

# NORTHERN ROOTS



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW

# CREATIVE STRATEGIST



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



**Salary:** £40,000 pro rata

**Contract:** Fixed term, May – December 2025. Three days/week, 7.5 hours per day.






**Location:** On site at Northern Roots with opportunities for flexible and remote working.

## Summary:

Northern Roots is transforming 160 acres of urban greenspace, fifteen minutes from Oldham town centre, into a destination for learning, culture, leisure and growing. The project aims to benefit the environment, and to improve the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of local communities.

We want to make a difference in Oldham by developing an ambitious arts and culture strategy and programme for Northern Roots, maximizing the opportunities created by our new Visitor Centre and amphitheatre, which will open in 2026.

Inspired by our unique 160-acre site and new buildings, the Creative Strategist will work with local communities and key stakeholders across the creative sector in Greater Manchester to:

-  Co-create and deliver a new Arts and Culture Strategy for Northern Roots.
-  Co-create and deliver a fully costed Delivery Plan for events to mark the opening of our new Visitor Centre (2026) and for a subsequent 12-month Arts and Culture programme.
-  Identify opportunities for income generation from Arts and Culture activities.
-  Develop an initial framework for creative talent development pathways at Northern Roots.
-  Work with our Creative Producer to enable the creation of a youth-led, youth-curated test and learn arts event at Northern Roots.



This work will help transform Northern Roots into a sustainable destination for cultural tourism; support Oldham's placemaking vision; challenge inequalities; and nurture local creative talent.

We are looking for a dynamic individual with exceptional creativity and strategic ability. You will have:

- A demonstrable track record in delivering strategic and cultural programmes within the creative sector.
- Extensive existing relationships and networks within the Greater Manchester and/or national creative sector.
- Experience of co-creation and working collaboratively with very diverse groups of people and stakeholders.
- Experience of working with audience data and project evaluation.
- Experience of increasing and diversifying funding and income for Arts and Culture programming.
- An absolute passion for being creative in everything you do!

The successful candidate will join a friendly, supportive and dynamic team, working to the Communications, Arts and Engagement Lead and the CEO.

**Job purpose:**

- Update and enhance our existing Arts and Culture strategy to create a new strategy for 2026 onwards.
- Deliver a fully costed plan for events to mark the opening of our new Visitor Centre (2026) and a subsequent 12-month Arts and Culture programme.
- Identify appropriate opportunities for funding for, and income generation from Arts and Culture activity.
- Develop an initial framework for creative talent development pathways at Northern Roots.
- Work with our Creative Producer to enable the creation of a youth-led, youth-curated test and learn arts event at Northern Roots.

**Line Management responsibilities:** The post holder has no immediate line management responsibilities.



# KEY TASKS



Deliver a new, co-created arts and culture strategy for Northern Roots.



Work with our Marketing Consultants, and audience insight data, to improve our understanding of audience needs and segmentation so that our Arts and Culture offer is carefully designed around local and regional audience needs.



Co-create a fully costed Delivery Plan for events to mark the opening of the new Visitor Centre in 2026 and a fully costed 12-month arts and culture programme for our first year of operating, that is relevant, accessible and exciting to both hyper-local communities and visitors from Greater Manchester and beyond. This will include identifying artists and organisations that Northern Roots can potentially partner with to deliver cultural activity.



Identify opportunities to generate funding for, and income from, arts and culture at Northern Roots and set income targets that support organisational sustainability and resilience.



Support our drive to secure funding for the initial programme to cover costs prior to income generation established from visitor and audience footfall.



Work with key stakeholders to create a framework for initial creative talent development pathways at Northern Roots.



Work with our Creative Producer to enable the creation of a youth-led, youth-curated test and learn arts event at Northern Roots. Capture ideas, needs and aspirations of young people involved in this opportunity, feeding learnings into the co-created Arts & Culture strategy.



Document, monitor, and evaluate activity/project in line with funding requirements.



Actively promote our equalities and diversity agenda in the workplace, and with partners.



Undertake and assist in other duties as may be required from time to time commensurate with the grade of the post.

