**Music industry bid to open specialist creative school in Bradford approved**

**BPI application for new school to serve West Yorkshire and the North of England and support the UK-wide talent pipeline into the music and creative industries**

*Sunday, 20th August 2023 – embargoed to 00.01 hours*

Plans by the **BPI** - the representative voice for record labels across the UK – to open a new specialist creative school in **Bradford, West Yorkshire** have been approved by the **Department for Education**.

The bid titled, ‘BRIT School North’,was submitted to the Department for Education as a part of a highly competitive free school funding process. The proposal for a specialist 16-19 college in the centre of Bradford is designed to provide a unique option for students across West Yorkshire and the North, by offering an opportunity to study a range of performance, production and digital subjects in an immersive environment solely dedicated to the creative learning experience.

It is inspired by the successful model of the BRIT School in Croydon, which is free to attend and since opening its doors more than three decades ago, has established a reputation as a world-leading centre for educating and nurturing creative talent. The bid also draws on the excellent work of East London Arts & Music (ELAM) in Bromley-by-Bow of which BPI member, Universal Music UK is a founding partner.

The vocational curriculum of this new school is expected to offer both performance and skills-based subjects across music, theatre, musical theatre, dance, film and tv, interactive digital design and production arts. It will be aimed at young people looking to pursue a career in the creative industries, one of the Government’s five priority growth sectors. The BPI knows from its experience that this type of educational setting produces incredible talent for the UK, as evidenced by the number of former BRIT School students making careers as successful artists, including in the recent Mercury Award nominations.

The BPI and its label members have long held an ambition to create a specialist creative school outside of London and the South East of England, drawing on the success and experiences of the BRIT School model and ELAM, and further delivering on a strong commitment to make the music industry and the wider creative industries more inclusive and accessible for all – regardless of background. This bid saw collaboration between the BPI; record companies Sony Music Entertainment UK, Universal Music UK and Warner Music UK; BRIT School; ELAM and the Day One Trust (which runs ELAM and the London Screen Academy (LSA)). These and other partnerships are crucial to ensuring that the school has direct links into the wider creative industries locally, nationally and globally, ensuring the curriculum is drawing on best practice and offering students experiences that may not otherwise be available. The three record company partners have committed to contribute an initial amount of additional funding towards to the school, which is expected to be used to fund the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment.

Bradford is considered an ideal location for this new school and was selected after extensive work to identify somewhere that both delivered on ambitions to level-up creative opportunity for underserved young people and provided the right conditions for this specialist proposal in the wider creative ecosystem. Bradford has a budding creative economy and has been awarded City of Culture 2025. The school will help to deliver on the

legacy commitment of the City of Culture status and contribute to Bradford’s 10-year cultural strategy, which places the creative industries at the heart of their economy. The proposal also has strong support from West Yorkshire’s devolved Mayor, Tracy Brabin, who recognises that the school will have a broader impact in the region – being open to young people from across West Yorkshire and beyond.

The school is projected to open in 2026/2027. The final site is still to be decided but it will be in a central location in Bradford, West Yorkshire.

**Dr Jo Twist OBE, Chief Executive of BPI** said: *“We are delighted with this decision and it is a positive signal that Government recognises the critical importance of creative and specialist creative arts education.*

*“The UK is a world-leader in music and across the creative industries and if we want this to continue, we must invest in talent and the highly transferable skills needed for a competitive economy. This school will not only focus on producing our next generation of performers, but crucially, train young people with the important technical qualities needed for our industries to thrive and provide them with opportunities that they otherwise might not be able to access.”*

**YolanDa Brown OBE DL, Chair of BPI** said: *“This is excellent news and it comes as the BPI celebrates its 50th year, which makes it all the more special.* *We know that young people have moved to London and the South East to specifically attend creative schools like the BRIT School and ELAM, and this approval means they will no longer have to do this.*

*“Creating opportunity and access to creative education really is a huge driver for us all in the music industry, not only because it’s the right thing to do but because it’s vital to ensure our future talent pipeline consists of young, diverse individuals who can find joy in the output of their creative practice and also contribute to the continued growth of our industries.”*

**Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan** said: **“***My home city of Liverpool is famously the home of the Beatles, Mersey Beat and many more stars. Whether on stage, on screen, or behind the scenes, the north is full of creative talent.*

*“This announcement will mean more young people will be able to reach their potential and follow in their footsteps, at the new BRIT School in the north. We are broadening opportunities so more of our children can access this springboard to success in the UK’s growing creative industries.”*

**Secretary of State for DCMS, Lucy Frazer** said: “*For more than thirty years, the BRIT School has been nurturing the next generation of creative talent - producing some of the most influential and successful performers and artists of our time. The new school in Bradford will give even more young people the opportunity to develop their skills and maximise their potential, while creating a pipeline of talent for our thriving creative industries.”*

**Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin** said: *“This is a fantastic win for the North and supports our ambition to ensure opportunities for all, no matter where you’re from or where you live.*

*“The build up to Bradford UK City of Culture 2025 has already started to inspire the next generation of artists.*

*“And now, with West Yorkshire becoming the home of BRIT School North, more young people can follow in the footsteps of our world-class homegrown artists, from the likes of Mel B and Corrine Bailey Rae to the Kaiser Chiefs.”*

