



Photo © Nina Manandhar

**NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT GRANTS INFORMATION SHEET**  
**TIME LIMITED PRIORITY**

# Supporting Grassroots Live Music

Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants is our open-access funding programme for individual practitioners, arts organisations, libraries, and museum projects.

**Published: March 2023**



Awarding funds from  
**THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®**

[artscouncil.org.uk](https://artscouncil.org.uk)

# What's Inside

This information sheet relates to Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants. It can be used alongside the Project Grants 'How to Apply' guidance documents to support you to make your application.

See our [website](#) for more information about Project Grants.

In this information sheet, we will talk about the following:

<b>Time limited priorities information</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Supporting Grassroots Live Music</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How much can you apply for?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>How do you apply?</b>	<b>5</b>
Criteria	5
<b>Who can apply?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What can you apply for?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Building work and purchasing equipment</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>What you cannot apply for</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Shaping your project</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>How to apply to Supporting Grassroots Live Music</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Decision making process</b>	<b>12</b>
If my application isn't successful	13
<b>Case studies</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Contact us</b>	<b>15</b>

## Time limited priorities information

From time to time, we may ask for specific types of applications through Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants to help us achieve our strategy [Let's Create](#).

The opportunity to respond to any priority is part of Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants, and is not a separate programme. Any application must meet the criteria for Project Grants, as well as respond to the specific characteristics of any priority.

**This information sheet relates to the Supporting Grassroots Live Music Time Limited Priority.**

## Supporting Grassroots Live Music

Venues and promoters are crucial to England's music ecology, developing music and audiences as well as supporting talent development. Grassroots music venues are where many musicians and music professionals develop their skills and their craft, testing out new approaches and developing audiences. These venues also provide opportunities for music professionals to gain vital experience of live performance. They could be described as the main 'research and development' sector of the music industry.

All venues and promoters in England are eligible to apply for Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants to support projects that help them bring live music to the public. However, we currently receive few applications from the grassroots part of this sector.

We recognise that there are some significant challenges facing the grassroots live music sector which mean venues can struggle to focus on developing their programmes, their audiences and their business models.

As part of National Lottery Project Grants, we have set aside funding specifically to support the organisations and people involved in the hosting and promotion of live music events in venues: Supporting Grassroots live music.

Further to the £1.5 million in the 2022/23 financial year, a further £1.5 million is available until September 2023 specifically to support activities that help grassroots music venues and promoters to deliver and develop their work, getting live music to more people across England. This amount is additional to the general Project Grants budget. It is ring fenced which means it can only be accessed by those whose work focuses on hosting and/or promotion of live music events, for projects that support them to deliver their work to bring live music to the public.

Although the ring-fenced budget for Supporting Grassroots Live Music will end in September 2023, applications submitted after this date for this type of work will continue to be a priority within the main Project Grants budget. It will act as a transition period to support more organisations and individuals in this sector to be confident in applying to the main Project Grants programme in the future.

We can support the full range of applicants and activity outlined in this information sheet. While the fund is available to support the needs and priorities of the grassroots live music sector, we are still open to receiving applications for a range of activity including: organisational development and asset purchase, and audience development and programming.

## How much can you apply for?

You can apply to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Live Music for between £1,000 and £40,000, for projects up to three years long. If you need to apply for more than £40,000, you can still apply to the main Project Grants programme for activity that delivers grassroots live music activity.

If you can, you need to find at least 10% of the total cost of your project using income from other sources. We call this 'match' or 'partnership funding'. This can be cash support, or support in kind, and could be your own contribution (for example: ticket sales), and/or support from any partners in your project

# How do you apply?

Applications to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Live Music are made using our online system, Grantium in the same way as the main Project Grants programme. The application form is also the same, and it follows the same process.

**We outline the process in the 'How to apply' guidance, which you need to read before starting your application.**

Find the guidance on our website [here](#).

There are no application deadlines, and the application form is always available.

## Criteria

Applications to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Live Music must meet the Project Grants criteria which are:

- Feasibility and Risk
- Your project and the Outcomes
- Your project and the Investment Principles

This information sheet gives some additional context for those working in hosting and/or promotion of live music events, and helps them to think about the Project Grants application form in relation to the types of activity they deliver. For more information on Project Grants Criteria, please refer to the 'How to apply guidance' on our [website](#).

