

Are you a theatre maker or company with an idea for a new piece of drama/ theatre you want to develop and tour to rural and community venues?

Background

Create Tour Connect (CTC) is a national touring partnership; commissioning, developing and touring new theatre across the rural and small-scale touring network in England. Since 2024, the project has demonstrated how collaborative shared practice and a coordinated approach can help address key challenges facing artists and venues across the country.

Now in its second phase, 18 partner organisations representing 4 regional consortia will be commissioning and touring 3 new adult theatre productions in 2028-2029. Reaching audiences across a diverse range of small-scale spaces including village halls, community venues, libraries, and locally led studios, CTC will offer a supported opportunity for new contemporary theatre to tour nationally.

CTC is led by South East based arts charity Applause Rural Touring and supported by Arts Council England. The consortia are made up of the following organisations:

- **Northern Consortia** – Spot On, Cheshire Rural Touring Arts (CRTA), Highlights, Blaize (Artery & Live Lincs), Arts Out West, Rural Arts on Tour.
- **Southwest Consortia** – Artsreach, Air in G, Beaford Arts, Carn to Cove, Take Art, Villages in Action, Pound Arts.
- **Southeast Consortia** – Applause, Creative Arts East
- **Midlands Consortia**- Live & Local, Arts Alive, Black Country Touring

From 2027-29 the following commission opportunities for a 3 hander + tech will be available.

- **South West / South East** – commission and touring Spring 2028 (call out below)
- **Midlands** - commission and touring Autumn 2028 (call out Spring 2027)
- **Northern** – commission and touring Spring 2029 (call out Autumn 2027)

Further information: [Create Tour Connect - Applause Rural Touring](#)

Applications are now open for artists and companies from the South West / South East with a deadline of **1 November 2026**. The commission for the **South East / South West** will be led by regional consortia lead Applause Rural Touring supported by South West lead Artsreach.

Commission opportunity

- Proposal for a new piece of theatre relevant to contemporary rural and community adult audiences (3 hander + 1 tech).
- Funded (minimum) 36 date tour across the Network (late Jan – early May 2028)
- The company or artist must be based in the South East / West region of England as defined by Arts Council regions.
- The company or artist must demonstrate understanding of or experience in developing work for and touring to community spaces
- Availability to develop a new show in 2027 and tour across the network in Spring 2028

Budget:

Development: £36,000 (inclusive) for the creation and production of a tour ready 3 hander theatre show.

Community engagement: £1,500 towards working with a community group/s as part of the development.

Marketing/Publicity: £3,500 to support marketing and the development and supply of publicity materials.

To include:

- Initial imagery and copy to market shows
- Production shots and trailers
- Tour programme
- Website and social media development
- Print (posters/flyers) for venues
- Digital artwork

Associated Touring: The company will tour in Spring 2028 fulfilling a national tour of a minimum of 36 dates over a 9-week period organised by the regional touring partners. The touring partners will co-ordinate bookings and will contract the company directly for individual tour dates. These will be booked regionally to ensure sustainability and keeping travel costs to a minimum. Once tour dates are booked, it will be the responsibility of the artist/company to liaise with each individual venue to manage the booking.

Touring fees: £57,800 (inclusive) to cover all costs for four people on tour (3 + 1 tech) to deliver a 36-date (min) national tour.



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This will be paid as follows:

- £29,000 to be paid prior to the commencement of the tour from project funding.
- £28,800 will be paid by the regional partners on completion of tour dates. Each partner scheme will be responsible for contracting individual bookings, and the artist/company will invoice the scheme directly for their contribution towards fees.

All fees stated are inclusive of VAT.

Access support – Artists will be asked to provide details of any access support required.

Additional support – Artists may include in-kind support in their development fees where they have existing relationships with local partners. We do not expect any additional funding to form part of this agreement.

Timescale:

- Development period (during 2027/8)
 - Initial imagery and copy to be delivered by March 27 for schemes to publicise the show to host venues.
- Touring – 36 dates (minimum) from Feb – April 2028

Application process

Deadline: **1 November 2026**

Shortlisted interviewees informed: w/c **23 November 2026**

Interviews (online): w/c **30 November 2026**

Decision: **by mid-December 2026**

Draft publicity assets for tour menus: **March 2027**

The successful artist/company will be selected by a panel of representatives from the commissioning organisations. A shortlist will be selected from the received applications who will be invited for an informal online chat to discuss your proposal further before a final decision is made.

