

Art for Tolworth



Brief 03 — Storytelling & Co-design, 'The Narrator'

Programme-wide, with the Central Art Space as a focal point

Core commission: £7,200

Opportunity: Programme-wide creative commission

Location: Across Art for Tolworth, with the Central Art Space as a focal point

Application: Expression of Interest

Deadline: Sunday 1 November 2026, 11:59pm UK time

Commissioning organisation: The Community Brain, in partnership with South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust

Please read this brief alongside the [Art for Tolworth webpage](#), which provides the wider programme context and information about co-creation, participation and working within a healthcare environment.

Architectural plans, drawings and visualisations are included within this brief to provide further information about the hospital and the spatial context within which Art for Tolworth is being developed.



View of the Central Art Space's Double Height Space.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments



**South West London and
St George's Mental Health**
NHS Trust

The Opportunity

Art for Tolworth will bring together artists, patients, people with lived experience, staff, carers and communities through a programme of commissions, co-creation and creative activity.

Alongside the individual artwork commissions, we want to create an opportunity to capture and creatively interpret the story of the programme as it develops.

We are therefore looking for an artist, collective or creative team to act as The Narrator for Art for Tolworth.

The Narrator will work across the programme, developing relationships with the people involved and finding creative ways to gather, interpret and make visible the conversations, ideas, experiences, processes and making that emerge.

We are not looking simply for conventional project documentation. We want the process of observing, gathering, recording and interpreting Art for Tolworth to become creative work in its own right.

The final form is deliberately open. It might involve visual art, drawing, writing, photography, film, sound, illustration, publishing, objects, installation, digital work, participatory practice, archives, collected material or a combination of different approaches.

We are interested in what applicants might bring to this role through their own creative practice.

We are currently seeking Arts Council England funding to extend the Narrator commission beyond the core £7,200 commission described in this brief. Following the Expression of Interest stage, we expect to shortlist a small number of applicants and invite them to an informal conversation.

Once the funding position is clear, we will either appoint one or more practitioners to deliver the commission within the total core budget of £7,200, or expand the scope and potentially invite shortlisted applicants to develop their proposals further, supported by a development fee.

Final selection is anticipated by January 2027.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

Architectural drawings are indicative and retain some internal project reference labels. The principal location described in this brief should remain the focus of the commission.



Views from the Double Height Space looking towards the Courtyards.



Better Communities
Transforming our
care and environments

Connecting the Programme

The Narrator has an important role in helping connect the different people, commissions, processes and spaces that make up Art for Tolworth.

Rather than responding to one predefined artwork location, the commissioned practitioner or practitioners will have opportunities to work alongside other artists and participants as the programme develops.

This might involve spending time within workshops and engagement activity, following the development and making of commissioned artworks, gathering contributions from participants, responding creatively to conversations or processes, or creating opportunities for people to contribute directly to the evolving work.

There is also potential for the Narrator's work to appear across the hospital rather than being confined to a single location.

Corridors, circulation spaces and other everyday parts of the building could provide opportunities for fragments, stories, images or other creative elements to be encountered as people move through the hospital. This could create moments of connection and discovery between different parts of Art for Tolworth.

The Central Art Space, positioned within the heart of the hospital, provides a potential focal point or home for the work. However, we do not want to prescribe how this space should be used or assume that the final work must take the form of a conventional exhibition or display.

The relationship between the Narrator, the Central Art Space and the wider hospital should develop through the practitioner's creative approach, engagement and experience of the programme.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

The Site

The Central Art Space sits within the heart of the new hospital and provides a potential focal point for the Narrator commission.

As a shared space within the wider programme, it offers an opportunity for creative work to be encountered, developed and brought into dialogue with the people, stories and processes that shape Art for Tolworth.

Please refer to the plans, drawings and visualisations included within this brief for further information about the Central Art Space and its spatial context.



Ground floor plan highlighting the current Creative Opportunities.

