Unlocked

Commissioning Brief

As the UK opens up after 18 months of Covid-19, Coventry’s brightest visual, musical and performing arts talents are invited to pitch ideas for short-form film projects, for broadcast on Sky Arts, as part of the UK City of Culture year.

We are asking artists to submit ideas that respond to the question:

**Unlocked: What does it mean to be free?**

Ten artists or artist-led organisations will be commissioned and mentored to create new, short films for Sky Arts through a unique partnership between the broadcaster, Coventry City of Culture Trust, Shoot Festival and The Space, with funding from Arts Council England.

## **Key points**

* Applicants must be currently living, working or studying in Coventry or the wider CV postcode, or have another significant connection to the area
* You can apply for up to £7,500 ex. VAT to create a short-form film that responds imaginatively to the provocation:

***Unlocked: What does it mean to be free?***

* Your work must have a duration of between 5 and 10 minutes
* You can **apply online here:**[**https://bit.ly/coventryunlocked**](https://bit.ly/coventryunlocked)
* The deadline for applications is **5pm on Monday 11 October 2021**
* We can provide support to access, complete or submit the application form
* If you are commissioned, we will provide bespoke production support to help you produce your project, including support with finding partners to help you make your film, delivery of content to Sky Arts and advice about broadcast and online rights
* We will let applicants know if they have been successful by 29 October 2021
* Projects must be delivered before the end of March 2022 ready for broadcast by Sky Arts in April and May as part of the City of Culture year.

Please read the sections below for more detail.

## **Application process**

**Q. Who can apply?**

Applicants must be creatives, artists or artist-led organisations where the lead individual(s) either:

* Live, work or study in Coventry or the wider CV postcode, or
* Have another significant connection to the area

A “significant connection to the area” might be that you were born there or spent a significant or impactful part of your life in the region. You will have the opportunity to describe your connection to Coventry on the application form.

**We want to support a range of artists who represent the diverse perspectives of Coventry: including different communities. We are open to applications from all ages, genders, neuro diverse, D/deaf and disabled artists, artists from all faiths and backgrounds.**

We welcome collaboration and understand applicants may be working in partnership with other individuals, groups or organisations, e.g. cultural venues or charities.

This is an opportunity aimed at creatives in the city whose work has not been broadcast before and we welcome collaboration and partnership working. Applications can include collaborators who are not based in the Coventry area. However, projects must be led by an artist or creative practitioner living, working or studying in Coventry or with a significant connection to the city.

Current employees of Arts Council England, Coventry City of Culture Trust, Shoot Festival, Sky Arts or The Space are not eligible to apply and cannot be part of your project team.

**Q. How do I apply?**

You can apply using the online form: <https://bit.ly/coventryunlocked>

If you need support to access, complete or submit the application form, would like more information about the process or information in a different format, or would like to apply in a different format, please contact us by emailing

commissioning@thespace.org or telephoning 0121 663 1488 and leave a message including your contact details.

**Q: What is the application deadline?**

You can submit your online application up until **5pm on Monday 11 October 2021.**You can save your work as you go along and come back to your application before final submission. You can also draft your application using our Word version if preferred.

## **Commissioning criteria**

**Q: How do you select which projects to commission?**

Applications will be assessed by a selection panel including representatives from Sky Arts, Coventry City of Culture Trust, Shoot Festival and The Space. The following assessment criteria will be used when selecting successful applications:

* Relevance of your idea to the question ‘Unlocked: What does it mean to be free’?
* The originality and creative ambition of your proposal
* The feasibility of your proposal: is it realistic within the budget, timelines and resources you have
* Your creative experience: e.g. writing, directing, performing, producing

A final selection criterion will be the mix of artists we commission so we can ensure that the selected applicants reflect the diversity of Coventry and its creative talent.

**Q. What types of works are you commissioning?**

We are funding 10 short-form films that can be initially experienced by audiences on Sky Arts platforms. We are not able to commission works that are audio-only, interactive, or that need to be published through a third-party mobile app, a video conference platform or any other non-Sky service.

**Q. Does my project have to be on a certain theme or topic?**

Yes, your project should respond to the provocation:

*Unlocked: What does it mean to be free?*

Artists may interpret ‘Unlocked’ in whatever way they wish – the bolder, more imaginative, and more unexpected, the better.

**Q: Are there maximum or minimum durations for content?**

The minimum duration for projects is 5 minutes. The maximum duration is 10 minutes.

**Q: Can you commission projects that are already underway?**

Yes. The commissioned content may form part of a project that is already in development or has been piloted in a small iteration. We can also support the digital version of projects that already exist, for example the adaptation of a live performance into a video piece. However, we can only fund activities that begin after your commission is confirmed.

**Q: What support can you provide for my project?**

You may not have all the skills you need to deliver your project. You might want advice on production processes; finding the right software or hardware; how to promote your completed work using social media and other channels; rights clearances; digital accessibility or other areas.

Any gaps in your skills or knowledge should not deter you from applying. Our application form allows you to flag where you feel you may need support. **The purpose of our application process is to identify projects that have a compelling creative idea and strong audience appeal** and then to work with the artists we commission to help you to realise their full potential.

Out of fairness to other applicants and because of time constraints, we cannot provide project-specific advice during the application process. However, if you are commissioned, the team at The Space and Shoot will support you to address any gaps in your plans or skills.

**Q. Are there accessibility requirements I should consider for my project?**

We encourage you to think about ways in which your project can be made as accessible as possible for audiences, such as including captions, BSL interpretation and audio description. We welcome suggestions for how to increase accessibility in creative ways. This is one of our shared aims of ensuring access to the widest number of people possible and, if commissioned, can provide advice on how to do this.

