

Swords Cultural Quarter Musician in Residence 2026

At The Carnegie

Guidelines for Applicants

Closing date for applications is Thursday 7 May 2026 at 2pm



Photo: The Carnegie, Swords

The Swords Cultural Quarter Musician in Residence 2026 Award is funded by Fingal County Council Arts Office and managed by Music Network.

Overview

We invite professional musicians to apply for a residency opportunity in 2026. One opportunity is available for a professional musician/group with a minimum of two years professional performance experience.

This opportunity is for a musician/group to create and showcase new work. New work may focus on composing and/or performing, for example to create new music and/or to develop a new collaboration.

If you are selected as the musician/group you will receive:

- €6,000
- Access to the space in The Carnegie, Swords for up to 10 days between August and October 2026
- Access to a desk space to work at The Carnegie on additional days
- Space to present one concert at The Carnegie or Swords Castle
- Space to present additional events, for example a showcase, open rehearsal or workshop.
The location for this will be discussed with the Arts Office team.

The residency dates will be agreed with the selected musicians.

Closing date for applications: Thursday 7 May 2026 at 2pm

How to apply

You should make your application online using this link.

Apply here: [Application Form](#)

If you have any trouble with the online application or have any access needs, please contact us. You can do this by email to operations@musicnetwork.ie or by telephone 01 475 0224.

We will ask you to tell us about your previous work and your ideas for your residency. This should include what you hope to achieve during your residency and how the opportunity will help you to develop as a musician/group.

You will need to fill in an application form and upload digital files that give more detail about your work.

You will need to upload:

- A document explaining in detail the ideas and activities you want to focus on during your residency
- Your CV
- Biographies of any musicians, composers mentors or other artistic collaborators you intend to work with during your residency
- Two samples of your work that show different styles or approaches. These can be audio or video samples
- A 1-minute video telling us about your proposed programme. This can be recorded on a mobile phone
- A detailed project budget
- Two letters of recommendation. These can be from teachers, mentors, organisations you have worked with or previous collaborators.

Please allow sufficient time for this and do not start making your application very close to the deadline. We cannot accept applications received after the deadline.

We will accept one application from a musician or group. You cannot make two applications.

We welcome applicants who represent the diversity of Irish society. We encourage applications from all areas of the community regardless of your gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community, or socio-economic background.

Please read all the information below before you make your application.

Who can apply?

- You can apply if you are an individual musician
- You can apply as a group. If you are applying as a group one musician should be identified at the main applicant*
- You can apply as two or more musicians who would like to collaborate. If applying as collaborators one musician should be identified as the main applicant*
- Applications are open to musicians working in any genre of music.

*The main applicant will be the point of contact for all communications regarding the application and project details. If you are selected, the main applicant will accept payments on behalf of the group or collaboration.

You must meet **all** of these requirements:

- You can apply if you, and all members of any group or collaboration applying live in or are originally from Fingal County.
- You can apply if you, and all members of any group or collaboration applying are aged 18 or over.
- You can apply if you, and all members of any group or collaboration applying have 2 years of professional performing experience.

Who cannot apply?

- You cannot apply if you have already received a Fingal Arts Office Musician in Residence award.
- Composers who don't perform cannot apply as the main applicant. They can be part of a collaboration if it leads to the awarded Musician in Residence (the main applicant) performing new work.

What will you get?

- A budget of €6,000. Budgets are inclusive of VAT.
- Access to the space in The Carnegie, Swords for up to 10 days between August and October 2026
- Access to a desk space to work at The Carnegie on additional days for 'quiet work'
- Space to present one concert at The Carnegie or Swords Castle
- Space to present additional events, for example a showcase, open rehearsal or workshop. The location for this will be discussed with the Arts Office team.
- Marketing material and PR. We will take care of any print, online PR and ticketing for your concert and events.
- A one 1-hour mentoring session with Music Network. This session will cover PR, Marketing, Social Media and/or artistic and career advice.
- Music Network staff are available throughout the residency to provide general, artistic and technical advice.