Architectural drawings are indicative and retain some internal project reference labels. The principal location described in this brief should remain the focus of the commission.

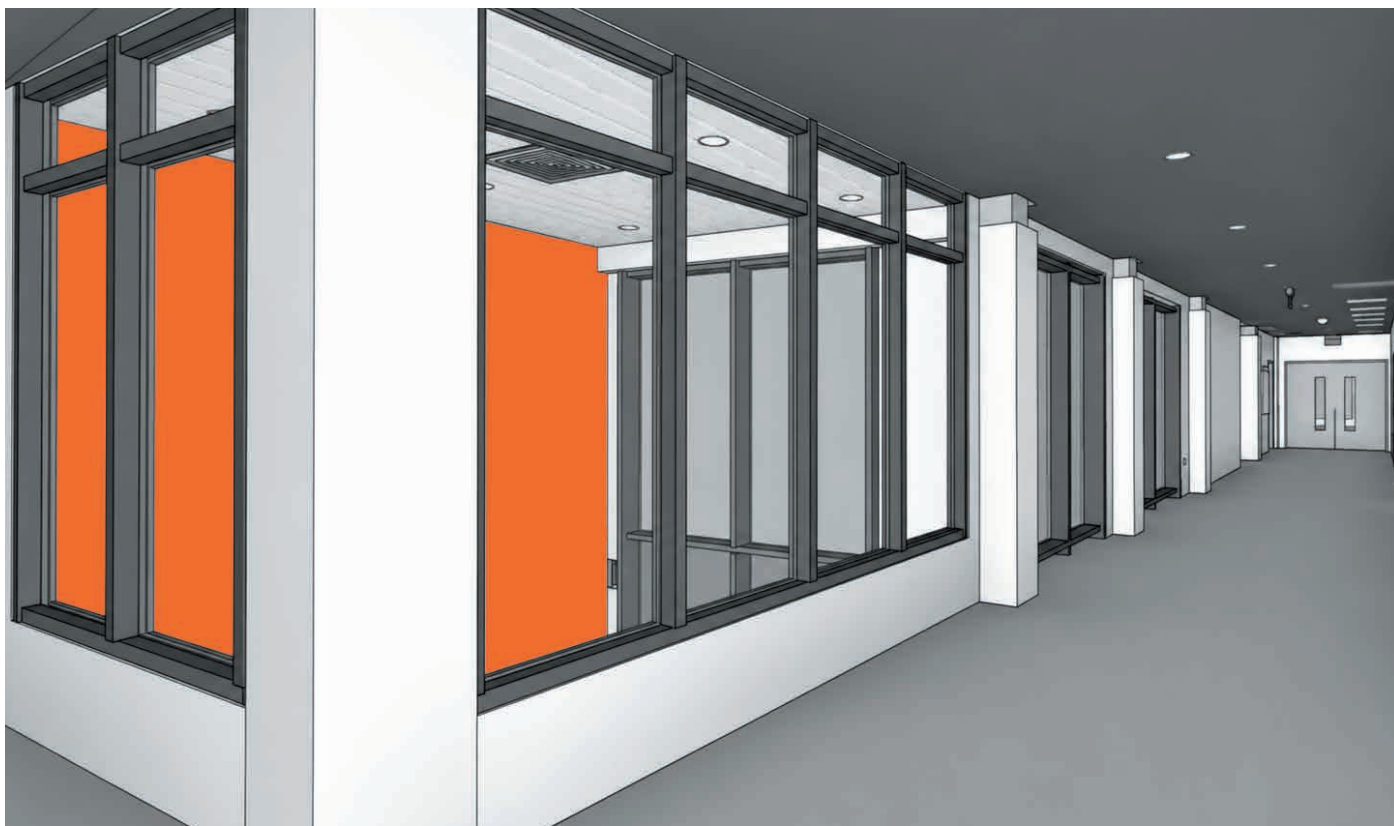


View from the Double Height Space towards adjacent walls and windows.

