

UK TOWN OF CULTURE

toolkit



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport



Every town has a unique story to tell

We're celebrating the unique creativity, history and identity of towns across the UK, encouraging them to take part in the first ever UK Town of Culture competition.

This toolkit provides key information about the competition, along with suggested copy and assets to help you amplify it and encourage towns to apply.

Applications must detail:

- Your story – the unique story of the town
- Culture for everyone – how the town will design a cultural programme for all
- Making it happen – how the town will then deliver a successful programme

Deadline to submit an initial Expression of Interest (EOI): **31 March 2026**

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Background

01



UK Tow of Culture

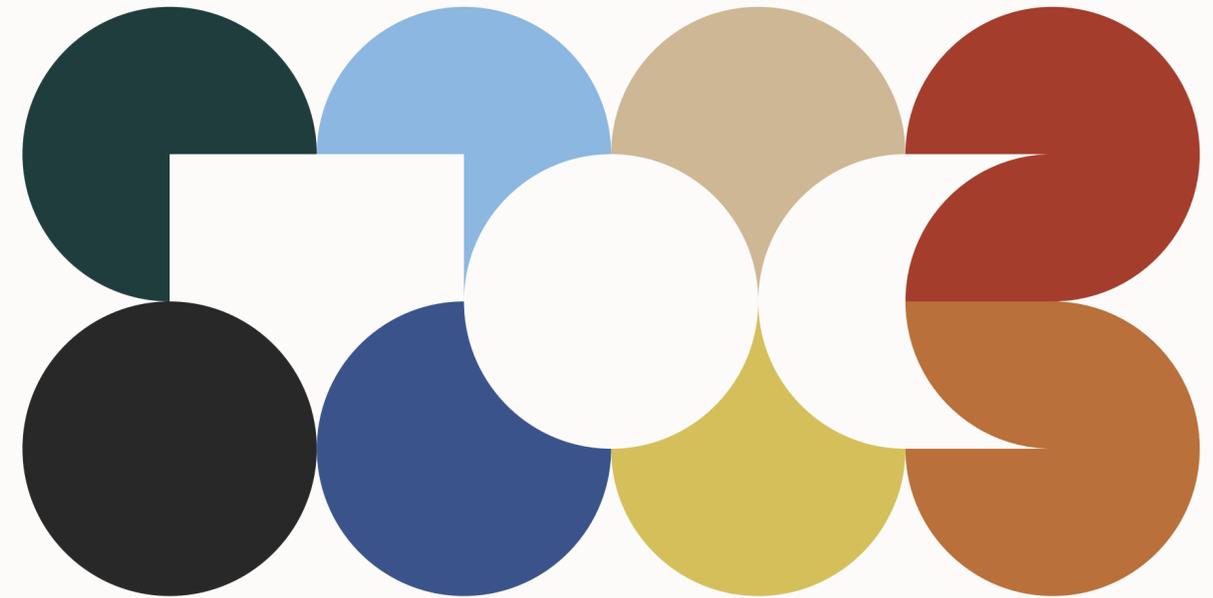
01

Background

UK Town of Culture

Inspired by the success of the UK City of Culture, the new UK Town of Culture competition aims to shine a spotlight on the unique contributions towns make to our national story. By engaging towns nationwide, we are building a more socially cohesive country where communities take pride in their local identity and are empowered to celebrate it.

We will select the best small, medium and large towns from the applications received. One of these entries will be named the UK Town of Culture 2028 and receive £3 million to deliver a cultural programme during 2028. The remaining two finalists will each receive £250,000 to carry forward significant elements detailed in their entry bid.



UK TOWN OF CULTURE

Competition Benefits

02

UK Tow of Culture

02

Competition Benefits



› Empowers Towns

Empowers towns to tell their unique story on the national stage, fostering local pride and strengthening social cohesion.

› Brings Together Communities

Brings local organisations, grassroots artists, creatives, local leaders and residents together to shape an impactful bid and build lasting partnerships, drawing on the best of art, heritage and creative industries in the area.

› Breaks Down Barriers

Breaks down barriers to participation, ensuring arts and culture are accessible and delivering local impact.

› Cultural Investment

Provides a significant funding boost to support a town's cultural infrastructure.

How to Apply

03



UK Tow of Culture

03

How to Apply

› For Bidders

Contact:

uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk

if you have any questions.

› Read the Expression of Interest guidance for bidders document

[**AVAILABLE HERE**](#)

› Attend the virtual information session, 21 January, 2026

Email uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk to register.

