

Job Vacancy: Artist in Residence for SPINE Festival 2026

The Opportunity

We are seeking artists from a range of different creative disciplines including spoken word/literature, graphic artists, music, dance, visual and digital arts to be part of **SPINE Festival 2026**; a festival for children and families.

Now in its eleventh year, the SPINE Festival works with libraries across 14 London boroughs. In 2026 activities will be delivered in-person from **16 May to 30 June 2026**.

Fourteen boroughs wish to appoint artists who will work collaboratively with libraries and a co-artist to create a series of workshops and a public event for children and families exploring this year's theme of **Magic & Imagination**.

SPINE Festival is produced by **Apples and Snakes** with participating library partners across fourteen London boroughs.

We are keen to recruit artists who reflect the diverse communities within London.

The Role

We are recruiting fourteen artists in total. Artists will be paired based on their art discipline with the aim of one of the artists being a poet/spoken word artist.

The paired artists will be partnered with paired library boroughs to tour their work in-person. For example, two artists would work with Newham and Tower Hamlets to creatively design workshops and events to be delivered in both boroughs during the festival month.

At the heart of the role is collaboration.

The theme of this year's festival is 'Magic & Imagination' and we are interested to hear how you would explore this theme with children aged 0-11 and families with a collaborative approach. We would like a legacy as a result of the residency eg. an exhibition/anthology/artefact/video/training.

Please note, aside from poetry and spoken word, we are keen to see applications from artists who work with these disciplines: Music, Dance, Illustration (i.e. comic books/zines/graphic novels), Visual Arts, Clay/Sculpting and Placard-making. We usually receive a huge number of applications for creative writing, however this year we are de-prioritising that art form.

The Duration

14 days (with a willingness to work evenings/weekends) including:

- 5 days of planning with paired artist and library staff
- 8 workshops and/or events at paired library boroughs (4 per borough)
- 1 day for post-festival evaluation

You **must** be available during May and June 2026.

The Fee

£2,800 in total (£200 per day and workshop/event)

Person Specification

- Experience of working with children and families.
- An interest in/experience of library settings.
- Experience of working with diverse communities
- Experience of working collaboratively with other artists or in a team/collective to agreed goals
- Ability to respond to the workshop context and problem solve
- Ability to work on one's own and work towards deadlines
- Ability to run creative engaging workshops around the theme of Magic & Imagination for children and families
- Experience of working in a community setting
- Experience of working with challenging groups such as PRUs / excluded young people
- Confident with digital knowledge/experience of social media
- Confident of delivering work digitally (i.e. workshops, performances) or have a willingness to learn
- A current DBS and public liability insurance.

How To Apply

The application process is as follows:

1. Complete [this application form](#) where you can share what excites you about the role and how you would plan to use your time to explore the theme
2. After submitting [the application form](#), complete the [Equality & Diversity form](#).

3. Once you have submitted the [Equality & Diversity form](#), **send your CV** (max. 2 sides) to recruitment@applesandsnakes.org for the attention of Marcelle Akita

Deadline is **Monday 6 April 2026, 23:59 GMT.**

We are dedicated to ensuring equity for all. We actively encourage applications from people belonging to all protected groups; reflecting the artists and communities we work with. As an organisational priority we are developing strands of work to challenge anti-Blackness and we particularly welcome applicants of African or Caribbean heritage.

If you are offered the role and identify as disabled and/or have access needs, we will ask you to send an access rider so we can make sure your needs are met. We have a template if you don't have an access rider already, so please don't worry about that.

Key dates:

Interviews:

Please note **interviews will take place week commencing 13 April 2026** for the duration of 30 minutes between 9am to 3pm in person at our offices in The Albany, Deptford. If you are offered an interview and have any access needs, please do let us know so we can accommodate.

Introduction meetings with libraries:

Should you be successful post interview and paired with your co-artist and boroughs, there will be **introduction meetings week commencing 27 April 2026**. During the interview you will be asked to confirm availability for the boroughs you may be paired with.

Artists in Residents Photoshoot:

Should you be successful post interview, you will need to be available for a photoshoot on **2 May 2026**.

If the photoshoot date needs to move due to photographer availability, we will give you notice. The photoshoot will be a half day session and take place in a studio based in Deptford, close to The Albany (Apples & Snakes office base). Details will be confirmed in the offer letter to successful applicants.

ABOUT SPINE FESTIVAL 2026

Magic & Imagination: 16 May – 30 June 2026

Launching on 16 May 2026, SPINE Festival 2026 continues the exploration of **Magic & Imagination** with children and families in fourteen London boroughs. This year features spoken word and arts activities delivered by **local artists**, touring poetry **SPIN show**, a series of engaging workshops and imaginative events by SPINE's 14 **Artists in Residence**.

This year will also see the festival's '**Magic & Imagination Poetry Competition**' judged by SPINE 2026 Ambassador **Simon Mole** in each partnering borough.

The full programme will be announced in May 2026.

The following boroughs will be participating this year:

Brent ● Bromley ● Greenwich ● Hammersmith and Fulham ● Harrow ● Camden ● Kensington and Chelsea ● Lewisham ● Merton ● Newham ● Sutton ● Tower Hamlets ● Wandsworth ● Westminster

Each year, SPINE Festival also offers a host of activities specifically for local school and community groups.

Libraries are creative spaces at the heart of London communities. They are free and open to all, and a great way to engage with and experience art and culture.

Previous SPINE Festival editions (2024, 2023, 2022, 2021 and 2020) can be discovered [here](#).