The budget is to cover:

- Your artist fee as the main applicant.
- The fees of any other musicians, composers and collaborators. You must ensure that all are fairly paid for their time spent working on this project. This should include rehearsals and performance fees.
- The fees of external mentors you would like to work with.
- Any extra expenses you might have related to the residency, for example travel or subsistence.
- Technical costs. All technical costs for example a sound engineer, videographer, recording or PA equipment rental must be covered by your budget. [More information about The Carnegie can be found here](#)
- Insurance: Public Liability Insurance costs and, if necessary, Employers Liability Insurance. Please see additional information about insurance on page 10 or contact Swords Cultural Quarter programmer at linda@lindashevlin.com for more information about insurance.

Please note that the residency budget must include all associated costs (other than marketing materials) and all details should be included in the proposal outline.

Successful applicants will be asked to complete a short report at the end of the residency.

When will residency activities take place?

Residency activities will take place between August and October 2026. Residency days may be scheduled individually or grouped together. They can be full or half days, but all activities must take place during the residency period.

Dates for all residency activities will be agreed with the successful applicants.

Locations and dates can be adjusted by agreement between the musicians and the Arts Office, depending on the availability of space

How will we select the musicians?

The applications will be assessed by a panel which will include a representative from Music Network, a representative from Fingal Arts Office, and an external individual with musical expertise. The same scoring system will be used for all applications.

The following criteria will be used to assess each application:

- **Artistic quality and track record in music performance/composition (45/100)**
The panel will assess your track record as a musician/group as shown in your application. This mark will be based on your CV, examples of previous work and letters of support. For emerging musicians, demonstrated potential will be considered.
- **Quality of your idea (30/100)**
The panel will assess your proposed programme and any information provided about musicians, composers and mentors you plan to work with (where relevant). They will also look at your ideas around public events and activities to engage with the local community and your plans for your concert.
- **Feasibility of your idea (15/100)**
The panel will assess your project budget, your approach to developing new work and working with others (where relevant). Your project budget must show that everyone involved is paid appropriately for their work.
- **Previous experience of managing similar projects and budgets (10/100)**
The panel would like to hear about previous projects and budgets you have managed to assess your experience.

Please read and consider all the criteria carefully when preparing your application. This is a competitive process, and all criteria will be assessed. Any lobbying at any stage will result in disqualification.

If none of the applications are suitable, Fingal Arts Office may use a different selection process. Fingal Arts Office may also change the number of residencies and/or the residency schedule based on the applications received.

Timeline and key dates

Online information meeting:	Tuesday 21 April 2026 at 11am
Site visit to The Carnegie:	Wednesday 22 April 2026 at 6.30pm
Deadline for applications:	Thursday 7 May 2026 at 2pm
Successful applicants informed:	May 2026
Residency activities:	August to October 2026

Information meetings

We will hold two information meetings to give interested musicians a chance to hear about the residency and what is needed for this application:

Online

There will be an online information meeting on Tuesday 21 April at 11am. This session will take place on Zoom and you can register to take part at this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IE2Uh4pJSEa7mM2-fB2HYA

A recording of the meeting will be available on Music Network's website and social media channels.

In person

There will be an in-person visit to The Carnegie, Swords with Arts Office and Music Network staff on Wednesday 22 April at 6.30pm.

Musicians will have the chance to meet the 2025 Musician in Residence, Alannah Thornburgh, and learn more about her residency experience. The site visit will be followed by a performance from the Musician in Residence 2025, and everyone is welcome to attend. To reserve a place, please email linda@lindashevin.com with "Musicians Site Visit" in the subject line.

When will I hear if my application was successful?

Music Network aims to inform applicants about decisions in **May 2026**. All notifications will be sent by email.

Can I ask for feedback?

Yes. To request feedback, email operations@musicnetwork.ie. Feedback is available for a period of 4 weeks following communication of results.

PR, Marketing and Publicity:

Musicians will be asked to work together with Music Network and Fingal Arts Office to promote the residency activities and to provide PR materials, as required, including:

- biographical material
- high resolution colour photographs in digital format
- programme information about your concerts

We will promote residency activities through our websites, e-newsletters and social media and cover any print and online PR costs associated with your concerts – you do not need to account for these costs within your residency budget.

