

CONFLUENCE ARTIST CALL OUT

What is Confluence?

Confluence is a new artist residency designed to support and mentor future generations of diverse early years artists. Led by Magic Acorns as part of our new Sustain project, funded by Arts Council England. Confluence will take place in Great Yarmouth between March and May 2027.

Named after the convergence of the rivers Yare, Bure and Waveney, Confluence is a residency built around the creative potential of meeting points: where artists and babies, practice and research, curiosity and experience come together.

New to working with babies and young children? You are welcome to apply. No previous early years experience is needed: the residency includes deep-play training, mentoring and practical support.

We are inviting two mid-career, multidisciplinary artists to merge with us here in Great Yarmouth, to grow their creative research practice within an early years context. The residency centres on a simple but profound idea: making visible the way in which young children and babies know and understand the world, and acknowledging them as powerful artists and creative researchers.

This is a unique opportunity to develop your practice through collaboration: re-activating your own child-knowing alongside babies and young children, and drawing on Magic Acorns' extensive experience of early years arts practice. You will explore your creative inquiries with young children and families in Great Yarmouth and with partner organisations, supported by training, mentorship and dedicated studio time.

CONFLUENCE

confluence
/kɒnflʊəns/

noun
the junction of two or more rivers
an act or process of merging



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**





About Magic Acorns

Magic Acorns is one of the UK's leading early years arts organisations. Based in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, we co-create spaces where babies, children, families and artists can flourish together. We are the first dedicated early years arts venue in England, and in 2025 we hosted the first Ripple Early Years Arts Festival and Symposium.

Our reach has expanded over the past seven years through inter/national collaborations, nurturing and supporting artists to developing experimental creative residencies. We are part of diverse communities, united by the shared vision of creating, experimenting and developing exceptional early childhood arts.

Our work with families offers a safe, nurturing and magical space, laying the foundations for a lifetime of self-expression and artistic growth. This is the cornerstone of our vision: to create arts encounters specifically with and for people under four years old and their families, where arts can be created and experienced in non-conformist ways.





We're offering:

- The opportunity to collaborate with Magic Acorns and learn from babies, toddlers, families and early years practitioners
- Up to 10 days of studio time to develop your artistic practice and explore new ideas
- 4 days of professional development workshops.
- A total bursary package of up to £4,050, comprising £2,250 for the residency, £800 to attend two compulsory two-day CPD workshops, £600 towards travel and accommodation, and £400 for materials
- Flexibility around residency dates between March - May 2027
- Support for access requirements, helping to remove barriers to participation wherever possible
- Mentorship from the Magic Acorns Directors
- Access to our regular family groups to share and test ideas in practice
- A mid-point sharing opportunity in April 2027
- A final exhibition and/or performance sharing in May 2027
- Professional video documentation of the residency process

We'd like you to bring:

- A collaborative approach to creative practice
- Openness to learning with and from babies, toddlers, families and our team
- Curiosity, creativity and a willingness to experiment
- Commitment to the residency programme and CPD workshops
- A willingness to embrace open-ended processes and outcomes
- Your own artistic skills, interests, experience and unique perspective
- An interest in socially engaged practice and creative research
- A desire to explore new contexts, audiences and ways of working
- New questions, perspectives and approaches that can enrich creative work with and for young children

We welcome applications from artists who are new to early years practice. Previous experience of working with babies, toddlers or families is not required. We're interested in what you already bring as an artist, and how your skills, ideas and creative approaches might open up new possibilities for this work. Through training, mentoring and shared learning, we'll support you to develop your creative practice in early years contexts.

How to apply

There will be two stages to the application process.

Stage One

An open call for artists to complete an Expression of Interest form.

This simple form asks you to confirm your eligibility and provide a short paragraph introducing your artistic practice and what interests you about this residency opportunity. We will not ask you to demonstrate previous experience of working in early years. In order to remove any biases and create a fair and open process we will randomly select twelve eligible applications to go through to stage two.

You can find the [Expression of Interest form here.](#)

Deadline for Stage One - 25 October 2026 at 23:59pm



Stage two

12 Artists will be selected to develop a full proposal. They will be supported with an online proposal development session and a fee of £200 to support developing their application. We want to reduce financial barriers to applying and support artists who may find traditional application processes challenging.

The proposal development session is an opportunity to discuss your proposal with a Magic Acorns Director, learn more about the residency and to ask any questions you may have.

The proposal stage is not about presenting a fully formed project idea. Instead, we'll ask artists to share more about their practice, what they hope to learn through the residency, their approach to collaboration, and how they would make use of the time, support and resources available.

Following submission of proposals, we'll shortlist and invite selected artists to an interview about their proposal. This will be an opportunity to discuss your ideas with you and to explore how you might approach the residency. Following these conversations, two artists will be selected to take part in Confluence.

Before applying, please make sure you can commit to up to 10 residency days between March and May 2027 in Great Yarmouth, two compulsory two-day CPD workshops, a mid-point sharing in April 2027 and a final sharing in May 2027. Residency dates have flexibility, and support is available for travel, accommodation, materials and access requirements.



Timeline

Stage One	
9 October 2026	Applications Open
25 October 23:59pm	Deadline for Expressions of Interest
2nd November	Applicants notified
Stage Two	
9-13 November	Proposal surgeries
29 November 23:59pm	Deadline for proposals
7-11 December	Interviews with shortlisted candidates
18 December	Applicants notified
March - May 2027 Artist Residencies	
March 2027	Start of Residency Period
March 2027	Two day CPD workshops at South Quay Gallery, Great Yarmouth - exact dates TBC
April 2027	Midpoint sharing
8-9 May 2027	Two day CPD workshops at The Ice House, Great Yarmouth
End of May	Final sharing