



ASSOCIATES LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME 2026-27

APPLICATION PACK

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ABOUT ARTS & HOMELESSNESS INTERNATIONAL

Please note, this application pack is also available as an audio download – email hello@artshomelessint.com.

Arts & Homelessness International (AHI) works to bring positive change to people, projects and policy in homelessness, through arts and creativity. We focus on connecting and strengthening individual artists and projects and advocating for arts to be part of homelessness support and policy. We do this through international exchanges, events, research and training. We passionately believe in co-creation and 50% of our board and staff members are, or have been, homeless.

We increase creative and employment opportunities for people who are, or have been, homeless; strengthen the practice and capacity of projects; trigger changes in local homelessness policy to include the arts, and to centre the voices of people with lived experience in decision-making; and strengthen the sector, creating solidarity & momentum.

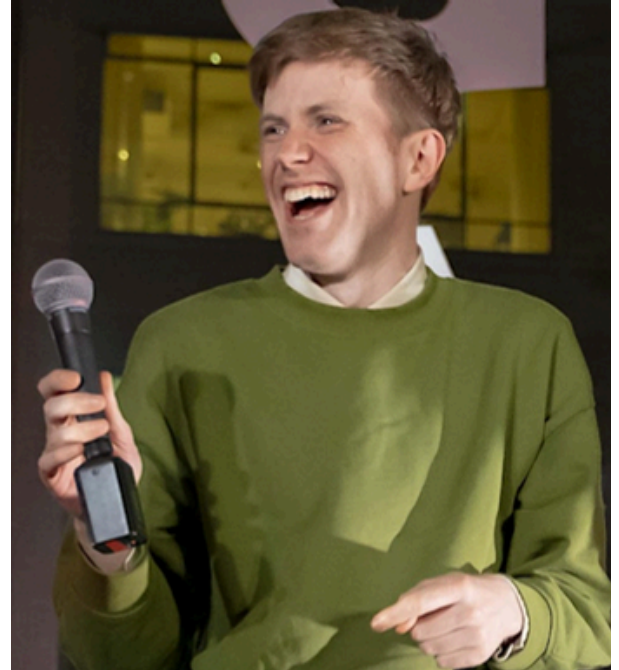
Our Values:

Equity – co-production runs through everything we do. We will always have at least 50% representation of people who are, or have been, homeless on our board and staff.

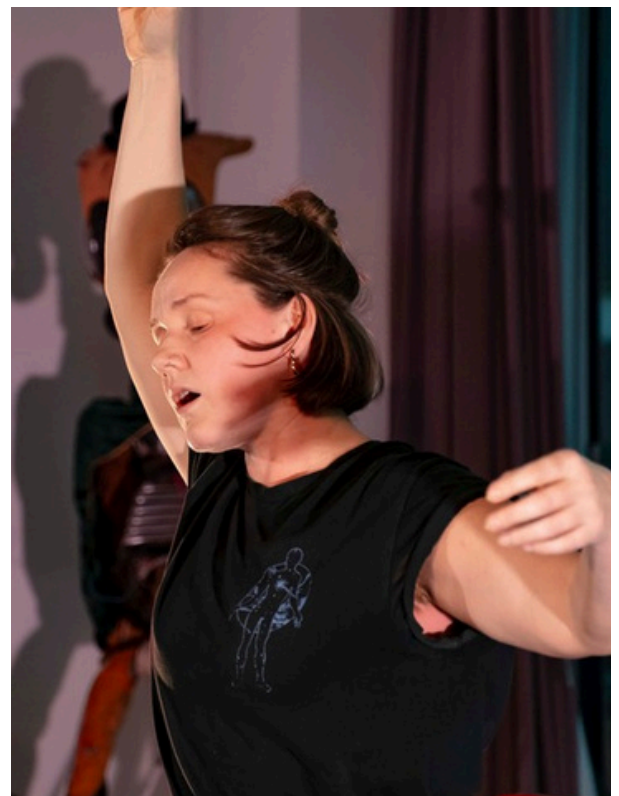
Creativity – our work is about creativity; from the way we run meetings to the events we hold.

Openness – we are open, generous and kind. All of our materials are accessible, clear and jargon-free. We go the extra mile.

