Youth-Led Artist's Commission Call

Artswork in partnership with Cowes Enterprise College (CEC) is looking to commission a local professional creative to work with students to redesign the Sensory Room at the school.

Up to £5000.00 is available for this work, to include the artist's time, materials, installation costs, travel, expenses and VAT. In putting forward their proposal, it is for the artist to determine how the budget is allocated to deliver the proposed project.

Deadline: 10:00 Thursday 3 December 2026

Context

The Young Cultural Changemakers Programme is putting creative place-making power in the hands of young people. Young people across the southeast are empowered to lead on significant creative projects in their local area, transforming their lives and those of their neighbours. Working with local communities and with a range of partners, we are listening to the views, experiences and ideas of children and young people and supporting them to explore creative ways to make change happen in their areas.

Artswork has secured funding from #BeeWell to support students to transform the Sensory Room at Cowes Enterprise College. In their own words, the students say they want a space for:

- Emotional regulation and reflection
- People who are stressed and overwhelmed
- Neurodivergent students

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- Showing acceptance and acknowledgement of the need for comfort and to 'step back'
- Students who need a place to be calm and relax

Brief

The chosen artist will work with students in 8 workshops during January and February 2027 to develop a design for the room. The design should:

- Be developed in workshop sessions with a group of up to 20 in such a way that the final installation can be completed in three days
- Incorporate ideas from the wider school community

In addition:

- The students say the design should create a space that feels: inclusive, calm and safe, comfy, comforting, spiritual, caring, and a 'judge-free zone'. It should 'bring colour into the school' and 'make the school more comforting'
- The students would like the design to be mural based, but say it could include other design element e.g. projected images
- The design themes are not fixed, but students have suggested: nature, stars, maritime, animals, beach sand, shells and should use calming colours
- The space is small, but the students would like consideration given to including calming activities e.g. colouring / drawing, fidget toys, a sensory wall, music / headphones
- The students say the design should **not** include triggering material or mirrors

The artist will support the students to achieve digital badges in areas such as Communication and Teamwork.

Proposed timeline and dates for sessions

10:00 Thursday 3 December 2026	Deadline for artists' applications
Friday 4 December 2026	Shortlisted Artists contacted

08:50 onwards Tuesday 8 December	Selection session with shortlisted artists who will pitch their ideas / students choose who they want to work with
January / February 2027	8 artist-led workshops to develop the design and incorporate ideas from whole school engagement
23-25 March 2027	Installation, painting of the mural
April 2027	Celebration event (date tbc)

The applicant artist(s) may suggest amendments to the timeline in their proposal, but the endpoint for the installation and completion of the commission is fixed.

Intellectual Property

The commission is a co-creation between the creative(s) and the young cultural changemakers. Legal title and ownership of the work is retained by the creative(s) until payment of the final instalment of the fee is made. Once payment has been made, ownership of the work will transfer to Cowes Enterprise College.

The creative(s) retains the right to be credited in any communications, photographs, film, promotional materials or reproduction in any media. Any reproduction or media is guaranteed for non-commercial purposes.

Contracting

The successful artist(s) will be issued a Contract for the work. Payment will be made in two instalments, one on commencement and one on completion.

Requirements

- The artist will be responsible for their own insurance and must have Public Liability Insurance cover of at least £5million whilst working on the project and for six years after its completion. It is the responsibility of the Artist to ensure that any individual or organisation they work with or who is involved

with the installation has Public Liability Insurance cover of at least £5million on the same terms.

- The commissioned artist(s) must hold an up-to-date DBS check. Applicants are advised to obtain basic checks (completed within the last 6 months) and to confirm this is in place as part of their proposal submission. Basic checks can be obtained here: https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record. A further Enhanced DBS check will be required as part of any Contract for this work.
- Approval of the final designs will be dependent on the artist's ability to demonstrate that the works meets all health and safety, maintenance, technical and durability considerations.
- The proposed design should have a minimum lifespan of 12 years
- Where relevant, materials should be vandal-resistant and cleanable as required by the setting in which the artwork is installed.
- Artswork prioritises second-hand materials and paints and solvents that do not have a negative impact on the environment. We ask you to source materials in line with our ethical and environmental procurement policy.
- As part of this contract and before commencing work with young people for this project, the artist must undertake training in the delivery of Artswork's digital badges that form part of the Young Cultural Changemakers programme.

Artist Specification

We are seeking a creative or creatives who can fulfil the following criteria to demonstrate their ability to engage meaningfully with the process as well as to create an outstanding final piece of design. These criteria will be scored as the basis of awarding the commission:

- A proven track record working with children and young people and in sharing skills with them
- Experience working collaboratively with a broad range of community partners
- A proven track record in substantive community consultation processes resulting in clear community ownership of the finished piece

- Demonstrable experience creating excellent, diverse art works that stimulate engagement with public and community groups especially children and young people
- Experience working in diverse materials and media to respond to the needs of specific places, communities and briefs
- A defined relationship to Isle of Wight. The successful artist will be based in or near the place-making area and be able to complete the work without long distance travel
- Significant track record of delivering commissioned art successfully to time and to budget
- Artist(s) must be available to work with the students on the dates and at the times set out above (though some amendments may be possible)
- Delivery of at least two Artswork digital badges will be part of this programme

Artswork aims to engage artists and facilitators that are representative of the communities and children and young people we support. We expect our team and those working on our behalf to commit to our Anti-Discrimination Charter which can be accessed via our website.

To submit a proposal

To apply please send a short (2p A4 maximum) expression of interest responding to the Artist Specification above and a CV to include up to 5 images / website link.

Applications must be received by email to petarainford@artswork.org.uk by **10:00 Thursday 3 December 2026**. Applicants will be scored against the criteria above by the selection panel.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to present their ideas to the students on **Tuesday 8 December from 8.50am at Cowes Enterprise College, Crossfield Avenue, Cowes PO31 8HB**. Please let us know if we can offer any access support to facilitate your attendance.

Thank you very much for your interest.
www.artswork.org.uk