**Q. What are the timelines for commissioning and production?**

* **September 2021:**Unlocked commissioning round announced
* **5pm on Monday 11 October 2021:**deadline for applications
* **By 29 October 2021:**all applicants will be notified whether they have been successful or not
* **By end March 2022:**projects must be completed and delivered to Sky Arts

**Q: Can I broadcast or publish my work in places other than Sky Arts?**

Yes, you are free to publish and promote the work through your own social channels and other free-to-view online platforms. However, Sky Arts will have Exclusive Exhibition Rights (i.e. the exclusive right to broadcast your work) for a 12-month period on its TV channel, both linear and on demand.

This means you will not be able to license your work to other broadcasters or paid internet subscription or streaming services for a period of 12 months after first publication. This includes, without limitation, Free Television, Basic Television, Pay Television and any TVOD, PVOD, AVOD and SVOD, provided that the SVOD and AVOD rights shall only be exploited on Websites.

Other partners including Coventry City of Culture may also distribute your work on a non-exclusive basis in order to share it with the largest possible audience.

**Q. What about Covid-19 restrictions?**

You must comply with all legislation and government guidance to minimise the spread of Covid-19. We recognise that the situation may change between now and the end of March 2022. You must follow any applicable rules throughout the production period.

**Q: Can I submit more than one proposal?**

No, please only submit one application per artist.

**Q. Can I apply if I’ve already submitted a different application to Arts Council England, Sky Arts, Coventry City of Culture, Shoot Festival or The Space?**

Yes. This is a separate commissioning programme.

**Q: Why do applicants need to live, work or study in Coventry or the wider CV postcode, or have another significant connection to the area?**

This programme is a celebration of Coventry’s year as the UK City of Culture and the lead programme partners are Coventry City of Culture Trust, Sky Arts, Arts Council England, Shoot Festival and The Space. Therefore, commissioned projects need to benefit artists who have a significant connection to the Coventry area.

## **Access support**

**Q. Can a support worker complete my application form?**

Yes, a support worker can complete the application form on your behalf.

**Q. Do you provide access support for applicants?**

Yes, we can arrange help to complete the application form, to apply in different ways, or for information to be provided in different formats. We also have a small budget for applicants to arrange their own access support. Please contact us to discuss your needs. You can email commissioning@thespace.org or telephone 0121 663 1488 and leave a message with your contact details. Due to Covid-19, our office is not currently staffed but we will respond to voice messages and emails.

## **Your budget**

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**Q. How much can I apply for?**

You can apply for up to £7,500 excluding VAT.

**Q. Do I need to have any matched funding?**

No. We can 100% fund projects. If your project depends on other additional funding, please indicate this in your budget and show whether this funding is confirmed or not.

**Q. What costs can you fund?**

We are asking for an indicative budget in order for the selection panel to assess the scope and scale of your project. There is a budget template available on the online application system for you to use if you wish.

If there are elements of your production budget where you don’t know what industry standard rates would be or you need help finding the right supplier (e.g. an editor, rights clearances), don’t worry. Please flag these areas in the ‘production support’ part of the application and if you are commissioned we will work with you to estimate these elements.

Your budget can include:

* Artist(s) fees
* Production fees and costs
* Project management costs including any insurance or legal costs
* Equipment and software necessary to produce the work, whether hired or purchased
* Rights clearance costs for online or broadcast publication (see below)
* Other relevant costs
* A contingency of up to 10%.

The partners are committed to fair pay for artists and appropriate fees should be reflected in your budget. For more guidance please read Arts Council England’s
[Fair Pay guidance](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACNLPG_Fair_pay_0.pdf).

Your budget cannot include any costs you have already incurred.

**Q. Does my budget need to include VAT?**

No. If you are VAT registered, you can charge VAT in addition to your stated budget. This is because commissions are contracted through a commissioning agreement between successful applicants and The Space, rather than a grant agreement.

**Q. How quickly will I be paid?**

If your project is commissioned, we will review your budget and project plans with you and draw up a commissioning agreement for you to sign. This agreement will specify payment terms which ensure you are paid in a timely manner for your artists fees and to fund any payments you need to make to other team members and suppliers. Typically, the final 25% of the budget is paid to you upon delivery of your completed work to Sky Arts, ready for broadcast.

## **Rights clearances**

**Q: If you commission my idea, does this mean you own it?**

No. One of our key objectives is to put your interests as an artist first. This means that the intellectual property rights to the work you create will remain with you and any people or organisations contributing material.

**Q. What rights do I need to clear?**

Sky Arts will take an exclusive license on the work for one year for its TV channel, both linear and on demand, following its first publication. You are free to publish the work on your own social channels and on other free-to-view online platforms for this first year, and more widely after that year has passed.

It is the sole responsibility of the Licensor to clear and pay for the clearance of any and all other rights. This means that your project must only include material with the relevant rights cleared for broadcast and online publication. All the contributors, performances, artworks, written works and music and any other underlying materials protected by copyright that are included in your work must be able to be licensed for broadcast and online publication as appropriate. If you think securing these licences might be a problem for your work, please still submit your application, indicating the potential issue, and we will review on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: Can you provide advice on rights clearances?**

Yes. We recognise that this is a complex area. If your project is commissioned, we will provide advice to ensure that the necessary broadcast and/or online rights have been cleared.

## **Asking other questions**

If you have a question about the brief or the application process, please email our team: commissioning@thespace.orgor phone us on 0121 663 1488 and leave a message including your contact details and time of call and we will come back to you.

Out of fairness to other applicants, we are unable to give detailed advice about your project. However, access support – and associated funding – is available for all applications and we can answer brief, factual questions regarding the commissioning brief and process by email.

This programme is funded by Arts Council England, Sky Arts, Coventry City of Culture Trust and The Space and delivered in partnership with Shoot Festival.

  

 