Amerah Saleh, Associate 2023-24; photo by Zbigniew Kotkiewicz



Calum Given, Associate 2024-25; photo by Becky Mursell



Jodie Cole, Associate 2024-25; photo by Becky Mursell



Surfing Sofas, Associate 2022-23; photo by Zbigniew Kotkiewicz

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME



Gemma Lees, Associate 2023-24; photo by Zbigniew Kotkiewicz

The Associates Leadership Programme is the **first cultural leadership programme for creatives who are or have been homeless in history.**

- It is a **part-time, year-long** leadership, training and creative development opportunity for **UK-based artists and creatives aged 18+ with lived experience of homelessness.**
- Now entering its **fourth year**, the programme has supported **24 Associates so far**, offering paid training, creative development support, leadership skills, experiences, and pathways into the cultural sector.
- Our **refreshed 2026–2027 programme builds on extensive co-creation, evaluation and collaboration** with previous Associates, Co-creation leads and partner organisations.
- The programme is delivered **online and in-person** with collaborations from the cultural sector as guest speakers, trainers so that you are connected with a pool of network of people and organisations that can support your creative journey.
- **Associates come from all artistic disciplines**, poetry, performance, dance, photography, producing, visual arts and more. **We welcome emerging and established creatives alike** who are looking for a space to build their confidence, skills, agency and knowledge.

IMPACTS OF THE ASSOCIATES PROGRAMME



Nell Hardy and Nai Muhhamad, Associates 2023-24

Alumni Associates who have completed the programme have gone on to lead organisations, curate festival and projects, secure employment, produce new work, exhibit in museums and galleries, deliver keynote performances, serve as poets-in-residence with renowned organisations advocating for art and homelessness, publish books and become advocates for creative inclusion.

The programme is cited as highly valued and impactful to associates who describe it as transformative and life changing.

"I read about the programme and just knew it would change my life for the better. It's truly one of the most amazing things I've been part of".

"The leadership programme has really shifted my understanding of myself, my practice, and how I want to work with organisations. It helped me recognise and reflect on my lived experience and gave me the confidence to speak openly about it. Through the programme I've developed a stronger sense of authenticity in my work, reducing the exhaustion of "masking" and making the most of my unique strengths. AHI are making strides forwards in compassionate and robust leadership for the sector. It is an invaluable programme that encourages everyone to find their voice, express it their unique way, and do this alongside others. The strength of community and kindness at AHI is supportive and palpable".

Jodie Cole Choreographer, Movement Director, Facilitator, Producer, AHI Associate 2024/25



Kate Betty Scott, Associate 2023-24



Bengy Speer, Associate 2022-23

PROGRAMME CONTENT

- **Orientation session and collaborative online learning sessions** on modules from producing, co-creation, care, archiving, curation, fundraising, leadership, art administration as well as other modules to enhance your skills and expand your learning. You will also hear from guest speakers.
- **Individual mentorship** with practitioners from the cultural sector.
- **Wellbeing support**, designed with clear pathways and boundaries.
- **Support sessions** from AHI Team throughout the programme.
- **Summer Retreat**, 4 days in-person to come together to learn, connect, plan, play and dream.
- **Placement opportunities with cultural organisations** – 5 days.
- **Creative development budget** to design and support your creative/practice.
- **Cohort exhibition/showcase sharing work publicly** at the end of the programme.
- **A formalised Alumni Pathway** to support Associates after completing the programme



*Sarah Hough, Associates 2024-25; photo
Becky Mursell*



*David Sparkes, Associate 2024-25; photo
Becky Mursell*

WHAT ASSOCIATES WILL RECEIVE

Payment

Associates are paid for:

- Participating at the in-person retreat
- Showcase event
- Creative budget

Travel, accommodation and meals, including at the placements, are covered by AHI.

Associates are not paid for:

- Attending interviews, counselling, mentorship, workshops and training sessions.

Wellbeing and Mentoring

You will receive:

- One-to-one mentorship
- Access to dedicated counselling support with clear pathways if you need it
- Programme Support from the team
- Mobility Fund

We operate a Fair Pay policy where everyone in the organisation (staff, freelancers, Associates) is paid the same day rate of £195. If you are on benefits, please let us know and we will discuss this situation with you.



