

Land of Lead and Silver

Artist-in-Residence Programme 2025



North
Pennines
National
Landscape

Brief

The North Pennines National Landscape is undertaking a project focusing on the lead and silver mining and processing of the North Pennines. The project, named *Land of Lead and Silver* aims to develop new audiences to the lead and silver mining heritage across the whole of the National Landscape area. Through this project we are seeking applications from individual artists to an artist-in-residency programme which will seek to engage new audiences in the lead and silver mining heritage of the North Pennines.

The artist-in-residence programme will last for 6 months based on a full-time residency, or 12 months on a part-time basis during which a monthly bursary will be paid to cover living costs. The monthly bursary will be £1,750 for a full-time residency or £875 for a part-time residency, totalling £10,500 across the duration of the residency. An additional £2,000 is available to cover the cost of materials, venue hire and refreshments, for the duration of the programme. The timeline of the residency is flexible, although it is expected that it would begin by the end of March 2026. The residency can be attended remotely, as long as all activities take place face-to-face within the National Landscape area. Please note, this residency is only available to applicants based in Cumbria, Northumberland, County Durham, Tyne and Wear, and North Yorkshire.

There are two online Q&A sessions available for anyone interested in applying to the Land of Lead and Silver 2026 arts programme, the first at 2-3.30pm on Friday 30th January, and the second at 6-7.30pm, also on Friday 30th January. If you would like to join either of the Q&A sessions, please email Rebecca to request the link (rebecca@northpennines.org.uk).

The deadline for applications is midnight, Sunday 8th February 2026. Completed applications should be emailed to Rebecca (email address as above).

Mission

To offer development opportunities to artists to explore new skills and/or improve existing skills through a perspective of cultural heritage. A secondary objective is to engage new audiences with the lead mining heritage of the North Pennines through inclusive and accessible arts activities.

The Programme

Artists are invited to put forward applications that play to their strengths and preferences for engaging with local community audiences. Any artistic method will be considered including, but not limited to, writing, painting, drawing, textiles, music, dance, theatre etc.

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We are seeking artists who are looking to develop their skills, both in their artistic medium and in community engagement.

The successful applicant will be required to create a minimum of one piece of art, or body of works, which explores and celebrates the local lead and silver mining heritage. The piece(s) of art can be of any medium but should be suitable for the North Pennines National Landscape team to use in interpretation work as part of the *Land of Lead and Silver* project, and in the future.

Additionally, the successful artist will be required to undertake a minimum of six public engagement events within the residency, engaging a minimum total of 100 people. The project team at the North Pennines National Landscape will provide support for any engagement activity including advertising events, providing booking services via Ticketsource and providing knowledge/resources about the lead and silver mining history of the North Pennines. Artists will have responsibility for securing and liaising with any specific groups which will be involved, booking venues, undertaking risk assessments, and delivering and evaluating events. All events should have a focus on the local lead and silver mining heritage, but how this is explored is left up to the artist.

A short report summarising the work undertaken and the successes/lessons learned from the residency will also be required to be submitted within one month of the residency coming to an end. It is also expected that the successful applicant will make contributions to the North Pennines National Landscape blog and social media content. A contribution to a public exhibition of the community arts project held in October 2026 will also be required (this can be items created by participants, but the artist is responsible for ensuring items are returned to participants following the exhibition).

There are several priority themes that we are looking to explore through the 2026 arts programme, these are:

- Improving wellbeing through the arts and heritage
- Reducing barriers to arts and heritage, including accessibility, rural poverty, and rural and social isolation
- Encouraging community identity through arts and heritage
- One landscape, how nature and heritage are connected, explored through the arts

What your application should include:

- A completed application form, ensuring you have fully answered all the questions
- An up-to-date CV
- Three examples of your previous work, including a minimum of one example which includes community engagement work (please do not only submit links to websites)

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and/or social media as we may not be able to view them). You may include images and video in your examples.

- A letter of support from a previous arts project/bursary/grant etc. If you are a new/emerging artist, please include a letter of support from someone who can vouch for your commitment to your work.

Scoring Criteria

Briefs will be scored 1-5 on the following criteria, up to a maximum of 35 points.

- Your interest in the programme and chosen artistic medium(s) (1-5 points available, based on application form answers)
- How the residency programme will develop your skills and open up opportunities for you (1-5 points available, based on application form answers)
- Your ideas for public engagement and how you will reach your target audience (1-5 points available, based on application form answers)
- How you will be exploring the themes of the arts programme through your residency (1-5 points available, based on application form answers)
- Your concept for your final piece of art (1-5 points available, based on application form answers)
- Demonstrated previous experience of working with the public to engage them in the arts. If you have no previous experience, please explain in your application how you will develop these skills in the residency (1-5 points available, based on evidence from supplied examples and CV)
- Letter of support from previous work (1-5 points available, based on letter of support)
- **Note: applicants who have been granted a bursary by the National Landscape within the last 5 years are encouraged to apply, but priority will be given to applicants who have not previously received a bursary from us.**

Please submit your application to rebecca@northpennines.org.uk by midnight, Sunday 8th February 2026. If you have any questions about the brief, please contact Rebecca on the same email address.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is there an access fund available?

A: Yes, please include access costs in the access question on the application form. These costs should not be included in the bursary/residency grant amounts. Including access requirements and costs will have no bearing on the outcome of your application.

Q: Can I include found materials from the landscape in my artworks and/or workshops?

A: Ideally not, we do not want to be encouraging people to be removing parts of the landscape. This is especially true for anything that is protected or a finite resource (for example; minerals, parts of calaminarian grasslands, etc.). Leaves, branches, etc. that have already naturally dropped from the tree/plant would be considered in limited amounts.

Q: Do I need to have the insurance and DBS check in place when I apply?

No, but it is your responsibility to arrange it as soon as possible if you are successful. We will not be able to release your grant payment until we have confirmation that you have these in place (DBS only if relevant to your project). Many arts unions offer support in arranging these and are worth exploring if you do not have them in place already.

Q: Will the North Pennines National Landscape team help me find venues and groups to work with?

We will be able to provide you with a list of options, but it will be your responsibility to make contact, organise bookings, etc.

Q: What can I do to make my application stand out?

Be innovative and excited about your idea, if you let your enthusiasm show it will come across in your application. Be specific about what you would like to do within your project/residency. Don't use jargon or assume that we will know what you're referring to. We want to have a clear understanding of what you will do in your project/residency and the groups you will be working with.

Q: What support can I expect from the North Pennines National Landscape team if I am successful?

The National Landscape team will be on hand to offer support and advice wherever possible. A site visit day will also be offered where you will meet the other successful artists on this year's programme and will be introduced to the mining heritage of the area. The team will also handle booking and advertising of your events. We can supply example risk assessments, consent forms, and evaluation forms if you have not used these previously. Where the team's workload allows, we can also join you at your events and support you in delivering them.

Q: I've never worked on an arts project before, but I do art in my spare time and would like to become a professional artist, can I still apply for the residency?

Absolutely, as long as you meet the other criteria (i.e. location, able to meet the themes, etc.) we encourage you to apply.