› Complete the EOI form

Submit the form which addresses the three core criteria: Your Story, Culture for Everyone, and Making it Happen.

Deadline: Ensure your completed EOI is submitted by **31 March 2026**. The DCMS bid team will not accept any EOIs submitted after this date.

How You Can Get Involved

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How You Can Get Involved

> For MPs

[DOWNLOAD THE ASSET PACK](#)

> **Champion the Vision**

Use your platform to articulate why towns within your constituency should apply to be a part of the competition, highlighting how they could benefit for eg. National recognition, expanding access to arts & culture in the community, enhancing local pride etc.

> **Convene Stakeholders**

Bring together the Local Authority, community groups, local businesses and cultural leaders to form a partnership needed to submit a bid.

Note - While collaborative cross-sector working is required, bidders will need to specify a single organisation within the partnership to be considered the 'Lead applicant' during the competition process.

> **Amplify on Social Media**

Support towns' bids on social media using the asset pack.

How to Get Involved

› For Stakeholders and Cultural Organisations

Use social media to highlight your support for the first ever UK Town of Culture competition, and/or to support town(s) who are bidding.

[DOWNLOAD THE ASSET PACK](#)

› Share and repost the promotional video

Featuring leading UK creatives on your social media channels.

› Tag relevant partners and cultural leaders

Mention regional partners, businesses, cultural groups and community leaders in your posts to build momentum.

› Use the hashtag

Every post should use **#UKTownOfCulture2028**

And the town-specific tag **#[Town name here]2028**

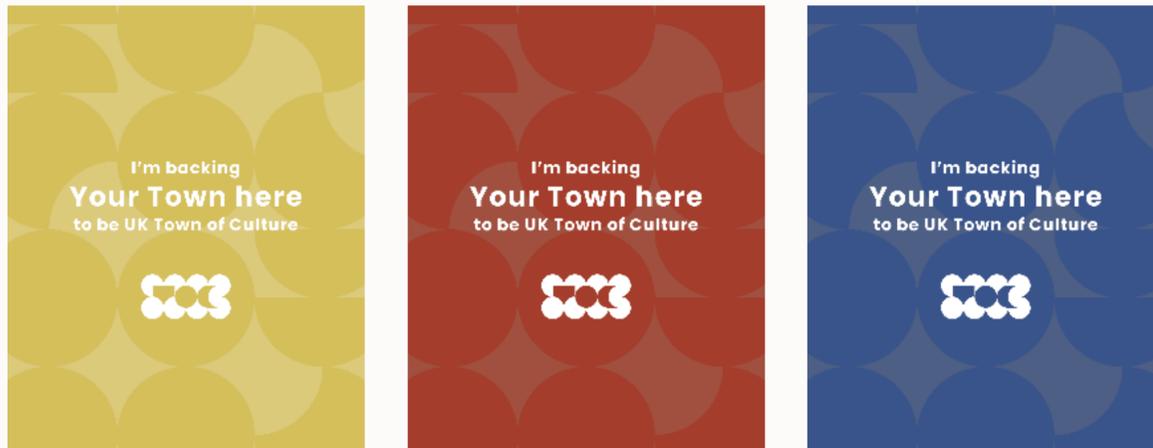
How You Can Get Involved

> Key Messages

- > The first ever UK Town of Culture competition is now open for applications: your town can start their bid today.
- > This competition is our chance to celebrate how towns across the country contribute to our national life – a chance to show the whole of the UK why you're proud of your town.
- > Inspired by UK City of Culture's success in making people proud of where they live and bringing communities together, we want towns of all sizes to have their moment.
- > Towns from Torquay to Thurso and Brecon to Ballycastle have until 31 March to apply, making the case for why they should be the UK's first Town of Culture and deliver a cultural programme for local people, enabling them to invest in their local area, create a lasting sense of pride for their town, and provide opportunities for people to engage with the arts.
- > A winner will be chosen in early 2027, and will deliver their vibrant cultural programme in 2028.

How You Can Get Involved

› Supporting on Social Media



› Post the “[Your Town Here] is Bidding” Graphic

Pin this to the top of your social profiles after registration. This can be found in the asset pack.

› Film a short video

Consider a short clip explaining why you are backing the bid and what it would mean for local pride.

› Quote-post the announcement

Amplify the Local Authority/Bidding organisation’s official launch post with a personal endorsement to reach a wider audience.

