

Creative Citizens 2026



Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1:

What is the Creative Citizens Panel

The Creative Citizens Panel is a pilot project that brings together a small group of local people (up to 12) to help shape arts activity in East Belfast. The aim is to ensure that local voices, experiences and ideas are better reflected in future programming, including the EastSide Arts Festival and year-round events.

We are looking for a diverse mix of people aged 18 and over, including those who have never attended an EastSide Arts event or taken part in arts activities before. No previous experience or knowledge of the arts is needed. We're interested in your perspective as someone who lives in East Belfast.

As well as helping to develop a new creative event or project for the area, participants will help us test and develop a new way of involving local people in arts programming. We hope this pilot will

inform how EastSide Arts works with local communities in the future, ensuring that local voices continue to play an important role in shaping creative activity.

Over four short sessions, the Panel members will have:

- * Explored the role of the arts in East Belfast and shared their experiences, ideas and aspirations
- * Developed recommendations for new creative projects or activities that reflect local priorities
- * Agreed how a dedicated project budget could be used to bring those ideas to life
- * Helped shape a new approach to involving local people in arts programming in the future

Question 2:

When will the panel meet?

Date	Time	Session	Theme
Saturday 22 August	10AM - 1PM	Panel Session 1	Explore
Saturday 29 August	10AM - 1PM	Panel Session 2	Imagine
Saturday 12 September	10AM - 1PM	Panel Session 3	Decide
Friday 18 September	5PM - 6PM	Culture Night*	-
Saturday 10 October	10AM - 11:30AM	Panel Session 4	Review

*This is an additional, optional discussion on taking place on Culture Night, where we will share some insights from the Creative Citizens Panel. We will share further details with panellists closer to the time.

Question 3:

Where will the Panel meet?

The Panel will meet in the EastSide Visitors Centre gallery space at CS Lewis Square. This venue is wheelchair accessible and has a lift. You can park at the Arches Health Centre or Connswater Shopping Centre. There's also street parking in the nearby residential areas.

Question 4:

What do we mean by creative activity?

Creative activity can mean any event, workshop, or project that allows people to experience creativity and make an area a positive place to live and work. For example, a music concert, art workshop,

movie screening, art exhibition, craft fayre, DJ night and much more. Creative activity brings people together and provides positive experiences in the community, and supports local artists.



Question 5:

Why did I receive an invite?

Your household was selected as part of a process designed to reach a broad mix of people from across the Newtownards Road. Each house along the Newtownards Road and the surrounding streets between C.S. Lewis Square and Short Strand has received a postcard.

We want the group to reflect different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives from the local community. Receiving an invitation does not guarantee a place in the group, but it gives you the opportunity to register your interest in taking part.

Question 6:

Who can register interest?

Anyone aged 18+ who has received a postcard through their letterbox. Everyone within the household can apply. We especially want to hear from people who do not usually get involved in arts or community projects.

Question 7:

What will I be expected to do?

Sessions will include conversation, creative activities and group discussion. Participants will also be invited to attend an EastSide Arts Festival event for free.

YOU WILL

Share ideas and experiences

Talk about what matters in the area

Explore creativity and local life

Help shape future creative activity in east Belfast

Help decide how a small creative budget is used

Question 8:

Will I make decisions?

Yes. The Panel will help shape ideas and priorities for future creative activity in the area and will contribute to decisions about how the project budget is used.

Question 9:

I have no art experience. Can I still apply?

Yes! We are interested in local knowledge, lived experience and different points of view. We especially welcome those who haven't taken part in arts or events activities before.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO:

Be an artist

Work in the arts

Organise events

Think of yourself as a creative person

Question 10:

How will people be chosen?

We are open to applications from all backgrounds and commit to making the Panel inclusive and accessible.

Our aim is to create a panel with a broad range of experiences and perspectives, so that conversations and decisions reflect the community as widely as possible.

We will use a fair selection process to bring together a balanced group of up to 12 people who reflect the diversity of the local community. We will look at age, gender, location, education level, disability, and past experience with arts and cultural activities. We are keen to include people who have not previously engaged with EastSide Arts.

