

Brief for Evaluator – Escalate Arts

Deadline for responses: 23rd May 2025

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Introduction

Escalate Arts is a new place-based partnership, including Surrey County Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Ashford Youth Club and Artswork to develop a new ‘Cultural Hub’ in Staines-upon-Thames in Surrey.

The two-year project aims to bring together creative organisations, education and creative employers to create a step change in how young people design, engage with, work in and enjoy culture in Spelthorne.

The project partners wish to appoint an independent evaluator to work with us to design and construct a robust evaluation framework, to understand our lasting impact on cultural engagement for direct beneficiaries and the wider Spelthorne community.

This learning will be used to replicate strategies of youth-led cultural programming across the county, regionally and nationally, to enhance learnings & opportunities.

Outcomes

Our 2-year success measures are mapped against our 4 strategic goals:

Strategic Goals	Outcomes
Improved local cultural offer & accessibility to wider Surrey cultural landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50%+ Spelthorne Children and Young people (CYP) engaged in local cultural activities • 30% new audiences • increased public awareness of diversified library offer.
Improved confidence in creative skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthened Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) • increased confidence in creative teaching & cultural library programming • demonstrable new CYP creative pathways • established relationships with 3+ key creative industry partners.
Empowered local youth voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% increase Youth Collective (YC) experience in leadership, event production & cultural co-design; clear, accessible youth leadership pathways.
Active & inclusive cultural provision for local disadvantaged CYP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of CYP engaged in project-related school activity are from disadvantaged backgrounds • enhanced relationships between local community organisations supporting disadvantaged CYP

Programme Delivery

Project activity will be delivered across 5 programme strands, each of which is developed by their own steering group with representation from key partners, including:

Programme	Description of activity
Staines Youth Collective	A group of young people aged 11 – 15 and 16 - 24. The Youth Collective are supported to develop their own skills and programme cultural events in Staines Library

Staines Library Programme	A 24-month programme of events and activities is delivered. Signposting for cultural engagement initiatives is developed
Community Programme	A programme of events and activities is delivered in wider areas of Spelthorne, including a fund for local artist commissions
Schools Programme	A programme of events and teacher training is delivered in Spelthorne Schools, and a teachers' network is developed
Creative Skills	<p>Working with partner organisations, we develop new 'creative pathways' across Surrey, to support young people gaining further skills. This includes (but is not limited to) accreditation, such as digital badging, work experience, apprenticeships etc.</p> <p>Surrey is a leading destination for creative professionals and enterprises. Surrey has more than 10,000 digital startups, film and TV studios, artistic producers, and entertainment companies employing 45,000 people. Home to, Shepperton Studios, CoSTAR National Lab.</p>

Background

The project uses the opportunity provided by the new Staines-upon-Thames flagship library to establish a 'cultural hub' addressing gaps identified in SCC Community 2030 Vision, Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Surrey Skills Plan, SCC Libraries & Cultural Strategy & Spelthorne Leisure Strategy.

Spelthorne is currently a priority location, and the most deprived borough in Surrey with the highest level of child poverty. Our research has shown only 46% engage with culture locally & 69% would take part in more cultural activity if available.

The project will be delivered in collaboration with a number of local partners, including:

- 5 Youth clubs (Ashford, Shepperton, Leacroft, Sunbury & Stanwell) their Youth Directors & CYP
- Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations incl. Artsworld who have extensive experience designing & delivering youth leadership training
- Surrey Creative Cluster – University for the Creative Arts (UCA), Shepperton Studios & Netflix
- Arts Partnership Surrey – council partnership, incl. SCC & Spelthorne BC
- Surrey CC Youth Services, Libraries, Surrey Arts (Local Cultural Education Partnership Culture Box Surrey & Surrey Music Hub)
- Local schools and colleges, University of Surrey, UCA, and Royal Holloway, University of London
- Community groups, including 2 food banks to reach the most disadvantaged

