your Grants and Learning officer if you are interested in applying. Energiser, Trailblazer, or Industry Connect Funded Partners can apply but need to:

- Be up to date with all your grant requirements.
- Have the capacity to deliver on multiple grants at the same time.

.

Section three: Programme fit

This is a flexible grant. It can help you through growth, consolidation, experimentation or change, and the risks and opportunities that come with them. We expect organisations to use it in different ways.

Eligible costs

Most of the funding should go on core costs. These include, but aren't limited to:

Staffing and development:

- Salaries and freelance fees, including on-costs and cost-of-living uplifts.
- Backfill so staff can take on development work.
- Recruitment and induction.
- Training, development days and away days.
- Leadership, succession and legacy planning.

Operations:

- Rent, bookkeeping and insurance.
- Security, safety and transport.
- Equipment.
- Digital transformation and IT.

Wellbeing:

- Rest, care and self-care for staff, freelancers and volunteers.
- External supervision and counselling.
- Fun.

External expertise to build your practice:

- Strategy, business planning and fundraising.
- Income generation and diversifying income.
- Communications, profile and branding.
- Safeguarding, IDEA, youth voice, digital and other practices.

Governance and learning:

- Strengthening governance and systems.
- Audit, legal advice and annual accounts.
- Research, monitoring and evaluation.
- Partnerships and networks.

Access:

- Childcare and other caring costs for staff, volunteers and community reps.
- Translation, interpretation and culturally appropriate communication.
- Physical access improvements.
- Transport, food, accommodation and other costs that help people take part.

Anything else that builds your organisation, resilience and wellbeing.

You can include a small amount for capital, but not a significant share of your request.

Projects with children and young people

Core funding is in high demand and short supply. This fund focuses on building your organisation, not delivering projects with children and young people. You can include a small share of project costs if they will strengthen your organisation for the long term.

Learning and Exchange Programme

We are appointing a learning partner to run online learning linked to the fund's aims, at least once a quarter. It's optional, but we recommend that you budget time for staff to attend.

Ineligible costs

The following are ineligible:

- Costs incurred before we make you a grant offer.
- The purchase of land or buildings.
- Reclaimable VAT.
- Loans or interest payments.
- Activity that promotes party political or religious beliefs.
- Activities that are a statutory responsibility.
- Costs incurred in making your application (if you identify as Disabled, you can apply to our Access Fund to help you write your application).

Section four: Budget planning

You can request up to £120,000 from Youth Music, for a programme that runs over four years. We strongly recommend that organisations consider applying for the full amount. However, we recognise that this may not be right for everyone. You know best what you need.

When you complete our online budget form, you should enter the total amount for the full four years. For example, you might request £5,000 a year towards a project manager's salary, and have office costs that change over the four years. You could set out your budget like this:

Description	Cost
Project Manager Salary (5% annual increase) £5,000 X Yr 1 £5,250 x Yr 2 £5,513 x Yr 3 £5,788 x Yr 4	21551
Staff wellbeing budget £3,000 x 4 yrs	12000

Our [finance and fundraising hub](#) provides further information and support.

If you have applied to us before, be aware that this is a new and simplified format.

Budget rules

- Your budget should clearly show the activities Youth Music is funding. And it should also be easy for you to track in your own systems.
- All staff and freelancers paid through this grant must be paid at the [Real Living Wage](#) rate or above.
- You do not need to raise match funding for this fund. But it's useful for us to know where match funding exists, to help us evaluate the fund. That's why we ask about it in the application form.
- We strongly recommend that you build contingency costs into your budget, to give you added flexibility. You can include contingency costs of

- up to 10% of your Youth Music grant to cover unexpected expenses.
- You can include some capital costs in your proposal, but we wouldn't expect it to be the full amount.

Personal Access costs

You can request an extra 10% of your grant request towards personal access costs.

Personal access costs are for those who face the following additional barriers:

- d/Deaf or disabled.
- Neurodivergent.
- Have learning difficulties.
- Have a mental health condition.
- Have a long-term health condition.

Access costs are designed to help you deliver the work and manage grant requirements by covering the extra costs created by disabling barriers.

Eligible costs include:

- Transport costs, for examples taxis or someone to help you get to work safely.
- Specialist software or equipment you need to enable you to deliver the project.
- A support worker to help with your grant reporting or workshop delivery.
- Other costs that remove disabling barriers and enable you to work on the project.

Points to note

- We review personal access costs separately, and after we have made the decision to award you a grant.
- Access costs to support participants should be included in your delivery costs. There is no extra funding available for this.
- We won't normally fund access support that costs more than £300 per day, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- If you are applying for personal access costs, then we also expect you to make (or have made) an application to the Government's [Access to Work](#) scheme. This is because we don't want to fund costs that you are entitled

to and should receive from the Government. You do not need to have received or applied for Access to Work before you apply to Youth Music.

Further [guidance about personal access costs](#) is available on our website.

Section five: How we make decisions

At Youth Music, we believe that a greater diversity of views, skills, and lived experience leads to better decisions.

For every funding round, we work with internal and external people with lived experience relevant to the fund. Several people review applications, and we make decisions collectively. People with lived experience of racial inequality and other intersecting barriers will be central to Recharge Fund decision-making.

We try to be equitable in our decision-making and target our investment towards the people and places that need it most. In addition, we want to have a diverse final portfolio. We aim to invest in a mix of children and young people, organisations across different areas of the country, working across a variety of artforms.

We know we won't be able to meet demand for this funding. Sadly, we'll have to turn down good proposals we'd genuinely like to support.