Contact us with further questions

For further information please contact Ciarán Kilbride at operations@musicnetwork.ie or by phone 01 475 0224

Additional information

A Guide to The Carnegie for Musicians

Information about the venue, facilities available and how to access them can be found at this link. [Guide to The Carnegie for Musicians](#)

Payments

Payments to each Musician-in-Residence will be made by Music Network in two stages. Certain conditions must be met before each payment. All details will be explained in a meeting with the selected musicians.

Insurance

We must make sure that any external person or company working with us on a project such as this has insurance cover in place. If you are selected for a residency, you will need to have Public Liability Insurance in place up to a limit of €6.5 million. Public Liability Insurance covers your legal liability to pay damages to members of the public for injury, loss, or damages, which occur because of your activities. The insurance policy must indemnify (cover) Fingal County Council.

If you employ another person to work with you, you will also need Employers Liability Insurance to a limit of €13 million (this will only be needed if the person working with you does not have an insurance policy of their own). These are standard insurance policies and several companies in Ireland provide them for artistic activities.

Selected musicians must provide proof of appropriate insurance before their residency can begin.

Child Protection

The successful candidate must complete Garda Vetting if they will work with children or vulnerable people, and provide any other documents requested by Fingal Arts Office.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 applies to Fingal Arts Office. This Act gives people the right to request information held by public authorities and the right to have personal information held about them corrected or updated where the information is incomplete, incorrect, or misleading.

If you feel that any of the information you submit as part of your application is confidential or sensitive, you should let Fingal Arts Office know. You must clearly state why you think the information is confidential or commercially sensitive, and why it should not be released as part of a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

GDPR

Data protection laws mean that your personal data should generally only be stored where there is a lawful basis, such as your consent, or where there is a legal obligation. Any information you provide for this application will be held and will only remain in the ownership of Fingal Arts Office and Music Network. We will only use the information you give in your application to administer and managing the residency, and selection process (this will include an external panel member who will read your application).

You may withdraw your consent for us to keep your application information at any time by sending an email to operations@musicnetwork.ie.

Background Information

The Carnegie, Swords:

The Carnegie is a civic and creative anchor within the Swords Cultural Quarter, a community and artist production hub for making, rehearsal, experimentation and co-creation.

Swords Cultural Quarter:

Swords Cultural Quarter (SCQ) comprising Culture House, a new space due for completion in 2027 will comprise a flagship library for Fingal, theatre, gallery, Arts space and Makerspace, The Carnegie and the surrounding public realm, strives to be recognised nationally and internationally as a new kind of cultural ecosystem: a living laboratory for culture, ideas and community.

Culture House will exemplify a progressive, radical and inclusive approach to cultural practice, where artists, audiences and communities co-author the cultural life of the region. It will be known not simply as a place that presents work, but as a place that produces, provokes and nurtures culture by prioritising experimentation, long-term artistic development and meaningful civic connection

Fingal Arts Office:

Fingal Arts Office is the cultural development unit of Fingal County Council dedicated to investing in and championing the arts across the county. It supports artistic activity through strategic planning, funding schemes, bursaries, residencies, and public art programmes, and works in partnership with local artists, arts organisations, and communities to enhance access to and participation in the arts. The office also oversees two major arts centres in Fingal and delivers programmes in education, youth engagement, and professional development for artists at all career stages.

Music Network:

Music Network is Ireland's national music touring and development organisation, and was founded by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon in 1986. Making high quality live music accessible to communities throughout Ireland and helping musicians to develop fulfilling careers, Music Network's vision is that of a culture which increasingly values live music in our everyday lives, embracing it as an essential part of a healthy, vibrant society. Music Network delivers a broad range of complementary programmes including a National Touring Programme, Musician Residencies both here and abroad, Learning & Participation projects, The Music Capital Funding Scheme, Commissioning, Training Programmes and other professional development supports for musicians.

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www.fingalarts.ie www.musicnetwork.ie