



Start Thurrock

Creative Community Support

Guidance Information

Community creativity starts here
StartThurrock.org



Introduction

Start Thurrock Creative Community Support is a process by which local people, community groups, artists and creative organisations can apply for support to create activities, events and projects that respond to the needs and aspirations of communities living in Thurrock.

The programme supports proposals that offer opportunities for people living in Thurrock to experience great creative and cultural activity where they live and that bring local people together to share new experiences around the arts.

Creative Community Support will be reviewed by a Start Panel against criteria and budget available. The Panel comprises volunteer residents from 12 areas/towns/villages across Thurrock. The Panel will have a budget of £13,500 in 2025/2026 with a minimum of (usually) £500 and maximum of £1,500 level of support available per application. When creating your budget, focus on aligning it with the specific needs of your project rather than simply requesting the maximum available. Start Thurrock hopes to support a minimum 12 applications in 2025/2026.

Anyone can ask for Creative Community Support from Start Thurrock, they don't have to have a formal group or have a fully formed idea, just a desire to do something creative in our local communities. Start Thurrock can help connect people to groups that may benefit from ideas where a group is not yet formed.

Start Thurrock will proactively invite proposals from under-represented individuals and groups.

Start Thurrock will not be prescriptive about the projects that are supported. What is important is that local people are involved in the design and delivery of the project, and that it reaches people who may not normally have this kind of creative opportunity.

The process:

We want everyone applying to feel supported from the very beginning. That's why we strongly encourage anyone considering an application to have an informal conversation with us first. This gives us a chance to hear about your idea, help you shape it if needed, and make sure it aligns with the criteria before you spend time completing the application. Whether you're an individual or part of a group, Start Thurrock is happy to offer a friendly and constructive chat about the activity or project you're developing. Please get in touch with us at info@startthurrock.org to arrange a conversation with a member of our team.

If following an initial conversation, you decide to apply for Creative Community Support, a simple proposal will need to be developed providing the following information to the Start Thurrock Delivery Team and Core Panel using the formats listed below:

- Name & contact details
- Proposed name and title of the idea
- Start and End Date of activity

- An outline of the activity or project
- How local people will be involved in the design and/or delivery of your activity
- How many people will be involved as creators, participants and audiences
- How you will engage audiences and/or participants
- Timeline for the project
- Budget for the project
- Potential outcome or benefit to the people involved
- Amount requested up to £1,500 per project including VAT

Proposals can be submitted in writing using this [MS Forms Application form](#), or via video recording. Recordings should be no longer than 20 minutes. Recorded submissions should be emailed to info@startthurrock.org by the deadline advertised.

The Start Thurrock Panel will be responsible for reviewing requests for support against the criteria and budget available.

Please note: The core panel will meet within three weeks of the application deadline. If your application is successful, grant paperwork must be completed and signed before your project can begin. Funds are released within 30 days of the paperwork being signed. For this reason, we recommend that project activity does not start until at least two months after the application deadline.

Applications for 2025/2026 should be submitted by the following dates:

30th April 2025 for activities starting no earlier than June 2025

31st July 2025 for activities starting no earlier than September 2025

31st October 2025 for activities starting no earlier than December 2025

When there is more demand for support than there is budget available, the following requests will be prioritised:

- Requests from locations within Thurrock that have had little or no previous or recent support from Start Thurrock. Areas Start Thurrock currently works in are South Ockendon, Purfleet-on-Thames and Chadwell St Mary.
- Requests from groups or individuals that have not been supported by Start Thurrock before
- Requests from groups that do not regularly engage in creative and cultural activity

Creative Community Support criteria:

Any activity or project supported by this programme must meet the following criteria:

- The activity must be new** and must not have been previously delivered as a pilot/taster session or have already started as we cannot support projects retrospectively.

- The activity should build audience engagement for arts and culture in Thurrock, reaching people who do not regularly engage in creative activities.
- We value co-creation between communities and your project or activity must involve local people in the design and/or delivery of the activity.
- Activities should aim to reach a minimum audience of 10 people. This example is used for people attending participatory activity (i.e. a class or workshop). For public events, you should aim to reach at least 50 people.
- The activity should be an inspiring experience – potentially working with artists or organisations and/or using good quality materials. *Arts Council England's Quality Principles at the end of this document offers prompts for developing inspiring, high-quality activities. The Start Delivery Team may also be able to offer additional support. Contact info@startthurrock.org to book a time with us.*
- The activity should be planned to be as accessible as possible.

** Examples of new activity:

Example 1: Community Mural

A project bringing together residents to co-design and paint a large outdoor mural reflecting community heritage. The activity includes a series of workshops led by a professional artist, with participants who have no prior experience of this creative activity.

Example 2: Family Day

A project supporting a group of local mums, none of whom have previous experience in event planning, to co-create and deliver a one-day family festival in their community – the first of its kind. With support from a facilitator, the group will design and run a programme of hands-on arts activities, such as storytelling, craft stations, and music-making for children and families.

Example 3:

A project led by a local music service offering a series of open access workshops for young people to experiment with different instruments, songwriting, and digital music production. The sessions are designed for beginners and emerging musicians who may not otherwise access music provision.

Start Thurrock encourages individuals and groups to consider the following questions when planning their activity:

- How will the project engage local people in creative and cultural activity, who do not regularly engage in arts and culture currently?
- How does the project or activity involve local people in the design and/or delivery of the activity?
- How will the project or activity give people new creative and cultural experiences that are not currently available in the area?
- How will you ensure that the project or activity provides an inspiring experience for participants?

