

TEES VALLEY

Festival Collectives Challenge Fund 2023



Programme Objectives

- To encourage and support coordinated, collaborative and connected approaches to strengthening the reach and impact of existing festivals and events across the Tees Valley with a commitment to supporting the following two genres as a minimum: – **Music and LGBTQIA+**
- To build sustainability, resilience and more robust business models for the individual businesses and concurrently strengthen the sub sector.
- To support audience development and grow geographic reach.
- To contribute to a year-round, cohesive festival and events offer in Tees Valley.

Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) intends to invest in one collaborative group (Collective) in each priority genre;

- LGBTQIA+
- Music

With potential to invest in one further collective in a non-priority genre.

Who is it for and who can apply?

Applications must be made by a collective of organisations/individuals with a nominated lead organisation. The collective must contain at least three festival products, two of which must have been delivered at least once before.

Existing multi-site festivals are eligible to apply on the basis of bringing new partners to the table, extending geographic reach, diversifying the offer.

Collectives must have good geographical spread with at least 3 out of the 5 Tees Valley boroughs (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton on Tees) **represented**.

Collectives can be made up of the following types of individuals/ businesses/ organisations

- Existing festival/event businesses / products (min. 2).
- Festival and event supply chain businesses (e.g., marketing/PR, equipment hire, hospitality etc.).
- Cultural/entertainment venue businesses.
- Local Authorities and FE or HE institutions.
- Charitable organisations or social enterprises (Registered Charity, CIC, CIO, constituted group).
- Individual Freelancers/Creative Professionals.

[Click Here](#)

To read more about TVCA and the objectives of the Growth Programme for the Creative and Visitor Economies

A lead organisation must be identified and will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with TVCA and be responsible for managing the investment on behalf of partners.

The lead organisation must have:

- A business bank account which is not a personal bank account.
- Be working within the cultural sector and have a demonstrable trading record of at least 12 months within the culture sector.
- Run a festival that has been delivered at least once before.
- Be able to demonstrate that the primary activity of the businesses is concerned with the delivery of cultural festivals and/or events in the Tees Valley.

If you have received TVCA investment in the past, you are still eligible to apply **subject to compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022**. If you are part of the TVCA Festival Scale-Up programme you cannot be the lead partner but can be part of a Collective.

Levels of investment

Total investment pot: £300,000

TVCA will invest in a maximum of three festival collectives, one from each of the priority genres;

- LGBTQIA+
- Music

With potential to invest in one further collective in a non-priority genre.

Expected awards will be in the region of £100,000 per collective to enable activity to be delivered over a maximum period of 2 years, 5 months (Nov 2023 – 31st March 2026).



Programme Opens

The Festival Collectives Challenge Fund opens 14th July 2023

All applicants must book a Visioning Workshop prior to making an application, which can be booked from **17th July 2023 – 18th August 2023**

Application Process

STAGE 1	Book Visioning Workshop
STAGE 2	Attend Visioning Workshop (paid time for up to 3 collective members where roles are freelance) - in this meeting we will cover; <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ scoping your initial ideas/project▪ aims and objectives▪ the make-up and management of your collective▪ and for TVCA colleagues to make any suggestions on further partnership/connections that may augment your project.
STAGE 3	Submit application

Deadline for applications

Deadline for applications: **12 noon, Friday 15th September 2023**

Applications notified of outcome: **by 5pm, Thursday 19th October 2023**

Project Length

Projects must not start delivery before **1st November 2023**.

All projects must be complete by **31st March 2026**.

We anticipate that there will be a period of development from Nov 2023 to early 2024 followed by two iterations/cycles of festival delivery, to be delivered between 2024 and Mar 2026.

Match Funding Required

Businesses must be able to demonstrate that the festivals in their current form are fully funded – this is the only ‘cash match’ that is required. TVCA investment must only be used to support above and beyond ‘business as usual.’

Examples of the types of projects we will support

TVCA will invest in Festival Collectives with the following priority genres;

- LGBTQIA+
- Music

With potential to invest in one further collective in a non-priority genre.

Here are some example projects

- Joined up and coordinated approach to marketing and programming festivals in Tees Valley.
- Co-commissioning of new work that tours Tees Valley and exports outside of Tees Valley to generate income for the co-commissioners.
- Collective audience development plan and implementation to increase Tees Valley and non-Tees Valley residents to attend.
- Collective buying approaches to broker best value arrangements with suppliers / brokering partnerships with supply-chain businesses.
- Collective approach to programming, developing and showcasing homegrown acts / artists across Tees Valley.
- Collective approach to supporting talent development / promotion for Tees Valley-based artists.
- Collective approach to developing a contributed income scheme – e.g., sponsorship, donations, corporate giving.
- Working together to enhance ‘wrap-around’ festival offers, such as food & drink, markets, engagement with local businesses etc.
- Working with new partners / places / sites to increase visibility and engagement with festival / event activity.
- Developing and delivering collaborative solutions to reducing carbon footprint resulting from festival delivery. As part of TVCA's commitment to achieving Net Zero, we will support all participating festivals to undertake an environmental impact audit in order to understand current impacts and identify opportunities for reduction in the future.
- Collective approaches to improving accessibility and inclusion. All participating festivals will be supported to undertake accessibility audits to understand current strengths and barriers to engagement and identify opportunities for improved practice in the future.