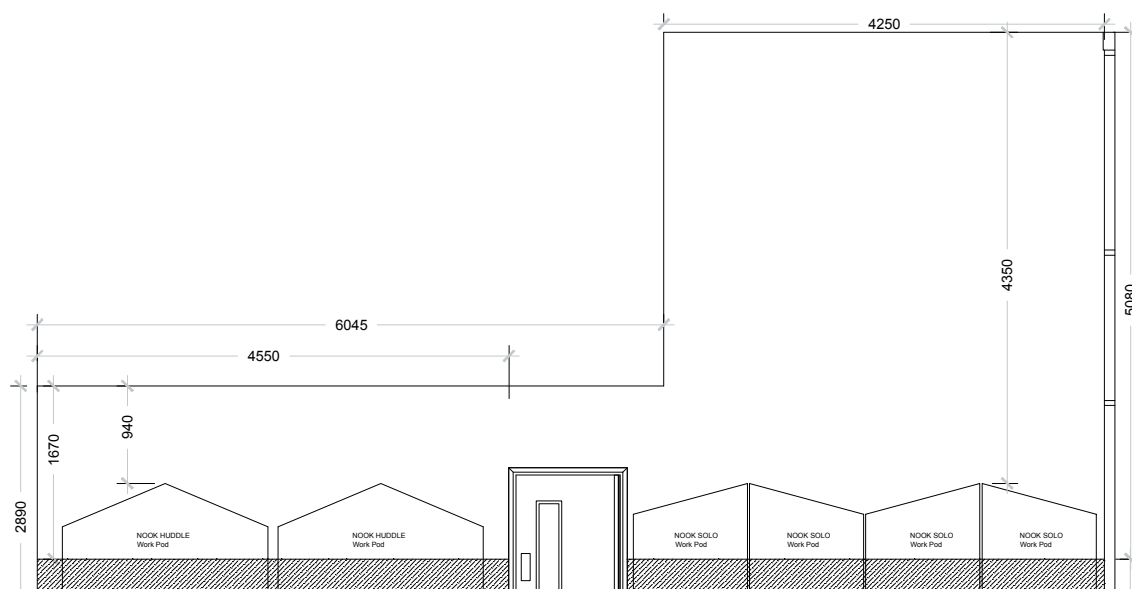


Ground Floor Plan of the Central Art Space.

Architectural drawings are indicative and retain some internal project reference labels. The principal location described in this brief should remain the focus of the commission.



View from the First Floor towards the Double Height Space.



Interior Elevation of the Central Art Space.

What We Are Looking For

We welcome applications from individual artists, collaborative practices and creative teams working across a wide range of disciplines.

We are particularly interested in practitioners who:

- have a strong and distinctive creative practice;
are interested in people, stories, processes and the act of making;
- can work sensitively and collaboratively with people with different experiences and perspectives;
- are comfortable allowing work to develop through listening, observation, participation and exchange;
- can respond creatively to activity happening over an extended period rather than beginning with a completely fixed outcome;
- are interested in working alongside other artists and creative practitioners;
- can explore how individual stories and experiences might connect with a wider programme;
- understand the sensitivity required when working within a mental health and healthcare context;
- can think imaginatively about how creative work might be encountered across different spaces and formats;
- can develop an approach that is realistic within the available budget and programme.

We are particularly interested in how you work, rather than asking applicants to propose a predetermined final artwork.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

Co-creation and Participation

Co-creation is central to Art for Tolworth and particularly important to the Narrator commission.

The appointed practitioner or practitioners will work alongside The Community Brain to develop meaningful ways of engaging with patients, people with lived experience, staff, carers, communities and other commissioned artists.

Participation might involve conversations, workshops, interviews, collaborative making, collecting material, creative prompts, observation, skills sharing or other approaches developed through the practitioner's creative practice.

