

**OPEN  
DOORS**

# Artist Residencies x 2

**May 2026 - Sept 2026 and Oct 2026 - Mar 2027**

We're looking for two early to mid-career community-focused artists, creatives or collectives to take up a residency based in a public studio space at National Civil War Centre and Newark Museum, in Newark.

You'll work with community groups at locations across the district of Newark Sherwood, as well as interact with visitors in the studio.

As an arts educator or participatory arts practitioner, you'll work with people to co-create artworks that respond to and are inspired by our historical artefacts, collections, buildings and / or heritage sites.

If your practice is accessible, inclusive, environmentally responsive, you care about communities and want to be part of a thriving artistic and cultural movement in the East Midlands, we want to hear from you!

## **Who we are - Open Doors**

Open Doors is an arts programme delivering free, creative activities across Newark and Sherwood.

Our projects encourage people of all ages and abilities to have fun, connect with their community, and experience something new. Our programme includes visual arts, creative writing, music, heritage, creative play, and performing arts for everyone to enjoy and take part in.

Funded by Arts Council England and delivered by Newark and Sherwood District Council, you'll find our team running activities in museums, libraries, schools, theatres, and other venues across the district.

We inspire children, families, young people, D/deaf and disabled people, and underserved communities, allowing everyone in Newark and Sherwood to experience the joy and benefits of arts and culture.

Since 2023, Artist Residencies have been a successful element of Open Doors, allowing us to work with artists and creatives working in Virtual Reality, paper-cutting, digital video games, creative writing, walking and puppetry.

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## Our sites and collections

The National Civil War Centre is an accredited museum which tells the story of the British Civil Wars and their relevance today.

Newark Museum looks after 95,000 objects including the internationally significant Newark Torc and an art collection that includes works by Edmund de Waal, Bridget Riley and Vanessa Bell.

The Palace Theatre has been centre stage in Newark for over 100 years, entertaining thousands of people every year with a lively and varied programme, including acts such as Benjamin Zephaniah, John Lydon, Opera North and the Kanneh-Masons.

Newark Castle, a scheduled ancient monument, has stood on the banks of the river Trent for nearly 900 years and is a key part of Newark's history. Its Gardens offer welcome green space and an accessible and unique historic setting for activities and events. This site is currently closed to the public, and is due to re-open in 2027 after extensive renovation and access improvements.

## The brief

We're looking for **artists** or **collectives** in any creative discipline, who are excited to make new work with local community groups, families and under-served groups. You'll be inspired by our buildings, stories and collections, and work with people to create new interpretations.

Your **practice** might include writing, photography, dance, music, textiles, print, performance, illustration, design, drawing and more. You might work alone or as part of a collective.

Throughout the residency you'll interact with the **public** during the museum's opening hours. You'll welcome visitors to the studio to see your creative process, talk to you about your work, try out activities and processes and explore the objects you choose to display from our collections.

You'll be based in our **top-floor studio** at the National Civil War Centre. The studio should have a working feel for visitors, and feel distinctly different to a gallery. The studio is open during museum opening times, and therefore visitors will access the studio on days when you are not there.

The studio is **accessible** by lift and stairs, has two windows, spotlights and wi-fi. Regarding **facilities**, it does not have a sink nor windows for ventilation. The studio contains 3 x museum cases to fill with your selection of objects from our collections as well as your work or artworks created during the residency. We also provide tables, chairs, a desk, a small lockable cupboard and an art materials storage unit. The furniture arrangement is reviewed for each residency; however, the museum cases are permanently located in the studio.

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During the residency, you'll **collaborate** with our Collections and Exhibitions team to explore, select and display objects from our collections. You'll also work closely with the Open Doors team to identify community groups to connect you with to plan and deliver participatory workshops at off-site, community-based locations.

Off-site **community workshops** are specifically for people living in areas of low cultural engagement and areas of deprivation across the district, and could include families, young people, diaspora communities, disabled and D/deaf people and neurodiverse people.