› Engage

Like, share and comment on content posted from the town to show your support.

› Suggested copy for your post:

I’m backing <town name here> to become the first-ever #UKTownOfCulture2028!

Let’s tell our unique story and shine a spotlight on the important role <town name here> plays in our national story.

[DOWNLOAD THE ASSET PACK](#)

Social Media for Bidders

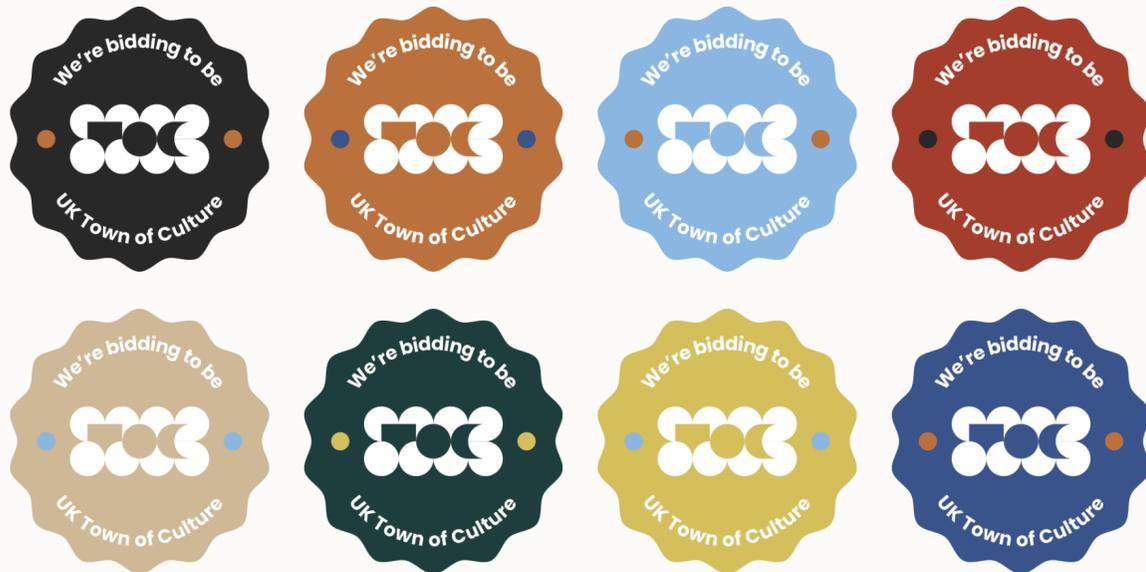
05



Social Media for Bidders

> Social assets for Stakeholders and Cultural Organisations

Highlight your support for the first-ever UK Town of Culture competition and/or relevant town(s) that have submitted the bid on social media.



[DOWNLOAD THE ASSET PACK](#)

> Post the “We’re Bidding” graphic on your social channels

Pin this to the top of your social profiles after your bid has been submitted.

> Tag relevant partners and cultural leaders

Mention regional partners, businesses, cultural groups and community leaders in your posts to build momentum.

> Use the Hashtag

Every post should use **#UKTownOfCulture2028**

And the town-specific tag **#[Town name here]2028**

> Engage

Film and post a video from the Council Leader asking local residents: “What is your favourite thing about our town?” to start gathering evidence and buzz around your town’s story.

> Suggested copy for your post:

“We’re bidding!

<your town here> is officially entering the race to become the first-ever #UKTownOfCulture2028.

Help us tell our story and celebrate <your town here> on the national stage.

#[Town name here]2028

Social Assets

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Social Assets

> Using the Social Assets

In the asset pack you will find the social media and design assets to show off your bid to be the first UK Town of Culture.

You can post the generic artworks, make them your own by inserting the name of your town using Adobe Acrobat into them or add a UK Town of Culture 'We're Bidding' badge to your existing images or social banners.

[DOWNLOAD THE ASSET PACK](#)

If you have any questions on branding or the toolkit, please contact:

uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk

> For MPs and Stakeholders

In the asset pack are a range of templates and posts to show your support.



You can edit these by opening the PDF file in Adobe Acrobat or Illustrator.

You will also find a generic, uneditable version too.