Investment Criteria

All projects supported via this challenge fund must:

- Create changes for the longer term rather than be a 'quick fix'.
- Leverage external funding (TVCA will not be the sole funder. Cash match funding to enable 'business as usual' activity is a requirement).
- Be delivered in the Tees Valley for the benefit of Tees Valley's Cultural Industries.
- Be 'Varifocal' by design: align with TVCA's strategic objectives for the region ([see Sustainable Sector Growth framework](#)) and [The Festivals and Events Investment Framework](#) with a delivery plan which is suitable for the place(s) in which the project is going to be delivered .
- Be delivered in an environmentally conscious and responsible way
- Support diversity, accessibility and inclusion.
- Provide evidence of need/demand. Proposals should directly respond to barriers which are preventing the sector from growing in a sustainable way. Our [Cultural and Creative Industries Baseline Report Executive Summary](#) provides useful insights into sector challenges.

The **Festival Collectives Challenge Fund** will invest in projects which respond to an identified sector need and set out a clear methodology for an approach which could achieve the following outcomes;

The Festivals Collective Fund	
	<p>Strengthen business models - enable businesses to make a strategic step change in business activity with a view to diversifying income streams, building resilience, and safeguarding and creating jobs.</p>
	<p>Foster innovation, collaboration, and connectivity - build new partnerships and networks (including with the wider creative industries & other sectors) leading to established / formalised collective working, economies of scale, knowledge transfer / exchange and skills sharing which have been developed and embedded.</p>
	<p>Increase regional cultural and creative export - create new products/services that are distinctively from Tees Valley and can be exported and result in new income streams.</p>
	<p>Contribute to a vibrant and varied year-round Festival and Events offer for Tees Valley – diversifying the offer across the calendar year.</p>
	<p>Increase audiences from inside and outside of the Tees Valley to Tees Valley based festivals and events – increasing access and engagement and generating increased spend and overnight stays.</p>
	<p>Provide opportunities to showcase and discover local talent and attract higher profile non-regional talent to the Tees Valley – increasing opportunities for local artists and increasing profile of Tees Valley festivals.</p>

	<p>Develop, attract and retain skills and talent - create identifiable, high-quality pathways for continuous professional development and skills development which are evident and being taken up.</p>
	<p>Diversify audiences - audiences and programming reflect the communities they serve.</p>
	<p>Improve environmental impacts and demonstrate sustainable leadership.</p>
	<p>Unlocks inward investment (money coming in from outside of Tees Valley).</p>

We know that a project will not achieve or be relevant to all outcomes listed above. However, projects are more likely to be supported via this programme where they achieve multiple outcomes and make a contribution to the development and growth of the cultural and creative cluster in the Tees Valley.

Eligibility Criteria

Collectives must have:

- A nominated lead applicant
- Good geographical spread with at least 3 out of the 5 Tees Valley boroughs (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees) represented/ or activity taking place in at least three boroughs.
- A minimum of 3 partners / organisations (a freelance/ sole trader can be counted as one partner).
- At least three festival products, two of which must have been delivered at least once before.

Existing multi-site festivals are eligible to apply on the basis of bringing new partners to the table, extending geographic reach, diversifying the offer.

Collectives can contain organisations or businesses that are not based in Tees Valley as long as they are providing support or activity that takes place in Tees Valley / for the benefit of Tees Valley.

Lead Applicant

The lead applicant will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with TVCA and be responsible for managing the investment on behalf of partners.

The lead applicant must:

- Have a bank account which is not a personal bank account.
- Be working within the cultural sector and have a demonstrable trading record of at least 12 months within the culture sector.
- Run a festival that has been delivered at least once before.
- Be able to demonstrate that the primary activity of the businesses is concerned with the delivery of cultural festivals and/or events in the Tees Valley.
- If the lead applicant is an independent sector business a proportion of the investment should be ringfenced for management fees.

Eligible Expenditure

TVCA investment should provide **additionality**. TVCA investment should not be used to fund existing activity.