Denise Harrison (Associate 2022-23) at the launch of her new book 'Finding Rat Park' in 2025 - she came up with the idea during her time on the Associates Leadership Programme.

PROGRAMME CRITERIA



Members of the Associate Leadership Programme Co-Creation cohort on retreat in Summer 2025

About you:

- Have lived experience of homelessness (including rough sleeping, sofa surfing, temporary accommodation, unsafe housing, overcrowding, being at risk of homelessness or domestic abuse)
- Be 18 or older
- Be UK-based
- Have the right to work in the UK
- You are an artist or a creative in any discipline
- Be available for the workshops on the set dates
- Participate in the public showcase
- Be committed to attending all programme activities, including travel where required
- Be open to collaboration and inclusive teamwork
- Be curious and motivated
- Interested in arts, social and political history in the UK
- Adhere to AHI's values of equity, creativity and openness
- Listen deeply and respect the experiences of others
- Be an active and self-motivated member of the cohort.

Lisa Ogun, Associate 2022-23 taking part in the Venice Biennale as part of a British Council Fellowship



Bengy Speer, Associate 2022-23

PROGRAMME TIMELINE



Artwork by Amanda Sinclair at the final showcase of the 2022-23 cohort

(A detailed schedule will be shared with shortlisted applicants.)

- **Applications open: 21st January 2026**
- **Q&A webinar: 2nd Feb at 12:30– online (click [here](#) to register)**
- **Applications close: Midnight 22nd February 2026**
- **Interviews: From week commencing 2nd March 2026**

- Programme begins: April 2026
- Spring 2026: Launch, Orientation, Learning workshops and co-creation
- Summer 2026 retreat
- Autumn and late 2026 : Training sessions, mentorship , wellbeing, creative development budget, placements with arts and socially engaged arts organisations
- March: Final group showcase

WHAT WE MEAN BY HOMELESSNESS

We use the wide definition of homelessness and ask applicants to self-identify if they feel their experiences fit this definition. If you understand homelessness differently based on your own lived experience, we welcome you to tell us about that too.

Homelessness can include (but is not limited to): Sleeping outside, staying in hostels or temporary accommodation, sofa surfing, being at risk of homelessness through eviction, staying in an abusive relationship, or being a victim of cuckooing.

Homelessness doesn't always look the same. If your experiences feel hard to define, or you're unsure whether they 'count', that often means they do. You don't need to fit into a specific category or explain everything perfectly. If in doubt, please trust your own judgement and feel free to get in touch if you'd like to talk it through.

WHAT WE MEAN BY ARTS

We use a broad and inclusive definition of art. This can include more 'conventional' artistic practices such as visual art, music, dance, theatre, poetry, film, photography, craft, fashion, and circus arts. We're also interested in producers, curators, and people who work behind the scenes to make creative work happen.

If your practice doesn't fit neatly into these categories, that's absolutely fine. We're open to your own understanding of what arts and creativity mean to you.



Associates' final showcase

WHAT WE MEAN BY LEADERSHIP

We believe that leadership exists in everyone.

You don't need to be a particular type of person to be a leader. You don't need to be super confident, great at public speaking, or naturally comfortable with paperwork, systems, or administration. Those things are not a measure of leadership.

Some of the strongest leaders work quietly, create space for others, and help good ideas grow. We're interested in people who have an idea they want to explore and who are curious about how their work might open up opportunities for others - through collaboration, sharing skills, building community, or creating new work.

For us, leadership isn't about being 'in charge'. It's about values, energy, and a willingness to contribute to something bigger than yourself. If you're unsure whether this applies to you, please don't rule yourself out, we'd really encourage you to get in touch.



Members of the Associate Leadership Programme Co-Creation cohort on retreat in Summer 2025

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit an application form by clicking [this link](#).

You will see that the form includes one main question: 'Why do you want to take part in the Arts & Homelessness International Associates Leadership Programme?'

There is no right or wrong answer to this question!

Your answers may include:

- Who you are, where you are based in the UK, what motivates your work, and your artistic/creative/producing/curating discipline
- How you imagine this programme will help you achieve your artistic and development aims
- Why this is the right moment for you to take part in the programme
- What skills, experiences, and values you bring to the cohort
- What you would like to learn or gain from being on the programme
- What art/creativity and leadership mean to you



AHI's alumni Associate artists Gemma Lees, Amerah Saheh, and Bengy Speer in the London School of Economics Library archives. Photo by Chelsea Collison.

