

Welcome to unAwards Round 3 - Final Round

This guidance contains:

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Unlimited Theatre's unAwards

After 25 years producing new work for national and international audiences, Unlimited Theatre embarked on a new chapter to create more opportunities for emerging and mid-career organisations and artists. Our grants, named unAwards, were each inspired by key milestones in Unlimited's history and aimed to enable greater collaboration, experimentation and inclusive practice for artists and creatives. We wanted to support the next generation of theatre makers and, in our 'retirement', leave a lasting legacy that enabled creatives and audiences to embark on inspirational journeys that they might not otherwise have been able to. During 2024 and 2025 we successfully supported ten companies in each of unAwards Rounds 1 and 2, awarding £50,000 through three separate strands:

- **Starting Out** – small capital programme
- **unLab** – creative retreats to begin and imagine projects
- **unLock** – to enhance and lever additional support for a project ready for production

We are delighted to be able to fund one final round and for Round 3 we will focus only on unLab, the strand of unAwards that has demonstrated the greatest need and that is at the very heart of everything Unlimited Theatre stood for. We will make two awards of up to £5,000 each. Applications can be made by organisations from anywhere in the UK between 23 February and 31 March 2026.

J Spooner, Founding Member:

“I’ve had the deep pleasure and privilege to work with so many wonderful people at Unlimited over 27 years. I’m incredibly proud and happy that we can create and leave this positive legacy. We’ve always said our mission is to help change the world, even a little bit, for the better. I hope our past work has done that and that these awards will continue that mission for artists and audiences well into the future.”

unLab grant recipient:

“The chance to retreat into a space of discussion, experimentation, and artistic play has been invaluable. It has allowed us to push boundaries, challenge assumptions about accessibility, and refine our approach in ways that feel authentic and impactful.”

Award details

unLab

Two awards of up to £5,000 each

For many years, a major part of our process in making new work was to 'retreat' - to find somewhere remote where we could escape from the daily pressures of our lives and other projects and just be together. It was time for us as artists to dream, to share and interrogate ideas at the earliest stage of their infancy, to begin the process of imagining what we might make next. We came away from that time refreshed, excited and closer to each other as friends and artists and with exciting plans for what we would do next. This was our 'laboratory'. We called it unLab.

This award is for artists at any stage of their career working within an arts producing organisation to retreat and begin to imagine their next project.

Please do not apply for support for projects that are already in progress or have been through any development process.

Successful awards must be spent and accounted for by the end of November 2026.

Eligibility

Criteria	Detail
Submission window	Applications must be submitted between 9am Monday 23 February and 6pm Tuesday 31 March 2026. We will not accept applications outside of these dates.

Organisations	<p>Applicants must <u>not</u> be an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO).</p> <p>Applicants must be working as part of an incorporated arts or cultural organisation. This means the organisation is registered with Companies House or the Charity Commission. For example, your organisation might be a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Company • Limited Liability Partnership • Community Interest Company (CIC) • Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) <p>Organisations must be creating work collaboratively, with at least two collaborating core artists as part of the organisation.</p>
Artists	Artists within the organisation must not be in full time education.
Artform	The regular work of the organisation must be primarily live performance.
Financial	Applicants must hold a UK bank account. The account must be in the name of the organisation.
Applications	<p>Must submit answers to all questions and within the word count (written) or time limit (audio or video).</p> <p>Note for videos: if we can hear the content, the quality of video will not affect the assessment of your application. Please do not spend time making your video all swish and fancy!</p>

Project dates	<i>unLab</i> budgets must be spent and accounted for by the end of November 2026.
Previous applicants	<p>We welcome applications from organisations that have applied before whether successful or not.</p> <p>You can submit a new proposal or resubmit a previous proposal. If you wish to resubmit the same proposal as before then we highly recommend that you consider how the context in which you are working has moved on and adapt your proposal accordingly.</p>

Please note that in our decision making we will prioritise the following by awarding one additional assessment score for each priority met:

	Priority detail
unLab	Based or working in the North of England: Northwest, Northeast, Yorkshire and Humber regions with over 50% of work taking place there
	Organisations that tackle and explore themes of inclusivity (Equality Act protected characteristics and broader intersectional identities) and can evidence this in the proposal

Values

It is important to us that organisations applying to unAwards embrace our values. We believe in:

- Empathy, generosity and collaboration in partnerships
- Rigour, curiosity and optimism in processes

- Innovation, adventure and brilliance in presentations

We have always been fiercely committed to promoting and creating equality and fairness and to reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve in our staff, freelancers, Board, unAward applicants, artistic output and the audiences we reach. Unlimited is an actively anti-racist organisation and we welcome, respect and value all people from all backgrounds irrespective of their gender, sex, sexuality, race, heritage, skin colour, disability, religion or anything else that mainstream society considers 'different'. We support and celebrate 'difference' and we expect all our Trustees, staff, collaborators and unAwards recipients to join us in promoting these values; to treat each other with sincere respect; to support and take care with each other; to be mindful of personal experiences and circumstance and, further, to bring attention to, report or call out behaviour that is hurtful, degrading or disrespectful in any way – no matter how 'small' or unintentional those instances may be.

unAwards Schedule

- 31 March 2026: Applications close
- 1 April to 2 June 2026: Application assessment & decision-making
- By 12 June 2026: Grant decisions communicated
- June - November 2026: unLab retreats and evaluations completed

Please note: we are a small team so, depending on the number of applications we receive, we may have to adapt this timeline. We will let all applicants know of any changes to dates as soon as we can.

Copy of Application Questions

Here you will find a copy of the application questions for unLab. This is not the application form; we just want to give you the opportunity to see the questions in advance. Application forms can be accessed through our [unAwards webpage](#).

We are a small team and are therefore unable to provide individual support for applications. On the unAwards webpage you will find a list of answers we are compiling to Frequently Asked Questions. If you have any questions that aren't already answered there, please email them to our unAwards Fund Manager, Mark Hollander mark@unlimited.earth and we will do our best to answer and update the page.

Copy of Application Questions - unLab

- Organisation name
- When did you form your organisation?
- Organisation registration number
- Registered address
- Main contact name
- Main contact email address
- Is there a minimum of two collaborating artists as a regular core part of your organisation? (Y/N)
- Is this a repeat application from a previous round of unAwards?

- Names of all collaborating artists that are core members of your organisation:
- Are any of these artists in full time education? (Y/N)
- Do you have a UK organisation bank account? (Y/N)
- Are you an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation? (Y/N)
- Is your regular work primarily live performance (over 50%) (Y/N)
- Does more than 50% of your work take place in the North of England (Northwest, Northeast, Yorkshire and Humber regions)? (Y/N)
- Amount requested from unAwards (£)
- Who are you? What do you do? Why do you do it? (max 2,400 characters written or 3-minute audio/video)
- Please outline your previous productions/projects over the last five years, including any key strategic partnerships (co-producers, research, commissioning) (max 2,400 characters written or 3-minute video/audio)
- How would you use your time in unLab*? Who would be involved? (max 2,400 characters written or 3-minute audio/video)
*Nb this is about what your **process** would be NOT what the outcomes would be
- When would you be looking to hold your retreat?
DATE/MONTH

- This award is for up to £5,000. Costs for different organisations will vary depending on the number of artists involved. Please provide an outline budget of your costs for this activity and only apply for what you need. This way we can maximise the impact of this fund for as many artists as possible.
(Upload budget)

Additional information

REQUIRED:

- Links to your website/social media accounts.
- Please upload or link to your most recent set of audited or certified accounts.

OPTIONAL:

- You may attach one supporting document up to 2 pages to further illustrate your organisation's work.