

New Play Commission Call-out (Light the Blue 2027)

Aberdeen Performing Arts is seeking to commission a new play for Light the Blue 2027.

We are looking for an early career writer aged 18 – 35 who is based in or has a meaningful connection to the North-East of Scotland to create a new piece of theatre for adult audiences.

Light the Blue is our festival for and by young people, with an annual programme featuring over 1000 young and professional artists, school pupils and early career creatives from across Scotland. Through our Emerging Artist strand, the festival supports early career individuals to develop their practice, test out ideas and create new work for wide-ranging audiences. Find out more about the festival here: www.aberdeenperformingarts.com/light-the-blue

Supported by Creative Scotland through the Expanded Festivals Fund, we are delighted to offer this commission opportunity as part of Light the Blue 2027. The new production will open at the Lemon Tree in Aberdeen in June 2027 for a run of up to 1 week.

What are we looking for?

We are looking to commission a new play that is original, relevant and engaging for our audiences. There is no set theme, we are simply looking for the most exciting idea which will, with our support, become a high-quality professional production.

The play must:

- **Be an original story or one that shines a new light on a familiar story**
If the idea is based on a book, play, film, poem or anything else that is another person's intellectual property, this work must be out of copyright and should not require licensing.
- **Be driven by text and may also include other artforms**
It must be suitable for live performance and be led by text. We are not looking to commission a musical, however the eventual production may include songs and/or live music.
- **Be aimed at wide-ranging audiences**
The play should predominantly be targeted at adult audiences. Whilst we are open to ideas which are suitable for children, this is not a commission for a play for young audiences.
- **Be able to be performed by a cast of 1 – 3 and be a maximum of 60 minutes**
The writer will be commissioned under Scottish Society of Playwrights and Federation of Scottish Theatre standard play contract for a play up to 60 minutes.
- **Be able to be presented in the Lemon Tree Studio**
Find images and dimensions of the space [here](#).

The play might:

- **Resonate with North-East Scotland audiences in some way**
Whilst this isn't essential, we're interested in proposals which feel rooted in place.
- **Have undergone some development already**
If so, the play should not be fully written beyond first draft and should not have been presented in full to an audience before. We're looking to support the writer in the development of their work, not commission work that is ready to be staged.

Whilst we are initially looking to commission the work for production at Light the Blue 2027, we may also explore touring and future presentation opportunities beyond Aberdeen with the successful artist.

We are also open to alternative models including devised work created by lead artists or collectives – get in touch via the details below if you have an idea and would like to discuss suitability.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for early career playwrights who have a new story to tell and who are keen to develop their practice through a supportive commission process.

You must:

- **Be aged 18 – 35**
Whilst we recognise artists can be defined as early career at any age, this commission is open to those aged 18 – 35 due to Light the Blue being a festival for and by young people.
- **Be based in North-East Scotland or be based in Scotland with a meaningful connection to the region**
Connections to the North-East might include lived experience, family ties, creative practice, research interests, community relationships, language, culture, or an ongoing engagement with the area.
- **Be actively pursuing a career in writing for the stage or making theatre**
You must have participated in training, workshops, mentoring or creating your own work as a writer. You must have been involved in the creation of live performance work, as a writer or otherwise, in some capacity.
- **Consider yourself an early career creative**
We're looking for writers who have some experience such as scratch events, self-produced work, short runs or Fringe shows. You should not have had more than one writing commission for a play of 60 minutes or more. If you consider yourself an early career creative but have experience beyond this, please get in touch via the contact details below to allow us to assess your suitability.
- **Be able to commit to the creation of the production for a June 2027 presentation**
Please refer to the draft production timeline below and ensure you would be able to fulfil the requirements of the commission before applying.

We are committed to fostering diversity and inclusion in our industry, and we encourage applications from artists from underrepresented backgrounds.

What are we offering?

We will support the commissioned artists to realise their work through hands-on producing, production and artistic development of the piece.

The writer will be offered a fee of **£6,457.50** (SSP/FST Standard Play rate for a new play of up to 60 minutes) plus at least 4 days of rehearsal attendance at **£140** per day and 10% royalties on box office takings.

