ROYAL DOCKS ORIGINALS

FAQs – We Are Original: Creative Commissions Programme

We Are Original is the creative commissions programme for Royal Docks Originals 2027. The programme supports artists, creative practitioners and collaborative groups to develop original work, explore the Royal Docks' people and places, and contribute to the area's cultural life.

There are three commission strands: **Original Work, Original Places and Original Workspaces.** Each has a different focus, eligibility criteria and funding offer.

- **Original Work:** An open and flexible commissioning strand for artists and creative practitioners at any stage of their career to develop and produce new work, responding to the festival themes
- **Original Places:** A commissioning strand for creative projects that respond to, reveal, animate or reimagine a particular place or space in the Royal Docks, creating meaningful connections between artists, local people, businesses and places.
- **Original Workspaces:** An opportunity for creative practitioners based in Royal Docks workspaces to come together and develop a collaborative project, combining their skills, ideas and creative practices.

Who can apply?

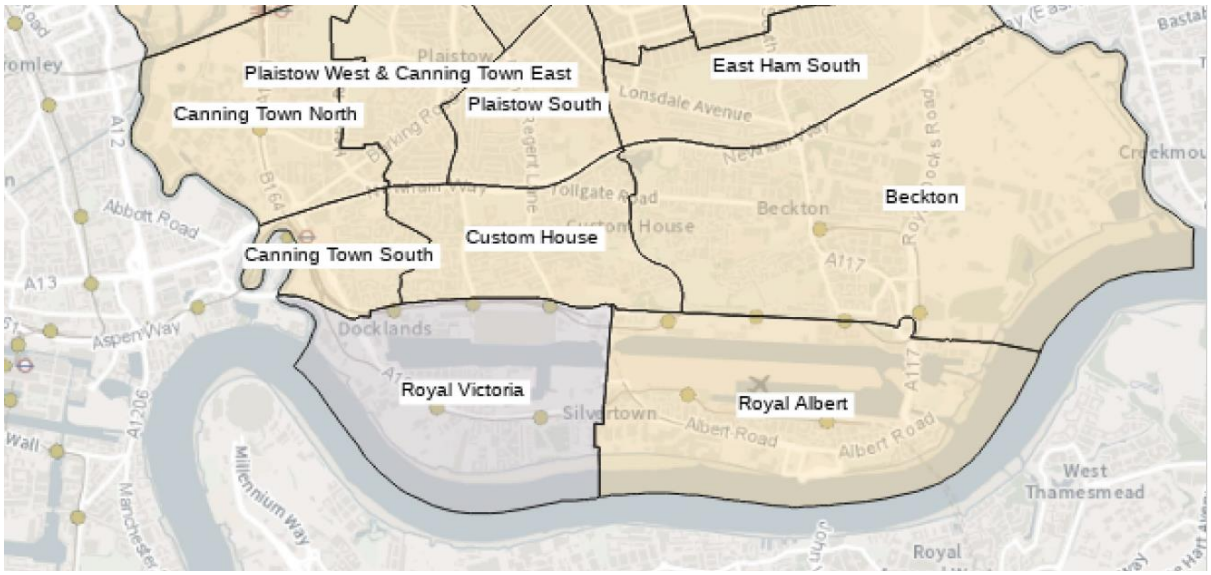
Eligibility varies by strand.

- **Original Work:** individual artists and creative practitioners at any stage of their career, working independently or collaboratively. Priority will be given to applicants who live, work or study in the Royal Docks.
- **Original Places:** creative practitioners of all types. Priority will be given to applicants who live, work or study in the Royal Docks.
- **Original Workspaces:** a group of at least three tenants currently based in a creative workspace or studio in the Royal Docks.

Please read the relevant application forms and guidance carefully before applying.

What do you mean by "The Royal Docks?"

The Royal Docks area is outlined below and includes the five southern Newham wards; Canning Town South, Custom House, Beckton, Royal Victoria and Royal Albert.



We imagine that the making process will take place outside of this area – but we are aiming for all festivity activity to be presented in the Royal Victoria area (shaded above).

When will the festival take place?

