

# I Am Festival 2025

## Brief for artists and organisations

### Overview

We are looking for expressions of interest from artists and organisations interested in exploring the theme **'Make Some Noise'** with the I Am Network schools and Cultural Ambassadors, through masterclasses and co-created activity.

The commissioned organisations/artists will work with a school to co-plan and deliver an activity or engagement piece for I Am Festival 2025 which explores one of the areas of focus (detailed below). This activity will be curated through planning sessions with teachers and in-school workshops with students.

They will also provide inspirational and hands-on opportunities for the Cultural Ambassadors through leading interactive masterclasses to share their practice and meet one of the key aims of the programme.

We are particularly interested in hearing from those who identify as Deaf, disabled and/or neurodivergent, and from disabled-led arts organisations.

**Budget:** Up to £5,300 including VAT (to include all resources, facilitator costs and any other materials needed to fulfil the scope of this work)

*Please note we have an additional £1000 to support any facilitator access requirements.*

**Timescale:** Planning: June – October 2024  
Delivery: October 2024 – March 2025

In March 2025, A New Direction will be delivering the 10<sup>th</sup> annual I Am Festival. The I Am Festival is a yearly celebration empowering Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent young people to explore their creativity. Over the past 9 years, the festival has provided a platform for hundreds of young people to showcase their talents, leadership, ideas, and opinions.

For the I Am Festival 2024 we worked with artists, and teachers in our [I Am Network](#) to deliver projects in schools, local communities and cultural venues exploring the theme of See Me, Hear Me. This included a secret mission with Coney at Kensington Palace, 'Don't ick my yum' with Blink Dance Theatre exploring the special interests of young people in a school in Southwark, a draw-along with Robin Smith and Action Space, held at the National Theatre and streamed to schools across London. There was also theatre and poetry with Graeae, CPD on sensory story-telling and creative communication techniques, a billboard project in north London, Jazz Up My Zimmer – a collaboration between a school and a care home in Chessington - a home-school exchange to reach out to and support young people unable to attend school and workshops at Tate Modern on print-making, electronics and coding and working with clay.

Following on from this exciting work, for I Am Festival 2025 we will continue to explore the theme **'Make Some Noise'**. The festival week will be co-created with our brilliant I Am Network and fantastic cohort of Cultural Ambassadors, following the success of their event at Sadler's Wells entitled 'I'm Amazing! You're Amazing!'

## About the I Am Network

A New Direction's I Am Network is a free professional development programme for educators working with Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent children and young people in London's schools and specialist settings. The Network meets twice a term over the academic year, working together to improve creative and cultural opportunities for children and young people who are Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent.

I Am Network members are supported to share good practice with other teachers working across a huge range of SEND settings in London. The network also provides an opportunity to meet and share strategies and ideas for bringing the curriculum to life in ways that meet students' needs as well as connecting with various cultural organisations across the city. In the 2023/2024 academic year we were fortunate enough to be hosted by Little Angel Theatre, Young V&A, and Kensington Palace.

## About the Cultural Ambassadors

This year will be our 5<sup>th</sup> year collaborating with charity AFK to provide a work experience programme for disabled young adults. This iteration of the programme will involve up to 10 young people working collaboratively with A New Direction, artists and arts organisations for 22 weeks. Alongside developing employability skills, they will meet the commissioned artists and cultural organisations to learn about the cultural sector and test ideas for school workshops, lead a festival project, and support the delivery of events throughout the festival week.

This year the Cultural Ambassadors programme has 4 key aims:

- To develop skills in creativity, communication, teamwork, problem-solving and independence.
- To enable the Cultural Ambassadors to become leaders and role models.
- To support readiness for future work-experience opportunities and employment
- To enhance knowledge of the roles and opportunities available in the creative and cultural sector.

This year we will also be working with alumni from the 4<sup>th</sup> year cohort to consult on various areas of the I Am Programme, including the artist commissions.

You can find out more about AFK on [their website](#).

## Details

We are looking for **three** artists/ cultural organisations who have a practice which may be rooted in...

- |                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Immersive/interactive arts | • Theatre/performance |
| • Digital Arts               | • Music               |
| • Dance/movement             | • Story-telling       |

We would also be interested in hearing from organisations/artists whose practice may not be defined by the above.

## Areas of focus

This year we have shortlisted 5 areas of focus for festival activities, 3 of which will be co-planned between I Am Network schools and artists/organisations. Each school and artist/organisation pairing will address **one** area of focus.

Please note these are initial ideas to help guide expressions of interest. Once commissioned, artists/organisations and their schools will take the lead on shaping these.

**Celebrate** : celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the festival.

For example:

- Designing an inclusive celebration
- An inclusive club night for students aged 16+

**Sensory** : Exploring the senses and the idea of a sensory space.

For example:

- Creating a physical space or event that explores sensory and calming techniques
- A soundscape created by a school to be played in a quiet space during the festival week
- Sensory installation or sensory play space that builds throughout the festival week

**Welcome** : Exploring how students are immersed into the festival when they arrive.

For example:

- Physical interactive entrance way
- Opening ceremony
- Welcome performance

**Parade** : Exploring how students can make some noise and take up space in cultural institutions.

For example:

- Parades happening in multiple spaces at the same time (Festival venues / schools / community spaces)
- A closing parade for the festival

**Exchange** : Exploring how students can share their creativity, knowledge and/or interests with other festival visitors

For example:

- Gift exchange between students, e.g. connecting those who are in school and those in home-school
- Creating a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo/image that can be used across promotional material
- Designing an item that is given out at the festival, e.g. limited edition 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary I Am socks!

