



THE NORTHERN CULTURAL EDUCATION AWARDS | 2024

Award Categories & Nomination Process

Guidance for Applicants

With
**Curious
Minds**



About these Awards

The Northern Cultural Education Awards is a biennial event which shines a light on best practice, innovation and activism in the field of creative and cultural education, wherever it is happening across the North of England.

We know from evidence and experience that when children and young people take part in arts and culture they do better in school and are happier and healthier. Every child deserves to grow up surrounded by a wealth of quality, creative opportunities. The mission of these awards is to celebrate the incredible, passionate people – teachers, artists and creative practitioners, youth and social workers, health and wellbeing specialists and community volunteers – who are working hard to make this ambition a reality.

As three-time organiser of the North West Cultural Education Awards, **Curious Minds is delighted this year to be inviting nominations from across the whole of Northern England.** We believe that with the right support and space to innovate, our sector can play an even greater role in making the North a great place for young people to grow up and achieve their potential.

Award Categories

There are 7 Award Categories for which we are inviting nominations. These are summarised below, with further guidance on the nomination form questions and assessment criteria given later in this document.

The Innovation and Leadership in Education Award ([jump to this category](#))

A trailblazing school or education setting which has embedded the arts, creativity and culture to deliver transformational outcomes for pupils, staff and/or community.

The Inspirational Local Partnership Award ([jump to this category](#))

To recognise the best in cross-sector partnership working. This award will celebrate a group of organisations that has worked collectively to improve access to arts, culture and creativity for the children and young people in their local area.

The Heart and Minds Award ([jump to this category](#))

A project that has used targeted creative or cultural activity to positively impact children and young people's health and wellbeing.

The One-to-Watch Award ([jump to this category](#))

Focusing on the next generation of leaders in cultural education. This award will recognise someone taking their first steps into a career that champions high-quality arts and culture for children and young people.

The Young Arts Activism Award ([jump to this category](#))

It's not just about the adults! This award will celebrate a group of young people or an individual (under 21) who have led creative action to drive a difference in the world around them.

The Grassroots Award(s) ([jump to this category](#))

This category is all about appreciating the professionalism, skill and commitment that exists with the army of freelance and grassroots creatives on which our sector relies. Depending on the number of nominations received, we hope to split this award into:

- **Fearless Freelancer** – an individual committed to working creatively with children and young people despite the socio-economic challenges inherent in a freelance career.
- **Small but Mighty** – a small grassroots organisation, whose work within the community it serves has contributed to the cultural and creative life of children and families.

The Changemaker Award ([jump to this category](#))

*An individual whose work, over many years, has made a significant positive change to the field of arts and culture by, with and for children and young people. The recipient of this award will be chosen by the CEO and Chair of Curious Minds but we are keen to hear your suggestions. **This is the only category for which people cannot nominate themselves!***

Nominations Process FAQs

1. When can I submit nominations?/When is the deadline?

Award nominations will open on Monday 15th January 2024. The deadline for submissions is midnight on Sunday 3rd March 2024. No late entries will be accepted.

2. What does it cost to nominate?

There is no cost to make an awards nomination, it is completely free!

However, please be aware that there will be a nominal fee for attendance at the Awards Ceremony, which will take place on the afternoon of Friday 24th May 2024. Individual tickets will cost £15.

The event will be a fantastic opportunity to celebrate, network and enjoy the company of people working in a similar field. We'd encourage everyone to attend.

3. Can I nominate myself/my project?

Yes, absolutely! You can nominate for yourself or for somebody else (with their permission). There is only one category for which we ask you not to nominate yourself, which is the Changemaker Award.

4. Can I nominate the same person/project in several categories?

Of course! There's no need to restrict yourself to just one category but it's important to remember that you must complete a nomination form for each separate category.

5. How do I submit a nomination?

Each of the award categories has a separate online nomination form. Links to these forms are provided on the [Northern Cultural Education Awards 2024](#) page of our website.

Later in this document you will find the nomination form questions for each category, as well as the assessment criteria by which it will be shortlisted and judged. We would encourage you to use this information to pre-prepare your nomination. It isn't possible to save the online form mid-way through completion.

