

# BSO *young* ASSOCIATES



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BSO Young Associates is part of a talent-development programme generously supported in 2026-29 by **The Calleva Foundation**, in memory of Jack Butt.



## PASSIONATE ABOUT MUSIC?

Keen to inspire and make a difference? Become a community music leader with the BSO's Young Associates programme.

The BSO's Young Associates programme is open to young people (aged 18-30) who are based in the South West and come from backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in the arts. It will immerse you in the world of community music leadership through hands-on training and mentorship with our diverse network of BSO Associate Musicians and Music Leaders.

If you're creative, passionate about music as a tool for connection, and love working with people, then this is for you! Working part-time with the BSO for eight months, you'll receive bursary support as you gain vocational experience, access specialist training and mentoring, and join a growing network of emerging music leaders. No music-leading experience is required – we're looking for potential!

## ABOUT THE BSO

### Championing culture in people's lives

One of the UK's best-loved orchestras, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) is known for championing the role of culture in people's lives. Based at Lighthouse, Poole, the Orchestra is resident in Bristol, Exeter, Portsmouth, Southampton and Yeovil, and performs in towns and villages across the region. A registered charity, it is the largest performing organisation in the South West of England, serving one of the biggest and most diverse regions in the UK.

BSO Participate positively impacts the lives of people in the South West and beyond through the extraordinary power of music. Every year, the BSO's award-winning programme creates over 50,000 opportunities for children, young people and adults to learn, experience and create music – building connections, improving health and wellbeing, and enriching creativity and learning. BSO Participate takes exceptional music beyond the concert hall to the heart of our communities to enrich the cultural lives of people of all ages.





## ABOUT THIS PROGRAMME

The BSO Young Associates trainee programme provides a career springboard for two talented young people to develop skills as music leaders through practical experience, training and mentoring.

Running from November 2026 – June 2027 the programme combines:

- A training and development plan tailored to each Young Associate
- One-to-one mentoring from an experienced music leader
- Practical experience on a wide range of BSO Participate projects across the South West region (projects include youth, schools, community and creative health)
- The chance to co-develop and co-deliver two projects with the other Young Associate
- The option to work on a BSO project at the end of the Young Associates programme, with in-depth collaborative planning, goal setting and reflecting with an experienced music leader
- Attendance at training weekends with other arts organisations such as Spitalfields Skills Labs

### BSO Participate Music Leader network

- After finishing the Young Associates programme, you will have the opportunity to become part of the Participate Music Leader network which includes alumni from the Young Associates programme
- As a member of this collective, you will be invited to an annual paid Get Together Day with your peers and have the option to apply for a paid patch of work on a BSO Participate project. This will support your continual professional development with wraparound planning, reflection and mentoring

Successful applicants will receive a bursary of £8,800 paid in monthly instalments of £1,100, from November 2026 to June 2027. Participants will need to commit up to 10 days a month to the programme. The programme will be scheduled around other work and music commitments.

### What is a music leader?

A music leader is someone who leads creative music projects with people of all ages, from all walks of life, often for social, health or wellbeing goals or to enrich creativity and learning. They could work in all sorts of different settings, from community spaces to schools, hospitals and residential care homes, facilitating music-making with people with a wide range of musical experience and confidence. You don't need to have music leading experience to apply, we're looking for people with potential.

## WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We're looking for people with the potential to be a great communicator, connect with people from all walks of life, and take their musical and creative skills to the next level.

No music leading experience is necessary but to apply to be a BSO Young Associate you must:

- Be a musician, vocalist, music producer, composer, sound artist, MC or songwriter of any genre
- Play or make music to a high standard
- Embrace different styles of music and be keen to learn new skills
- Be passionate about music making with people of all ages, abilities and needs
- Be based in the South or South West of England (from Basingstoke in the East to Gloucestershire in the North and Cornwall in the West)
- Be aged 18 – 30
- The Young Associates programme is created to support those currently underrepresented in the arts. We are not presenting a fixed set of criteria, and instead ask applicants to self-identify their eligibility in this area. Eligible criteria may include, but are not limited to, underrepresented gender, racial, ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds, rural isolation and may also include neurodiversity and Disability.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The eight-month learning and development programme will be tailored to the Young Associates' needs and interests, consisting of:

- Hands-on experience on a variety of BSO music projects, which could include presenting, co-leading music workshops and co-creative music making (equivalent to 20 days, some projects are half days)
- Co-planning and co-leading two creative projects (one each in a school and creative-health setting), estimated at four sessions each, coached and supported by the BSO team and BSO Associates (equivalent of 20 days)
- Leading on one programme at the end of the scheme, estimated at eight sessions plus joint planning and reflection (equivalent of 16 days)
- Attendance at training days/induction/specialist mentoring sessions estimated at nine days
- One-hour monthly mentoring sessions with a BSO Associate plus one post-programme wrap-up session (equivalent of two days)
- Behind-the-scenes experience across the BSO (roughly three days)
- Independent reflection/planning time (estimated at 10 days)

### Commitment

Participants will need to commit to up to 10 days on average a month to the programme for projects, training and mentoring. Activities will take place all around the South West, and projects are scheduled a few months ahead. The programme will do its best to work around the Young Associates' other work commitments, and there are likely to be busier and quieter periods depending on the schedule of projects.

### Bursary and Expenses

The £8,800 bursary will be paid in equal monthly payments of £1,100. Travel expenses agreed in advance will be reimbursed in addition to the bursary, and overnight accommodation and subsistence will be paid for by the BSO where required. Young Associates will need to travel to projects and events across the South West from Cornwall to Bristol and Southampton.



## Timeline

- MIDDLE OCT** Welcome and planning your Young Associates programme with BSO Participate Project Manager
- NOV-DEC** Two-day induction with other Young Associate  
Take part in BSO Participate projects in a range of settings  
Begin planning of co-leading projects with other Young Associate
- JAN-FEB** Take part in BSO Participate projects in a range of settings  
Continue developing co-leading projects with other Young Associate  
Two training weekends
- MARCH-APR** Co-lead two projects with other Young Associate  
BSO Young Associates Get Together Day (part of the BSO's Participate Music Leader network)  
One training weekend  
Continue taking part in BSO Participate projects  
Discuss with project manager which project to focus on for end
- MAY-JUN** Eight sessions on independent project with wraparound planning and reflection  
Final reflection with project manager
- JULY** Wrap-up mentor session as a follow up

## HOW TO APPLY

1. Complete the application form downloadable from the [webpage](#).
2. Email completed applications (including video/audio clips if applicable) to Nicola Fulker [nfulker@bsorchestra.co.uk](mailto:nfulker@bsorchestra.co.uk) by Sunday 16 August, 5pm.

As this is a targeted programme it also includes questions based on guidance from the Social Mobility Commission, and around Protected Characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. Please share whatever information you feel comfortable with and you can select “prefer not to say” if you would rather not answer any question.

Please note: your answers will be treated as strictly confidential and used for internal purposes only.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview/audition on Wednesday 9 or Thursday 10 September in Poole. If you are successful there may be a second round of interviews on Zoom on Wednesday 16 or Thursday 17 September. The first round of interviews/auditions will involve:

- An informal interview
- A whole-group music workshop
- A chance to meet other young musicians

Your travel expenses will be reimbursed for attending this interview day.

If you would like more information or a friendly confidential chat about any aspect of the programme before applying, please contact Jess Kirby [jkirby@bsorchestra.co.uk](mailto:jkirby@bsorchestra.co.uk) to arrange a phone call. We look forward to receiving your application.