The Narrator should create opportunities for different voices and experiences to become part of the work while remaining sensitive to consent, privacy and the particular context of a mental health setting.

We do not expect applicants to define every method or outcome in advance. We are interested in practitioners who can establish a clear creative approach while remaining responsive to the relationships and material that emerge through the programme.

Further information about the programme's approach to co-creation and participation is available on the [Art for Tolworth webpage](#).



Co-creation and Engagement by The Community Brain



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments



**South West London and
St George's Mental Health**
NHS Trust

Working Across Art for Tolworth

Unlike the Primary and Secondary Arrival commissions, the Narrator is not tied to one principal artwork location.

The appointed practitioner or practitioners will instead work across different parts of Art for Tolworth as the programme develops.

This is likely to involve dialogue with The Community Brain and other commissioned artists, participation in selected engagement and co-creation activity, and opportunities to respond to the development of artworks and the experiences of people involved in the programme.

The precise rhythm of this involvement will be developed collaboratively following appointment. We do not expect the Narrator to document every activity or commission, but to identify where their presence and creative response can be most meaningful.

The commission should ultimately leave a creative legacy within the new hospital, but its form, scale and location will develop through the process rather than being predetermined.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

Working Within the Hospital

The artwork will form part of a mental health hospital and must ultimately meet the clinical, technical, accessibility, safety and maintenance requirements of the environment.

The appointed artist will work with The Community Brain, the Trust, the design team and relevant technical specialists to ensure that the artwork is appropriate for its location.

This will include consideration of materials, fixings, structural requirements, infection prevention and control, accessibility, sensory impact, durability, cleaning, maintenance, installation and relevant health and safety requirements.

We recognise that these issues cannot all be fully resolved at application stage. Detailed technical development and approvals will form part of the commissioned design process.

Further programme-wide guidance about working within a healthcare environment is available on the [Art for Tolworth webpage](#).



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

Commission Budget

The total core budget for the Narrator commission is:

£7,200 inclusive of VAT

Where VAT is applicable, it must be included within this total. No additional VAT will be payable by the commissioner. Practitioners are responsible for their own VAT registration, tax and other statutory obligations.

The £7,200 is the total core budget available for the commission, rather than a fee available to each appointed practitioner. If more than one practitioner or team is appointed within the core funding, the budget and responsibilities will be divided according to the agreed scope.

The budget should support the development and delivery of the commission, including, as appropriate:

- artist or creative fees;
- engagement and co-creation activity;
- design development;
- materials and fabrication;
- specialist or subcontractor costs;
- travel and expenses;
- installation;
- documentation and handover information;
- an appropriate project contingency.

We recognise that the balance between practitioner time, engagement activity and production will depend on the proposed approach.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

Applicants are not expected to provide a detailed budget at Expression of Interest stage. We are primarily interested in understanding your practice, your way of working and the creative potential you see in the opportunity.

We are currently seeking Arts Council England funding to expand the scale and reach of the commission. Once the funding position is clear, we will either:

- appoint one or more practitioners to deliver the commission within the total core budget of £7,200; or
- expand the scope and budget and potentially invite shortlisted applicants to develop proposals further.

Where further proposal development is requested, the scope, expanded commission budget and development fee will be confirmed with shortlisted applicants in advance.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

Indicative Programme

Opportunity opens: Monday 21 September 2026

Online artist Q&A: Thursday 8 October 2026, 2pm UK time

Expression of Interest deadline: Sunday 1 November 2026, 11:59pm UK time

Shortlisting and informal conversations: November 2026

Funding decision and next steps: December 2026

Further development with shortlisted applicants, where required: December 2026 to January 2027

Final selection and contracting: by the end of January 2027

Artist induction and commencement: February 2027

Co-creation and creative development: February to April 2027

Production and technical coordination: May to June 2027

Anticipated installation or presentation within the hospital: July to August 2027

The programme may evolve in coordination with the wider hospital construction programme. Any changes affecting applicants or the appointed artist will be communicated as early as possible.