Brief

Evaluation Commission

Deliverables

The evaluator will be responsible for delivering:

1. **Evaluation Framework:** A comprehensive evaluation framework, that includes a theory of change and sets out clear methods, tools, and timelines for data collection and analysis, to be used across all programme strands.
2. **Methodology:** A range of creative, participatory methods combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the programme's impact. Data will be particularly collected either directly or indirectly from young people. These methods should be accessible, engaging, and capable of being delivered by local partners and youth participants, as well as the project team. Methods might include:
 - Collecting case studies from diverse participants, including young people, creative organisations, educators, and employers
 - Surveys, focus groups, and interviews with young people, partners, and stakeholders.
 - Creative methods such as digital storytelling or participatory arts activities to engage young people in reflective practices.
 - Analysis of data in relation to outcomes and the theory of change
3. **Support for Partners:** Tools, templates, and training to help delivery partners collect data directly from young people, ensuring that their feedback informs both current and future activities.

4. **Mid-point Review:** A review report conducted at the programme's mid-point, identifying progress, challenges, and recommendations for adjustments.
5. **Final Evaluation:** A comprehensive final evaluation report for Arts Council England, including key findings, case studies, and recommendations for sustaining and scaling the programme in future phases.

Responsibilities

The evaluator will be expected to:

- attend events and activities, to support with data gathering.
- attend project meetings, on teams and in person
- Work with partners to collaborate

Budget

A budget of £28,000 inclusive of VAT and expenses, is available for this work

Projected Timeline

Programme delivery	Key dates
Library	6-month programme: January 2025 – June 2025 New Library opens: June 2025 18-month programme: July 2025 – January 2027
Youth Collective	Started Jan 2025. Meeting regularly
Community Programme	Commissioning delivery partners Feb 25 – August 25 Delivery Sept 25 – August 26
Schools Programme	Commissioning delivery Partners Feb 25 – August 25 Delivery Sept 25 – July 26
Creative Skills programme	Creative Pathways Network events Youth Arts and Culture Festival Nov 25
Programme ends	January 2027
Interim report	March 2026
Final report	March 2027

Management and Reporting Arrangements

The appointed consultant will be contracted by Surrey County Council. They will be expected to work closely with key project partners including Artsworld, Spelthorne Borough Council and Ashford Youth Club.

How to Apply

Applicants should provide a quotation document, no longer than 1000 words (excluding any annexes), which should include:

- A response to the evaluation brief and outlining how you propose to deliver it
- A timetable for delivery
- A breakdown of days and costs related to management against the planned work including VAT
- If you are planning to involve other members of a team, please provide a statement of the number of days / hours each team member will work on the evaluation, along with their job title and daily rates (if applicable)

The successful appointee will be able to demonstrate the following:

- The skills and experience to design an appropriate and effective evaluation methodology that includes robust indicators of impact and effective data collection processes, both quantitative and qualitative.
- Knowledge of cultural learning in the UK
- Organisational and partnership development expertise, specifically in collaborative models of governance and leadership
- The ability to pull together diverse sources of data into a coherent whole
- Analytical skills to determine robust indicators of impact
- Report writing skills
- Strong interpersonal and organisational skills to engage effectively with stakeholders across the region
- Administrative and project management skills
- Availability to deliver the research in line with the required timescale

The following should be included as appendices in a separate document:

- CVs and details of the personnel proposed to carry out the work
- Examples of previous relevant work
- Names and contact details of two referees - at least one of these should have knowledge of your work in a similar capacity
- Details of your professional indemnity and public liability insurance
- To arrange a conversation or for more information, please contact surreyarts@surreycc.gov.uk

Please send responses to surreyarts@surreycc.gov.uk by 23rd May 2025

The Staines Culture Project Partners will be assessing all submissions received against the following criteria:

- Understanding of the brief and key objectives

- Proposed approach
- Experience and expertise
- Value for money