

National Festival of Making: Open Call for Festival Workshops

We're inviting artists, makers, creatives and facilitators to submit workshop proposals for the National Festival of Making weekend on the 4th & 5th July 2026.

Key Details:

- **Festival Dates:** 4th and 5th July 2026 - *you must be available for both dates*
- **Festival Times:** 11 am - 5 pm
- **Open to:** Artists/Makers/Creatives/Collectives/Musicians/STEAM Leaders/Facilitators
- **Budget:** Varied, dependent on day-rate and material costs - *we ask you to supply an estimated budget as part of your proposal*
- **Deadline for applications:** 9 am on Monday 8th December 2025



About:

The National Festival of Making is a unique celebration of making, from the kitchen table to the factory floor. Presenting a programme of work that combines Art, Manufacturing, Making and Communities, we commission local and national artists to create world-class works, a year-round programme and a participatory FREE FAMILY festival for all to enjoy.

The National Festival of Making weekend will return to Lancashire on 4th & 5th July 2026, filling the streets of Blackburn with free participatory making opportunities, workshops, performances, talks, exhibitions, markets and more.

The festival is recognised as a place where makers deliver an extraordinary range of workshops for all ages. Workshops make up the largest part of our programme, offering our audience the opportunity to take part in high-quality making experiences and explore new skills and materials.

Whether coming with the family or on a solo trip, the programme is packed with opportunities for intergenerational making, discovering an artists' practice, or contemporary takes on heritage skills.

To learn more about our work, visit www.festivalofmaking.co.uk and www.artinmanufacturing.co.uk



The Workshop Brief:

We work closely with some of the most skilled, exciting and contemporary artists and makers locally and nationally through our festival workshop programme. Often, artists adapt their practice to suit the drop-in family-festival, or we offer opportunities for participants to take part in longer, slower workshop experiences. Every step of the way, we consider how both the artist and participant can have the best experience.

We would like to hear from artists/makers/creatives of all kinds with an outline of what they would like to deliver as part of the 2026 festival workshop programme.

We are looking for **imaginative** and **distinctive** ideas that inspire and engage our **multi-generational audiences**, from early years through to adults.

Previous festival workshops have included pottery throwing, screen-printing, food making, STEAM activities, traditional bookbinding, music making, stitching, woodworking and more. Workshops have also explored the region's manufacturing history, specific art & design movements (such as the Bauhaus and the Arts & Crafts movement), or local architecture and design.

Most of the workshops are drop-in (running from 11 am - 5 pm with a 30 minute break) however we also programme bookable workshops which last for up to 2 hours and repeat throughout the weekend.

When curating our programme, we ensure there is a balanced mix of:

- Diverse making skills
- Drop-in / sign-up-on-the-day / bookable workshops
- Workshops led by local and national artists
- Workshops designed for a range of audiences, including Early Years, children, teens, adults, and multi-generational groups
- Workshops using a vast array of materials
- Workshops with a variety of outcomes i.e. in some workshops, participants make something to take away, in others, they collaborate and contribute to the making of something

Whilst not a requirement, we encourage artists to consider the impact they can have on the environment, whether through the materials they plan to use, or the message they want to share with participants.

Practical Information & Budget

Through this open call, we expect to commission between 6-8 new workshops, which will complement our developing programme.

Budget: Varied, dependent on day-rate and material costs - *we ask you to supply an estimated budget as part of your proposal*

- All budgets should include a breakdown and are to include artist fees, materials and travel expenses.
- Workshops may take place indoors or in gazebos/marquees. We will discuss your specific space requirements if your idea is taken forward.
- Workshops are to run all day 11 am-5 pm or at bookable times throughout the day.
- Workshops usually accommodate between 6-12 participants at once. We have a large audience and encourage facilitators to be prepared for a high volume of workshop participants.
- A detailed risk assessment and proof of Public Liability Insurance of £5m will be required 4 weeks before the festival.

We welcome applications from both established and emerging artists and makers. We will support individuals with exciting workshop ideas to make their ideas feasible, where possible.



How to Apply

We aim to avoid the necessity for artists and makers to provide extensive information. As part of the open call we request 1-2 pages including:

- A brief outline of your workshop idea
- A breakdown of your budget, including artist fees, materials and travel expenses
- The target audience for your workshop (e.g. early years / family groups / adults)
- Details of any previous experience delivering workshops
- Relevant images or links to your work e.g. Instagram/website.

Please email the above to applications@festivalofmaking.co.uk

Deadline for applications: 9 am on Monday, 8th December

We will be in touch regarding your application on or before **26th January 2026**.

Please note, our office will be closed from the 17th December to 5th January and we will be unable to respond to queries during this time.

If you have any questions regarding this opportunity, please get in touch with us. If you would like the application information in a different format, or to discuss alternative ways to submit an application, please email applications@festivalofmaking.co.uk. We are open to many alternative ways to submit including video/audio recordings of workshop outlines.

Festival of Making CIC's aim is that our workforce, contributors and partners are representative of the diverse society we live in and that each individual feels respected, supported and able to give their best. We encourage applications from all backgrounds and communities and welcome discussions about specific individual requirements. Please contact us on the details above, or by emailing Daisy on daisy@decopublique.co.uk