



REVISED
EDITION

the unsigned guide

THE UNSIGNED GUIDE'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MUSIC FUNDING

Help
Musicians



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



bpi
PROMOTING
BRITISH
MUSIC



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The National Lottery®
through Creative Scotland



HM Government



PRS
Foundation

YOUTH
MUSIC

Take it
away

Musicians'
Union
mu

www.theunsignedguide.com

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About **The Unsigned Guide**

INTRO

Welcome to The Unsigned Guide's Essential Guide to Music Funding, a booklet we have compiled in the hope of making you, the emerging artist, fully aware of the funding opportunities available to you in order to develop and progress your blossoming career.

Here at The Unsigned Guide, we are regularly on the receiving end of enquiries from bands and musicians wanting to make a living from their craft; asking how they can be supported financially, what they need to do to get signed by a record label, or what other artists do to make ends meet.

With many artists still largely unaware of the music funding opportunities out there, we decided to create this guide as a free source of information summarising the options available. Now, refreshed and revised for

the third time, we are pleased to welcome contributions to the Essential Guide to Music Funding from Arts Council England, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Creative Scotland, PRS Foundation, Help Musicians UK, Musicians' Union, BPI, Youth Music and Take It Away. All of these organisations have taken the time to present straightforward details of what they can offer grassroots musicians in terms of funding, support and development, and we've gathered it all together in one place for easy reference.

Of course, the pandemic has also raised many challenges for artists and created obstacles when it comes to earning money from playing live. Most of the organisations featured in this guide have set-up their own emergency funds to support musicians affected by the pandemic. As these grants and funds are changing regularly in response to the needs of musicians, they are not covered in this guide and we urge you to go directly to the websites of the organisations featured to ensure you are observing the most up to date information.

Arts and music funding never has been, and never will be, handed out without the proven demonstration of an idea worth evolving and real passion & commitment to that idea. However, with the fundamental details of the options available to you as a music maker, here at your fingertips, you are now in an informed position to consider how you conduct your musical projects, how they could possibly be adapted to obtain funding, or it may spark fresh notions as to what direction your music career could take.

Although record labels can still provide financial investment in new music in the UK, the music model has transformed drastically

over the years and the days of awarding large advances to emerging acts are a thing of the past. Therefore, it is a good idea for any emerging band or artist to look beyond the record companies and see what other outlets can help them fund the marketing and release of their music.

Whilst we have tried to gather together as much music funding information as possible, there are also other organisations providing ongoing funding programmes, as well as one-off, ad hoc schemes and initiatives that crop up, so other organisations and websites to keep an eye on for details or events would be [Scottish Music Centre](#), [Featured Artists Coalition](#), [DCMS](#), [Arts Council Of Wales](#), and [Generator](#). On a more regional basis, members of The Unsigned Guide will be able to refer to the Music & Business Advice section of our directory to locate charities, projects and organisations based near you who may offer grants and other opportunities specifically to local musicians. Whilst this booklet is focused on what is available on a national level, there may be opportunities in your area that you can tap into so take the time to investigate a little.

An alternative route to consider for smaller projects is crowdfunding or fan funding, and platforms such as [Patreon](#), [Crowdfunder](#) and [Kickstarter](#) have been used by many artists to help create and release new material. For those launching their own label, promotion company or other music business, government-backed loans such as [Transmit Start-Ups](#) can be a great option.

We extend our thanks in providing the information essential to putting this guide together to: Chris Tams at BPI, Liam McMahon at PRS Foundation, Ashley Egan at Arts Council England, Maddy Radcliff at Musicians' Union, Owen Ralph at Help Musicians UK, Matthew Hendry at Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Domenica Simpson at Youth Music, Bernard Regan & Shannon Twiddy at Creative Scotland, and Lorna Jones at Take It Away.

**HELP MUSICIANS:
PROVIDING A
LIFETIME OF
SUPPORT WHEN IT'S
NEEDED MOST**



**Help
Musicians**

Help Musicians is a charity that loves music and for 100 years has been working hard to make a meaningful difference to the lives of musicians across the UK. We want to create a world where musicians thrive.

• Help
• Musicians



A musician's life can be precarious with ups and downs throughout a career. Opportunities must be hard-won, whilst challenges come along all too easily, with unsteady income and physical and mental health concerns common issues to navigate. In addition, training can take many years and, along with investing in instruments and other equipment, puts up financial barriers to creative progression. Help Musicians offers a broad range of help to support music creators in times of crisis and opportunity - ensuring musicians across the UK can achieve their creative potential and sustain a career in music. Love Music: Help Musicians

YOUR MUSIC MATTERS

We know that creativity can strike at any time, and that music development, release plans and co-creating take months of meticulous planning. Every musician is on a different schedule and no two paths are the same.

This is why our financial support is available all year round, whenever you need it. No time restrictions, no deadlines. Whether you're creating and releasing music or looking to develop your skills, apply when you're ready and receive a decision within 10 weeks. [Get started.](#)

RECORDING AND RELEASING MUSIC

Musicians benefit most from support which enables them to focus on three key areas of their career: their creative portfolio, their business development and their health and wellbeing. Alongside financial support of up to £3,000 towards recording and releasing music, through this strand of support you will benefit from one-to-one advice sessions from professionals in the music industry, as well as a health consultation from a specialist to talk through and address any issues.

MOBO HELP MUSICIANS FUND

If you're looking to take your career to the next level, the MOBO Help Musicians Fund can provide financial support of up to £3,000 to help you create music, develop your business skills and drive your career forward. The MOBO Help Musicians Fund exists to facilitate these opportunities for musicians making Hip Hop, Grime, R&B, Soul, music of African origin, Reggae, Jazz and Gospel.