Applications for Supporting Grassroots Live Music projects will not be in competition with everyone else applying to Project Grants. As the budget for this time limited priority is ringfenced, these applications will only be in competition with each other.

We do generally receive more good applications than we can fund., and unfortunately some applicants will be disappointed.

- If you apply for between £1,000 and £30,000, we will make a decision within eight weeks
- If you apply for between £30,001 and £40,000, we will make a decision within 12 weeks

## Who can apply?

This funding is available to those whose main function is to host and/or promote live music events in venues. Usually, this will be venues and promoters (or groups of venues and/or promoters). We are particularly interested in supporting those venues and promoters who work in the grassroots part of this sector (for example: those working with new, developing talent in small to mid-size venues).

We welcome applications from those who work with all types of music and genres. We are keen to support projects that bring the full spectrum of contemporary popular music genres to live audiences. This includes, but is not limited to:

- electronic (including house, electronica, drum & bass, dubstep, experimental)
- hip-hop and grime
- indie and alternative
- metal and punk
- pop
- rock (including blues, modern, post-rock)

Your programme may fit into one more of these genres or be a different style altogether.

We are also keen to support projects which develop diverse approaches to music programming, incorporating for example: classical, jazz, folk, and/or world music alongside contemporary pop.

We cannot support individual bands, managers or agents to tour work as part of Supporting Grassroots Live Music, but you can apply to the main Project Grants programme to support activity like this.

## What can you apply for?

You can apply to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Live Music for a variety of types of project that aim to bring more and better-quality live music to more people in venues in England

Projects might involve presenting live music programming, but they might also include activities that put live music venues and promoters in a better position to deliver their work in the long term, for example: purchasing some essential equipment, carrying out building work, developing new routes into off-stage roles, or business planning. The activity we fund must primarily benefit audiences for live music in the short or longer term.

Some examples of the types of activity we can support include:

### **Artistic programming and audience development**

This could include a season of performances or shows across one or more venues, or a particular project to develop a more diverse programme and audience, for example to allow you to take risks on programming new genres of music or new ways of presenting live music.

### **Developing a venue's resilience and sustainability**

This could include trialling alternative uses of venues during non-showtimes, such as offering music-related activities to children and young people, afternoon performances, developing on- or off-stage talent, renting space out for rehearsals or training activities, paying for support with business planning, exploring new initiatives with partners, or mentoring from other venue or promoter colleagues.

# Building work and purchasing equipment

We can support some types of building development work and equipment purchases through Supporting Grassroots Live Music.

We prioritise the consolidation and improvement of existing venues rather than investing in significant expansion or new infrastructure. We could support some building work to make a venue more accessible, for example, or the purchase of a key piece of equipment that would improve the quality of a venue's offer for audiences.

You should read our Building Projects and Asset purchase [information sheets](#) before developing an application for either of these types of project.

**You need to ask for our permission before submitting your project application if your application is for more than £30,000 and includes requesting for support towards building costs:**

We'll discuss an outline of your plans in this conversation, and we'll review your security of tenure if you are applying for building works or fixed assets. We'll then decide whether to give you permission to apply.

Some important things to note are:

- We are very unlikely to support the purchase of leases
- We can't support the purchase of second-hand equipment in most cases
- You can't apply for equipment if you plan to sell it within the monitoring period

If you have any plans for asset purchases, they must be part of a project that clearly demonstrates development of artistic activity and benefit to the wider public. Equipment purchases could include production equipment (such as sound or lighting) that will clearly make a positive impact on the artistic activity and audience engagement.



Other purchases or building work could include alterations to venues to make them more accessible to all members of the public. If you do want to make these kinds of alterations, Attitude is Everything have published a [Charter of Best Practice](#) which you may find useful.

---

## What you cannot apply for

Because this time limited priority is focused on supporting those who host and/or promote live music events in venues, you cannot apply to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Live Music for:

- delivery of non-venue-based outdoor festivals
- artists' own tours

You may still be able to apply to Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants for support towards these types of activity.

