

About Seasons of Culture 26 Nature: Explore & Experience

Summary
Seasons of Culture offers one-off funding for organisations, community or voluntary groups to explore & experience creative activities in blue & green spaces. Funded by West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Council, the programme aims to help more people connect with the natural environment through arts and cultural activity in local green and blue spaces such as parks, rivers, canals, and woodlands. We are looking to support activities and trips that engage with creative activities through the themes of nature, sustainability and climate resilience in outdoor spaces. Funding can be requested for trips to nature-themed performances, exhibitions, and participatory events in green and blue spaces such as parks, riversides and nature reserves. We are particularly keen to support activities that reflect the creative and cultural diversity of Leeds. This includes activities by, with or for those with protected characteristics and those living in the most disadvantaged areas of the city.
Who can apply?
- Cultural and creative organisations registered in Leeds - An individual who is responsible for a community or voluntary group registered in Leeds (this person must also live in Leeds)
How much can be applied for per organisation/group?
- The group can apply for a one off grant of between £250 - £1,500 We do not provide 100% of the funding for any projects. A minimum of 10% cash or in-kind match is required The minimum 10% cash can be: - Grants and funding from other sources such as sponsorships, trusts and foundations or other cultural funders e.g., Arts Council England or National Lottery Heritage Fund, Leeds Community Foundation - Additional funding from Leeds City Council can only be used if funding has been agreed in writing and designated for this project, funding from the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme Grow:Revenue, Thrive, Activate or Cultural Anchors cannot be used as cash match. - Contribution from your group members towards the trip You must have confirmation of your 10% contribution (either in-kind or cash) in place when submitting your application. In kind support can be: - Staff time - Free/subsidised travel - Free tickets/ entry fees for activity
What can we use the funding for?
Funding can be requested for Tickets/ entry fees: Applicants can request up to £30 per person towards ticket or entry fees. We would need to know the number of tickets purchased and confirmation of the official ticket price must be provided. Transport: Participants are expected to use active travel such as walking, cycling, wheeling or public transport to reach the destination. This approach promotes healthier lifestyles and helps individuals build a stronger connection to their local area. Exceptions will be made where members of the group have additional needs that require alternative transport (please include this in your application). Staff Costs: Applicants can request up to £25 per person per hour. The staff member must be employed by the organisation/group and costed at their normal hourly rate Refreshments: Applicants can request up to £7 per person for refreshments Accessibility costs: Applicants may request, within their grant application, up to 30% of the total budget or £500 (whichever is lower) to support their visit. For this fund you will need to submit all receipts after the visit, please ensure you keep all receipts
When is the deadline for applications?
Applications close on Thursday 27 August @ 12pm
What if I my disability means I will struggle to use the application form?
To discuss your access needs, please email culturalgrants@leeds.gov.uk We will make whatever reasonable adjustments we can to help you to apply.

When must the activity take place?

Your Explore and Experience visit must be between Monday 19 October - Sunday 15 November 2026

We aim to notify you of the outcome of your application on Friday 10 October 2026

Please do not buy any tickets or book any transport until you have confirmation that we are funding your trip

Essential Information

- You must ensure that appropriate insurance is in place for the visit. Applicants may include the cost of this within the budget; however, coverage cannot extend beyond the duration of the event.
- If the trip involves children or vulnerable adults, you must obtain the necessary permissions for them to attend. Additionally, all staff involved must have up-to-date DBS checks.
- If your application is successful, you will be required to provide, for each person involved in the visit (including staff), anonymised demographic information (including partial postcode), statistics relating to the visit, and feedback from the group on their experience of the trip and their engagement with arts and the theme

Need Inspiration..... Places you may want to explore and experience

Leeds Inspired: **Outdoor Activities**

Leeds City Council Museums and Galleries: **Lotherton Hall, Kirkstall Abbey, and Temple Newsam**

Leeds City Council Parks: **Golden Acre Park, Middleton Park, Otley Chevin Forest Park; Pudsey Park, Roundhay Park, Tropical World**

Leeds City Council Outdoor Activity Centres: **Herd Farm, Yeadon Tarn**

Canals & Rivers Trust Activities in Leeds, Harewood House, Meanwood Urban Valley Farm, Skelton Grange Environment Centre

How will we make our decision?

