

CO-CREATING CHANGE PROJECT COMMISSIONS: INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES R2-3

1. What are Co-Creating Change Project Commissions?



Co-Creating Change Project Commissions are part of a national programme and network called [Co-Creating Change](#). Co-Creating Change explores, champions, grows, spreads and promotes a better understanding of what co-creation is, how it can be done, and why we think it's essential for the future.

Co-Creating Change is led by Battersea Arts Centre, and you can read more about it on the project website [here](#).

The aim of these commissions is to demonstrate and explore the crucial role arts practice and creative process can play in addressing some of the most urgent social and environmental challenges we are facing as a society today.

For example, previous commissions have gone to women in Bootle to address ways of living with debt, asylum seekers in Gateshead to promote happiness in the local community, and people from across rural communities in Devon to tackle the climate crisis.

These commissions are for methodologies which use co-creation to effect real change.

Co-creation is a way of working which recognises that:

- We desperately need new and different approaches and ways of thinking to address the multiple challenges many of our communities currently face.
- These approaches must be collaborative and inclusive, and involve from the very beginning people who are often excluded from finding and developing solutions.
- The creative process must empower and support people who are most keenly affected by these issues, so they are able to inform, explore and shape ideas which are based on real lived experience and knowledge.

Co-Creating Change Project Commissions are not designed to support conventional participatory arts projects, in which people are invited to *join in* with a project which has already been designed and planned by an artist or organisation. Instead we are looking for approaches which bring people and partners together, from the design and planning stages through to delivery and beyond, to *create* something which addresses real issues and effects change.

Key things being looked for in these methodologies are:

- Deep-rooted collaborative processes which bring together people and partners with diverse experiences, skills and knowledge to work in non-hierarchical ways to address a common issue.
- The shifting of power, agency and decision-making towards people and partners who might traditionally have less control over these areas.

We are particularly keen to hear about co-created processes which do not have a pre-determined or imposed solution or output – eg a theatrical production, exhibition or festival – but whose form and solution will be decided through the process of co-creation.

We encourage applications both from arts and cultural partners, and from non-arts and cultural partners.

How much money can I apply for?

There is £90,000 remaining in the commissioning pot, and there is no minimum or maximum amount for which you can apply within this. However, we imagine most successful applications will be for between £5,000 and £15,000.

You do not need to be a member of the Co-Creating Change network to apply for a commission. However, at least 50% of the total commissioning pot will be allocated to applicants from within the Co-Creating Change network.

Why are Co-Creating Change Project Commissions happening?

The wider Co-Creating Change project is interested in co-created practice, which shifts the arts and cultural sector beyond a narrow model of arts participation ("come and join in with what we do") towards a wider, more inclusive model of co-creation ("come and create").

Co-creation challenges old hierarchies which have often existed within arts participation work, in which the arts and cultural partner can be seen as the authority, and community members as learners and beneficiaries. Co-creation instead provides a process in which the diverse strengths, interests and knowledge of everyone involved are central to the work.

Co-Creating Change is exploring how co-created processes make change at an individual, community, and systemic level.

By commissioning the development of new and existing co-created methodologies, Co-Creating Change aims to:

- Add to the wealth of brilliant co-created practice already taking place, creating positive change in communities across the UK.
- Learn from the processes which sit behind these co-created projects to further develop knowledge of what co-creation is, and how it works for the arts and cultural sector. As part of this, all commissioned projects must be willing to take part in the overarching evaluation process for Co-Creating Change. This will be light-touch, and will involve some self-evaluation and the production of a case study.

The inspiration for and background to the wider Co-Creating Change project are described in two blogs from Battersea Arts Centre:

- [How can cultural centres also be community centres?](#) – describing the first ideas behind Co-Creating Change, published 31st Dec 2017
- [Update: Co-Creating Change](#) – describing how plans and ideas around the network evolved, published 24th Apr 2018

What are Co-Creating Change Project Commissions looking for?

Co-Creating Change Project Commissions are for any kind of activity which uses co-creation. Our interest lies in understanding more thoroughly the creative and collaborative processes that sit behind co-created practice.