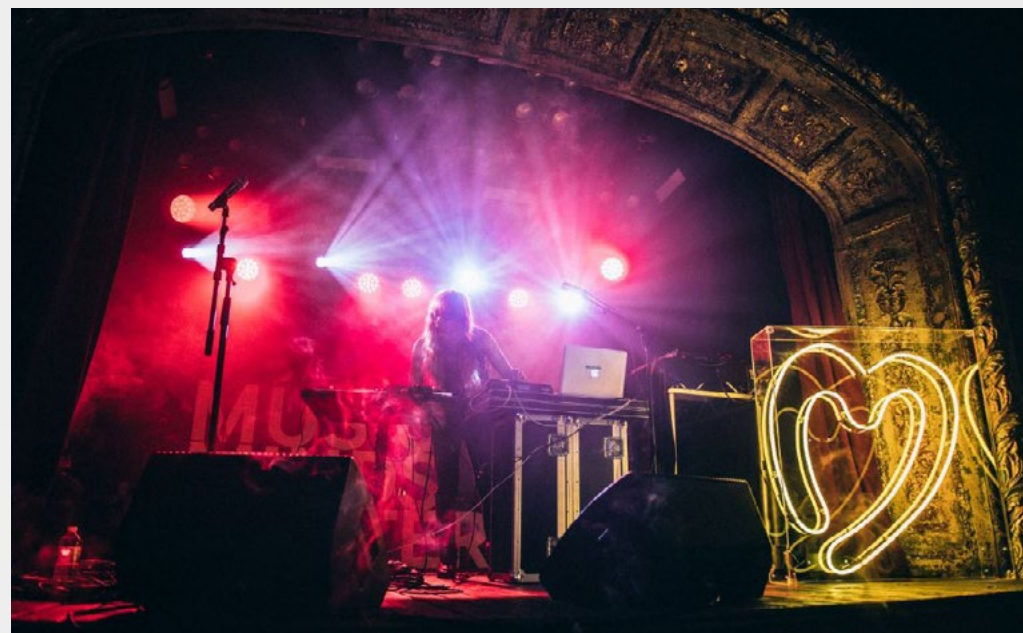
DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

Taking time to learn new skills, hone your craft or work with peers and mentors to grow and develop as a creator can be hugely beneficial at any stage of your career.

This strand of support can provide up to £1,500 to help you take advantage of opportunities that enhance your skills or artistic practice, from virtual conferences or courses to one-to-one coaching or mentorship.

MUSIC-LED CREATIVE COLLABORATION

Collaboration between musicians and creatives such as lighting designers, choreographers and visual artists can make music even more powerful. Musicians can apply for up to £5,000 to undertake a UK-based collaboration between themselves and another non-music artists, for example storytellers, lighting designers, choreographers, technologists, scientists, gaming designers, theatre directors, visual artists etc, creating tangible results such as a body of work created for an upcoming recording or a new performance.



PETER WHITTINGHAM JAZZ AWARD

The Peter Whittingham Jazz Award has been supporting early career jazz musicians for over 30 years. It supports exciting emerging jazz musicians with £5,000 towards their music and career plans.

The Award has become an influential accreditation recognised across the scene and has previously supported the likes of: Xhosa Cole, Soweto Kinch, Errollyn Wallen MBE, Dave O'Higgins, Gwilym Simcock, Roller Trio and more.

YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

We know how a career in music comes with a great deal of physical strain, and how devastating an effect physical health problems can have on your ability to do your job.

Whatever you're struggling with – whether it's a performance-related injury, long-term illness, disability, or coping with retirement, we are here to keep you going.

Find out how we can support you at helpmusicians.org.uk/health-welfare

YOUR HEARING MATTERS

Noise-induced hearing loss is 100% irreversible but 100% preventable.

For a small one-off payment you can take action to prevent hearing loss with an audiological assessment and ear check-up from a specialist in musicians' hearing, one set of custom-made, ACS Pro Series plugs, and expert advice on referral routes and next steps to manage any problems. Get started at hearformusicians.org.uk.

YOUR MIND MATTERS

A career in music should not come at the expense of your wellbeing. However, there may well be times when the highs and lows of performing, financial insecurity and anti-social working hours feel difficult to handle.

If you find yourself in need of support with your mental health, call our 24/7 support line, Music Minds Matter. It doesn't have to be a crisis, or even about music. We're here to listen, support and help at any time. Call **0808 802 8008** or visit www.musicmindsmatter.org.uk.

“I raised my profile in a way which I wouldn't have been able to do otherwise. That's going to be invaluable to me for the rest of my career.”

Rhumba Club

Synth-Pop Creator & Producer | Supported to create & release music



ALL ABOUT ARTS COUNCIL NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT GRANTS



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. They want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences. For musicians (or those working on music-based projects) looking for support, the open access Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants scheme and Developing Your Creative Practice fund are both good places to start. However, do check the website as targeted funds specifically aimed at musicians are sometimes also available.



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



ARTS COUNCIL NATIONAL LOTTERY PROJECT GRANTS

Individual musicians, musical organisations and others who use music in their work can apply for Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants. Grants are awarded for activities carried out over a set period which:

- engage people in England in arts activities
- help artists and arts organisations in England carry out their work

HOW MUCH CAN I APPLY FOR?

Grants range from £1,000 to £100,000 and in special circumstances they will award larger grants for more major projects. Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants is a continuous funding programme so you can apply at any time. There are no deadlines but you need to allow enough time between when you apply and when your project starts.

For awards up to £30,000, the Arts Council will take up to 8 weeks to process applications and for applications over £30,000, 12 weeks. Find out more about the types of activity they fund in their How to Apply guidance documents and visit www.artscouncil.org.uk/projectgrants.

DEVELOPING YOUR CREATIVE PRACTICE

Individual musicians and others who use music in their work can apply for Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) which funds individual practitioners to take their practice to the next stage, through things such as: research, time to create new work, travel, training, developing ideas, networking or mentoring. The fund can support work related to the Arts Council's supported artforms and disciplines and practitioners who live in England and have at least one years' creative practice experience outside a formal education context. Find out more about the types of activity they fund

through DYCP and when the next round is open by visiting www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-your-creative-practice/dycp-how-apply.

