Applause Youth Dance Festival

Marketplace & Community Performance Application Guide

This guide is for **stallholders, artists, organisations, businesses and community performers** who are interested in being part of the **Applause Youth Dance Festival Marketplace 2027**.

Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 February 2027, Albany Theatre, Coventry, CV5 6JQ.

The marketplace is an opportunity to connect young people with the wider dance and creative industries, introducing young dancers to new opportunities and helping them to discover different pathways into dance and creative careers.

Priority will be given to applications that offer **meaningful opportunities for young people**, support progression into dance and the creative industries, and who demonstrate a commitment to **inclusion & accessibility.**

1. What is Applause Youth Dance Festival?

Applause Youth Dance Festival (AYDF) is the Midlands regional platform for U.Dance, led by Fabric in partnership with the host theatre.

The festival takes place each year and alternates between the East and West Midlands.

Across one weekend**, up to 20 youth dance groups and performers** come together to celebrate young people's dance.

The festival includes:

- Youth dance performances
- Workshops
- Industry talks and panel discussions
- A dance and creative careers marketplace
- Opportunities to meet artists and creative professionals
- Information about training, education and career pathways

Each evening, the festival concludes with performances from the selected groups and soloists on the main stage.

2. What is U.Dance?

U.Dance is a national programme led by One Dance UK, creating dance performance opportunities for children and young people across England.

3. Who can apply for the marketplace?

We welcome applications from a wide range of organisations, artists, practitioners and businesses.

This could include:

- Colleges and universities
- Dance companies
- Alternative education providers
- Independent artists
- Youth and community organisations
- Dancewear and clothing brands
- Youth service providers
- Creative and cultural organisations
- Organisations working in health and wellbeing
- Anyone with a strong connection to dance, creativity or youth engagement

This list is not exhaustive. If you have something that could be useful, inspiring or interesting for young people, we'd love to hear from you.

Community performances

We also welcome community performance groups from across a wide range of dance styles, including:

Afro dance, Bharatanatyam, Bollywood, Ballet, Commercial, Contemporary, Dancehall, Hip Hop, Jazz, Latin Tap or Musical theatre – this list is not exhaustive, and we are open to all dance forms.

We particularly encourage applications from marketplace stallholders and performance groups that include, support or provide visibility for disabled dancers and young people with physical or Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

- Stallholders will be provided with a standard size Tressel table and two chairs
- Community performances will have access to sound system and stage/performance space, dimensions TBC
- Microphone and stand will be provided for presentations

4. What are the benefits of taking part?

Being part of the AYDF Marketplace is a chance to connect with young people and the wider dance community, while also raising awareness of what you do.

Taking part in the AYDF Marketplace you the opportunity to connect with a new audience of young dancers, parents/carers, group leaders and youth workers, to raise visibility of your organisation practice or to promote their opportunities. It is also a chance to meet other artists and organisations, build connections across the Midlands, and inspire young people by sharing different pathways into dance and the creative industries.

By taking part, you can:

- Reach a new audience of young dancers, disabled young people, parents, teachers and youth workers
- Raise your profile and introduce people to your organisation, business or practice
- Promote your opportunities, such as classes, courses, training, auditions, jobs or programmes
- Build connections with artists, organisations and creative professionals across the Midlands
- Meet potential future participants, audiences and collaborators
- Share your experience and inspire young people thinking about a future in dance or the creative industries
- Try out new ideas through interactive activities, demonstrations or taster sessions
- Be part of a regional celebration of youth dance and contribute to the wider dance community

We see the marketplace as a **two-way opportunity**: young people get to discover new ideas, people and opportunities, while stallholders get the chance to connect with a new and engaged audience.

5. What could you offer?

We want the marketplace to be more than just a collection of stalls.

It should be a space where young people can discover something new, ask questions, try things out and find opportunities.

Your offer could include:

- Information about your organisation or practice
- A creative activity
- A demonstration
- A taster workshop
- A hands-on activity
- A creative challenge
- Interactive technology
- A mini performance
- The opportunity to meet and talk to professionals
- Information about training or education
- Information about careers and opportunities

Think about what a young person will experience when they visit your stall or activity.

6. What are we looking for?

Relevance to young people

Your offer should be engaging and appropriate for:

- Young dancers aged 11–19
- Disabled young people up to age 25
- Parents and carers
- Dance group leaders
- Youth and support workers

Think about what would make a young person stop, get involved and want to find out more about you.

Career and progression opportunities

We are interested in opportunities that help young people understand the different routes into dance and the creative industries.

This could include:

- Dance training and education
- Further and higher education
- Apprenticeships
- Vocational training
- Professional dance careers
- Freelance careers
- Creative industry opportunities

We also want to highlight that there are **many different careers behind and alongside dance and performance**.

Different creative careers

We are keen to showcase the wide range of roles available across dance and the creative industries.

This could include:

- Choreography
- Dance teaching
- Producing
- Production and stage management
- Lighting and sound
- Costume and design
- Arts administration
- Marketing and communications
- Community arts and participation
- Health and wellbeing

7. Make it interesting!

Young people are more likely to engage when they **can do something rather than just read information.**

Where possible, think about including:

- Hands-on activities
- Demonstrations
- Taster sessions
- Creative challenges
- Interactive technology
- Opportunities to meet professionals
- Activities that encourage conversation and questions

You don't need to create something complicated. **A simple, engaging activity can be just as effective.**

8. Local and national creative providers

We want young people to discover opportunities both close to home and further afield.

We are interested in hearing from:

- Local dance schools and youth companies
- Regional arts organisations
- National dance organisations and agencies
- Colleges and universities
- Industry networks
- Creative organisations, practitioners and employers

9. Wellbeing and personal development

Dance is about more than performance and careers.

We are also interested in opportunities that support young people's wider development, including:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Physical health and wellbeing
- Confidence building
- Leadership
- Youth voice
- Advocacy
- Personal development

10. Inclusion and accessibility

We want the marketplace to feel welcoming and accessible to everyone.

Please consider:

- How you can welcome young people from different backgrounds
- Whether your materials and activities are accessible
- How you represent different communities and experiences
- Whether there are different ways for young people to take part
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We particularly welcome organisations working in **inclusive dance and disability arts.**

11. How to apply

If you are interested in being part of the **AYDF Marketplace 2027**, please complete the application form via the link below:

Click/tap here to be taken to the online application form.

Please give us as much information as possible about:

- Who you are
- What you offer
- What young people will be able to experience
- How your offer connects to dance, creativity, careers or wellbeing
- Any practical or access requirements

12. What happens next?

After the application deadline, the AYDF team will review and shortlist applications.

Applications open: Monday 5 October 2026
Application deadline: Monday 7 December 2026
Notification date: Week commencing - Monday 14 December 2026

Shortlisted applications will then be considered by a youth panel, who will help make the final selection of marketplace stallholders and community performance slots.

If you have any further questions, please get in touch with the Jerry from the AYDF team. We'd much rather have a conversation and help you develop your idea

Email: Jerry@fabric.dance
Telephone: 0333 091 3782

Alternatively, you can book a place on our AYDF Marketplace webinar by emailing Jerry@fabric.dance

Webinar Dates

Wednesday 4 November 6.30 - 7.30pm
Thursday 5 November 12-1pm