You can apply for commissioning money for a methodology that you have never run before, or you can apply to develop or improve an existing methodology. However, if you want to significantly scale up and spread an existing methodology to new locations, you are encouraged to apply to a separate pot of money for **Co-Creating Change Growing and Spreading Commissions**. Further details of how to apply for these commissions, and when applications will open, will be publicised on the Co-Creating Change website and Twitter.

The [first round of Co-Creating Change Project Commissions](#) awarded money to the following:

- **Flight: The Chrysalis Collective** – a programme of touring events and governance support for a new mobile learning space made by people who live or work in the Bio Region of South Devon. The programme will be devised in collaboration with [Encounters Arts](#), a company of artists, producers, facilitators based in Totnes.
- **A Women's Manifesto for Living Well with Debt** – bringing together women in Bootle with charity [Venus](#) and artist Jeanne van Heeswijk to create radical solutions for tackling an urgent issue in the local community: debt.
- **The Happiness Project** – helping new arrivals to Newcastle/Gateshead to come together to create happiness and cohesion in their communities. The Happiness Project will be developed with [Curious Monkey Theatre](#).
- **Exchange 62: northern disabled artists exchange** – a new initiative between [Artlink Hull](#), [Pyramid of Arts, Leeds](#) and [Venture Arts, Manchester](#). The programme will support a disabled artist from each of these areas to develop and lead their own exchange programme with the goal of long-term social change.
- **Garota Hacker** – a sustainable fashion project co-designed by BAME-led [ZU-UK](#) in Newham and Lá Da Favelinha based at Aglomerado da Serra in Brazil. Garota Hacker combines accessible and creative technologies with personal development processes to empower people from economically vulnerable backgrounds to create and self-develop.

You can also read some reflections from Susanne Burns, Co-Creating Change's Learning and Evaluation Consultant, on the selection process for Round 1 [here](#) – which is a useful exploration of some of the things that helped or hindered applications hoping to be funded.

2. Some examples of co-creation



Here are some examples of existing methodologies that use co-creation. These are the kind of methodologies that inspired the founding of the Co-Creating Change network, so they might be useful for thinking about the sort of work the Co-Creating Change Project Commissions could support.

We Can Make

We Can Make is a new housing initiative led by Knowle West Media Centre and White Design that supports communities to create the homes they want and need. It works with residents, artists, academics, designers, architects and policy makers to try out new ideas for sustainable, affordable housing. The initiative ensures communities, not property developers, call the shots and are in the lead and means that homes are built to meet local need using local assets and skills.

Example outputs include:

- Unlocking various micro-sites and using them to develop of affordable and sustainable homes.
- A 'Community Design Code' which enables communities to make the rules for what new development looks like in their area, where it goes, and what it is made from.

You can read more about We Can Make [here](#).

The Advocacy Academy

The Advocacy Academy is a youth movement working to unleash the power of young people to create a more fair, just and equal society. The Advocacy Academy's mission is to create a new generation of social change leaders, supporting them to tackle the biggest challenges of the 21st century, from gender equality to mental health. Through education and action, the

Advocates learn to analyse the socio-political conditions in their communities, identify solutions that will better address their needs, and leverage instruments of power to make their demands heard.

Example output: Legally Black is a campaigning group which aims to increase awareness around the lack of black representation in the media and the often inaccurate and harmful depictions that do occur. Four advocates from The Advocacy Academy – Liv, Kofi, Shiden & Bel – came together to create Legally Black to combat the way black people are portrayed in the media. They all felt affected by the issue either directly or indirectly, and saw first-hand the damage it causes. So they re-created a series of famous film posters, replacing the white actors with black people from their lives – friends, family, other advocates – along with the tagline, “If you’re surprised, it means you don’t see enough black people in major roles. Join us in our mission for better black representation in the media.” The posters were put up in bus stops all over Brixton, garnering national and international press and kick-starting an ongoing viral campaign. They have since had meetings with major commissioners to deal with the lack of black representation in the media to demand accountability.