CASE STUDY – RIZZLE KICKS/ AUDIOACTIVE HIP HOP FOUNDATION

Arts Council funding has enabled many creative music projects to flourish. AudioActive is a pioneering charity working to nurture the talent and potential of children and young people. Jordan Stephens and Harley Alexander-Sule (aka Rizzle Kicks) took part in AudioActive's flagship project Hip Hop Foundation, which was supported by open-access funding programme Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants.

Rizzle Kicks' involvement in the Hip Hop Foundation was a major turning point in their artistic careers, offering them the opportunity to gain major exposure for their work, including performing live to thousands at Brighton Hip Hop Festival 2006 and 2007, with the likes of Blak Twang and Soweto Kinch.

Today, Rizzle Kicks are playing sell out tours and recording a new album and have said of their early support from AudioActive: *"AudioActive did us a lot of good and without them we may not have got here!"* Rizzle Kicks

See more news and case studies about Arts Council investment here: www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/.

“AudioActive did us a lot of good and without them we may not have got here!”

Rizzle Kicks

ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND — FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



LOTTERY FUNDED

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the funding and development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. Our investment provides the main support for artists and arts organisations through a range of funding opportunities. We distribute public money and National Lottery funds to people and organisations to develop and deliver arts programmes across all of society.



LOTTERY FUNDED



Singer Songwriter, **ROE**

Our Arts Officers offer specialist guidance on funding and project development to artists working across the spectrum of arts activities.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland provides support for individual musicians and musical organisations through a number of funding schemes, which open for application at various times during the year. Please consult the website for details.
www.artscouncil-ni.org

Alternative Hip Hop Artist,
Jordan Adetunji



GRANTS FOR MUSICIANS

Musicians, singers, song-writers and composers can apply to the Support for the Individual Artist Programme (SIAP) for funding support, providing they have made a contribution to artistic activities in Northern Ireland for a minimum period of one year within the last five years. The programme opens once a year, generally in July/August. SIAP contains a number of individual funding schemes, including:

- General Arts
- Artists Career Enhancement
- Major Individual Artist
- Artists International Development
- Self-arranged residencies
- Bursaries to attend WOMEX and the Folk Alliance
- Travel awards are available on a 'rolling' basis.

Targeted opportunities for musicians may arise during the year, so please check the website.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSICIANS

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland works with other funding partners and invests in a range of organisations to provide development support and performing opportunities for individual musicians. These organisations provide a support network for musicians of all abilities and for established as well as up-and-coming talent performing or writing in any musical genre.

For further details, please contact the Arts Council at info@artscouncil-ni.org.

CREATIVE SCOTLAND – SUPPORTING MUSIC IN SCOTLAND



LOTTERY FUNDED

Music is a vital part of the lives of everyone in Scotland. As we all adapt to living in a new way brought on by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognise the importance of music more than ever – it brings joy to our lives, offers the opportunity to inspire, and sparks collaboration no matter how far apart we might be.

Creative Scotland supports individual musicians and bands, as well as music development projects across the country, from urban centres to rural communities, from domestic bases to international spotlights. We distribute funding from the Scottish Government and The National Lottery to help people and organisations bring their ideas to life.





Credit: Sistema Scotland

YOUTH MUSIC INITIATIVE FUNDING



Funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Creative Scotland, the Youth Music Initiative support high-quality music-making activity for young people aged 0-25 years. Through YMI, we aim to help young people access quality music provision and to achieve their potential in or through music-making. The fund also supports the development of the youth music sector in Scotland.

Examples of YMI-supported projects which are free to those taking part:

- **The Sound Lab - Amplify**
Based in and around Glasgow since 2003, The Sound Lab are a grass-roots, volunteer-run charity who provide creative opportunities to communities across the city. YMI funds support a programme of instrumental tuition, song-writing and music industry events for children and young people ages 5-25. Project activities are carefully designed for and targeted to care-experienced young people, young people from an unaccompanied, refugee or asylum seeking background, and children with disabilities. Find out [more](#).



Credit: Euan Robertson

- **Tinderbox Collective - Online Music School**
From youth work to award-winning productions, Tinderbox continue to build a vibrant and eclectic community of young musicians and artists in Scotland. Their pioneering online music school is open to children and young people aged 10-25, from complete beginners to intermediate level ability. As well as delivering small group lessons on a range of different instruments, singing and song-writing, there is a facilitated space where participants can hang out, share music, and perform songs to each other. Find out [more](#).
- **Hit the Road**
Hit the Road is a touring project for 14-19 year old aspiring performers who are at an early stage in their careers. Run by the Scottish Music Centre, it presents genre themed tours of Scotland throughout the year giving young people the opportunity to experience life on the road. Participants are also invited to workshops with industry professionals covering all aspects of the reality of touring, while there are also training opportunities for young people interested in support roles such as sound engineering and stage technician work. Find out more, and how to apply at [hittheroad.org.uk](#)

- Musicplus+

Musicplus+ is a mentoring scheme offering participants one to one experience with music industry professionals who will provide guidance, encouragement, and access to skills and knowledge across a range music industry careers, including performance, music production, music business management and DJ mentoring. For more details go to musicplus.org.uk.

FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASING

Creative Scotland is committed to helping domestic talent access global opportunities. We work toward this through a series of collaborations with high-profile partner organisations. In recent years, we have invested in a dedicated Scottish presence at the UK's biggest music showcasing event The Great Escape, exposing acts to industry delegates from all over the world. Our partnership with the PRS Foundation's International Showcasing Fund, meanwhile, has seen us send numerous Scotland-based acts of all genres to key festivals and expos across the world, including Eurosonic, SXSW and MIDEM. Check out the [PRS Foundation website](#) for more information on how to apply for funding for international showcasing.

OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS SUPPORTED BY CREATIVE SCOTLAND:

OPEN FUND FOR INDIVIDUALS

Creative Scotland's Open Fund for Individuals is a rolling fund that can support a wide range of project activity across all art forms. Open to freelance and self-employed artists and creative practitioners based in Scotland, it supports activity lasting a maximum of two years. Successful music applicants have previously used the fund to support costs related to recording new work, video production costs, touring, marketing, distribution and professional development among other things. Go to www.creativescotland.com/funding/funding-programmes/open-fund/open-fund-for-individuals for details on how to apply.

NURTURING TALENT FUND

Funded by Creative Scotland, this small grants fund is open to anyone aged 11 – 25 who is looking for support with a creative or artistic idea. The fund will reopen in 2022 and for more details sign up to the [YMI newsletter](#).

CROWDFUNDING

Creative Scotland commissioned creative consultancy Paved With Gold to produce The Next Generation of Creative Crowdfunding, an easy-to-read overview of how crowdfunding can help support

creative projects and profiling the best platforms for each art form. On the back of this, a crowdfunding pilot programme was launched, offering mentoring and match-funding for those looking to embark on a crowdfunding campaign.

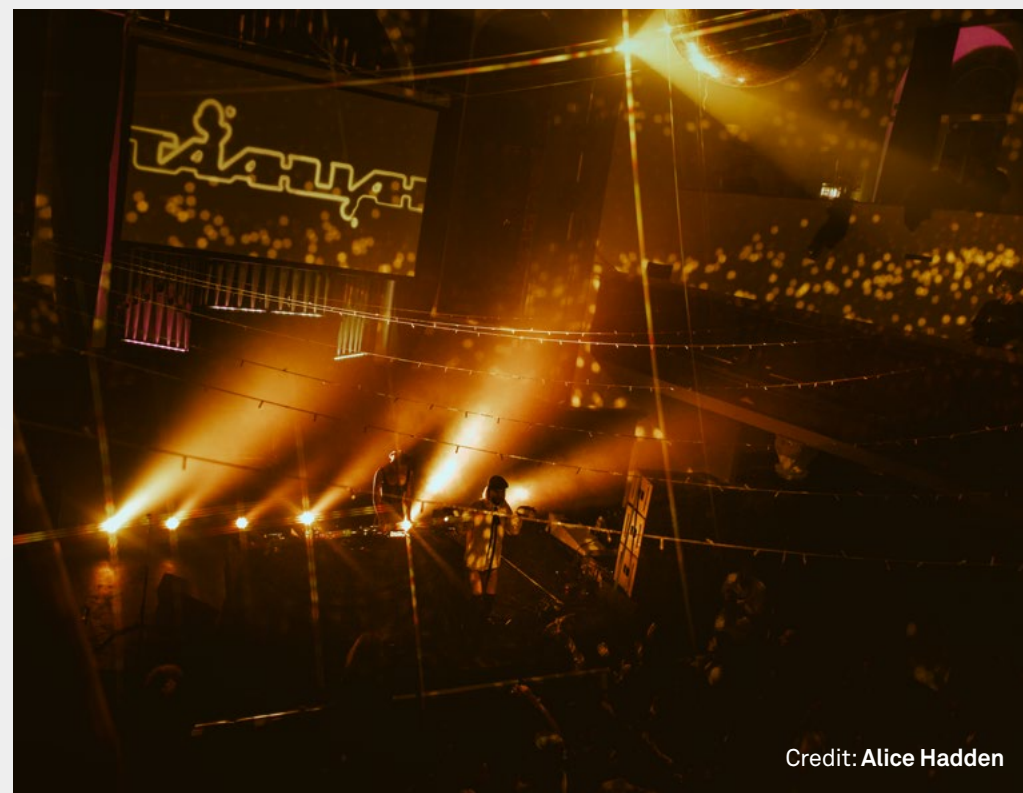
The programme was expanded, in partnership with Crowdfunder UK, and since then two further match funding competitions have been delivered with a third planned for January 2022. The Crowdmatch competition will support a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations in Scotland to run successful crowdfunding campaigns, with some match funding from Creative Scotland to help them along the way. So far eleven music projects have received match funding for new album recordings and releases. The Crowdfunding Creativity hub page hosted on the Crowdfunder website provides access to training resources and examples of successful crowdfunding campaigns. [Find out more.](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

Artistic activity thrives within Scotland, beyond the work which Creative Scotland directly supports. Opportunities (opportunities.creativescotland.com) is a busy online bulletin board containing a wide range of upcoming opportunities, funding deadlines, development programmes, workshops, training and more. Sign up for free weekly updates of relevant opportunities.

MADE IN SCOTLAND

Creative Scotland partner with the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, the



Credit: Alice Hadden

Federation of Scottish Theatre and the Scottish Music Centre for this programme. Made in Scotland aims to raise the international profile of Scottish music, theatre and dance artists through the promotion of work at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe each year. Through grant funding, artists are supported to present new or existing artistically ambitious work with strong onward potential. Go to [Made in Scotland Funding](#) for further details.

PRS FOUNDATION POWER UP

Creative Scotland are partners in this initiative which supports Black music creators, industry professionals and executives. Through the Power Up Participant Programme each year 40 Black creators and professionals are supported through grants of up to £15k to break down barriers, elevate their careers and support their progression. For more information, go to the [PRS Foundation website](#).

OTHER KEY ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITY FOR MUSIC IN SCOTLAND

CELTIC CONNECTIONS

Celtic Connections is Glasgow's annual folk, roots and world music festival celebrating connections to culture across the globe. Between January – February, the festival hosts over 2,000 musicians for concerts, ceilidhs, talks, exhibitions, workshops and events.

