

NEW FOCUS × IMPRESSIONS GALLERY

PHOTOGRAPHY COMMISSIONS FOR BRADFORD 2025 UK CITY OF CULTURE

THE COMMISSION

New Focus and Impressions Gallery want to commission two experienced photographers to create compelling new portraits of families in Bradford – by this, we mean families in the traditional and non-traditional sense, and in broad social definition, this could include community groups, workplaces, clubs and societies.

This is a free open call, and the work of the commissioned photographers will be shown in a major exhibition at Impressions Gallery as part of Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture.

There are two commissions of £5,000 available, and applications are open to photographers based anywhere in the UK.

The commission may be used to produce a new body of work within the six-month timeframe (January–June 2025) or help the photographer complete an existing project consistent with the brief.

Throughout the commission the photographers will be in regular dialogue with the New Focus Bradford Young Curators, the New Focus Curatorial Mentor, and Impressions Gallery's team. This includes curatorial and practical support alongside introductions to local contacts and networks as (and if) required.

The commissions are part of an Impressions Gallery project in partnership with Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture.

THE BRIEF

What are we looking for?

We are keen to see a range of photographic approaches to the subject, with each photographer bringing their perspective and style to the commission. The work should spark interest and dialogue, and encourage new or alternative perspectives on Bradford and its people.

This project is about people, so we are particularly interested in submissions from those who have experience working with individuals and groups, and who can foster an open and engaging environment for new work to be made.

Collaboration is at the heart of the commission. You will need to be positive about working with the New Focus as part of the process, enabling the young people to reach their creative and professional potential and embrace this commission as a unique opportunity for reciprocal learning.

Who can apply?

We welcome applications from experienced photographers based in the UK, working across all forms of photography, including moving image.

Joint or co-produced proposals are welcome. Please note that the £5,000 project fee is per proposal, not per participant.

Applicants must be over 18 years old – there is no upper age limit for applicants.

The commission is not open to those in full-time education.

We are looking for photographers who can commit time to developing and making this work from January to June 2025. In addition the option to be available for associated events during the exhibition period of September to December 2025 where possible.

We encourage applications from those who identify as D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent, come from working-class backgrounds, and/or are ethnically diverse.

TIMELINE AND KEY DATES

Application deadline	12 December 2024, 23:59 GMT
Shortlisted applicants notified	18 December 2024
Conversations with shortlisted applicants at Impressions Gallery	w/c 13 January 2025
Commissioned photographers selected	w/c 20 January 2025
Commission completion	End of June 2025
Selection of final works for exhibition	July 2025
Production / printing / framing of work	August 2025
Exhibition installation	1 to 11 September 2025
Exhibition opens	13 September 2025
Exhibition open alongside learning and events programme	September to December 2025

BACKGROUND

The commissioning process is being led by members of New Focus, Impressions Gallery's award winning programme that supports young people aged 18–25 to gain the skills and experience they need to become the creatives of the future.

A group of ten diverse young people from Bradford were selected to take part in the *New Focus: Bradford Young Curators* programme, and are now benefiting from workshops and mentoring with some of the UK's leading photography experts and creative professionals.

At the heart of this 18-month programme is the handover of curatorial control from Impressions Gallery to New Focus.

During the project the New Focus Bradford Young Curators will be:

- Commissioning new photographic work.
- Reaching out to Bradford's communities to unearth cherished family photos and the stories behind them.
- Curating a major exhibition at Impressions Gallery in 2025 that brings together new photographic work alongside archival material to create a powerful tribute to the people of Bradford and diverse communities.
- Building a digital archive that preserves the photographs and personal stories for years to come.
- Planning and delivering a learning and events programme to encourage deeper engagement with the exhibition and digital archive.

Throughout the project, New Focus are receiving regular mentoring from award-winning artists, photo historians, curators and creative professionals including:

- Anand Chhabra, Photographer and Director of Black Country Visual Arts.
- Maryam Wahid, Photographer.
- Brian Liddy, Photo historian.
- Mahnoor Akhlaq, Multimedia Producer, Channel 4 News
- Usmaan Arshad, Filmmaker.
- Emily Coghlan, Photographer.
- Angela Brown, Curator.
- Anne McNeill, Director and Curator, Impressions Gallery.
- Sarah Hill, Deputy Director, Impressions Gallery.
- Jennifer Sobol, Learning & New Focus Manager, Impressions Gallery.
- Chemaine Cooke, Bradford Young Curators Project Manager, Impressions Gallery.

“Impressions Gallery is delighted to be working with New Focus and Bradford 2025 UK Culture to provide new opportunities for Bradford photographic talent. I cannot wait to see who Bradford Young Curators select to undertake these commissions and to watch as all the work progresses, culminating in a major exhibition in the gallery in autumn 2025.”

Anne McNeill, Director, Impressions Gallery

About Impressions Gallery

Impressions Gallery is a charity that helps people understand the world through photography and acts as an agent for change. The gallery opened in 1972 as one of the first specialist photography galleries in the country, and continues to support and encourage groundbreaking artists who challenge and change photography. Our artistic programme is recognised nationally for its curatorial excellence, and we have a track record of supporting photographers early in their career. The gallery embraces a wide range of artistic voices, enabling exhibitions of artists from diverse backgrounds and addressing themes that are relevant and accessible to a wide range of people, including social class, race, gender and identity. Impressions Gallery is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and supported by Bradford Council.