6. *I have access needs which mean I will struggle to complete an online form. Are there other options?*

Yes. We're very keen to ensure you're able to submit nominations using an alternative format (such as video or audio) if you need to. Please contact us via events@curiousminds.org.uk to discuss how we can help.

7. *When will you announce shortlisted finalists?*

Shortlisted finalists will be announced on or shortly after 5th April 2024 on our website and social media channels. All submissions will receive an email to confirm if your nomination has been shortlisted or not.

It's worth being aware that we will ask shortlisted finalists to provide us with some existing photos, videos or audio clips related to their project/nomination. Nothing too onerous, and we will provide further guidance if this applies to you.

8. *How will the categories be judged?*

For each category (with the exception of the Changemaker Award) we will be convening a judging panel of three. Two of these people will be external to and independent of Curious Minds. The panel will read all nominations for the category and will score them with reference to the published assessment criteria.

The Change Maker Award winner will be chosen by the CEO and Chair of Curious Minds.

9. *Who can I contact if I have questions that aren't answered in this document?*

Got an outstanding question? That's fine. If you've read through this document fully and also looked at the nomination form but still need clarity, email us at events@curiousminds.org.uk. We are here to help!

The Awards Ceremony and Wonderland

The Awards Ceremony will take place on the afternoon of Friday 24th May at The Edge Arena in Wigan. It will include plenty of opportunities to reconnect or build your networks, as well as Wonderland – an inspiring cultural marketplace for creative educators.

Questions and Assessment Criteria

Each of the award category nomination forms will include some standard questions about your entry. These include:

- Key contact name and details for the nominee
- Confirmation that the nominee gives permission to be contacted
- Name and contact details of nominator (if these are different from the nominee)
- Data processing consent

In addition, the forms will ask you a unique set of questions that are specific to the category that will give you the opportunity to tell us more about your project or person. These answers will be what we use to assess your entry.

All the submission questions and assessment criteria for each category are provided below to help you plan your submission.

The Innovation & Leadership in Education Award

The award for Innovation & Leadership in Education celebrates a trailblazing education setting which has embedded arts, creativity and culture to deliver transformational outcomes for pupils, staff and/or community.

Assessment Criteria

- **Pioneering and transformational** – has the setting used innovative methods to deliver transformational change for pupils, staff and school community?
- **Impact** – has there been a substantial impact in one or more areas of strategic planning and/or delivery using arts, creativity and culture?
- **Legacy** – has this work led to embedded and sustainable outcomes, which will continue to serve the school community in the long term?

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Tell us about the need(s) you were trying to address? *(up to 200 words)*
 2. Please describe how the approach you have taken to embedding the arts, creativity and culture within your setting was innovative and exciting. *(up to 200 words)*
 3. What impact has this work had on: a) the pupils b) the staff c) your wider school community? *(up to 200 words)*
 4. How will the impact of this work be sustainable? *(up to 200 words)*
 5. Tell us about how you overcame barriers in this work that exclude some young people from participating in arts and culture? *(up to 200 words)*
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The Inspirational Local Partnership Award

The award for Inspirational Local Partnership recognises a group of organisations that has worked collectively to improve access to arts, culture and creativity for the children and young people in their local area.

Assessment Criteria

- **Locality** – how has this work been specific to the local area and what knowledge have the partners drawn on?
- **Impact** – what difference has this partnership made to their area? What is the lasting impact of their work?
- **Partners** – how has the group responded to the question 'why these specific partners?'

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Please tell us about your partnership, where it's located, and who the partners are? Why did these specific partners come together? *(up to 200 words)*
 2. What are the specific needs your work is addressing? How did you identify these? *(up to 200 words)*
 3. Who has benefitted from your partnership's activities? What difference have you made for children and young people? *(up to 200 words)*
 4. How will you make the impact of this work sustainable? *(up to 200 words)*
 5. Tell us about how your work challenges the barriers that exclude some young people from participating in arts and culture? *(up to 200 words)*
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The Hearts and Minds Award

The Hearts & Minds award will recognise a project or programme that can evidence positive impact on children and young people's health and wellbeing through innovative and targeted arts, creative or cultural activity.