The festival itself will be delivered across four long weekends from early September to early October 2027. Dates TBC.

Royal Docks MAYOR OF LONDON Newham London

Do I need to live, work or study in the Royal Docks?

Royal Docks Originals is committed to developing the area's cultural ecosystem, so priority will be given to applicants who live, work or study in the Royal Docks.

1. Original Work – FAQs

Funding: £1,000–£5,000 per project; approximately six projects.

What is Original Work looking for?

Original Work supports artists and creative practitioners to develop and produce new work with a meaningful connection to the Royal Docks Originals festival themes. The programme welcomes imaginative and distinctive proposals that offer a new or engaging way of experiencing the Royal Docks.

We have compiled a selection of places and spaces across the Royal Docks that you may wish to consider for your proposal. Please find this here.

Can I apply with an existing idea or project?

If you can demonstrate that the existing idea or project has a significant link with the festival themes, and evidence the additional resources required to bring this idea to life – you can apply with an existing idea or project.

You should explain what you want to make or develop, what the outcome will be and why this is the right project for you to undertake now.

Can I apply as an individual or as a group?

Both are welcome. The application form invites proposals from creative practitioners working independently or collaboratively.

Do I need to live, work or study in the Royal Docks?

No, but priority will be given to applicants who do. If you do not live, work or study in the Royal Docks, your application must explain the lasting benefit your work would bring to the area.

What should my proposal include?

Your proposal should explain:

- What you want to create or develop.
- How your idea responds to one or more festival themes.
- Why the project is right for you to undertake now.
- Who your intended audiences or participants are.
- How you have considered their needs, interests and experiences.
- How you will deliver the project and present the final outcome during the festival.
- How you will give audiences insight into the creative process.

You will also need to provide a month-by-month timeline, a detailed budget and up to three links to your website or social media.

How will Original Work applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed against the following weighted criteria:

Assessment criterion	Weighting
Strength of ideas and artistic quality	50%
Response to Royal Docks Originals festival themes	20%
Feasibility, delivery and sustainability	15%
Audience experience and creative process	15%

The largest weighting is given to the strength of the idea and its artistic quality. Your application should clearly communicate what you want to create and its potential to produce an engaging and ambitious creative outcome.

You should also demonstrate a meaningful response to the festival themes, a realistic delivery plan and a considered approach to audiences and the creative process.

2. Original Places – FAQs

Funding: £1,000–£5,000 per project; approximately six projects.

What is Original Places looking for?

Original Places supports creative projects that respond to, reveal, animate or reimagine a particular place or space within the Royal Docks.

The programme is interested in ideas that create meaningful connections between artists, local people, businesses and places, and offer new ways of experiencing the Royal Docks.

What kinds of places or businesses can I work with?

The application form welcomes proposals connected to an existing venue, public space, business or other location within the Royal Docks.

Examples listed in the form include:

- The Cable Car
- B.Bakery
- Pizza Heroica
- Pump House
- Cage Barbers
- V and A Salon
- Corniche Food Market
- WakeUp Docklands wakeboarding
- SweHeat Sauna

As above, other places and spaces in the Royal Docks are shown here. These examples are intended to help applicants consider potential locations and partnerships.

Do I need to live, work or study in the Royal Docks?

Priority will be given to applicants who do. If you do not live, work or study in the Royal Docks, your application should describe the lasting benefit your work would bring to the area.

Do I need to have confirmed involvement from a business or venue partner before applying?

No. The application form asks you to identify the place, space or business you would like to work with and explain why it is relevant to your idea; we will then discuss these proposals with the named business/venue. Successful applicants will work closely with their chosen partner after selection to develop and refine their project.

Can I contact potential business partners directly?

We would ask applicants not to contact participating businesses directly before submitting a proposal, as their capacity is limited. A speed-networking event has been held to help prospective applicants meet local businesses, explore shared interests and discuss ideas.

What should my proposal include?

Your application should explain:

- Your creative practice and what drives your work.
- Your connection to the Royal Docks, or the lasting benefit your work would bring to the area.
- The place, space or business you want to work with.
- Why that location or partner is relevant to your idea.
- What you want to make or develop and what the final outcome will be.
- How your proposal responds to one or more festival themes.
- How you will deliver the project during the festival.
- Who your intended audiences or participants are.
- How audiences will gain insight into the creative process.