All applications to Supporting Grassroots Live Music must meet the eligibility criteria for the wider Project Grants programme. The 'How to apply' guidance sets out what is eligible. In particular we can't support:

- day-to-day running costs like rent or utilities
  - You can include management costs for running the project but these need to be directly related to the activity you are delivering
- activities where the outcome is fundraising (for example: fundraising events)
  - This is because you need to declare the direct income from your project

- any activity that is already funded, either by the Arts Council or through other sources
- activity that doesn't benefit the public in the short or longer
- term activity that is intended to make a profit within the
- project time frame legal fees and/or any other costs

associated with challenging or  
contesting local business (eg planning) decisions

## Shaping your project

Project Grants and Supporting Grassroots Live Music are intended to support project activity. This programme cannot be used to support the day-to-day costs of running a business like rent or utilities, though you can apply for any extra expenditure like this that you incur because of delivering your project. For example: extra staff costs, or hire of specialist equipment.

Think carefully about the scope of what you want to use the funding to deliver, making sure it is manageable, realistic, and likely to achieve what you want it to by the end of the project timeframe.

This won't necessarily be everything you might achieve as a result of your funding in the long term – you only need to tell us in detail about what you can reasonably expect to achieve by the end of the funded project.

You should focus your application on the project you're asking us to support. You don't need to give us lots of information about your whole wider business operation if what you're asking us for is something quite specific.

This also means you will also not usually need to give us your whole business accounts. We ask you to submit a project budget, showing the income and expenditure that is specific to the activity you want to carry out as part of your project. See the section on Finance below for more information on how to put your budget together.

# How to apply to Supporting Grassroots Live Music

All applicants must read the How to apply guidance before starting an application. There is detailed guidance on how to plan your activity and on the Project Grants application form in the How to apply guidance.

Applications to Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Live Music are made using our online system Grantium. If you need help to use Grantium or have never used it before, guidance is available on our [website](#).

## Step 1: Create an applicant profile

To begin the application process, you first need to have a validated applicant profile on our online system Grantium. If you do not already have an applicant profile you will need to create one. If you already have a validated applicant profile you can skip ahead to step 2 below.

Make sure you submit your profile as soon as you can so it can be validated in time to start the application process.

**It can take up to five working days to validate an applicant profile.**

Use our Grantium guidance for more information on how to create an applicant profile [here](#).

## Step 2: Complete an Eligibility Questionnaire

You'll then need to complete a National Lottery Project Grants Eligibility Questionnaire.

You can find it by selecting National Lottery Project Grants in the Browse Programmes section of Grantium and clicking 'Apply Now'.

## The Eligibility Questionnaire

On the 'priorities' screen, select that you are applying for a Supporting Grassroots Live Music project from the list:

**Responding to Project Grants Priorities**

Is your project specifically responding to one of our current published Project Grants Priorities?

± Please select from the following list:

Selected priority:

Maximum request (£):

Once you have submitted your Eligibility Questionnaire you can then make your application.

### Step 3: Complete your application

You will need to complete your application on Grantium.

## Decision making process

Applications to Supporting Grassroots Live Music follow the same appraisal and decision making process as the wider Project Grants programme. The decision making process is detailed in the [How to apply guidance](#).

The only difference is that Supporting Grassroots Live Music applications will not be in competition with everyone else applying to Project Grants. As this budget is ringfenced, these applications will only be in competition with each other. We do generally receive more good applications than we can fund.

We won't always commit all the available budget in each decision meeting. We look at demand across a period of time and might choose not to invest in

a project even if we have sufficient money available in a particular decision meeting

We will make our decision on your application in:

- eight weeks if you apply for between £1,000 and £30,000
- 12 weeks if you apply for between £30,001 and £40,000

### **If my application isn't successful**

If we decide not to fund your project, your account on our online system Grantium will show a letter explaining our decision and outlining your next steps. You can apply again, but any new application for the same activity must sufficiently deal with the reasons that the original application was not successful.

If you would like to apply again you will need to begin a new application form using Grantium.

## **Case studies**

Below are some examples of successful projects funded recently through Projects Grants that give you some sense of the range of activity we hope to support through Project Grants: Supporting Grassroots Live Music.