Beyond the writer's fee, the budget will support:

- 1 director fee inclusive of prep, 3 weeks rehearsal and 1 tech/production week
- 2 actor fees for 3 weeks rehearsal and 1 tech/production week
- 1 stage manager fee for 3 weeks rehearsal plus 1 tech/production week
- 3 designer fees (set & costume, lighting and sound)
- 1 additional creative fee – additional performer, movement director, assistant director or another role depending on the requirements of the production
- A small but manageable set, props, costume and tech budget

The above is a starting point for reference of the scale we are envisaging, and the budget will be adapted in response to the shape of the eventual production. For reference, the total budget will sit around £45,000 – producing, production management, script development support and use of in-house technical equipment will be covered separately.

The commissioned writer will retain copyright of the script throughout the development and production process. Aberdeen Performing Arts will be granted exclusive rights to produce and present the production for a period of up to 14 weeks at Light the Blue 2027 and across Scotland if touring opportunities arise. Any presentation opportunities beyond this would be agreed separately.

We will work collaboratively with the selected writer to assemble the best team for the production, with a focus on engaging with those based in or with a connection to the North-East.

Project Timeline

The timeline for the commission call-out is:

Activity	Date
Call-out goes live	Friday 1st July 2026
Deadline for proposals	Friday 11th September 2026, 5pm
Applicants notified of first stage outcome	by Friday 25th September 2026
Shortlist meetings	week of Monday 28th September 2026
Writer selected	by Friday 9th October 2026

The draft timeline for the commission and production is:

Activity	Date
Development of first draft and creative team assembly	October – December 2026
First draft submitted, creative team confirmed	January 2027
Development of second draft and design	February – April 2027
Show announced as part of Light the Blue 2027 programme launch	March 2027
Delivery of rehearsal draft and pre-production	late April 2027
Rehearsal period (3 weeks)	May 2027
Production opens in Lemon Tree Studio	June 2027

How to Apply

Please complete our submission form via <https://bit.ly/4w0acer> by **Friday 11th September 2026 at 5pm**. As part of the application process, we'll ask for the following:

Personal details

- Name
- Email address
- Where are you based?

Your practice

- Please let us know about your experience as a writer and/or theatre-maker (*up to 250 words*)
- What type of theatre do you like to make? (*up to 250 words*)
- If you'd like to share your website or links to any current/previous work, please do so here
- Please attach one example of your previous writing work (*this could be an extract of at least 15 pages or a complete script, something that gives us insight into your style of writing*)

The play idea

- What is the title of the play you're proposing?
- Tell us about your play idea, including the narrative, theme(s) and envisaged production style (*up to 750 words*)
- Have you written/developed any of the play already or is it an idea at this stage? (*up to 250 words*)
- If you have any ideas at this stage, please give an indication of any creatives you might want to work with to realise the production (*up to 250 words*)

Your connection to the North-East

- Tell us about your connection to the North-East of Scotland (*up to 250 words*)

Anything else?

- If there's anything else you'd like to mention that hasn't been covered above, let us know

Please note: The submission form must be submitted in one go and doesn't have a word counter, therefore we recommend preparing answers in a separate document first. A word document containing the questions can be downloaded below if useful.

Applicants are welcome to submit a video application instead of written responses to the question in this document if preferred. To do so, please send a video of no longer than 5 minutes answering the above points via WeTransfer link to jordan.blackwood@aberdeenperformingarts.com along with an example of your previous work.

If you have any questions, require additional support to apply or would like to arrange an informal chat in August ahead of applying please contact Jordan Blackwood, Light the Blue Creative Producer: jordan.blackwood@aberdeenperformingarts.com.

Selection Process

The commission panel, comprising members of the Aberdeen Performing Arts team and an experienced industry professional, will review submissions after the deadline and select 4 – 6 projects to progress to the second stage. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their submission by Friday 25th September 2026, end of day.

Shortlist meetings will take place in Aberdeen during the week commencing Monday 28th September 2026, where writers will have the opportunity to tell us more about the play, the production they envisage and the team they might want to work with. The panel will select one artist to be commissioned, with all shortlisted individuals notified of the outcome by Friday 9th October 2026.