If you have any question or like to speak to someone about the programme, please email samra@artshomelessint.com. We encourage you to attend the webinar to ask questions as well.

You will see in the application form that you may respond in one of three formats:

- Written (up to 650 words)
- Video (up to 5 minutes - a simple selfie film on a phone is fine; we don't want this to be a labour for you)
- Audio (up to 5 minutes)

HOW TO APPLY CONT...

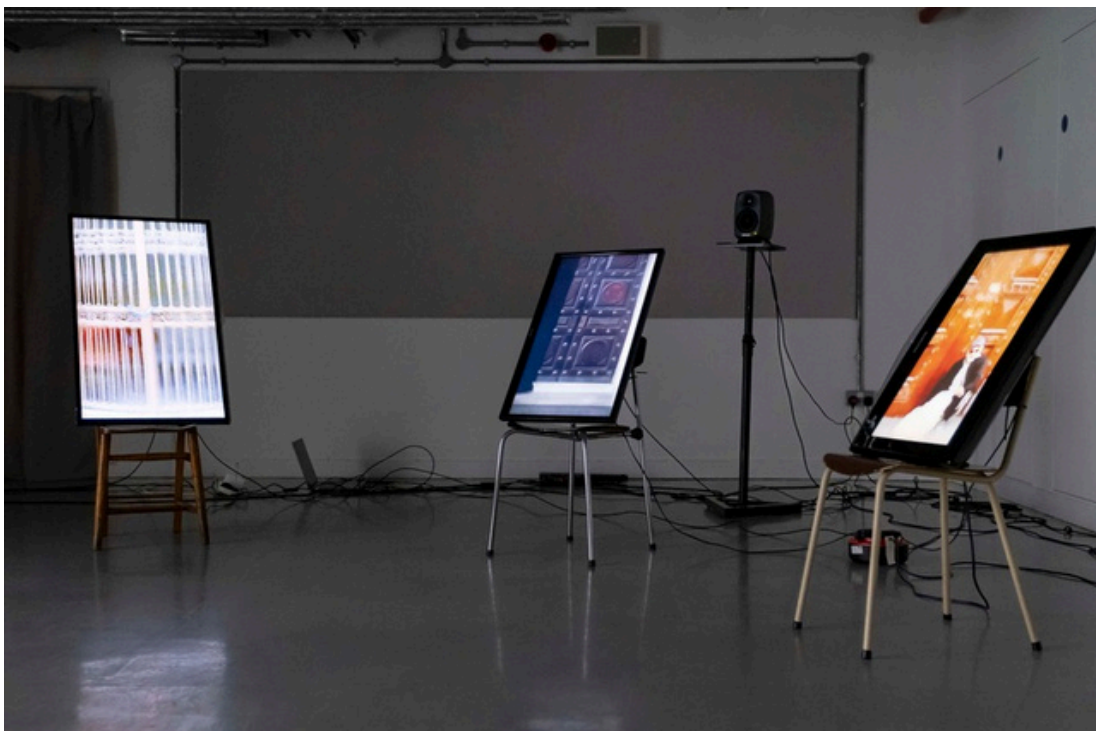
Supporting material: On the application form, you will be asked to share ONE link that gives us a sense of your work. This could be e.g. a page from your website, a YouTube video, a specific social post about a project, or a sample of your work that can be sent with your application. Please don't share WeTransfer links. Whatever you choose, remember: We need to have access to the link and we'll have few minutes to review it.

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- **Applications close: 22nd February 2026**
- **Interviews: From week commencing March 2026**

Access and support: AHl welcomes access requests at any stage. **We commit to providing reasonable adjustments for the application process, interviews, training sessions, travel and placements.** Try to attend the webinar above to ask questions.

All applications are reviewed anonymously.

As part of the application process, we ask all applicants to complete an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Reach Monitoring Form. The form is anonymous and not used in scoring or selection. You don't have to answer every question - you can skip any question by selecting "Prefer not to say". Please see the form by clicking the link [here](#).



Calum Perrin (2024–25 Associate) audio-visual installation at the 2024 final Showcase (photo Becky Mursell)



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