

**The Spark Arts for Children**

# **Vital Spark Relationship Programme 2024/25**

**Information pack – easier read**

Funded by Arts Council England, AAC, Inspire, Lincoln Arts Centre

# Who are The Spark?

Based in the heart of Leicester's cultural quarter in England, we are an arts organization with over 20 years of experience. We help children immerse themselves in the arts in a variety of places and spaces. We offer children opportunities to discover their skills, passions, and potential—both as an audience and participants.

We commission and produce ambitious, high-quality experiences that are led by diversity and innovation. We organise a bold and imaginative children's arts festival. And we champion local cultural activity so that children in the region can thrive!

# What is Vital Spark?

Born in 2018, Vital Spark is a movement addressing the lack of diversity in the Performance for Young Audiences (PYA) sector.

## How?

Through Vital Spark, we share best practice with partner organisations – and provide essential support to under-represented artists – to create world-class cultural opportunities.

We care about artists, partners, and children – and recognise that they are all different, so each Vital Spark relationship is bespoke.

## Why?

Through development opportunities, and the commissioning and production of new work, we support artists who are currently under-represented in the PYA sector; and in turn, these artists support us in our ambition to be a more inclusive organisation.

We believe that children and young people should be able to see

themselves reflected and represented in all the shows they watch. Both in terms of the stories being told and the performers who tell those stories.

By working closely with the Vital Spark Artists and Partner Organisations, we can make this a reality.

## **The Artist Relationship Programme**

Looking to develop your understanding in creating work for children and families? Want the time and space to develop your artistic process and producing ability?

### **How will it work?**

It is for artists who are interested in developing their artistic practice and processes to make, create and invent exciting new work for children's audiences. We will work with four artists from England:

- 'Go and See' performances for Young Audiences to Inspire and develop our critical thinking
- An Artist residential in Leicester in November
- Online coaching sessions
- Attending the Vital Spark Sharing day in March 2024.

You'll be paid a training fee of £180 per day for your time to engage in the programme. Online coaching sessions will be paid at £45 for a 90-minute session.

You'll receive training, workshops, coaching and masterclasses at no cost. All travel, accommodation, theatre tickets, food and drink will be paid for.

The total value of the investment in each artist taking part in the programme is approximately £5,000.

## **When and where?**

### The Leicester Residential – week commencing 4th November 2024

You'll spend four days in Leicester at The Vital Spark host venue, Attenborough Arts Centre. There you'll be sharing, learning and building a relationship with The Spark. You'll take part in:

- Masterclasses delivered by specialists – such as co-creation, dramaturgy, storytelling, object manipulation or cross arts practise
- Coaching sessions exploring where you currently are, what you want to achieve, and how you will get there.

Each evening there will be a chance to reflect on your experiences and how this applies to you and there'll be a chance to get to know each other outside of the work space over meals.

### Vital Spark Sharing Day – 6th March 2025

Finally, in March 2025 you attend the Vital Spark Sharing Day at Attenborough Arts Centre in Leicester.

### Online coaching sessions

During the programme, when we are not together, there will be a series of online group coaching sessions that will support you in finding your voice, your values and your authenticity. We will support you to create your action plan to propel you on your onward journey.

## Who is this for?

To make the positive change to the PYA sector Vital Spark aim to achieve, this opportunity is open to Artists that identify as one or more of the following:

- African and African Caribbean diaspora
- D/deaf
- Disabled
- Ethnically diverse
- LGBTQ+
- Neurodivergent
- South, East and South East Asian diaspora.

### You might be...

- An emerging artist who is keen to develop their craft in arts and culture for children and families
- A mid-career artist who has not yet developed their practice specifically in relation to work for children and families
- An actor, a musician, a director, a visual artist – in fact any type of artist – but with an interest in making performance work for children.

Regardless of your experience you'll have a commitment, passion and drive to create extraordinary art for children and families!

## Access

We want to ensure that access and inclusion is at the heart of artistic development. Therefore, as a baseline, we will ensure that:

- All spaces used are accessible
- 'Go and See' trips will only involve events that are accessible

- Travel and accommodation is accessible
- We provide information in different formats.

On top of this, the residential will be delivered through consultation with selected artists to ensure we meet individual access needs, with appropriate breaks and timings which meets the requirements of those involved.

We are aware that the above won't meet everyone's access requirements and that access requirements can vary from day to day. Therefore, we will do our best to meet all access needs of artists both in application phase and for the duration of the programme.

If you have any questions about access or if you require additional support to submit an application, please contact **jobs@thesparkarts.co.uk** or call **0116 261 6893**.

## How to apply

Expressions of interest can be made by written, video or audio response. Please use the Application Guide for each stand or listen to the audio guide for a full breakdown of what is needed.

Submissions are via the online portal for each application strand. You can find the links to each portal on our website or by downloading the how to apply document.

- **Submissions must be received by midday on Monday 16th September 2024.**
- Thirty-minute online meetings with shortlisted artists will take place during the week of 23rd September 2024
- Final decision: Tuesday 1st October (all applicants will be contacted by this date).

If you have any questions or any problems downloading these forms please contact the team on **jobs@thesparkarts.co.uk** or call **0116 2616893**.

## **Want to apply for both The Relationship Programme and The Ideas Fund Programme?**

That's great - you can apply to both. You'll need to read the guidance about how to apply for both programmes and use the joint application form.

## **Got a question about the application?**

### Arrange a chat

If you have any questions about how to make your application or if you have any questions relating to the programme itself, please contact the team on: **jobs@thesparkarts.co.uk** or call **0116 2616893**.

### Digital Gathering

We're hosting an informal online Q&A session where we will explain a bit more about the programmes and answer questions you have on Tuesday 3rd September at 6.30pm. This will take place on Zoom and will be British Sign Language interpreted if requested. To register you can email **jobs@thesparkarts.co.uk** or call **0116 261 6893**.

Thank you and we look forward to receiving your application!