**Sophie Jones, BPI Chief Strategy Officer**,said: “*This approval marks the culmination of months of hard work to deliver our ambitions to extend specialist creative education to a diverse cohort of students, providing talented young people with opportunities to pursue a creative career, and diversifying the talent pipeline for the BPI and our members.*

*“I am absolutely delighted and pass my wholehearted thanks to the Government for recognising the passion and vision behind this bid. This is only the beginning, we can’t wait to get started and to continue this work with our key partners to bring the new school to reality.”*

**Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Leader of Bradford Council**, said: *“This is brilliant news for the Bradford district and will help cement our place as a creative powerhouse.* *There is a huge creative and cultural buzz around Bradford right now. We are preparing to be the UK’s City of Culture in 2025 and will soon celebrate the opening of Bradford Live, a new 4000 capacity live music venue in the old Odeon cinema.*

*“I am delighted that the BPI has decided Bradford would be the perfect location for their new school. It is a great decision on their part. There is enormous talent in our young, energetic, diverse population and this can bring them life-changing opportunities.*

*“It’s exciting to think about the future stars of music, art, film, TV and dance from our region.  This school will help them to fulfil their dreams.”*

**Fred Sharrock, CEO of Day One Trust** said: “*BRIT School North will be a fantastic asset for the young people, communities and creative industries of Bradford and West Yorkshire.*

*“It's great that some of the UK's leading creative schools are working together on this project and we're delighted to have cross-party support from local, regional and national politicians. We're proud to be supporting the growth of the creative industries outside London and we hope there will be many more opportunities to create schools that do that."*

**ENDS –**

BPI representatives will be available for interview.

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Notes to Editors

**About ‘Wave-15’**

Wave-15 is a funding process for [free schools](https://www.gov.uk/types-of-school/free-schools) by the Department for Education.

A summary list of all submitted proposals to Wave-15 can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-schools-application-information-for-wave-15/wave-15-free-school-applications).

For more information about Wave-15, please contact Charlie Callear, Media Officer, Schools, Department for Education via charlotte.callear@education.gov.uk or 020 7227 5365.

**Previous support for this bid was expressed by leading stars from Bradford:**

**Nia Archives, Bradford-born DJ and producer who was nominated for The Rising Star Award at The BRIT Awards 2023:**

*“I love this idea and hope it happens. This is exactly what Bradford needs for young people in the absence of creative industry opportunities in more regional parts of the country”*

**Zayn Malik, Bradford-born recording artist – formerly of global British pop sensation boy band One Direction:**

*“I am passionate and excited about the potential of the planned BRIT school. Growing up in Bradford without many resources, I know first-hand the struggle and what a life changing difference this would directly make for these young people. There is immense talent in Bradford and the surrounding areas, so to have an accessible resource like this school will change the lives of these emerging creative artists.”*

**About the BPI**(British Phonographic Industry)

Founded in 1973 and this year celebrating its 50th anniversary, the [BPI](https://www.bpi.co.uk/) is the representative voice of record labels across the UK. As a trade association it champions the UK’s recorded music community, safeguarding the rights of its members and of the artists, performers and label members of collecting body [PPL](https://www.ppluk.com/).  The BPI’s membership consists of well over 500 independent labels and the UK’s three majors – Universal Music UK, Sony Music Entertainment UK and Warner Music UK. Its total membership taken together accounts for approximately 85% of legitimate domestic music consumption and around 1 in 10 streams globally.

The BPI promotes British music at home and overseas through its international trade missions, including its annual LA Sync event; participation at major music conferences, such as SXSW; the [*Music Exports Growth Scheme*](https://www.bpi.co.uk/news-analysis/music-export-growth-scheme/)*;* and [*The BRIT Awards*](https://www.brits.co.uk/), which it owns and organises. It administers [*The BRIT Certified*](https://www.bpi.co.uk/brit-certified/) *Platinum, Gold and Silver Awards Programme*, co-owns the [*Official Charts Company*](https://www.officialcharts.com/)with ERA, and is home to [*The Mercury Prize*](https://www.mercuryprize.com/). The BPI encourages and supports innovation and technology through its [*Music & Tech Springboard Programme*](https://www.bpi.co.uk/the-music-tech-springboard-programme/), and additionally provides insights, training and networking with its extensive free masterclasses, networking events, *Insight Sessions* and reports alongside its public affairs and communications work.

The BPI has considerable experience in the education sphere and is enormously proud of the [BRIT School](https://www.brit.croydon.sch.uk/), which receives additional funding from [the BRIT Trust](https://www.brittrust.co.uk/) which was set up in 1989 by the BPI and the major record labels. To date, the school has 10,000 alumni, including global and UK stars such as Adele, Amy Winehouse, Jessie J, Katie Melua, Loyle Carner, Freya Ridings and current BRITs Rising nominee Cat Burns, as well as actors such as Ashley Thomas, Blake Harrison, Cush Jumbo and Tom Holland – AKA Spiderman.

The BRIT Trust also funds two-thirds of the [*BRITs Apprentice Scheme*](https://www.brittrust.co.uk/apprenticeships/). BPI Member, Universal Music are a founding partner of East London Arts and Music ([ELAM](https://www.elam.co.uk/)), which is an academy for 16–19-year-olds, conceived to address the growing demand within the UK’s creative sector for talent and BPI has had a continued involvement through the Board of the Governors.