For the purposes of this pilot, the project is open to residents living on the Newtownards Road and the surrounding streets between C.S. Lewis Square and Short Strand. Please refer to the list of eligible streets at the end of this document.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must be 18 or over, live on the Newtownards Road (or the surrounding streets between C.S. Lewis Square and

Short Strand) and be available to attend all four sessions.

If we receive more eligible applications than places available, we will use the information provided in the expression of interest form to create a panel that reflects the diversity of the local community. Where there are more eligible applicants than places within a particular criteria, participants will be selected at random.

Criterion	Aim
Age	Include range of ages
Gender	Include a gender balance
Disability	Include a mix of disabled and non disabled participants
Educational background	Include a range of educational backgrounds
Engagement with the arts	Include a mix of people who regularly engage in arts activity and people who rarely or never engage
Geography	Include a good spread of people living on the Newtownards Road and the surrounding streets between C.S. Lewis Square and Short Strand.

Question 11:
How will I be paid?

Participants will receive shopping vouchers after each session, with a total worth of £350 for taking part in all four sessions. We ask that you commit to attending all four sessions. Support with travel, childcare and access needs will also be available.

- Session 1:** £100 voucher
- Session 2:** £100 voucher
- Session 3:** £100 voucher
- Session 4:** £50 voucher

Question 12:

If I apply, how will my personal information be used?

The information you give will help Starling Start and EastSide Arts run the Creative Citizens Panel. It will also be used to contact applicants and choose participants if there are too many applications.

Your personal information will only be used for this project. It will be stored securely and won't be shared with anyone outside the project team, unless required by law. We will keep your information only for as

long as necessary to deliver and evaluate the project, after which it will be securely deleted.

By submitting this form, you agree to Starling Start and EastSide Arts using your information for these purposes.

In Panel sessions, we'll use just your first name. We won't share any personal details, like your address or phone number.

Question 13:

How will I be supported to take part?

We want everyone to feel comfortable taking part. Sessions will be informal and friendly, with plenty of opportunities to contribute in different ways. Our facilitator will use plain English, avoid jargon, and make sure everyone has an opportunity to take part.

If you need help to take part, like wheelchair access, interpretation, translation, childcare, transport, or other support, please let us know on the application form. If you are selected we will be in touch to make sure you have everything you need to be supported in this process.

Question 14:

If I don't get selected, will there be other opportunities?

Yes. The Creative Citizen Panel is a pilot project which we hope will help shape how we work with local people in future. You will have the opportunity to join EastSide

Arts as a volunteer as event support at any upcoming creative events. You can join our mailing list to receive any news via email of upcoming events or opportunities.

Question 15:

How do I register my interest?

Click this button to open the online Creative Citizens application form. Applications should be submitted by **22 July**. After the deadline, all eligible applicants will be reviewed to create a panel that reflects the local community. Everyone who applies will be contacted by **27 July** to let them know the outcome.



List of eligible streets

Belvoir Street

Bryson Street

Cable Close

Chamberlain Street

Chadolly Street

Dee Street

Derwent Street

Fraser Pass

Gawn Street

Hornby Street

Kenilworth Street

Lendrick Street

McMaster Street

Montrose Street

Newtownards Road (between C.S. Lewis
Square and Short Strand only)

Parker Street

Pitt Place

Ribble Street

St Patrick's Walk

St Matthews Court

St Leonards Crescent

Susan Street

Strand Close

Strand Walk

Tamar Court

Templemore Avenue

Tower Street

Vulcan Court

Vulcan Gardens

Witham Street

EASTSIDE ARTS

EastSide Arts is part of EastSide Partnership, a regeneration charity working across physical regeneration, education, poverty alleviation, arts, tourism and heritage.

EastSide Arts runs a multi-venue arts festival throughout East Belfast in July and August featuring a curated programme of Music, Theatre, Comedy, Visual Art, Talks, Tours and Community events. This year's festival features over 100 events across over 30 venues.

www.eastsidearts.net

STARLING START

Starling Start is a creative company based in East Belfast, developing cultural, heritage and place related strategy across Northern Ireland.

www.starlingstart.com

For any other questions, please email **eastsidearts@eastsidepartnership.com** or phone **028 9045 1900** and we will get back to you.