How to apply

Applications will be via the [Eventotron](#) online platform.

If you are already registered with **Eventotron** you can apply to [Create Tour Connect 2 – South East/West](#). Otherwise, you will need to [register](#) first and then apply to the season.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and welcome applications from individuals or companies, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, social



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background, religion and/or belief.

We want to hear about

- you/your company and the work you do
- your proposal and your experience or understanding of rural and community touring
- your budget and touring fees
- your approach to sustainability

If you feel more comfortable applying by video or voice recording, please contact Applause – programming@applause.org.uk for further information.

If you have any questions about this commission, call out and want to discuss your application before applying, please get in touch by emailing Sally Lampitt programming@applause.org.uk

FAQs for applicants

WHAT TYPE OF DRAMA/THEATRE ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We are looking for:

- Scripted or devised new writing, that could include physical theatre, but it should not be predominantly a circus or dance show.
- Work that resonates with rural and community audiences nationally – this does not mean we are just looking for work which reflects specific rural issues.
- Work that is developed for small-scale touring and can be adapted to multiple settings

We are **not** looking for theatre aimed at children and young people or work that has previously toured.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- artists or companies based in the South East / West region (Arts Council England definition).
- artists or companies with a track record in creating and touring theatre
- artist or companies who can demonstrate understanding of or experience in touring to community spaces
- artists or companies whose work has undergone limited R&D with no significant sharing or further development planned

- NPO's can apply, however they need to clearly demonstrate that this funding falls outside of their core/regular funding

This commission is to support new work and is not suitable for shows that have had extensive R&D and previously toured.

LENGTH OF SHOW

We are looking for work that is a minimum of 75 minutes and a maximum of 100 minutes.

Often rural venues are looking for a 'full night' of entertainment – by that they mean a show with an interval and two halves. We are open to different approaches to duration, but we are mindful that our audiences and venues have expectations of what a night out in their venues entails.

TOURING

Touring dates will be organised by the consortia leads. We will be placing work in a variety of community settings including venues that can provide very little technical or other support. We need you to be technically self-sufficient (including PA/lighting/set etc.) and to have excellent communication skills. Many of these hosts are volunteers and have no specialist theatre knowledge – you will need to be flexible, understanding and informative.

TECHNICAL

Due to the nature of rural and community touring, many of our promoters pay to hire space and therefore we expect shows to have a maximum get in time of 3 hrs and get out 1-2 hours. You will be required to adhere to this in the development of your show.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

We will also require you to support the marketing of events by creating material for social media and general PR – we will supply further information and support on what marketing assets are essential for touring schemes and venues with an agreed deadline for fulfilling requirements.

ADMINISTRATION

Artists/companies must demonstrate strong communication skills and understand the requirements around administering a 9-week tour. While tour dates will be pre-booked, companies will need to liaise with schemes and individual venues to confirm requirements and logistics.

EVALUATION

The project will be undertaking evaluation with audiences and venues. We do not expect the company to collect any evaluative data as part of the tour. They will, however, be required to supply feedback and reports on both the commission and the sustainability of the tour.

ABOUT HOSTS

Many of these hosts are volunteers and have no specialist theatre knowledge – you will need to be flexible, understanding and informative. Community hosts are passionate about supporting their local community and will often use your performance to support their own local fundraising initiatives; we would not expect companies to be asking for donations/fundraising at CTC events.

TRANSPORT

It is essential that you have the means to tour rural and isolated communities. Many of our venues are not near to regular train, bus or taxi services.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

There may be additional opportunities for in-kind support from the consortia during the development of the show (rehearsal space/venue support for scratch performances). This will be discussed with the successful company.

FEES

All fees should use industry standards and will need to be reflected in budgets and company contracts. Please only use the Artist budget template provided on Eventotron in support of your application. The template has suggested headings; all can be changed to reflect your own devising and touring processes.

PREVIOUS COMMISSIONS

Since 2024 CTC has commissioned the following regional new work

- [Wild](#) (Midlands) - Black Country Touring (toured Autumn 2025)
- [Eyes Down](#) (North) - Just Some Theatre (toured Spring 2026)
- [George and the Drag Queen](#) (South West) - Pipeline Theatre (touring Autumn 2026)
- [A Country's Tale](#) – *feasting, fighting and folk* – Out of Chaos (touring Spring 2027)