OFF THE RECORD

Founded by Wide Events, Off The Record is a conference for young musicians and those who want to work in the industry. It is open to anyone aged 16-25 and provides participants with music business knowledge on releasing music, organising gigs, collection societies, photography and promotion. The conference hosts various workshops and sessions, featuring young industry professionals, developing them as speakers and moderators for other events.

RESONATE

Resonate is an annual music industry conference focusing on industry training, business development, accessibility and collaboration. Directed by the team at 23rd Precinct, Resonate is an open platform for music practitioners in Scotland and beyond to come together, discuss challenges and opportunities. The conference hosts an array of panels, workshops,



Credit: Alice Hadden

demonstrations, round tables and one to one sessions.

SMIA

The Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA) is a trade body which fosters, promotes and serves the interests of Scotland's music industry. Their membership encompasses individuals and organisations working across all sectors

of Scotland's music industry, including artist managers, promoters, record labels, studios, artists, distributors and more. SMIA strengthens and advocates for Scotland's music industry through a variety of projects, including training events, workshops, masterclasses, sector networking, and the SAY Award, Scotland's national music prize.

SCOTTISH MUSIC CENTRE

The Scottish Music Centre is a key player in encouraging talent both locally and internationally through programmes, training sessions and a range of services, and is central in promoting Scotland's vibrant music culture. The Centre is also an excellent music resource and home to a collection of over 30,000 items including rare scores and recordings.

SWIM – SCOTTISH WOMEN IN MUSIC

SWIM is a collection of female music creators and industry professionals, based in Scotland, their membership is comprised of those working in all areas and genres of music, who are committed to achieving a level playing field for women. They exist to be a network for their members, educate and inform on women's abilities across the music industry and, advocate for increased visibility of women in music.

SCOTLAND ON TOUR

Scotland on Tour is a Scottish Government run initiative that supports the creation of new and additional concerts across Scotland in 2022 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Open to musicians, bands, artists and venues, this initiative will provide communities across Scotland with world class performances, contributing to more sustainable concert delivery and providing opportunities for professional musicians to generate new income.

SCOTTISH ALTERNATIVE MUSIC AWARDS (SAMA)

The Scottish Alternative Music Awards (SAMA) recognises the best new Scottish music, shining a spotlight across an eclectic range of contemporary music genres. Throughout the year, SAMA host a range of events including showcases at Liverpool Sound City, HANG (Scotland's first ever Hip Hop and Grime Networking event), and their own music festival: The SAMA's Paisley Takeover. SAMA are also part of global network Keychange, working towards gender equality in the music industry.

THE SAY AWARD

The Scottish Album of the Year Award (SAY) is Scotland's national music prize, celebrating Scottish music, and the cultural impact and contribution of outstanding Scottish albums. As of the 2021 awards, there has been an introduction of two new awards to accompany the main album of the year, these new awards include the Modern Scottish Classic Award and the Sound of Young Scotland Award.

WIDE DAYS / WIDE EVENTS

Wide Days is an annual convention hosted by Wide Events in Edinburgh every April. It combines a conference programme, curated showcase of emerging talent and networking opportunities for Scottish music businesses and artists to connect with the international industry. It has served as a springboard for numerous acts including Honeyblood, C Duncan, Be Charlotte, Kathryn Joseph, Swim School and Fatherson.

Wide Events has its origins in the Born To Be Wide evenings which was launched in 2004 as a social night for people in the Edinburgh music scene. Throughout the year the company stages music business seminars, showcases the Off The Record youth events (see below), as well as bespoke panels for other organisations.

XPONORTH

XpoNorth is Scotland's leading creative industries festival. Taking place every year in Inverness, the festival covers the breadth of the creative industries, including music. This is a unique event in the UK's cultural calendar and offers a packed programme of panels and workshops. In addition, the festival includes networking events, free music showcases and a short film programme.



Credit: Drew Farrell

PPL MOMENTUM MUSIC FUND, WOMEN MAKE MUSIC & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY PRS FOUNDATION



PRS
Foundation

PRS Foundation was set up as an independent charity in 2000, and is supported through an annual donation from PRS for Music. We support the performance and creation of music of any genre by UK based music creators. Since 2000, we've supported over 8,100 projects to the tune of over £41m. Our funding deadlines are publicised on our website, through our newsletter and social media. Applications are completed online and are assessed by specialists from our UK-wide network of advisors.



PRS
Foundation

OUR FUNDING

PPL Momentum Music Fund is run by PRS Foundation in partnership with PPL, Creative Wales, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Invest Northern Ireland and Spotify offering grants of £5-£15k for artists and bands based in the UK to break through to the next level of their career. Funding deadlines are 4 times a year.

You are eligible if you:

- are writing, recording and performing music in the commercial genres
- are working with a team, i.e. a manager, booking agent, PR, plugger, indie label, lawyer
- have evidence of existing track record, i.e. club level shows, support tour, press, radio play, blog buzz

The International Showcase Fund supports acts to showcase at international music industry events such as SXSW, Reeperbahn Festival, Eurosonic and NH7. Apply for support at least 3 months before the industry event will take place.

You are eligible if you have:

- an invitation to showcase at an international industry conference
- evidence of existing track record, i.e. club level shows, support tour, press, radio play, blog buzz
- genuine interest in your music/act from outside of the UK, i.e. from labels, agents, promoters, sync agencies

Women Make Music supports women and gender minority music creators to increase their profile as well as stimulate new collaborations. Women Make Music has 2 deadlines a year.

You are eligible if you:

- are a woman or gender minority artist/composer or music creator
- have been active/working in music for at least 18 months
- have a project that would
 - support the creation, performance and promotion of outstanding new music in any genre
 - enable the UK's most talented music creators to realise their potential
 - inspire audiences

Our Open Funding offers grants to Organisations (i.e. promoters, large performance groups, talent development organisations, venues and curators) and Music Creators (i.e. songwriters, composers, artists, bands and performers who are writing their own music or commissioning others). Deadlines are two times a year.