How to Apply

We want the application process to be simple and accessible. At this stage, we are particularly interested in understanding your practice, your approach to working with people and why this commission interests you.

This is an Expression of Interest rather than a request for a fully developed proposal.

Complete the [Brief 03 The Narrator Expression of Interest Form](#).

1. Artist or Practice Information

A short introduction to you or your practice, together with a link to your website, portfolio or other relevant online material.

2. CV

A CV of no more than two A4 pages outlining relevant experience.

3. Short Responses

Please respond to the following questions:

- Why are you interested in working within the new Tolworth Hospital and/or a mental health setting? (Maximum 200 words)
- Do you have a connection to Tolworth, Kingston or the wider area? If so, please tell us about it. (Maximum 200 words)
- A local connection is welcomed but is not a requirement for this opportunity. Tell us about your approach to engagement and co-creation. How have you worked with people or communities within your practice, or how would you approach doing so through this commission? (Maximum 300 words)
- What kind of creative work could you imagine developing as The Narrator? Tell us about how it might look, feel, develop or be encountered, and who you might involve in creating it. (Maximum 300 words)



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments



**South West London and
St George's Mental Health**
NHS Trust

4. Supporting Images

Please provide up to 2 A4 pages of images, drawings, previous work, references or other visual material that helps us understand your practice and/or proposed approach.

We are not looking for a fully resolved proposal or final artwork. We want to understand the direction of your thinking and how this opportunity might connect with your existing creative practice.

Alternatively, applicants may submit an audio or video response of up to six minutes in place of the written responses. Further instructions are included within the Expression of Interest Form.

Submit your Expression of Interest: [Brief 03 – The Narrator \(Google Form\)](#)



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments

Selection

Expressions of Interest will initially be reviewed by The Community Brain before a shortlist is developed for further consideration with the Art for Tolworth Steering Group.

We will be looking for:

- the quality and relevance of the applicant's creative practice;
- the strength and potential of the proposed approach;
- the ability to work sensitively and collaboratively with different people;
- a meaningful approach to engagement and co-creation;
- an understanding of the particular context of the hospital;
- the ability to respond creatively to stories, processes, people and places;
- openness to collaboration with other artists and the wider programme;
- the ability to develop and deliver work within the available budget and programme.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an informal conversation with The Community Brain and members of the Steering Group. The date and format will be confirmed directly with shortlisted applicants.

Once the Arts Council England funding position is clearer, shortlisted applicants will be informed whether the commission will proceed within the £7,200 core budget or through an expanded scope and selection process.

If further proposal development is requested, its scope, timeframe and associated development fee will be confirmed in advance.

Final selection is anticipated by the end of January 2027.

Access and Reasonable Adjustments

We want the application process and commission to be accessible and welcoming to artists with different access needs.

If you require a reasonable adjustment to apply for or participate in this opportunity, please let us know. This might include adjustments to the application format, additional time, communication support, access requirements or support to attend meetings or conversations.

Reasonable adjustments required by the appointed artist during the commission may also be requested in addition to the commission budget. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the artist's individual access needs and the requirements of the commission.

Please contact artfortolworth@thecommunitybrain.org to discuss any access requirements or reasonable adjustments. Requests will be treated sensitively and will not affect how your application is assessed.



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments



**South West London and
St George's Mental Health**
NHS Trust

Supporting Information

Applicants should also refer to:

- the [Art for Tolworth webpage](#);
- the plans, drawings and visualisations included within this brief;
- any additional site or technical information issued during the commissioning process.

Questions

We welcome questions from artists during the application period.

Contact: artfortolworth@thecommunitybrain.org

Online artist Q&A: Thursday 8 October 2026, 2:00pm UK time

Meeting link: <https://meet.google.com/brj-uyqs-idy>



Better Communities

Transforming our
care and environments