**Guidance Notes for Ambition Arena: Your Pitch, Your Summer**

**What is happening?**

Groups of young people aged 8-18 who live in Barnsley can apply for up to £3,000 to enable them to plan and run events or activities for other Under 18s during Summer 2026. The final stage of the decision about who is awarded the funding will be at a “Dragons’ Den” style event where groups pitch their ideas and local panel members decide which ones to invest in.

**Why should I get involved?**

We think young people know best when it comes to planning activities that other children and young people would like to do. So, we want you to have the chance to plan and run an activity next Summer. We hope that you will learn some new skills which could be useful if you are thinking about applying for a job, training or further education and we hope you will plan something fun that you will enjoy being involved in.

**Where is the money coming from?**

The money is from the Great Childhoods Ambition programme which is being run by Barnsley Council.

**How can I get involved?**

We’re not expecting you to do this by yourselves. All groups of young people will need a community group or charity who can host them and support them with their application. Host organisations must be able to accept the funding into their charity’s bank account, help the young people manage their budget and provide evidence of how the money was spent if requested. £200 will be paid to the community groups or charities if the team they are supporting is selected to go to the final stage, as a small contribution towards their time.

If you are a young person reading this and don’t have a connection with a community group or charity who can host you, please email [funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk](mailto:funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk) and we will try and put you in touch with someone who can help you.

**The first stage: a short online “expression of interest”**

You can work in teams of up to 8 people to create the event. Think of some different ideas between you and decide which one is your favourite. Your host organisation can help you do this. We are asking that you plan something that fits with one of the five themes for the Great Childhoods Ambition:

**1 - Belong**

Children and young people feel part of their community. We support them to have resilience and engage positively in their local area

**2 - Explore**

All children and young people have opportunities to explore and understand the wider world. Reduce the barriers to developing cultural capital and special experiences in the arts, sports and travel.

**3 - Dream**

Children and young people are inspired to think boldly about their future. We provide opportunities to learn about a wide range of careers and experiences that ensure they are ready for the world of work.

**4 - Grow**

Children and young people thrive and succeed as they grow up in Barnsley. We ensure they have opportunities to be healthy, confident and learn new things.

**5 - Connect**

Children, young people and families have access to a connected and responsive system of support. We develop digital and systematic changes to the infrastructure around them to reduce barriers to access to support.

Once you are sure what you want to do, work on the Expression of Interest. This is a short form which asks what you want to do, how you decided, and what you will need to think about next. Plan your answers carefully together before you submit the form.

The maximum you can receive for one project is £3,000, but you can apply for a lot less! Your project doesn’t have to be big or expensive to be brilliant. Think about roughly what your costs might be and give us your best estimate. You can amend this if you need to at the final stage.

Funding could be for any “reasonable” project costs. We have not included a list of these as we want you to be creative! If you are not sure whether a cost would be seen as “reasonable”, please ask your host organisation to contact [funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk](mailto:funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk) and we will have a look at what you’re suggesting. **Unfortunately you can’t use the money to pay yourselves: you will be doing this as a volunteer.**

A panel will review all of the Expressions of Interest that we receive and a maximum of 10 groups will be chosen to pitch to our panel of local “dragons”. We will let you know in December 2025 whether you have been successful in getting to the final stage.

**The Final Stage**

At the final stage, groups will pitch their ideas in person to a panel. 5 groups will pitch on the evening of Friday 27th February and 5 groups will pitch in the afternoon of Saturday 28th February. The panel will be supportive, not scary, and you will have plenty of time to prepare. Not everyone in the group needs to speak, but all will have been involved in developing the idea and contributing in different ways to getting ready for the pitch. Some groups who pitch will receive the funding they request, but other groups may not. There will be separate amounts of funding for each of the pitching sessions so it doesn’t matter if you pitch on Friday or Saturday. When all the groups have pitched on Friday 27th, the panel will decide which ones to support with their Friday funding and will announce their decisions at the end of the evening. Similarly, when all the groups have pitched on Saturday 28th, the panel will make their decisions and announce which of those groups have been successful with the Saturday budget.

Our “Dragons” are not off the TV – they are people from the local community and will be a mixture of people from local businesses, the team behind the Great Childhoods Ambition and from local charities.

**Timetable:**

• **Week of 15th Sept:** online form for Expressions of Interest goes live

• Please submit your Expression of Interest **by 9am on 1st December**

• Groups will be told if they have got through to the final stage **by 15th December** and will then have between then and the end of February to prepare their pitches.

• Final Presentations will be on **27th and 28th Feb 2026** and decisions made at the events

The groups who are awarded the funding can then prepare for their event or activity to take place.

• Grants will be sent out to the host charities early in March 2026

• The activity or event must take place in Summer 26 (from June to September). We will ask for some feedback from you about how it all went afterwards.

We look forward to hearing more about your plans!

**Final checks for Host Organisations**

**You must be able to answer YES to all of the following questions to be eligible to host a group of young people:**

|  |
| --- |
| Do you have a board or committee of at least 3 unrelated people? |
| Do you have adequate insurance in place for the activities you deliver? |
| Do you have a Children’s Safeguarding Policy in place? |
| Do you have relevant DBS checks for staff and volunteers in direct contact with young people? |
| Do you have a bank account in the name of the organization, that requires two people to authorize any payments? |
| Are you a registered charity or social enterprise?  (if you are not, please contact [funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk](mailto:funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk) to discuss further – you may still be able to work on this, we just need to talk through your circumstances) |

If you have any questions about these final checks, or anything else, please email [funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk](mailto:funding@barnsleycvs.org.uk).

A reminder that all children taking part must live in Barnsley Council’s area and projects also need to demonstrate that they fit broadly with one of the themes of the Great Childhoods Ambition:

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