You are eligible if you have:

- been active/working in music for at least 18 months
- a project that would
 - support the creation, performance and promotion of outstanding new music in any genre
 - enable the UK's most talented music creators to realise their potential
 - inspire audiences

We also work in partnership with other organisations, funders and foundations to provide musician residencies, professional development schemes and new music commissioning programmes, including:

- BBC Music Introducing and PRS Foundation Showcases
- POWER UP
- New Music Biennial
- Take Five (in partnership with Serious)
- Musicians In Residence (international opportunity in partnership with British Council)
- Steve Reid Innovation Award
- Beyond Borders
- ReBalance (in partnership with Festival Republic)

“Since 2000, we’ve supported over 8,100 projects to the tune of over £41m.”



WHAT THE MUSIC EXPORT GROWTH SCHEME CAN OFFER YOU



The Music Export Growth Scheme was created to help support music marketing activity in overseas territories. It is funded by the Department for International Trade (DIT), the Government organisation that supports UK business overseas, and The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and run by BPI, which represents British recorded music businesses.



The scheme (launched at the end of 2013) has now had 20 rounds of funding and these guidelines are to help you with your application and steer you in the right direction. The important thing is to put a solid business case forward including where we would see a return on investment for the grant being requested. Each case will be looked at by the Selection Board and they will decide if the application is

right for funding or not. We will then let you know their decision. If they don't feel an application is appropriate, we will try and give some guidance on where you can improve and services you can use to assist you. For further information on the Scheme, guidelines for application and deadlines please go to BPI's [website](#)

We've put together ten questions that are commonly asked about the Scheme and tried to answer them as clearly and precisely as possible.

Q1. CAN I APPLY FOR THE SCHEME?

A. You are eligible to apply if you are a UK-based music company with a turnover of less than €50 million and fewer than 250 employees, as per the definition of an SME (Small to Medium Enterprise).

Q2. WHAT IS THE MUSIC EXPORT GROWTH SCHEME FOR EXACTLY?

A. The Scheme has been set up to support artists, bands, DJs, performers, projects, etc. that have had a degree of success in the UK and are ready to try and break into an overseas market.

If you want funding for a service rather than an act, please get in touch with your local DIT advisor who should be able to give you more advice on any opportunities that are available to you. To find details of your local DIT office please visit <https://www.contactus.trade.gov.uk/office-finder>

Q3. CAN I APPLY FOR MORE THAN ONE OF MY ARTISTS?

A. Yes, though you must apply for one artist or project on each application. A company can be awarded no more than two grants in any year of funding so you may wish to restrict your applications accordingly.

Q4. HOW MUCH CAN I GET?

A. You can apply for between £5,000 and £50,000 in your application. The grant awarded can cover up to 60% of your eligible costs so companies must part-fund at least 40% of the proposed activity from their own resources, demonstrating their commitment to the plan. It is not a Dragons Den style all-or-nothing request; if the Selection Board feel it is a worthy project but the applicant has overestimated their costs or they have a number of applications that are more than the allocated funds for each round they may offer a grant at a reduced level.

“The important thing is to put a solid business case forward including where we would see a return on investment for the grant being requested.”

Q5. WHAT IS AN ELIGIBLE COST?

A. That's marketing costs, tour support, venue costs, international travel, visa costs, international promotion costs including hire of session musicians/singers etc. for performances. Non eligible costs are your normal day to day running costs, salaries, UK travel not related to the funded activity and items unrelated to the market you are applying for.

Q6. WHEN WILL I FIND OUT IF I'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL OR NOT?

A. If you get your application in by the deadline of each round and you are entered into a round of funding you will have a decision on whether you have been successful or not in approximately six weeks from the deadline date.

Q7. AND IF MY APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WHEN WILL I RECEIVE THE GRANT?

A. You will need to undertake your planned activity before you receive any funding. The grant will only be distributed in arrears on the presentation of invoices and receipts. If the amount requested is a large amount this may be awarded in several parts.

Q8. IS ANYTHING EXPECTED OF ME IN RETURN?

A. We need to make sure there is a return on investment so you will need to comply with any requests for information and provide updates at regular intervals detailing the impact the funding has had on your artist. We do not intend for such requests to be onerous, but we do need to evaluate the success of the scheme and the awards. BPI and DIT may also call upon you to do some marketing on behalf of the Scheme or use your company name in promotional material, case studies and press releases

Q9. WHEN DO I NEED TO APPLY BY?

A. The scheme runs regularly throughout the year so for the latest information on the next closing date for applications please visit www.bpi.co.uk/news-analysis/music-export-growth-scheme/

Q10. SO I UNDERSTAND IT ALL NOW, HOW DO I APPLY?

A. You will find the application portal on the BPI website at: www.bpi.co.uk/news-analysis/music-export-growth-scheme - please note that the application portal is only live and the link shown when a round is open. The portal is an online form to submit your application – you need to set up an account and then you can fill in the form, save and edit prior to submitting an application. Complete the application in as much detail as you can so that we have all the information that we need available to us and then submit online. You can email musicexportscheme@bpi.co.uk with any queries or questions to in relation to the Scheme.”

TAKE IT AWAY –
BECAUSE
MUSIC NEEDS
BACKING



With interest-free loans for musical instruments, equipment and software, we give music-makers the backing they need.



Whether you are a professional musician or just starting out, making music can be tough financially. The cost of instruments, equipment and private lessons mean some people never discover the joy of learning and playing music. For disabled musicians who need adapted instruments, the problems can be particularly challenging.