You'll have experience of planning and facilitating **engaging activities** that are relevant to local communities or specific groups and be passionate about placing participant needs and co-creation at the heart of your work.

The **first residency** will take place for up to 5 ½ months between mid-April 2025 and mid to end of September 2026 and the **second residency** will take place between mid-October 2026 the end of March 2027.

In summary, the **aims** are to:

- work collaboratively with the Open Doors team, museum staff and volunteers;
- provide creative ways to engage our general visitors in the studio;
- engage target community groups at offsite locations;
- inspire people to explore creative skills and develop understanding and confidence;
- create new ways for people to engage with and interpret our historical artefacts, collections, buildings and / or heritage sites;
- add arts participation activities to our monthly Family Saturday events;
- remove barriers to cultural engagement across the district; and
- create new work through participatory activities.

## Outputs per residency

- A minimum of 3 days per week onsite or in a community setting within the district, including some weekends and evenings to meet the needs of participant / community groups;
- Plan and deliver 8 x workshops / sessions with groups of people at other locations across the district;
- Co-plan and deliver activities that contribute to monthly Family Saturdays at the National Civil War Centre;
- Co-plan and deliver half-term / school holiday activity days for children and families at the National Civil War Centre (dependant on residency dates);
- Keep a log of visitor numbers in the studio and gather visitor surveys (using templates provided);

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- Design and implement creative and accessible ways to gather qualitative feedback from studio visitors and offsite workshop participants;
- Produce a creative record of the residency – perhaps an event or performance or material objects or artworks, digital products, or a combination; and
- A printed and digital book as a record of the residency.

## Budget

There is a budget of up to £19,500.00 (excluding VAT) per residency. This covers the delivery of all outputs and includes daily fees for a minimum of 3 x days per week throughout the duration of each 5 ½ month residency, travel, accommodation (if required) and materials.

## Eligibility

- To be eligible for this residency you'll be required to provide details of insurance, DBS certificate or be prepared to provide information to undergo a fresh DBS check. We might also support you to attend Safeguarding training too.
- Although a substantial part of this work will happen across our district, it is not essential that you drive as transport can be provided.
- You must be a UK resident and be registered with HMRC as self-employed in order for Newark and Sherwood District Council to pay you.

## How to apply

Please tell us why you're interested in this residency, and describe:

- how you would deliver the aims and outputs of this brief;
- your previous experience of planning and delivering participatory arts activity with both targeted community groups, children and families, and general audiences;
- your strengths, experience and interests with regard to working with particular participant groups, such as Early Years children and families, Primary school children, young people, people with SEND, older people, people with care and support needs, people from diaspora communities, newly arrived or settled people;
- your artistic practice and process - how you might work with visitors and community groups in a socially engaged way;
- how you envisage visitors of all ages, abilities and backgrounds might enjoy participating in your activities on and off-site; and
- how you might interpret historical artefacts, collections, buildings and / or heritage sites in new ways.

Please also include:

- your CV;

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- which residency dates you are interested in and if you are applying as an individual or a collective;
- a costed breakdown including your daily rate, what you anticipate spending on materials, production and transport; and
- the contact details of two referees you have worked with in the last two years.

## Format

Written applications should be no more than 2 sides of A4.

However, your proposal format can be a video file (MP4) or audio file (MP3). Video or audio content should not exceed 3 minutes. If you choose this format, you must include fee breakdown and a link to your CV and referee contact details.

If submitting a video or audio file, please send this via a file-sharing service such as WeTransfer or Dropbox.

Please send your application to [opendoors@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:opendoors@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)

## Schedule

The closing date is **4pm Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026**.

We will acknowledge the receipt of your application by email.

Those shortlisted will be invited to an interview (in person or via Teams) before final selection. Interviews will take place Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**If you would like this document in a different format, please email:**  
[opendoors@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk](mailto:opendoors@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)