Assessment Criteria

- **Quality of Experience** – has the quality of the arts, creative or cultural activity been evidenced?
- **Impact** – has there been a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of the children / young people involved in this project / programme? Is there also evidence of the impact on wellbeing?
- **Legacy** – has the work had an embedded and sustainable impact which will continue to serve children / young people?

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Please tell us about the art, creative or cultural project that has been delivered to support and improve the wellbeing of children/young people. Please include the following details in your answer: (a) duration of the project, (b) number of participants and (c) description of the activity. *(up to 200 words)*

2. How was the need for this project identified and how were children/young people selected to take part? *(up to 200 words)*
 3. What difference has this project made to the health and wellbeing of children/young people involved, and how can you evidence this? Please include the methods used to measure the impact in your answer. *(up to 200 words)*
 4. How will you make the impact of this work sustainable? *(up to 200 words)*
 5. Tell us about how your work challenges the barriers that exclude some young people from participating in arts and culture? *(up to 200 words)*
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The One-to-Watch Award

The One-to-Watch award celebrates the next generation of leaders in cultural education, recognising someone taking their first steps into a career that champions high-quality arts and culture for children and young people. This award is open to anyone at any age, as long as they are in the early stages of a career in cultural education.

Assessment Criteria

- **Leadership & Changemaker Potential** – has the nominee shown where they believe change in cultural education needs to happen and that they are committed to being part of that change?
- **Advocacy** – are they aware of the need to advocate for arts and culture for children and young people? Can they articulate its importance and are they willing and able to step into an advocacy role?
- **Commitment to Quality** – have they demonstrated their understanding of what quality looks like and how they strive for this in their work?

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Please provide us with a brief overview of your work in cultural education so far, including any leadership experience. This might be leading a project or an event - whatever leadership looks like for you. *(up to 200 words)*
 2. Please give an example of how you ensure children and young people have access to high quality arts and culture through your work. This could be based on what you do yourself or how you work with others. *(up to 200 words)*
 3. Please tell us about a time that you have championed the role that arts and culture plays in enriching the lives of children and young people. *(up to 200 words)*
 4. What one change do you want to see in cultural education and why? *(up to 200 words)*
 5. Tell us about how your work challenges the barriers that exclude some young people from participating in arts and culture? *(up to 200 words)*
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The Young Arts Activism Award

The Young Arts Activism award celebrates a group of young people (the majority of whom are aged under 21) or an individual, that has led creative action to drive a difference in the world around them.

Eligibility note:

We recognise that groups of young people rarely undertake collective action without the support and supervision of responsible adults. We actively invite nomination forms submitted by an adult on behalf of a group of young people in their care. You can either prepare the entry with them or submit it on their behalf but please ensure that you have their permission to do so, and that you are able to demonstrate that their activities have been predominantly self-directed.

Assessment Criteria

- **Impact** – think about the improved circumstances for the group that the creative action benefitted. How much impact did it have on other children and young people or those around them?
- **Innovation and Risk Taking** – how innovative and creative was the project? Were creative risks taken?
- **Agents of Change** – how did the nominated group demonstrate that they are self-motivated and have motivated others?

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Please tell us about this group and the work/activities for which they are being nominated. *(up to 200 words)*
2. What change has been brought about through the group's work/activities? What risks have been taken to bring about that change? *(up to 200 words)*
3. How has arts and creativity been an integral part of this work? *(up to 200 words)*
4. How will the impact of this work be made sustainable? *(up to 200 words)*
5. Tell us about how this work challenges the barriers that exclude some young people from participating in arts and culture? *(up to 200 words)*

The Grassroots Award(s)

This category is all about recognising the professionalism, skill and commitment that exists with the army of freelance and grassroots creatives on which our sector relies.

If enough nominations are received, we hope to split this award into two sub-categories, with a winner for each:

i) Fearless Freelancer – *an individual committed to working creatively with children and young people despite the socio-economic challenges inherent in a freelance career.*

ii) Small but Mighty – a small grassroots organisation, whose work within the community it serves has contributed to the cultural and creative life of children and families.