Investment made through this programme can be used to support the following costs:

- Staff costs - new or expansion (e.g., increased hours, from part-time to full-time) of existing roles – where roles are dedicated to collective working for project delivery.
- Contribution towards costs of existing collective members of staff to develop and deliver the project. Max 10% of total project costs.
- Management fees (if lead applicant is an independent sector business) for lead applicant to manage TVCA financial investment and reporting requirements.
- Consultancy costs.
- Skills development and training.
- Strategic programme development.
- Small capital expenditure to support majority revenue-based project (max 20% of total TVCA request).
- Costs towards development / commissioning / co-commissioning of NEW artistic work / product that will generate income back into the Tees Valley from touring/exporting outside of the Tees Valley.
- Access costs.
- Marketing and communication costs, including documentation of project activities such as photography or filmmaking.
- Research costs.
- Evaluation costs.
- Implementation of environmental / accessibility action plans.

Ineligible Expenditure

- Direct project costs for artistic activities/artistic creation (where not connected to creating new product which will generate new income streams).
- Costs that have already been incurred.
- 'Business as usual' expenditure, i.e, costs associated with existing festival delivery models.

Match Funding

Businesses must be able to demonstrate that the festivals in their current form are fully funded – this is the only 'cash match' that is required. TVCA investment must only be used to support above and beyond 'business as usual.'

Programme Management & Expectations

We will work to extend the impacts of our investment and to add value to the work of our partners by making connections with the wider resource of TVCA. We will work with you to ensure connectivity with the Marketing & Communications and Business Solutions teams and ask that you commit to providing information, copy and images to facilitate promotion of the project as necessary.

We will require successful applicants to develop a Communications & Marketing Plan outlining the objectives, key messages, tactics and KPIs you intend to use to market the project, including social media, digital marketing, and publicity. Ideally, this should include key dates and project milestones. Our Marketing & Comms team will support you with this and work with you to maximise opportunities for raising the profile of your festivals and events.

You will need to commit to working with and providing information and data to our evaluators, who are conducting a longitudinal study on the effect and impact of TVCA investment on the cultural industries sector.

A Creative Place Development Officer will be identified as your main contact. They will work to support you throughout your programme delivery and you will need to provide them with regular updates on progress of your project commensurate with size and scale of the project.



Subsidy Control

The UK subsidy control regime began on 4 January 2023. It enables public authorities, including devolved administrations and local authorities, to give subsidies that are tailored to their local needs, and that drive economic growth while minimising distortion to UK competition and protecting our international obligations. Under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 ('the Act'), Tees Valley Combined Authority is under a legal obligation to design any subsidy to ensure that it complies with the Act.

There are a series of questions within the application from that we require you to answer in order to fulfil our legal obligations under the Subsidy Control Regime. Subject to the nature of your business you may be required to complete a Minimal Financial Assistance Notification.

For more information on the UK Subsidy Control Regime please go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/subsidy-control-regime>

Step by Step Application Process

Application Process



STEP 1

Read all the guidance and supporting information to ensure your project is eligible and meets the objectives and priorities of the Festival Collectives Challenge Fund. If you have any questions, please get in touch.
Email: creativeplace@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk



STEP 2

Arrange a Visioning Workshop – you can arrange this by emailing creativeplace@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk. Meetings can take place between **17th July 2023 – 18th August 2023**.



STEP 3

At the Visioning Workshop the Creative Place team will cover the following with you;

- scoping your initial ideas/project
- aims and objectives of the project
- the make-up and management of your collective
- TVCA colleagues may make suggestions on further partnership / connections that may augment your project.



STEP 4

Submit your application using the online form by 12 noon, Wednesday 20th Sept 2023.

You can save and return to the online application form, however we advise preparing your application using the offline version of the application form which can be downloaded from the Festival Collectives web page. Once ready please upload your information to the online application form.

We will ask to you upload the following documents;

- a. Project Budget and Delivery Plan **using the template provided.**
When completing your project budget please only input expenditure and income related to delivering your Festival Collective project. We do not require you to input the full costs of festival delivery. For income, please only input income related to, or forecast as a result of delivering the Festival Collectives project. There is guidance and examples on how to complete the Methodology/Delivery Plan on the template.
- b. Your most recent audited accounts (Lead Applicant only)
- c. An income and expenditure breakdown for each festival business that will be delivered within your collective that shows two previous years of festival delivery, (with minimum of one year if festival has only been delivered once before.) Any member of the collective which is delivering a new festival must provide a forecast budget for Y1 delivery. You can use your own template for this. Please make sure the budget clearly details income sources and provides a basic breakdown of areas of expenditure.
- d. One additional document which supports your application (optional)



STEP 5

All applications received will initially be assessed by the Creative Place team and then recommendations passed to an independent assessment panel. See assessment process below.



STEP 6

All applicants will be notified by the published deadline - **5pm, Thursday 19th October**, by email as to the outcome of the application.

How we assess applications

Officers who work in TVCA's Creative Place team will read all the applications, score your answers against how well it meets the objectives and outcomes of the programme and make recommendations which are taken to an Independent Panel.