NATIONWIDE RETAILERS

At Take it away, we work with over 130 retail partners, Arts Council England and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland to help break down these barriers. We provide a range of subsidised and non-subsidised interest free loans to buy musical instruments, equipment and software. These are designed to make learning, playing and participating in music more affordable and open to everyone. Together with our partners, we look to enable and inspire a life-long love of music.

Our music stores can offer interest-free loans to eligible customers from as little as £100 up to £25,000. The available loan amount will depend on the store, so find your local Take it away retailer and enquire about their products.

DRIVING GROWTH AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Take it away is part of Creative United, a community interest company that drives economic growth and social impact in the arts and creative industries. As well as helping people become better musicians, we work with our retail partners to help them become stronger businesses. By investing our Arts Council grants in subsidised service charges, funding point-of-sale materials and supporting their marketing campaigns, we help our retailers secure and build their place on the High Street. And, together, we make sure music maintains and grows its place in the community.

To find your nearest Take it away retailer and the Take it away loans they offer, visit our website www.takeitaway.org.uk

Representative 0% APR

Credit subject to status and affordability. Terms and Conditions Apply. Credit is provided by Omni Capital Retail Finance Ltd authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Take it away is a Creative United initiative supported by Arts Council England and Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Creative United is a registered trademark of Creative Sector Services CIC, a Community Interest Company registered in England and Wales under number 08280539. Registered office: 10 Queen Street Place, London EC4R 1BE.



WE BELIEVE THAT
EVERY YOUNG PERSON
SHOULD HAVE THE
CHANCE TO CHANGE
THEIR LIFE THROUGH
MUSIC.



**YOUTH
MUSIC**

We believe that every young person should have the chance to change their life through music.

Yet our research shows that many can't because of who they are, where they're from or what they're going through.

Our insights, influence and investment in grassroots organisations and to young people themselves means that more 0-25-year-olds from can make, learn and earn in music.

Youth Music is a national charity funded thanks to the National Lottery via Arts Council England, players of People's Postcode Lottery and support from partners, fundraisers and donors.

ABOUT YOUTH MUSIC NEXTGEN FUND

This fund is about supporting people to take their first steps into the music industries.

You can apply to develop a project that you can run and deliver yourself. Here are some examples of ideas:

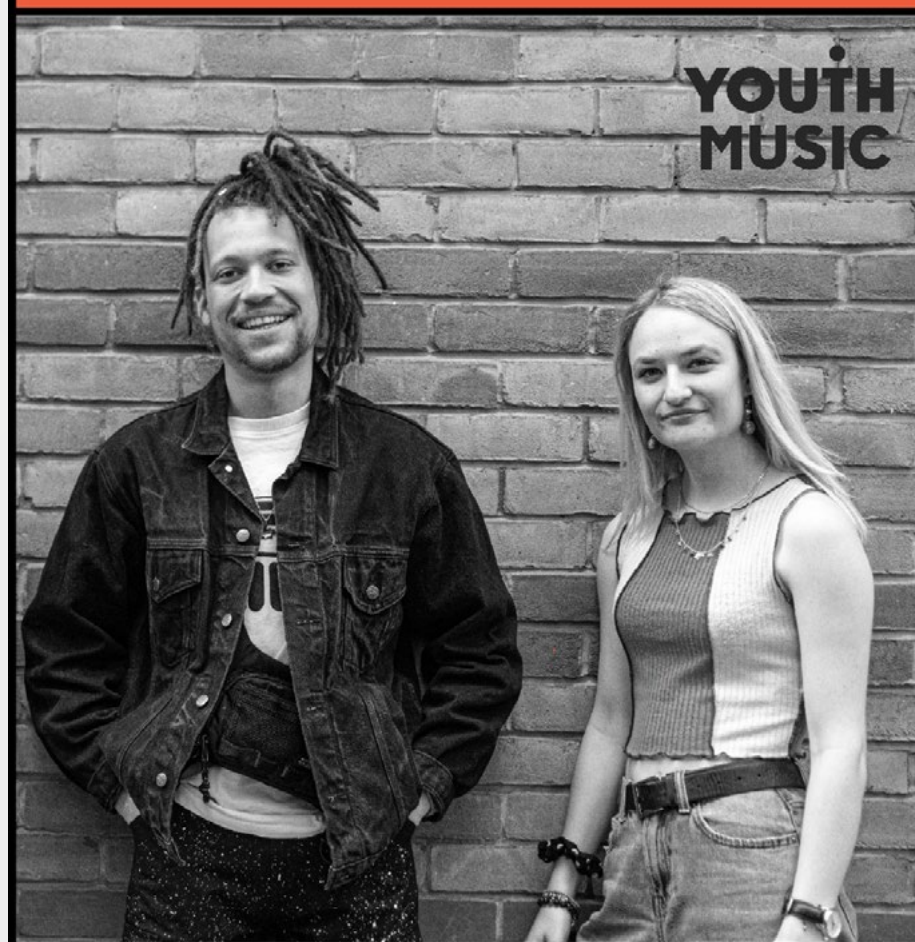
- A creative music project
- A music-based business
- A platform that supports underrepresented voices
- An event or series of events showcasing emerging artists

As well as funding time for you to pursue your idea, we can also cover costs linked to:

- Career development
- Audience development
- Equipment and Software
- Business development

YOUTH MUSIC

YOUTH MUSIC NEXTGEN FUND



GRANTS OF UP TO £2,500

All projects need to be released within a year of being awarded the funds, and ideas that aren't accessible to the general public cannot be funded. For example, it couldn't fund a training course with no project outcome.

WHO'S THE FUND FOR?

People working towards a career in the music industries, but lack key contacts, resources and insights. They might be:

- Musicians, Producers, Engineers, DJs, MCs, Rappers, Songwriters
- Managers, Promoters, A&Rs, Agents
- Activists and campaigners who are transforming the music industries

In our funding decisions, we will prioritise:

- People who do not have the financial means to invest in themselves to get their ideas started
- People that are too early stage to be funded by larger grant programmes like Arts Council England and PRS Foundation
- Those who might be discriminated against, for reasons that could include Gender, Race, Disability, location or other characteristics
- People who are creative, entrepreneurial and are multi-disciplinary - even if they don't recognise themselves as such

Youth Music's NextGen Fund is open to young people based in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

WHO IS THIS FUND NOT FOR?