- Completed applications will be assessed by a panel of Leeds City Council officers and/or external assessors
- Applications that are incomplete, ineligible, or submitted using an alternative form cannot be assessed
- Following assessment, we will balance applications to ensure that there is a spread of investment, a broad representation of the diversity of our city and a range of activity in different art forms. Balancing means that you may make a strong application but still not be successful
- It is possible that we will not invest in your request if you did not follow previous Leeds City Council funding requirements

How much funding is available?

The budget is £20,000

We anticipate that demand for funding will be higher than the funds available.

We expect to make between 20 - 30 project awards this round, out of an estimated 70 - 80 applications.

When will we make our decision?

We aim to notify you of the outcome of your application by **Friday 10 October 2026**

When will grants be issued and what are the reporting obligations?

If your application is successful, you will receive 90% of the award on receipt of a signed grant agreement and subject to you meeting any additional funding requirements that might be necessary.

All projects must contribute and adhere to all marketing and promotion in relation to this programme, this will include WYCA, LCC, Leeds400 etc

You will receive the final 10% of the grant award on completion of your trip, submission of receipts and on the return of the short project report.

What we cannot fund

- Core costs, that are not directly related to the delivery of the visit, including general running costs, which are already covered by other funding or that should be covered by your own resources
- Repeat visits or continuation of activity already being delivered – your visit must be to either a new place or participating in a new activity
- Activity that is not creative or does not involve work by artists
- Activity that is not cultural (defined as: Circus, Combined Arts, Crafts, Dance, Design, Digital Media, Festival / Carnival, Film, Literature / Poetry / Spoken Word, Live Art, Music, Photography, Theatre, Visual Art or any combination of these art forms)
- Trips for Schools, Out of School Clubs, Colleges, Universities
- Overheads relating to equipment or buildings, such as insurance, building repairs, maintenance costs and capital equipment
- Activities that provide no benefit or engagement opportunity to people in Leeds
- Individuals and organisations with a registered address outside Leeds
- Sports activity, kit or equipment
- Charity fund-raising events
- Competitions or lotteries
- Redistribution of funds as grants to other parties
- Activities that promote party political or religious views

How do I apply?

Applications close on Thursday 27 August @ 12 noon

Please submit your completed **APPLICATION FORM** and **EDI FORM** which can be found here

<https://leedscultureprogrammes.org.uk/seasons-culture-explore-experience-grant-scheme> to culturalgrants@leeds.gov.uk

How to complete the Seasons of Culture 26 Nature: Explore & Experience application form

Is your Organisation/ Community/ Voluntary Group based in Leeds?
Your organisation/ group must be based in Leeds to be eligible for this funding. Please do not continue with the application if the organisation or individual applying on behalf of the group is not based in Leeds.
Please tell us about your organisation, community/voluntary group, what you do and how often you meet
Tell us about the activities your organisation or group runs, who takes part, what a typical session looks like, and how often you meet.
Have you had any other funding from Leeds City Council in the last 12 months?
You will still be eligible to apply, we collect this information to help us learn more about the people and organisations receiving LCC funding. Please tell us how much, who from and for what activity? Examples include Leeds Cultural Investment Fund, Seasons of Culture, AD:Venture, ABCD, Youth Activities Fund, etc. alongside any other funding from Leeds City Council.
Have you had any other funding from West Yorkshire Combined Authority in the last 12 months?
You will still be eligible to apply, we collect this information to help us learn more about the people and organisations receiving WYCA funding. Please tell us how much, who from and for what activity?
Where do you want to go on your visit
This must take place in Leeds, be held in a green or blue space and include the delivery of an artistic or creative activity within the session. We are unable to fund other activities that happen outside of Leeds
Which ward in Leeds is it in
Click on the link and insert the address of your location to ensure it is in Leeds
What are you planning on doing during this visit?
This must include artistic/creative activity in nature, tell us about the session you are wanting to deliver
What type of artform will your activity fall into
Please tick one of the artforms only, if it is more than one tick combined arts
When do you want to go on your visit?
Tell us the date you would like to go in your visit, this must be between Mon 19 October - Sunday 15 November 2026, If it is before or after this period your application will be ineligible.
Who do you plan to bring on the visit?
How many people, include participants and staff do you want to go on this visit (We are particularly keen to support groups including people with protected characteristics who may not usually have the opportunity to explore and experience new environments, especially in nature.)
What is the primary make up of your participants?
Please tick only one from the list
Why do you want to go on this visit?
In two hundred words or less tell us why your group want to go on this visit, how this visit will help connect with blue or green spaces and creativity
What benefits do you expect your visit will make
In two hundred words or less please tell us what benefits this visit will make to the group
What steps are you taking to ensure accessibility for your visit / group?
In two hundred words or less please tell us what steps you are taking to ensure accessibility for your visit, group. This can include a pre visit by staff to check the location and plan how you will get there and what you will do when you get there. If you need special transport or additional staff, tell us why and include it in the budget
What are the risks involved with your visit? How will you overcome them?
In two hundred words or less please tell us what risks you have identified and how you are going to overcome them
If your application includes a trip involving children or vulnerable adults, you must have appropriate staff, volunteers, or chaperones in place who have current DBS checks.
If your application includes a trip involving children or vulnerable adults, you must have appropriate staff, volunteers, or chaperones in place who have current DBS checks, permission for the participants to attend and appropriate risk assessments in place. If not relevant please tick not applicable.
How many people will benefit from your project?
We want to know how many participants, staff, volunteer and artists are you proposing to take on the trip Only include the number of people going, if you do not have volunteers leave blank
Number of Participants per age range
Please tell us the number of participants per age range you plan to take