You can read more about the Advocacy Academy [here](#).

Agents of Creative Change

Agents of Creative Change is a programme run by Battersea Arts Centre which brings together third sector professionals, artists and researchers in a collaborative exchange programme. At the beginning of the process, the third sector partners bring a challenge they are facing in their professional environment, in their community, or both. They are then teamed up with an artist and a researcher to tackle that challenge in a creative and playful way. Producers then support them to test their idea iteratively over time and in dialogue with everyone whom the idea will impact. Previous third sector partners have included those working in the police, local government, health services, libraries, employment and probation. Artists have come from a wide variety of backgrounds including music, design, writing, photography, performance work, digital and community theatre.

Example output: interactive theatremaker Tassos Stevens collaborated with Barbara Cala-Lesina from Wandsworth Council’s probation service to tackle her challenge of changing the behaviour of Wandsworth’s 75 most prolific offenders. Together they are prototyping an interactive game which uses cognitive behavioral therapy to disrupt cycles of repeat offending.

3. Applying for Co-Creating Change Project Commissions



Co-Creating Change Project Commissions criteria

To succeed, your application must meet all of the following core criteria:

- The methodology uses a collaborative process which brings together people with diverse experiences, skills and knowledge to work in non-hierarchical ways to address a common issue.
- The passions, interests, concerns, skills and creative ideas of everyone involved – especially those whose voices are not always heard – are supported and developed.
- The methodology shifts power, agency and decision-making towards people and partners who traditionally might traditionally have less control over these areas.
 - See the **Agency Scale** document for one way of mapping this. Most successful applications are likely to demonstrate a split of agency between partners of between 50/50 and 60/40 at every stage of the methodology.
- There is clarity around how the methodology aims to effect change, and there is evidence of the need for this change.
- There is demonstrable experience, skills and knowledge from the applicant or from your partner(s) to work effectively on the project.
- There is opportunity for change and learning for everyone involved in the project – individuals or organisations, arts and cultural partners or community partners.
- There is a willingness to take part in Co-Creating Change's overarching evaluation process.
- The project provides value for money.
- The methodology is innovative and pushes boundaries.

Additional criteria which you do not have to meet but will be considered are:

- Potential for future scalability of the methodology.
- Connections across different sectors to add value and knowledge.

Please note successful applications in the past have stood out because:

- They are ambitious but do not over-claim on what they can deliver.
- The voices of the co-creators can be heard in the application.
- Their primary focus is not artist or audience development (although this may be a by-product).
- We can see that the money applied for will make a real difference to the project.

How will successful applicants be decided upon?

We will look at how your methodology meets the above criteria, as well as taking into account the below:

A diverse range of commissions

Since Co-Creating Change is researching and evaluating different approaches to co-creation, we are interested in supporting a range of different issues, demographics and approaches through Co-Creating Change Project Commissions. This means that when assessing your methodology we will consider it alongside other applications to ensure that we commission:

- a variety of different approaches to co-creation
- a diversity of practitioners and organisations
- a geographic spread of projects
- a range of scales of projects
- a range of people involved – we are particularly interested in making sure the money reaches people and places that are often under-served by arts and cultural provision

Safeguarding and planning

We will also be looking to ensure:

- that you are able to provide a safe, supportive and ethically sound process;
- that you are committed to involving as wide and diverse a group of people as is appropriate for your project;
- that your activity and budgets are well planned.

What can the money cover?

There is a total commissioning pot of £150,000, and there is no minimum or maximum amount for which you can apply within this. However, we imagine most successful applications will be for between £5,000 and £15,000.

You can apply for project costs including (but not limited to):

- Fees for people's time
- Materials
- Coordination costs
- Hiring space
- Marketing costs – printing and distribution
- Training costs
- Volunteer out-of-pocket costs reimbursement
- Travel costs
- Staff costs
- Hiring equipment
- Running costs
- Translators
- Access costs

You can't apply for costs for:

- Activities that have already happened
- Activities that happen within six weeks of your application being submitted
- General overheads not related to the delivery of your project
- Fundraising activities or challenges (like costs for a charity skydive)
- Activities which collect funds for other charities or people
- Support for tuition fees or activity linked to an individual's formal studies such as a degree or apprenticeship

You might have additional money or support for your project from other sources outside of Co-Creating Change Project Commissions. If so, please tell us about any other cash or in-kind support that your project will receive.