Each will commit to working in collaboration with our I Am Network and Cultural Ambassadors to:

I Am Network		
Deliver	Detail	Approximate time commitment
Co-design an activity or engagement piece with an I Am network school to be delivered during the I Am Festival.	<p>Work with Cultural Ambassador alumni and teachers from the chosen I Am Network school to co-plan a project that can be delivered during the I Am Festival week.</p> <p>The project will explore one of the areas of focus detailed above.</p> <p><i>The aims of this aspect of the commission are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meet and understand the school and students partnered with</li> <li>- Share initial ideas with teachers and Cultural Ambassador alumni for the festival activity and shape the in-school workshops</li> <li>- Hear from Cultural Ambassador alumni what they thought worked well at the 2024 I Am Festival</li> </ul>	<p>0.5 days co-planning with Cultural Ambassador alumni and teachers. Date of meeting – <b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 9:30am – 12:30pm</b></p> <p>Plus approximately 1 days further planning time with school.</p>
Deliver workshops in an I Am Network school exploring the I Am Festival activity or engagement piece	<p>Deliver workshops exploring the project focus with students from the network school.</p> <p>The aims of this aspect of the commission are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce and explore your creative practice with students</li> <li>- Engage school students in the creation of a festival activity or engagement point that meets one of the areas of focus (detailed above)</li> </ul>	<p>1 – 2 days delivery in schools depending on project (N.B. We anticipate this delivery will need to be split over a number of sessions)</p> <p>Workshop planning and prep time</p>
Deliver a short presentation about your festival project and practice at an I Am Network Meeting	<p>Deliver a 30-minute talk or practical activity to teachers in the I Am Network exploring elements of your festival project and your practice.</p> <p>The aims of this aspect of the commission are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To share practice with teachers in the network.</li> <li>- For network teachers to make more connections in the cultural sector</li> </ul>	0.5 days delivery in Jan/Feb 2025
Project delivery at I Am Festival 2025	<p><b>Leading</b> the delivery of the project as part of the I Am Festival week.</p> <p>The aims of this aspect of the commission are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To engage visitors (students/teachers/cultural sector and/or the general public) in creative activity co-planned by your partnered school</li> <li>- To champion the creativity of Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent young people</li> </ul>	<p>1 day delivery</p> <p>1-2 Planning and preparation time</p>
Evaluation	<p>Take part in a project evaluation call with A New Direction</p> <p>The aims of this aspect of the commission are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To aid the evaluation of the whole I Am Programme</li> </ul>	1-2 hours
Cultural Ambassadors		
Deliver a masterclass for Cultural Ambassadors	<p>The aims of the masterclass workshops are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Respond to one or more of the key aims of the Cultural Ambassador programme</li> <li>- Introduce your practice through a creative workshop</li> <li>- Introduce different progression route options by sharing the pathways into employment of masterclass facilitators</li> <li>- Signposting to any personal and professional development opportunities available e.g. young company/internships/youth board</li> </ul>	<p>1 day planning</p> <p>1 day delivery</p>

## Expression of Interest

To express your interest in working with us to deliver masterclasses and workshops, please send us an expression of interest (EOI) outlining the following:

- Your organisation's ethos and approach to working
- A brief idea of an activity or engagement piece for I Am Festival 2025 which explores one of the areas of focus and how this will be explored through in school workshops
- A brief idea for a Cultural Ambassador masterclass and which of the 4 programme aims you will address
- An indication of available dates to deliver:
  - Cultural Ambassador masterclass (any Thursday between September – February, not including school holidays)
  - Availability for planning meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 9:30am – 12:30pm
  - Availability for 1 day during the I Am Festival (18<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025)
- An estimated, outline budget (e.g. practitioner fees, materials and applicable VAT)

EOIs can be sent in any format, e.g. a Word document, video, audio, to [schools@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:schools@anewdirection.org.uk).

**Deadline: Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June at 5pm**

If you have questions about this brief or would like to have an informal conversation about our work, please email [schools@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:schools@anewdirection.org.uk) to arrange a time.

## Safeguarding

Please note that any organisations that work with us need to complete an Organisation Declaration Form stating that relevant DBS checks have been undertaken for any practitioners involved in this project. Any individuals/freelancers will need to undertake an Enhanced DBS check or be on the DBS update service. They must also be eligible to work in the UK and registered to pay their own taxes.

## Access

It is really important to us that there are no barriers to anyone applying for opportunities at A New Direction. Please let us know if you have any access requirements and/or would like to submit your application in a different format by contacting [schools@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:schools@anewdirection.org.uk).

If there is any additional support, we could offer to enable you to participate in either the selection process or potentially working with the A New Direction, please include this in your application. Find out more about accessibility requirements and provisions on [Scope's website](#).