The Independent Panel reads all the applications & Creative Place team's recommendations. The panel members consider whether they agree or not with the recommendations. They also make sure a diverse range of activity and people are being supported and the activity taking place is spread across the Tees Valley.

Sometimes the panel may ask that we go back to an applicant for more information to help them make a final decision.

TVCA may also ask Tees Valley Local Authority partners in Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton on Tees whether our proposed investments align with their plans.

Successful Applications

If I am successful, what happens next?

Financial Due Diligence checks will be undertaken

This may include:

- Authenticating the personal identities of persons with significant control and carrying out financial/ fraud risk assessment.
- Carrying out a general risk assessment of the organisation using Experian and Companies House records.
- Carrying out a financial viability assessment of each organisation using their accounts together with Experian and Companies House records.
- Carrying out a reputational risk assessment of each applicant.
- Validating grantees' bank accounts using Experian and/or CreditSafe.

We may request additional documentation in order to complete these checks such as;

- Evidence of existing bank account.
- Details of person who has control of the business including the completion of a 'fit and proper person' declaration.
- Subsidy control declaration (previously known as state aid).

- Please note that if you have previously undergone financial due diligence with TVCA, we may be able to use some of the previous checks as evidence in this process.
- Once these checks are complete TVCA will issue you with an indicative offer letter, which may contain conditions related to delivery of the project that assessors have identified.
- We will then enter into a period of negotiation with grant recipients to agree and finalise outputs, budget details etc. Following this you will be issued with a Funding Agreement.
- The Funding Agreement will state what we have agreed you will spend the money on, outputs, targets and conditions we have set and how much money you receive and when.
- Money will be paid quarterly in arrears unless you have requested quarterly payments in advance within your application and this has been approved by TVCA Finance Manager (see below for further information).
- TVCA grant funding is, as a rule, issued in arrears, however we are aware that some of the businesses we support operate on a project-by-project basis without significant reserves/cash in the bank. Therefore, without advance funds delivery of the project would be difficult to cashflow.
- If you require advanced quarterly payments, there is a question on the application form for you to enter a short statement detailing your financial position and why you would need an advance in order to deliver the project. Your request will be sent to the finance department to verify and check and approve or otherwise. You will be required to supply TVCA with a quarterly forecast in advance of releasing each quarter payment and provide actuals on previous quarter delivered.
- If an advance payment is not required, please state this in your application. You will receive the grant funding quarterly in arrears.

Monitoring & Evaluation

To trigger each quarterly payment as outlined in your funding agreement, you must provide the following information and documentation.

- **Confirmation of any match funding i.e., grant/funding offer letter**

- **Quarterly report (using TVCA template):**
 - Detailing income and expenditure to date (quarterly).
 - Explaining any differences between actual and original figures.
 - Progress against milestones, targets and project outcomes to date.
 - A full transaction list of expenditure in the quarter.
 - We will sample approximately 10% of expenditure quarterly. (i.e., we will ask for evidence of some invoices being paid).
 - If in receipt of quarterly payments in advance – provide a forecast on the next quarter.

- **Final Report and Evaluation using TVCA Evaluation Toolkit:**
 - Detailing actual income and expenditure.
 - Narrative explaining any differences between actual and original figures.
 - Narrative on final outcomes against original targets, including:
 - Evidence of outcomes, for example, increased ticket sales, sponsorship achieved, audience development plan.
 - Case studies, marketing material, photographs, participant quotes etc.
 - Evaluation Report using TVCA Evaluation Toolkit.
 - Final exit strategy, sustainability or legacy plan.

- **Successful applications must work with the external evaluator to provide data as requested and be available for interview and/or provide a case study.**

- **Previous years audited accounts to be provided once available (annually for multiple year projects).**

All those who receive TVCA investment must

- Ensure that all records, including financial records, relating to the Project are accurate and up to date. You must keep these records for at least seven years after the Project has finished.
- Give us, or any person nominated by us, access to all records relating to the Project or other projects funded by us upon demand within 14 days, including (but not limited to) accounts and any other financial records, VAT and any other tax records. We can ask for access to these records for up to seven years after the Project has finished.
- Where requested, provide us with clear and accurate accounts that cover the period of the Project. These accounts must follow any relevant legal requirements for accounts, audit or examination of accounts, annual reports or annual returns and must clearly show income and expenditure. We may ask for proof of expenditure.

Support with your application

We encourage you to read all the guidance and supporting information. However, if you have any accessibility needs or further questions not covered in the supporting information please email: creativeplace@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk and your enquiry will be directed to the appropriate team member.

If you are not eligible there may be other forms of support via Tees Valley Business Growth Support. For more information, [click here](#). We would also recommend signing up to the Creative Place Newsletter [here](#) to receive the latest news, networking events and funding opportunities from TVCA, and other regional and national bodies.

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