

Hamara Playgroup – Artist Open Call

Yorkshire Contemporary and Hamara Healthy Living Centre are commissioning two artists to conceive and deliver weekly playgroup sessions aimed at children under 5 and their parents/carers. Each project will run over two school terms, with the first commission starting in September 2025, and the second from April 2026.

Sessions take place at Hamara Healthy Living Centre. Located in Beeston Hill, the Centre is one of the largest ethnic minority organisations in the voluntary and community sector in Leeds. Beeston Hill is a diverse area of the inner city, a priority area for Leeds City Council and one of the 10% most socially and economically deprived areas in Leeds. The playgroup is open to all families with children under 5.



The playgroup is part of Yorkshire Contemporary's [Inside Out](#) programme, focused on supporting creative play for children and families in Beeston and Beeston Hill. It forms part of the organisation's artistic strategy of supporting continuous play, curiosity and creativity for people from all walks and stages of life.

The playgroup takes place during term time on Wednesday mornings from 9.30am – 12.30pm. It is drop-in, with families typically staying between 30 minutes and 3 hours, sometimes whilst using other services Hamara offers.

We are looking for artists or creative practitioners with or without formal arts training to create a playful and engaging programme of sessions that young children can enjoy with their parents/carers. The sessions should be fun, social, inclusive, playful, relaxed and inviting. The sessions could be structured with planned activities or a space for free-play provided they are suited to an informal setting where different families may attend each week. We are open to different ideas and ways of working with early years. This opportunity is suited to a practitioner with experience and/or interest in working with children and families. It would also be useful to have an understanding of the Beeston Hill area and the communities that Hamara Healthy Living Centre supports.

The Playgroup has been running since January 2025. Previously commissioned artist projects include Beatrice Lee Knowles' [Splat Mat](#) and Thahmina Begum's [Let's Play!](#).



Practical Information

- There are two commissions to be awarded to two different artists. The first commission takes place September 2025 to April 2026 (autumn and spring term). The second commission takes place April 2026 to December 2026 (summer and autumn term)
- Collectives and duos are welcome to apply but the available fee will remain the same
- The Playgroup takes place at Hamara Healthy Living Centre, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 6RD on Wednesdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm, during term-time only
- Sessions are free, drop-in and aim to engage 5-10 children and their families each week
- The selected artists will plan and facilitate the playgroup sessions each week. The artist's fees have been planned on this basis
- We understand you may have other commitments, and as such two absences can be accommodated. If any dates pose a problem please indicate when applying
- The selected artists will be supported by Sophie Bullen, Assistant Curator, and wider Yorkshire Contemporary team. They will work with you to develop your idea and on the practical delivery of the sessions
- Parents and carers must stay with their children at all times. Sessions are also staffed by Yorkshire Contemporary
- Sessions are held on the ground floor of Hamara Healthy Living Centre in a multi use space, measuring 5.4 x 9.6m. The room is carpeted, with a suspended ceiling and concertina doors forming one wall when closed. Please see the images below
- Activities should be designed to be set up and packed away in 30 minutes, by two people. Cupboard storage measuring 1.4 x 1.3 x 1.1m is available between sessions

- Hamara is a vibrant centre which responds to the needs of the community. The activity needs to be flexible to changing environments, such as items stored in the room, visitors, noise and events happening elsewhere in the building
- The artists will need an enhanced DBS, this will be paid for and organised by Yorkshire Contemporary



Budget

Each commission has a fee of £5,000 inclusive of planning and delivery, with an additional materials budget of £1,500 which is managed by Yorkshire Contemporary.

Outcomes

Inside Out is funded by the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund. The Playgroup strand has these aims:

- Children and families will enjoy new, high-quality opportunities for play and creative expression
- Young families will form new relationships and friendships in the local community
- Children and families will report feeling less isolated and will be more willing to join other activities locally and will self-initiate opportunities for play and shared social time

Application Process

If you are interested in applying for this opportunity, please complete a brief application via the Google Form below. The form will ask you to enter the following information:

- A brief statement about your work (max 200 words)
- A brief statement about the project you wish to create (max 200 words)
- Upload your CV and/or input a web link
- Upload up to 5 images of previous projects or supporting images
- To indicate which commission periods you are available, and if there are any dates you are not available
- Confirm you have completed an equal opportunities monitoring form (link in the application form)

Deadline for application submission: **1.00pm, Monday 16th June**

Complete your application form [here](#).

Four people will be invited to present a developed proposal in an interview to be held on Thursday 3rd July. A fee will be provided for this work, with more information on the process to be communicated in due course.

Alternative Formats

If you'd like this open call in any other format, please email Sophie Bullen, sophie.bullen@yorkshirecontemporary.org, or call 07440295257. We will also accept applications as audio or video recordings (5 mins in total). Please save these as an MP4, titled '[Your Name] 2025 Hamara Open Call', and send them via WeTransfer to: sophie.bullen@yorkshirecontemporary.org.

Online Information Event

An online information event will be held on Tuesday 3rd June, from 12.30 – 1.30pm. This is a chance to learn more about the opportunity and ask any questions about the commission.

You can sign up for the session [here](#). A link will be emailed an hour before the session begins.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the commission, please contact Sophie Bullen, sophie.bullen@yorkshirecontemporary.org.

About Yorkshire Contemporary

Yorkshire Contemporary is an arts organisation based in Leeds. We work across the region creating exciting opportunities for people to experience ambitious and inspiring contemporary art for free, through exhibitions, commissions and public programmes. Artist-centred in all we do, we provide professional development activities for early career artists, creating national and international networks. We champion art and play, supporting our communities to be creative.

About Hamara Healthy Living Centre

Hamara delivers a wide range of culturally sensitive services across health and wellbeing, youth engagement, older people's programmes, learning disabilities, education, employment, and training. They also run a community café, deliver food support, and host a variety of community development initiatives, all aimed at improving quality of life and promoting social inclusion.

Image Credits

1. Beatrice Lee Knowles *Splat Mat*. Credit Ronnie Danaher
2. Thahmina Begum *Let's Play!*. Credit Rhian Cooke
3. Hamara Centre. Credit Yorkshire Contemporary
4. Hamara Centre. Credit Yorkshire Contemporary
5. Beatrice Lee Knowles *Splat Mat*. Credit Ronnie Danaher