**Holiday entitlement:** 25 days holiday a year (excluding public holidays) pro rata

**Employer Pension Contribution:** 3%

**Reporting to:** Communications, Arts & Engagement Lead, Northern Roots





**NORTHERN ROOTS**  
**A CATALYST FOR**  
**HOPE, CREATIVITY**  
**AND OPPORTUNITY**

**Northern Roots is a 160-acre green space in Oldham, surrounded by some of England's most deprived communities. We're creating the UK's largest urban farm and eco-park, with a £12m Visitor Centre and amphitheatre, opening in 2026, followed by a Longhouse performance space (funding permitting).**

Formerly the site of cotton mills, a coal mine, and the Council tip, we're creating a unique new community asset and visitor destination, already benefitting people, planet and place. We're transforming neglected land, connecting communities and creating opportunities for all to grow. It's the UK's most ambitious project to bring contaminated urban green space back into use as a community asset.

The people on our doorstep will benefit from heritage, nature, creativity, learning, leisure and growing to improve their health, wellbeing and livelihoods. Landscape, water and wildlife will be revitalised - to flourish once again. It's a bold and innovative plan, with a sustainable model to engage and support the most deprived in our communities – and arts and culture is a key catalyst.



# THE AMBITION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE AT NORTHERN ROOTS

Northern Roots aims to inspire a **bold, surprising** and **high-quality arts offer**, that animates the 160-acre site and brings local communities and visitors together.

The Northern Roots site, and vision, should act as venue, inspiration, incubator, canvas and source of materials for arts and culture programming. Our ambition is to grow a **collaborative cultural offer** that is rooted in Oldham's unique heritage, diverse communities and creative sector, and focuses on:

- Providing a platform, inspiration and source of commissions for local, regional and emerging talent across a range of disciplines.
- Providing physical spaces to create and collaborate, training and performance opportunities, work experience, platforms for showcasing new work and access to audiences for emerging talent.
- Creating talent development pathways in the arts for young and emerging talent.
- Harnessing arts, heritage, sport and culture to attract local communities to get involved in the co-production of the wider Northern Roots offer.
- Curating an ambitious, high-quality programme, that brings new art forms and practitioners to local audiences.
- Using arts and culture to connect a wider range of people with the natural environment, increase awareness of environmental issues and inspire action.

Our Arts and Culture offer sits alongside, and interfaces with, our other activity strands: Our Natural Health Service (green social prescribing), Urban Farming, Landscape Recovery, Learning & Skills Programme, and Social Enterprise Support.



# ARTS AND CULTURE AT NORTHERN ROOTS SO FAR....

Over the last three years we have collaborated with local, regional and international artists and partners, commissioned new original work for outdoor arts events, created full and part-time jobs in the sector, run creative projects with local young people enabling them to develop and showcase their talent, and welcomed over 3000 visitors to arts events at the Northern Roots site. This has enabled us to test, learn, and begin to understand who our audiences are and could be.



## NEXT STEPS – CREATIVE STRATEGIST

Having piloted a diverse range of cultural activity at Northern Roots, we are now eighteen months away from opening Oldham's first Visitor Centre, which, along with our 160-acre site, has enormous opportunities for cultural curation, creativity, and bringing communities, audiences and artists together through outstanding arts programming.

We're at a pivotal point as a project and need someone exceptional to come in and help us grow the vision for arts and culture. The Cultural Strategist role is crucial to **maximising the opportunity** we have with new facilities opening, and to the long-term aspiration around cultural programming, community co-creation, talent development pathways, revenue generation, and placemaking.

This individual will be a leader in the sector, have an impressive regional and national network, relish the opportunity to co-create an Arts & Culture Strategy and Delivery Plan, **understand the intricacies of co-creation** and relationship-building, possess creativity and innovation in abundance, and understand the role of arts and culture in **placemaking** and the power of arts and culture to change lives.



# NEXT GENERATION – YOUNG CREATIVES

Northern Roots is a project for everyone, but supporting young people, the next generation, is particularly important to us as an organisation. We aim to provide a range of opportunities that **empower young people to be creative**, to learn, to develop skills, positive wellbeing and self-regard, confidence and hope.

We currently do well in terms of programming arts and cultural activity for families and children under 12 and have begun to develop a successful offer for adults (creative workshops) but we barely reach young people (13 to 24).

To start exploring the needs and aspirations of local young people, we propose to recruit and appoint three Young Creatives (18-24) from Oldham, who will work with the Creative Strategist and our Creative Producer on a **paid 12-week placement**.

They will be supported to work primarily on the co-creation and co-production of a small youth-led, youth-focused Test and Learn event at Northern Roots, reaching into their networks to draw out and develop ideas, themes and content. They will also feed into the development of the Arts and Culture Strategy, Delivery Plan, talent development pathways framework and evaluation plan.



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