www.impressions-gallery.com

About Bradford 2025

Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture (Bradford 2025) runs from January 2025 to December 2025 and is a celebration of Bradford city and district, taking place across its city, towns, villages and greenspaces. It will showcase the rich history of the area and spotlight its dynamic contemporary culture in all forms; dance and theatre, music and film, visual arts and crafts, food and sport. It is set to have a lifelong impact through its reshaping of the local curriculum, skills and training programmes, investment in existing and new creative spaces, and open up opportunities for cultural participation. Alongside this, local communities will be at the heart of the projects, showcasing the diversity and vibrancy of the whole district and bringing experiences to people's doorsteps.

www.bradford2025.co.uk

About Bradford

Bradford is the UK's youngest city (34% of the population are under 25), one of its biggest and among its most diverse. The district is home to 560,000 people and spans approximately 141 miles, bringing together city, suburbs and towns such as Keighley, Shipley, Bingley and Ilkley, each with their own strong identities. The district is two-thirds rural, its hills and moors juxtaposed with its rich industrial heritage. As it grew, Bradford quickly became a home for the world, welcoming migrants from Ireland, Scotland, Germany, Russia, Poland, Italy, Belgium, the Basque Country, West Indies, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Ukraine, Czechia, Latvia, Estonia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Syria, amongst others. Bradford's proud legacy of immigration, social activism and hope endures to this day, and its energy and ambition reflected in its vibrant cultural scene and designation as 2025 UK City of Culture.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please complete the application form available via [here](#) and on Impressions Gallery's website

1. Each submission should include:
 - Your name, where you're based, and your contact details.
 - A proposal (up to 750 words) including why you are interested in the brief, and how you would loosely approach the commission.
 - A CV including past exhibitions, commissions, awards, and residencies as relevant.
 - Examples of previous work that best reflect your photographic style (up to 10 images, max 1mb each) and/or a link to your website/portfolio.
 - If you have any access needs that you would like us to be aware of, you will have an opportunity to explain these on the submission form.

2. We would be grateful if you could also complete our anonymous [Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form](#) (following the link here on Impressions Gallery's website).

3. There is no fee to submit a proposal.

4. The selection process will be undertaken in English.

5. Only one submission per person or group will be accepted.

If you have any accessibility requirements and would prefer to submit your application in any other format (such as a video), please contact us at newfocus@impressions-gallery.com

Deadline for submissions: Thursday 12 December 2024, 23:59 GMT.

FAQs

How much is the commission?

- Proposals must be achievable within the £5,000 project fee and the 6 month creation period.
- The fee of £5,000 will be used towards any combination of research & development, contact time with the project team, artist fee (including exhibition fee), post production prep, and equipment costs. The commissioned photographer will organise and undertake their own shooting schedule, including post production, as part of the fee.
- The commission will be paid in five instalments of £1,000:
 1. February 2025 - after signing of contracts at the start of the commission.
 2. April 2025 - following a work-in-progress meeting.
 3. June 2025 - following a work-in-progress meeting.
 4. August 2025 - after the completion of the artwork.
 5. October 2025 - following the opening of the exhibition and launch events.
- Up to £1,000 can be claimed for travel and accommodation expenses, in addition to the project fee.
- There is an additional budget for the cost of printing, framing and presentation for the exhibition. This budget will be managed by New Focus and administered by Impressions Gallery. A detailed production budget will be agreed with each photographer upon selection.

Where will the work be presented?

- The commission will be presented as part of a group show of contemporary and archival photography at Impressions Gallery in September to December 2025.
- Commissioned works will feature on Impressions Gallery and Bradford 2025 websites, social media channels, and other associated press and marketing communications.

What is expected of the commissioned photographers?

As per their contract, the photographers will be expected to:

- Follow a schedule of work with mutually agreed timelines.
- Take part in at least three work-in-progress meetings with members of New Focus and Impressions Gallery.
- Complete their series of photographic works by the end of June 2025.
- Provide information and images for communications in a timely manner.
- Take part in a recorded video interview.
- Take part, as appropriate, in the exhibition's public events programme (there will be an additional fee per event).

Do I need to be based in the UK to apply?

- Applicants must be over 18 years old and have the legal right to work in the UK, be resident in the UK, and with the intention to continue residence within the UK until December 2025 (you do not need to be a British National).

Is the commission only open to individual photographers?

- Joint or co-produced proposals are welcome. Please note that the £5,000 fee is per proposal, not per participant.

Can I apply if I have access needs?

- The project's team will support and adequately resource any access needs of the photographer and/or collaborators.
- You will have the opportunity to let us know if you have any specific support needs that we should be aware of as part of your submission.

Who is on the selection panel?

All submissions will be reviewed by a selection panel consisting of:

- The ten members of New Focus: Amina Ahmed, Zarah Ashraf, Esther Hill, Louie Haslam-Chance, Keyhan Modaresi, Gyula Papp, Ramlah Qureshi, Hafsa Rauf, Lauren Waldron and Mia Wilson.
- Angela Brown, Curatorial Mentor.
- Anne McNeill, Director & Curator, Impressions Gallery.
- Jennifer Sobol, Learning & New Focus Manager, Impressions Gallery.
- Chemaine Cooke, New Focus Project Manager at Impressions Gallery.

How will the commissioned photographers be selected?

The submissions will be shortlisted with the following criteria in mind:

- The idea and vision behind your proposal for new work in response to the brief.
- The quality and track record of your existing practice and recent work.
- How the proposal fits into your practice to date.
- How the opportunity may benefit your artistic development and practice.
- How the opportunity may benefit your professional development.

How will I know if I've been successful or not?

- You will receive an automatic email acknowledgement of your application once it is submitted online.
- We will let all applicants know whether or not they have been shortlisted by Wednesday 18 December 2024.
- All shortlisted applicants will receive feedback on their application.
- Applicants that have not been shortlisted will be able to request feedback on their application. Due to capacity, we will not provide feedback until the selection process has completed, and we will send individual feedback by the end of January 2025.



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