- How will you ensure your project or activity is accessible? (e.g. consider cost, venue location and who your audience will be)

Who is eligible?

Support is available to individuals, groups or organisations wanting to become involved in arts and cultural activity in Thurrock.

- Individuals, groups or organisations that have previously been supported by Start Thurrock can apply but priority may be given to people we haven't supported before.
- Individuals, groups or organisations that have previously applied and been unsuccessful, can apply again. Where feedback has been offered on an unsuccessful proposal, it would be expected that feedback will be addressed in re-applications.
- Individuals might include: artists, musicians, writers, performers, designers, promoters, producers, curators, directors or a local person who wants to give something creative a go.

Collectives, consortiums and informal groups of people i.e. a performance group (one member will need to take the lead and have the main responsibility for managing the project).

Applicants under the age of 18 must have an adult (18 or over) apply and manage the grant on their behalf.

Organisations who CAN submit proposals:

- Voluntary organisations e.g. arts clubs, collectives, choirs or groups that meet regularly, not for profit organisations and community groups, whether registered charities or not and faith groups/organisations.
- Creative and Cultural organisations.
- Public organisations such as schools, colleges, libraries, youth centres, etc who are proposing activities that engage new audiences (e.g. schools engaging parents in creative activities).
- Organisations whose normal activity is not related to the arts who want to include arts in what they do e.g. an allotment or residents' association, youth group, senior citizens group etc.
- Commercial organisations where the public are sole beneficiaries of your proposed activity and the activity is not-for-profit.

Who CANNOT submit requests for financial support?

The following individuals or organisations cannot receive financial support from this programme:

- Those running activities that do not benefit people living in Thurrock.
- Organisations that share out profits to members or shareholders.
- University students using this support to fund their tuition fees as part of their undergraduate or postgraduate course.

- Schools using this support to fund projects linked to the curriculum or Teacher CPD
- Activities that are already taking place or have already been completed. This must be a new activity.
- Individuals applying for support solely for their independent creative endeavours where they are the only beneficiary. Projects must demonstrate a clear plan to address the needs, interests, or aspirations of a broader audience or community.

If you do receive financial support, you will need to:

- Complete a Start Thurrock Support Agreement for the activity or project.
- Complete a brief evaluation at the end of the project and require all participants to complete the Start Thurrock evaluation or an online survey (which we will provide and support you with).
- Provide basic documentation of the activity. This could be photographs, film or online documentation (using a phone for example).
- Ensure you have all the necessary consents, permissions and insurance in place to undertake the project or activity.
- Provide proof of project expenditure via the 'expenditure form' which will be provided on confirmation of our support.
- Acknowledge support from Start Thurrock in any publication, publicity materials, communications, website, or events relating to the project. Projects should also include the Start Thurrock logo and Arts Council England's national lottery logo. Start Thurrock will provide all relevant logos upon receipt of support.

Access and Inclusion:

We are committed to ensuring that all of the activity we support is as accessible as possible. Where appropriate we may provide additional resources to a group to help them to make their activity more accessible, such as BSL interpretation, subtitles or audio description.

Partnerships:

We encourage partnership working. Start Thurrock can provide guidance to help community groups to partner with artists and organisations. Groups may also find information of local artists and organisations on <https://strongertogetherthurrock.org.uk/listing-category/arts-music-culture-and-heritage/>

Match funding and rates of pay:

Match Funding Support - Cash and in-kind:

We do not require any match funding for this support. However, if there is additional support for an activity, we will ask recipients to record and report it to us so that we can evaluate the scale of activity our support is enabling.

What is cash match funding?

This refers to actual cash contributions to your project received through fundraising, other grants and awards.

What is in-kind support?

This refers to non-cash contributions to the project. For example, receiving rehearsal space without cost, equipment at no cost or expertise in voluntary time (volunteer support is typically valued at £9.50 per hour).

Rates of pay for artists:

Start Thurrock is committed to making sure those who work in the arts and culture are properly and fairly paid. We are unable to suggest rates of pay for artists or creatives but Arts Council England's Fair Pay webpage contains information on where to find advice on this subject
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACNLPG_Fair_pay_0.pdf

Arts Council England's Core Quality Principles

The following principles are intended to help applicants, the START Panel and the START Delivery Team think about the quality of activity being designed, developed and delivered.

1. **Concept:** Is the idea or activity interesting?
2. **Presentation:** Is the activity well produced and presented?
3. **Distinctiveness:** Is the activity different from things previously experienced?
4. **Challenge:** Is the activity thought-provoking?
5. **Captivation:** Is the activity or event absorbing and will hold the public or participant's attention?
6. **Enthusiasm:** Is this activity something public or participants want to participate in again?
7. **Local impact:** Is it important that the activity is happening here?

To apply:

We encourage anyone thinking of applying to get in touch for an informal chat before submitting an application. It's a great opportunity to talk through your idea, ask questions, and make sure it's a good fit for the programme. Just drop us a line at info@startthurrock.org to arrange a conversation with a member of our team.

Then, please fill out the [Creative Community Support Proposal Form](#) or submit via video recording. Recordings should be no longer than 20 minutes. Recorded submissions should be emailed to info@startthurrock.org by date advertised.

NOTE: If you're unable to access the MS Form or have any questions or issues with the format, please email us at info@startthurrock.org, and we'll be happy to assist you in finding a solution.

For further assistance or enquiries, please email info@startthurrock.org



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