You will also need to provide a month-by-month timeline, a detailed budget and up to three links to your website or social media.

How will Original Places applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed against the following weighted criteria:

Assessment criterion	Weighting
Strength of ideas and artistic quality	30%
Relationship to the proposed place or space	20%
Response to Royal Docks Originals festival themes	20%
Feasibility, delivery and sustainability	15%
Audience experience and creative process	15%

Your application should demonstrate a distinctive creative idea, a meaningful and specific relationship to the proposed location, a thoughtful response to the festival themes and a realistic delivery plan.

You should also explain how the project could offer audiences new ways of experiencing the place or insight into the creative process.

3. Original Workspaces – FAQs

Funding: x 1 £10,000 grant for a collaborative project.

What is Original Workspaces looking for?

Original Workspaces supports creative practitioners based in Royal Docks workspaces to come together and develop a shared creative project.

The programme is interested in what might happen when practitioners who would not usually work together combine their skills, ideas and practices.

Projects should have the potential to develop individual creative practices, create new relationships and connections within the workspace, and contribute to the wider cultural ecosystem of the Royal Docks.

Who can apply?

You must already be a tenant in a workspace or studio in the Royal Docks.

Applications must be made jointly by a group of at least three tenants currently based in a creative workspace or studio in the area. One person should act as the main point of contact.

Which workspaces are eligible?

The application form lists the following examples:

- The Factory
- The Pump House
- Expressway
- Terradock (Royal Docks Centre for Sustainability)
- Bow Arts

The list is not exhaustive, but applicants must meet the requirement of being tenants in a creative workspace or studio in the Royal Docks. If your workspace is not listed, contact the team to confirm eligibility.

Can I apply on my own?

No. The application must be submitted jointly by at least three tenants from a creative workspace or studio in the Royal Docks.

Can we apply if we have separate project ideas?

The programme is looking for a genuinely shared idea, not a collection of individual projects presented together. Your proposal should explain how the participating

tenants will bring their skills, interests and creative practices into conversation to develop something collectively.

What kinds of projects can we propose?

The programme welcomes ambitious ideas that take creative risks and explore new ways of working together. Your project could result in a new artwork, event, performance, installation, intervention, programme or another form of creative activity.

The important thing is to demonstrate how the collaboration will work, what the group wants to achieve together and how the project could benefit the practitioners involved and the wider Royal Docks creative community.

What should our proposal include?

Your application should explain:

- The name of your creative workspace.
- Who the participating tenants are and their creative practices or areas of expertise.
- The shared idea and what you want to create.
- How the collaboration will bring your different skills, interests and practices together.
- How the project responds to one or more festival themes.
- Who your intended audiences or participants are.
- How you will deliver the project and present an outcome in Royal Victoria West during the festival.
- How audiences will gain insight into the creative process.

You will also need to provide a month-by-month timeline, a detailed budget and up to three links to websites or social media.

How much funding is available?

There is one commission of £10,000 for a collaborative project. Your budget should explain how the funding will support the shared idea and its delivery.

How will Original Workspaces applications be assessed?

The application form lists the following criteria:

Assessment criterion	Weighting stated in the form
Strength of ideas and artistic quality	30%
Strength and potential of the collaboration	30%
Response to Royal Docks Originals festival themes	15%
Feasibility, delivery and sustainability	15%
Audience experience and creative process	10%

The stated criteria emphasise the quality and ambition of the shared idea, the potential of the collaboration, the project's response to the festival themes, a realistic delivery plan and a considered approach to audiences and the creative process.

5. Further information and contact

For more information about the commissions, visit the We Are Original – Creative Commissions webpage.

For application questions, access support or alternative application formats, email RDO@royaldocks.london and use *Creative Commissions: We Are Original* as the subject line.

Application deadline: Monday 23 November 2026 at 11.59pm.

Successful applicants notified: Friday 11 December 2026.

Royal Docks MAYOR OF LONDON Newham London