



Hull

City Council

Out of the Box 2026 Commission Guidelines

Following the success of Out of the Box 2023 and 24, Hull Music Service and Hull City Council Arts Development are inviting applications for Special Collaborative Commissions from musicians and artists in all musical genres and media. This is part of the 'Out of the Box' partnership which is set up to continue work established by Arts Development and J-Night Jazz supporting the development of the Music Sector in Hull.

Support for the creation of new work is one thing that is highly valued by artists in the sector. We are keen to support diversity in the music that is made in Hull, we recognize the value of the creative nourishment that occurs when artists from different genres collaborate.

We are now inviting applications for the 3rd round of Out of the Box. The commissions can enable musicians to develop unusual collaborations and pairings, open up possibilities for exploration and challenge, and support musicians to create new work outside their normal musical boxes.

For examples of successful Out of the Box commissions please go to <https://hulljazzfestival.co.uk/event/out-of-the-box/>

The commissions will support the development of new work, with a payment of up to **£2,000** for the following:

- New collaborations between artists of different musical genres, who have not created work together previously, at least one of whom are Hull residents or work in Hull
- Individual artists from different musical backgrounds developing new music through co-creation and sharing ideas and approaches

We are looking for original and exciting ideas and welcome proposals from individuals or groups that will be developed towards live performance. All collaborations in these Special Collaborative Commissions are to take place during 2026 in the city of Hull, resulting in a live sharing of the work at the Hull Jazz Festival in November 2026.

Submissions open from 14 January to end of February 2026. Final deadline for submissions is midnight **Sunday 1 March 2026**.

What is an Out of the Box commission?

We will support local music creators, artists and creative producers to produce a piece of new work, based on a sense of place. It could be geographical, historical, emotional, lyrical or personal. It could reflect an incident, a specific location, an atmosphere or reflect what you think is the spirit of the North, or of Hull.

We're looking for projects that explore stories that define a sense of place and that embody the spirit of music as forward-facing artform that's continually evolving.

All rights for the commissioned work will remain with the music creator(s), but Hull City Council will be permitted to host the premiere performance and Hull Jazz Festival and Hull City Council shall be credited as commissioner on all future performances or recordings.

What can we offer?

Hull City Council can contribute up to £2,000, depending on project needs, for four individual commissions. One of these commissions will be offered the opportunity to work with young musicians from the Albemarle Music Centre, through Hull Music Service. The agreed commission amount will cover the composition plus live performance fees and any special production costs (e.g. rehearsal rooms, and use of special equipment).

Out of the Box can offer:

- Practical and mentoring support designed around your project
- Opportunities to come together with other Out of the Box artists to share progress
- Live performance at an official Hull Jazz Festival showcase event
- Practical support and guidance on production, career development and profile raising
- Additional support may be suggested based on your application e.g. consideration of mentorship.

Finances

You may request a maximum of up to £2,000 towards the cost of your project but should bear in mind that, if an offer is made, it may be lower and will be determined by the needs and ambitions of the project and the availability of funds. We're expecting to receive more applications than available funds. The exact amount offered may be up to negotiation prior to a final offer of award.

Eligibility

To be eligible the lead applicant must:

- Be over 18 years old and based in the UK;
- Live or have their work base within the boundary of the City of Hull;
- Not be in full-time education;
- Have a track record of a professional music career;
- Have a clear and coherent project proposal.

Previous recipients of Out of the Box commissions are not eligible to apply for this round

Criteria

Your proposal should meet the following criteria:

- Have intrinsic musical or artistic value;
- Challenge you to develop your artistic practice;
- Clearly express the musical ambition of the collaboration;
- Clearly articulate the process involved in achieving your ambitions;
- We would expect the final outcome to result in a minimum of 20 minutes performance;
- It should have collaboration at its heart with at least one creative collaborator;
- Must result in creating new work
- You should not have previously collaborated with the collaborative partner/s identified for this proposal.

It is hoped that the process and legacy of each commission will have a positive impact on Hull's musical ecology.

We anticipate the commissions to be showcased to a wider audience through live performance in November 2026 as part of Hull Jazz Festival.

Application

The application process will begin on 14 January and will close **at midnight on 1 March 2026**.

You must apply using the official application form available in Microsoft Forms here:

<https://forms.office.com/e/jAwb1VtBAM>

In the application form you will be asked to provide:

- Name of your project;
- Contact details for lead applicant and collaborators;
- Outline of your proposed commission idea (up to 5000 characters); describe your project, its sense of place, artists you would like to collaborate with, and the planned collaborative creative process etc.;
- Personal statement (up to 3000 characters) including relevant experience of you and your collaborators and why the time is right for you to be commissioned, plus a link to 2 examples of your work;
- Who your target audiences would be – who are you making work for? (up to 1500 characters);
- If your project is focused around the option to work with young musicians at the Albemarle you will be asked to expand on this, sharing your intended learning outcomes for participants. (up to 3000 characters).
- Simple budget listing your expenditure items, any in kind or further support, and the amount of commission required (up to a maximum £2,000).

How and when we make our decision

All applications will be considered by a selection panel, consisting of music and cultural professionals, in March 2026.

- A shortlist of candidates may be invited to present their ideas over Zoom
- Successful candidates will be contacted by the end of April 2026.

Who to contact

If you have a question about any aspect of the process or wonder if the commissioning process is right for you or you have an access query please contact:

James Dickinson, email James.Dickinson@hullcc.gov.uk

or Clare Drury email Clare.Drury@hullcc.gov.uk

Hull City Council, are committed to ensuring that the Out of the Box commissions will be representative of wider society in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background.

Supported by Hull City Council and Friends of the Albemarle