We will ask you to tell us at the start of the form which sub-category your nomination falls under.

i) Fearless Freelancer

Eligibility note:

To be nominated in this category, you should meet the following criteria:

- Be registered as self-employed. We recognise that some people also work freelance part-time and there are many different ways to have a freelance career.
- Have done freelance work for 2 years or more.
- Undertake work which prioritises children and young people.

We will assume the freelancer has a portfolio career. A portfolio career is one that incorporates a range of different roles/employers rather than one full-time position.

Assessment Criteria

- **Commitment to Quality** – have they demonstrated their understanding of what quality looks like and how they strive for this in their work?
- **Resilience** – have they been able to sustain a career for several years, despite socio-economic challenges?
- **Career development** – are they committed to developing their creative practice?

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Please give a brief overview of your work in arts, creativity and culture so far. Please give examples of who you have worked with/for. *(up to 200 words)*
2. Please share some examples of how you ensure children and young people have access to high quality arts and culture through your work. This could be based on what you do yourself, collaborative projects with others and/or within organisations. *(up to 200 words)*
3. Tell us about how you develop your own creativity. Think about any professional or creative development you have undertaken to keep you up to date with practice in your creative field. *(up to 200 words)*
4. After the Covid-19 lockdowns and during this current cost of living crisis, how have you managed your career and stayed motivated? *(up to 200 words)*
5. Tell us about how your work challenges the barriers that exclude some young people from participating in arts and culture? *(up to 200 words)*

ii) Small but Mighty

Eligibility note:

We appreciate that 'grassroots' is a term is often used but seldom defined – other than a general understanding that it refers to activity that is small scale and community focussed. Basically, you know your organisation and work best, so we're happy to let you decide whether your organisation qualifies. However, if you're still unsure, you may find the following benchmark characteristics may serve as a useful guide:

- **Size:** We would normally expect grassroots organisations to have small staff teams of around 5 or fewer (not including volunteers).
- **Community:** We see grassroots organisations as being born from and uniquely rooted within their community.
- **Turnover:** Your funding may come from several different sources but it's likely that your annual turnover will be less than £150,000.

Assessment Criteria

- **Commitment to Quality** – have they demonstrated their understanding of what quality looks like and how they strive for this in their work?
- **Resilience** – have they been able to sustain a small organisation through tough times, such as the cost of living crisis and Covid-19 lockdown? What creative solutions have they come up with?
- **Impact** – what difference has this organisation made to the community they are located in? What is the lasting impact of their work?

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Please give a brief overview of your work in arts, creativity and culture so far. *(up to 200 words)*
2. Please share some examples of how you ensure children and young people have access to high quality arts and culture through your work. This could be based on what you do yourself, collaborative projects with others and/or within organisations. *(up to 200 words)*
3. Tell us about how you develop your own creativity. Think about any professional or creative development you have undertaken to keep you up to date with practice in your creative field. *(up to 200 words)*
4. After Covid 19 lockdowns and during this current cost of living crisis, how have you been able to sustain your organisation and the work it is doing with communities and individuals? *(up to 200 words)*
5. Tell us about how your work challenges the barriers that exclude some young people from participating in arts and culture? *(up to 200 words)*

The Changemaker Award

This person's vision and outstanding contribution will have raised the bar, pioneered new and inclusive practice, improved the conditions for the workforce - or all three. They will have a strong connection to the North of England, but their influence will have had a ripple effect and their work will be easily recognised as an important part of the history of our sector.

Eligibility note:

This is the only category for which people cannot nominate themselves. The recipient of this award will be chosen by the CEO and Chair of Curious Minds but we are still keen to hear your suggestions. For these reasons, there are fewer questions on the nomination form.

Assessment Criteria

- **Impact** – To what extent has their work had a significant positive impact on the field of cultural education?

Qualitative Nomination Questions

1. Who do you think should receive this award?
2. What have they done that motivated you to suggest them?
3. How does their work challenge the barriers that exclude some people from participating in arts and culture?