If you have the financial means to deliver your project, we recommend not applying.

Signed Artists. If you are signed to a record label, publisher or management company.

People in full time employment in the music industries already. This specifically means working in the area of the industry you want to progress in.

Groups and collectives. If you are intending on working with others as part of your project that is fine, but we want this grant to primarily support you as an individual.

WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

youthmusic.org.uk/nextgen/nextgen-fund

facebook.com/youthmusiccharity

twitter.com/youthmusic

instagram.com/youthmusic_charity

youtube.com/user/youthmusicUK

tiktok.com/@youthmusic

COMPLETING A FUNDING APPLICATION

www.theMU.org

[@WeAreTheMU](https://twitter.com/WeAreTheMU)

[#BehindEveryMusician](https://twitter.com/behindeverymusician)

Musicians'
Union



The Musicians' Union is the trade union for musicians in the UK, with over 32,000 members. Be better represented.



READ THE FUNDING INFO & BRIEF

Most funding awards will require applicants to complete a comprehensive application form. Whilst these forms can appear complex and overwhelming, it helps to carefully appraise each section and map out the information that you're going to need to put an application together. Is this the right funding for your idea/project? Some funding awards have fairly strict briefs and you're unlikely to win an award if your project or proposal doesn't clearly meet the criteria. However, some organisations also offer 'open funding'

awards which invite a wider and less specific range of applications.

GIVE YOURSELF ADEQUATE TIME TO COMPLETE THE FORM

You may find that you need to write a few drafts before you get to an application that you're happy to submit.

Allow plenty of time to obtain the information you need from other people and/or organisations.

PROVIDE ONLY THE INFORMATION THAT IS REQUIRED

Answer the questions fully, but don't include superfluous data that will make the application difficult or time-consuming to assess. Many applications have strict word counts, so you may find yourself editing down the answers that you initially write, and becoming more succinct as you progress. Avoid repetition, and read your answers back against the questions to see if your responses satisfy exactly what is being asked.

Some applications request video footage in addition to or instead of written accounts and proposals.

PROOF THE APPLICATION THOROUGHLY BEFORE SUBMITTING

Check for typos, consistency and also ensure that all of the numerical entries in your budget(s) add up appropriately. Ask someone else to read the application in order to find inaccuracies or any areas that don't make sense.

BE REALISTIC IN YOUR FORECASTING

Where you are asked to provide budgets, be economic and resourceful but don't underestimate the true cost of resources or people's skills. If you're hiring musicians as part of your project, use MU rates where applicable as these are widely recognised by funding assessors.

You may also need to individually negotiate rates with artists, depending on their profile and expertise. It's a good idea to get an idea of people's fees before you submit your application.

BE MINDFUL THAT FINANCIAL EVIDENCE WILL BE REQUIRED

It is often necessary to provide receipts and/or invoices for every financial transaction undertaken as part of a funded project. Bear this in mind when obtaining quotes and costings as part of your budgeting.

BE TRUE TO YOUR WORD

You will need to deliver your project as outlined in your application. Don't write things purely for the benefit of obtaining funding, as you will be required to demonstrate that you have executed a project as promised, in terms of finance, creativity and delivery.

FUNDING SUPPORT FOR MU MEMBERS

MU members can access a support service in relation to Arts Council England (ACE) Project Grants and Developing Your Creative Practice funds. Application forms are reviewed by a funding advisor, before they're submitted to Ace, and feedback is given which allows applicants to improve their applications and increase their chance of success. See the MU [website](#) for further info.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT WE DO AT THE UNSIGNED GUIDE?

the unsigned guide

THE UNSIGNED GUIDE is a music industry directory packed with over 8,000 music contacts spanning 50 areas of the business including record labels, music publishing companies, recording studios & rehearsal rooms, venues, promoters, music blogs, radio stations, festivals, producers and loads more! Take a look at everything the directory covers here.

USED BY THOUSANDS OF BANDS AND ARTISTS

Since first publishing their music industry directory in 2003, The Unsigned Guide has become an essential resource for aspiring bands & artists, producers and managers, plus start-up record labels, new promoters and anyone else working towards a career in the music business. Find out what the bands & artists who use our service have to say.

CHEAP, FLEXIBLE ACCESS

Membership to The Unsigned Guide starts from only £5.99 a month, and you can cancel after your first month, so there are no tie-ins. See the subscription options available here.



the unsigned guide

SAVE MONEY ON MUSIC SERVICES LISTED IN THE UNSIGNED GUIDE

Take advantage of exclusive discounts and offers on everything from recording and rehearsal rates, music photography and video shoots, CD duplication and mastering to merchandise, graphic and web design for posters, or PR packages. With money-saving offers galore, you'll more than make up the value of your subscription to The Unsigned Guide so what have you got to lose!

GET YOUR MUSIC HEARD BY INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

Each month we take the 5 best tracks submitted by our members and champion them on our Spotlight blog and on our radio show on Reform Radio. As well as exposure on our blog and radio airplay, the songs featured on Spotlight every month are sent onto a select bunch of music industry professionals who guarantee to listen. Ranging from contacts at record labels, PR companies, new music blogs & magazines, radio DJs & producers, established gig promoters, managers, music publishers and sync agencies, plus festival and event organisers. [Find out more about Spotlight here.](#)

IT'S THE ULTIMATE TOOLKIT FOR ANYONE TRYING TO GET AHEAD IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

If you have any questions or queries for The Unsigned Guide, feel free to drop us a line at: info@theunsignedguide.com.