We will prioritise proposals where money from Co-Creating Change will have a clear impact and make a significant difference to a project. This means that if a Co-Creating Change commission would make up a comparatively small part of your budget, with the majority coming from other sources, we may decide that the impact on your project is not significant enough to award you a commission.

Who can apply?

Lead applicants must be either:

- Individuals based in the UK who are registered as self-employed, with the right to work in the UK
- Registered organisations based in the UK

If you are not a formally constituted group or a self-employed individual, you may still be able to apply. However, you must nominate a registered organisation within the UK who can accept and administrate the money on your behalf. This organisation will then become a signatory in the commissioning contract, taking on its responsibilities and agreeing to its terms and conditions.

You cannot apply if you are a for-profit organisation.

You do not need to be a member of the Co-Creating Change network to apply for a commission. However, at least 50% of the total commissioning pot will be allocated to applicants from within the Co-Creating Change network.

How can I apply?

You can apply using the application form [here](#).

If you submit your application by **5pm on Monday 16th September 2019**, your application will be assessed in Round 2.

If you submit your application between **5pm on Monday 16th September** and **5pm on Monday 18th November 2019**, your application will be assessed in the final Round 3.

The form asks you a few questions about the methodology and project as well as you and/or your organisation, your partners, and the people involved.

You will be responsible for all financial and legal aspects of your project. This may include insurance, risk assessments, and having an up-to-date safeguarding policy if you are working with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

The application process

- Submit your application form by **5pm on Monday 16th September 2019** to be eligible for Round 2, or by **5pm on Monday 18th November 2019** to be eligible for Round 3. Please allow a minimum of six weeks from the relevant application deadline to the proposed start date of your project.
- Your application will be eligibility checked against the criteria above by members of the producing team at Battersea Arts Centre.
- A panel of people will assess all eligible applications. The members of this panel will be announced publically nearer to the time. The panel will be made up of individuals and representatives of organisations; professionals and non-professionals; and people from the arts and cultural, social and community sectors. They will be from a range of geographical locations from across the UK.
- You will hear whether you have been successful within four weeks of the submission deadline.
- If your application has been successful, you will receive a Welcome Pack with terms and conditions of your commission, and information on how to draw down your money.
- If your application is successful, you will need to attend a pre-project evaluation planning and learning workshop. This will take place on **Tuesday 15th October 2019 in London** for Round 2, and **Tuesday 7th January 2020 (location TBC)** for Round 3. If you are a successful Round 2 applicant but your project activity doesn't begin until 2020, you can choose to attend the January workshop instead of the October one, if you prefer.

What if my application is not successful?

We won't be able to support all projects that apply for a commission.

If your application doesn't succeed, we can provide you with some feedback. If you have been unsuccessful in Round 1 or 2, you are welcome to apply to a future round with a different methodology, but we do not encourage you to re-apply with a previously unsuccessful methodology.

Future Co-Creating Change commissioning opportunities

Round 3, closing on Monday 18th November 2019, will be the final round of Co-Creating Change Project Commissions.

If you are looking to grow, scale up or spread a successful co-created methodology to other locations or contexts, you should instead apply to a separate pot for money for a **Co-Creating Change Growing and Spreading Commission**. Further details of how to apply for these commissions, and when applications will open, will be publicised on the Co-Creating Change website and Twitter.

4. Questions and feedback

Please contact Maddie Wilson on maddiew@bac.org.uk if:

- You have any questions about Co-Creating Change Project Commissions
- You require any of the application materials in a different format
- You have any feedback on the Co-Creating Change Project Commissions process.

Please send any completed applications to cocreatingchange@bac.org.uk.