Assessments

During decision-making, your application will be reviewed in the following areas:

- **Eligibility:** We'll check that your organisation meets the Youth Music Recharge Fund eligibility criteria (Section Two: Am I eligible? Your organisation).
- **Ethos and practice:** We'll assess the ethos, culture, and values of your organisation, including how you prioritise the safety, rights, and wellbeing of the people you work with. This includes where decision-making power sits with the communities you serve. (Section Two: Am I Eligible? - Your practices).
- **Track record and engagement:** We'll look at your history in delivering creative activities with children and young people from Black and Global Majority Communities. We'll consider how Black and Global Majority people (including children and young people) influence your work, and the organisation's wider cultural relevance to the communities it serves.
- **Need and impact:** We'll consider the likely long-term impact for your organisation and community. We'll also consider your current access (or lack of) to other core or unrestricted funding.

- **Strategy and systems:** We'll look at your policies and practices around areas such as inclusion, diversity, equity and access (IDEA), safeguarding, governance, and finance. We'll review your proposal to understand more about your strategy, how it builds on where you are now, and how you reflect and evaluate. If you're at the start of your journey, that's fine. But we want to understand your intentions, and knowledge of where you need to develop.
- **Portfolio balancing:** At this final stage of decision-making, we bring together all the strong, eligible applications and balance our overall investment across regions, artforms, and organisation sizes. We'll ensure the funding reaches a diverse range of places and communities across England, and that children and young people with varying demographics and barriers will ultimately be supported.

Based on previous funding rounds, we estimate that the overall application success rate will be around 15 to 20%. We anticipate that:

- It will be more competitive for organisations who work with young adults within music industry and career progression settings.
- It will be less competitive for organisations who:
 - Focus their work on babies and toddlers.
 - Work with young people who are, or who are at risk of, involvement with the youth justice system.
- It will be more competitive for music and theatre specialist organisations.
- It will be more competitive for organisations based in London and the North West of England.

Section six: What happens next?

All applicants will be notified at the end of March 2027.

Unsuccessful applicants

If your application is unsuccessful, we will share individual feedback where we can, alongside general feedback about all applications. We'll also offer a workshop delivered by our learning partner, to help you in your next steps. Places are limited so will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Successful applicants

You'll be assigned a member of the Youth Music team to support you throughout your grant. We're friendly people who are looking forward to getting to know you and your organisation. We'll issue a funding agreement and an online form. You'll be asked to upload the following:

- A signed funding agreement (signed by two people in your organisation)
- Bank details
- An authorised signatories' mandate
- Any other specific information we require from you
- Responses to any assessment panel advice and guidance.

It takes up to 30 days from submitting these requirements to get your first payment.

Support for Funded Partners

Alongside your funding agreement you will receive a Funded Partner welcome pack. You'll also be invited to an online induction session with other Recharge Fund partners. The session is designed to help you understand your responsibilities and the support and opportunities Youth Music can offer you.

If we have identified gaps in your safeguarding practices you will be offered time with an expert to support you before you start your activities.

There will also be other learning opportunities to come together with other Recharge Fund organisations, and Youth Music's wider portfolio of Funded Partners.

Monitoring and reporting

You'll need to complete annual reports to tell us about what you have been doing with the funding and how you've spent the budget. We aim to have our reporting templates available to you by June 2027.

Please note that we'll ask about the children and young people you've reached through your wider organisational work. This is to show how our funding is ultimately improving access to creative activities for children and young people.

Making changes

We're a flexible funder and know that things don't always run smoothly. You may need to make changes to your original plans. These should be approved by your Youth Music contact. You'll have their email and phone number so you can always contact them directly to discuss. We'll always try to approve the changes you request, so long as they meet the aims of the Fund.

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.

We're campaigning to break down barriers for young people facing inequality, exclusion and discrimination. Together with our partners, we're helping the next generation to transform their lives through music.

Youth Music is a national charity funded thanks to the National Lottery via Arts Council England, players of Postcode Lottery and support from partners, fundraisers, and donors.

The Youth Music Recharge Fund is financed with National Lottery funding, which we receive through Arts Council England.

We believe that flexible funding helps people deliver better outcomes for communities. So, we make and manage grants in a way that enables them to respond to changing needs. Read more about our [flexible funding](#) policy.

Youth Music runs several grant programmes. [Read more about them on the Youth Music website.](#)

**YOUTH
MUSIC**



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Application checklist

Have you...	✓
Before you decide to apply	
Checked that your organisation aligns with all Recharge Fund principles?	
Responded yes to all the statements in the 'Am I eligible?' section in the guidance?	
Proposed a programme that aligns with the 'Programme fit' section in the guidance?	
Read the guidance in full?	
Applied to the Access Fund if you need support?	
Contacted Youth Music with any questions?	
Before starting your application	
Downloaded a copy of the application form questions?	
Created an account on the Youth Music Grants Portal	
Checked: - the date you were legally constituted - your charity/company number (if applicable) - your annual turnover	
Got the information you need to answer all the questions on the application form – including a copy of your accounts and safeguarding policy (and constitution if you are a voluntary group not registered with the charity commission).	
Got the required diversity monitoring information about your organisation and leadership team?	
Before submitting your application	
Ensured your application form has been checked through by the appropriate people in your organisation, that they have completed the declaration and data protection section, and signed their name, position, and the date	
Checked the validation page on the Youth Music Grants Portal for errors?	
Made sure you have saved a copy of your application for your records	
After you've submitted your application	
Received a confirmation email from Youth Music?	