### **Komeida, Bath - received £14,382**

Komedia is a community owned venue in Bath and hosts over 400 events a year covering comedy, music, cabaret events and club nights.

Whilst there was already a large, well-equipped 780 capacity auditorium, the venue wanted to develop a professionally equipped second 100 capacity space so they could work with a more diverse range of artists who couldn't be accommodated in the main auditorium. Programming a broader range of genres and artists led to attracting new and diverse audiences and extended their reach into the community.

The application was for funds towards the installation of PA and lighting equipment. Previously there was only a vocal PA and minimal stage lighting and using the space for live music was too expensive due to the cost of hiring additional equipment.

**Matt and Phreds, Manchester - received £14,989**

During lockdown, Matt and Phreds opened a social media platform directly to musicians so they could perform from home with a 'PayPal' link for viewers to 'Pay What They Can'. The success of this led to creating an online series of live streamed performances from the venue, named Club+.

The funding went towards camera equipment and set up costs. It enables them to develop a membership area of the website to host Club+ content, including live streams and catch-up content. Running Club+ membership directly through the venue meant ongoing relationships with audiences who engage with the series.

Training and increasing the capabilities of the sound engineers, including new approaches to lighting and presentation alongside sound mixing for video and live, meant new skills for future careers.

**Electronic Sound Magazine, Norwich - received £33,900**

The funding was to create a space within the Electronic Sound editorial offices where it was possible to invite both emerging and established artists to come and play sessions. Funding specifically supported the running of the inaugural season of sessions, hosted on the new Electronic Sound website.

It proved to be quite transformative. Having artists come into the space meant relationships were strengthened with artists and their teams. The project involved working with artists in new ways, amplifying their work, and at the same time reaching new audiences for Electronic Sound itself. Adding high end skillsets of video and audio production to activities, and marketing planning that goes beyond the magazine itself means Electronic Sound magazine now fits into a broader, larger, more ambitious structure of activity which will reach much larger audiences.

**Forum Music Studios, Darlington – received £40,000**

The project supported 44 local artists and musicians who had written songs during lockdown. The programme, Release From Lockdown, involved commissioning session musicians, producers and the in house technical team to develop the music, professionally record it and live stream a showcase event. The investment also triggered a new artwork commission which was funded by Creative Darlington with a local artist creating the artwork for the Release from Lockdown album. The project allowed people to develop and express their creativity.

The project meant the venue worked with industry professionals they'd not otherwise have been able to and upgrade their recording studio to improve the quality of their studio recordings. The project gave the in-house technical team experience and confidence in live-streaming for the future. Being ambitious yet keeping it local was key to success.

**Baby Rock Sampler, Manchester – received £15,000**

Baby Rock Sampler is a series of daytime, family friendly gigs in Manchester. Funding was for a pilot of live music events for parents/carers of kids aged 0-5 years. The project provided additional revenue opportunities for touring artists, reached new audiences that generally didn't go to gigs, and created amazing opportunities for kids to experience live music for the first time.

New partnerships enabled more ambitious programming and led to new audiences for the shows. The funding also meant freedom and confidence to try new approaches to running the events, including testing new pricing of tickets and agreeing a box office split and venue hire deal with new partner venue Band on the Wall.

**Team Black Promotions at the Hope and Ruin, Brighton – received £14,999**

Ruinfest was a collaborative project with six local DIY promoters to create six unique All Day Festivals in the pub and venue. Each event showcased the promoter and what they were about via the acts booked, artwork created to promote the event and the workshops offered.

The funding allowed things to be done differently and more thoroughly. It enabled bigger risks to be taken with line ups and gave some less commercial artists a space to perform. Having the events spread over a whole day encouraged more people to attend from out of town. Being able to subsidise the ticket price meant it was accessible to more diverse audiences as the event was affordable.

## Contact us

**Phone:** 0161 934 4317  
**Email:** [enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk)  
**Website:** [artscouncil.org.uk](http://artscouncil.org.uk)  
**Post:**

Arts Council England  
The Hive, 49 Lever Street  
Manchester  
M1 1FN

You can also Livechat with our customer services team by clicking the icon on our Project Grants page on our website:

[artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants](http://artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants)