

Paisley Arts Festival

Associate Programmer

Recruitment Pack

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Contract Details

Position: Associate Programmer

Contract: Freelance Temporary Assignment

Timeframe: August/Sep 2026 – April 2027

Fee: £14,000

Deadline for submissions: June 20th 5pm

Internal Contact: Christine Martin

christine.martin@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Brief

OneRen are seeking a dynamic and creative Freelance Arts Festival Programmer to join our team to programme the first edition of OneRen's newest festival Paisley Arts Festival taking place between 27th – 29th March 2026.

The role of the Associate Programmer is to:

- Curate an ambitious, diverse and unique festival programme of performances and events across OneRen's cultural venues Paisley Arts Centre and Paisley Town Hall, using both indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Collaborate to programme work at national level whilst showcasing local artists.
- Ensure the festival programme connects strongly with place to create meaningful engagement with Renfrewshire communities and beyond, offering a platform for high quality work that will appeal to a diverse range of audiences.

The programmer will be bursting with ideas, contacts, be able to bring experience of venue and festival programming and a wide network of contacts nationally across multiple genres.



Festivals Strategy

Paisley Arts Festival is a 3-day programme across performance, music and visual arts, to be launched in March 2026.

The festival programme should take inspiration from Paisley's unique stories, culture and locations where possible, animating the town centre, physically connecting the newly transformed cultural venues through a unique and unexpected programme of activity and experiences, that create a platform for a diverse range of performers/artists to have an impact that will ripple throughout Scotland and beyond.

Audiences will experience the town in new and inspiring ways, access high quality, relevant cultural activity, discover the arts through carefully curated programming, participate in creative activity and immersive events and engage with new and challenging ideas.

Paisley Arts Festival will take its place alongside three of Paisley and Renfrewshire's most vibrant cultural celebrations, forming a powerful tapestry of creativity and community spirit. It joins the much-loved Paisley Book Festival, now in its 6th successful year of celebrating the written word; the brand-new Paisley Comedy Festival, lighting up the town with laughter and world-class stand-up talent; and the magical Winter Festival, which brings people together with its joyful mix of pantomime, craft workshops, and festive films.

Together, these festivals showcase the rich cultural heartbeat of the region, bold, inclusive, and bursting with inspiration.



Festivals Strategy

Vision

To be Scotland's leader in diverse and radical festival programming, enriching communities through creativity and celebration.

Mission

To present an ambitious annual programme of festivals that provide a platform for local and national artists across a wide range of genres that connects with the place and people of Renfrewshire but reaches far and beyond.



Aims

- To celebrate Renfrewshire's rich history and contemporary culture through dynamic, diverse and unexpected programmes.
- To provide a platform for local and national artists to showcase their work and collaborate with local artists, communities and audiences.
- Grow audiences for Festivals programme as well as visitor numbers to Paisley's cultural venues and the town centre.
- To raise the profile of Paisley and Renfrewshire as a place where outstanding cultural events happen.
- Develop sustainability through all areas of the festival.

Role Requirements

The Associate Programmer should have:

- Proven experience in arts festival/venue programming across theatre, dance and music predominantly.
- Strong organisational and project management skills.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal abilities.
- Wide range of contacts and networks across multiple genres.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Creative thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Knowledge of current trends in the arts and cultural sector.
- An ability to maximise commercial opportunities to support the festivals financial sustainability.



Key Responsibilities:

- Partner with the festival steering group and management group to develop an agreed theme that meets the vision of the festival.
- Deliver a programme that meets OneRen's Festivals aims and objectives as well as the income and audience targets for the festival.
- Research, curate, plan and deliver a high-quality, unique and diverse programme ensuring a balanced mix of artistic disciplines that aligns with the festivals theme and objectives and reflects Renfrewshire's unique culture, stories, heritage and venues.
- Collaborate with local and national artists, producers, theatre companies and other stakeholders to curate engaging and innovative content.
- Manage logistics, including scheduling, venue arrangements, and technical requirements with the support of OneRen's Project Producer and wider steering group, ensuring appropriate spaces are utilised to maximise audience engagement.
- Partner with the Project Producer to ensure the smooth development and delivery of the festival digital events.
- Programme a family day, that is coproduced, with support from OneRen's Project Producer.
- Liaise with OneRen teams to programme within budget, ensure accurate budgeting and comprehensive contracting arrangements.
- Liaise closely with OneRen's Marketing team over audience segments to enable the delivering of the marketing strategy for the festival.
- Liaise with OneRen's Venues and Technical teams to ensure events run smoothly and professionally, maximising the experience of audiences and contributors.
- Attend and actively participate in regular programme progress meetings. Ensure resources are deployed to ensure maximum coverage and income
- Contribute the overall monitoring and evaluation of the success of the festival and provide recommendations for future improvements.
- Liaise with OneRen teams on the output and opportunities from the visual arts residency.
- Liaise with internal programming teams on content and opportunities ensuring the visual artist in residence output is a key element of the festival programme.
- Be able to attend in person meetings, site meetings and be present for the duration of the festival.
- Hold Public Liability Insurance to the minimum value of £5million.
- Build the foundations for the festival programme for future years.



Key Targets and Deliverables

- **Audience numbers:**
5000 approx.
- **Number of events across the festival:**
15 approx.

The programme should include the following elements, however there is flexibility within this:

- Free Family Day (including indoor and outdoor work, and new commissions where possible)
- Multi-Disciplinary Open Call for events, screenings, workshops
- Theatre and Music performances across Paisley Arts Centre and Paisley Town Hall spaces
- At least 3 x headline events of national profile at Paisley Town Hall
- Platform local artists and stories

Key dates

- **Sep 2025:**
Festival theme and programme strands identified and agreed with OneRen
- **Nov 2025:**
Draft Programme submitted to OneRen
- **Dec 2025:**
Final Programme to be submitted to OneRen
- **Dec 2025:**
Marketing collateral proof deadline
- **Jan 2026:**
Festival Programme announcement /event
- **March 27th – 29th:**
Festival dates



Submission Process:

Please provide a CV and a written statement (max 4 x A4 pages) no later than June 20th 5pm, outlining specifically:

- Your approach to programming the festival
- Who would you seek to partner with and what artists/performers would you approach?
- What would the first edition of the Paisley Arts Festival look like?
- How would you ensure the programme appeals to Renfrewshire audiences and beyond while being rooted in place?

We welcome applications from global majority candidates and from people that identify as being from other marginalised communities. Applications are welcome from freelancers from all backgrounds including those with disabilities and freelancers who have 'care experience'.

OneRen is a diverse and inclusive workplace, and we want to help you demonstrate your full potential whatever type of assessment is used.

If you require any adjustments to our process, please let us know via OneRen_hr@renfrewshire.gov.uk

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the role please contact: Christine Martin christine.martin@renfrewshire.gov.uk



Assessment Process

A panel of staff from OneRen will read proposals and related documents.

In order to create a shortlist, the panel will assess the application upon the following essential criteria:

- Artistic vision (Relevance to festival objectives, quality and ambition, diversity and inclusion)
- Professional skills and experience
- Collaboration
- Impact and feasibility

Interviews will be scheduled for w/c 14 July.

The selected freelancer will be asked to provide a testimonial from previous relevant work.

OneRen is the local charitable trust in Renfrewshire providing culture, leisure and sporting opportunities to help people enjoy active and healthy lives.