Explore & Experience Budget		
Income	Please tell us who is providing the contribution/money	How much £
Amount you are applying for	Put in the box, how much you are applying to us for, it must be between £250 and £1,250	
Cash contribution		
	Use these lines to list the different sources of cash funding you are contributing to the activity.	
	You must contribute at least 10% of the total project cost, either in cash or as an in-kind contribution. If your contribution is less than 10%, your application will not be eligible for funding.	
In-kind contribution		
	Use these lines to list the different in kind contribution you have to put towards	
	These can be staff time, transport, of given free tickets 9the cost to buy them), donated refreshments etc	
	You must contribute at least 10% of the total project cost, either in cash or as an in-kind contribution. If your contribution is less than 10%, your application will not be eligible for funding.	
TOTAL		

Expenditure	Please tell us what and where you want to spend the money	£
Tickets / entry fees	Applicants can request up to £30 per person towards ticket or entry fees.	
Transport	State: bus/train tickets, electric coach, bike hire	
Staff costs	If required, applicants can request up to £25 per person per hour. The staff member must be employed by organisation/group and costed at their normal hourly rate	
Refreshments	If required up to £7 per person for refreshments Please write here what you would like to spend it on	
Accessibility costs	Applicants can request up to 30% of the total budget or £500 (whichever is lower) to support their visit. This can include taxis if your group has additional requirements Please write here what if any access cost you may have	
Other	Please write here what this would be for and why	
TOTAL	Please add up all your expenditure this should match the money you have put in the income	

UK Subsidy Control

This grant will be classed as subsidy, if you are successful Leeds City Council must complete an additional financial assessment as part of the UK Subsidy Control. Please see information below, additional advice will be given if your application is successful

Leeds City Council considers most grant funding from its Cultural Investment Programme will be a subsidy as defined under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 ("the Act") and will be subject to the conditions in the Act. If your application is successful, it may be awarded under the Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) exemption of the Act; the MFA exemption permits an organisation to receive up to £315,000 total MFA funding from all sources, within any three financial year period. In this case you will be sent a declaration form to notify us of any previous MFA funding you have received so far in the current financial year and the preceding two financial years, and to confirm that the proposed grant from Leeds City Council will not take you over your £315,000 MFA limit. If the grant would take you over the MFA limit, then Leeds City Council will have to carry out a further assessment of your eligibility under the Act to receive this funding.

Applications close on Thursday 27 August @ 12 noon

Please submit your completed **APPLICATION FORM** and **EDI FORM** which can be found [here](https://leedscultureprogrammes.org.uk/seasons-culture-explore-experience-grant-scheme)

<https://leedscultureprogrammes.org.uk/seasons-culture-explore-experience-grant-scheme> to culturalgrants@leeds.gov.uk