> Suggested copy for your post:

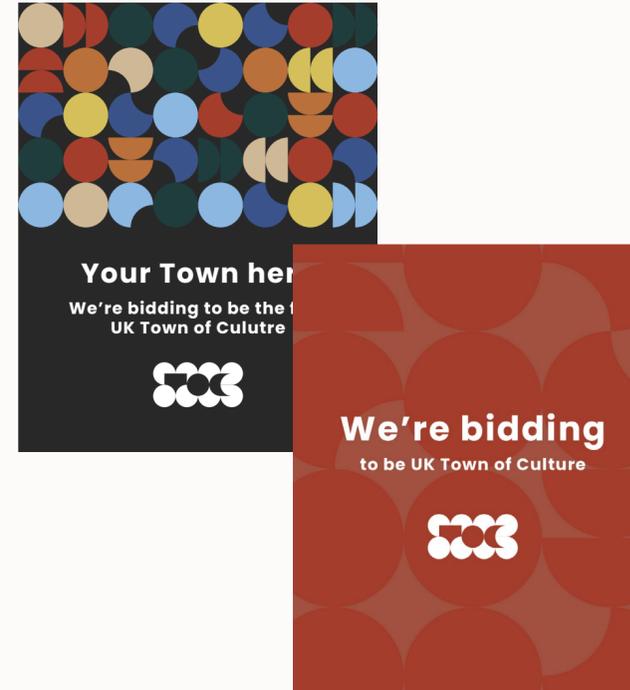
I'm backing <town name here> to become the first-ever #UKTownOfCulture2028!

Let's tell our unique story and shine a spotlight on the important role <town name here> plays in our national story.

#[Town name here]2028

> For bidding towns

In the asset pack are a range of templates and posts to celebrate your bid.



> Suggested copy for your post:

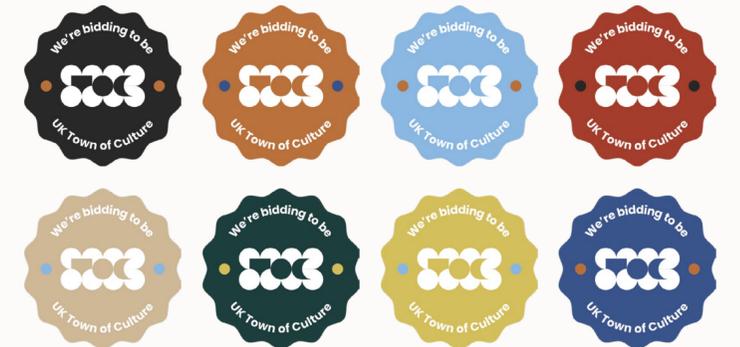
"We're bidding!"

<your town here> is officially entering the race to become the first-ever #UKTownOfCulture2028.

Help us tell our story and celebrate <your town here> on the national stage.

#[Town name here]2028

You will also find a range of 'We're Bidding' badges that can be added to social headers, profile pictures or future content.



The UK Town of Culture logo, colours and design, included in the asset pack, are yours to help tell your town's story as you see fit.

Brand Guidelines

Brand Guidelines

> UK Town of Culture

The UK Town of Culture brand celebrates the unique contribution that towns make to our cultural life.

It represents the UK coming together to create culture. It uses a bold design and vibrant palette, with eight circles reflecting the different regions of the UK, to visualise the identities, histories and traditions that exemplify our national story.

> how you can get involved

We've created the UK Town of Culture logo to be downloaded and used by anyone.

[DOWNLOAD THE ASSET PACK](#)

If your town is applying, you can use the badges included in the tool kit to add to your social media pages. Either by adding them to your profile images or channel headers.

Logos

> primary logo

The logo with text is the main symbol of the UK Town of Competition, so try to use it wherever possible.

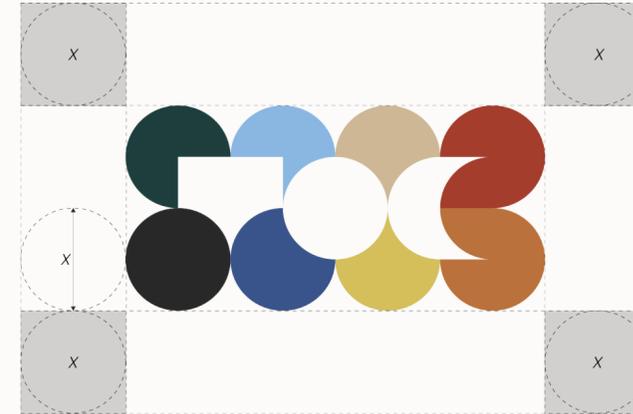


Giving the logo space to breathe is key to its impact. Make sure to consider the background and clear space around it.

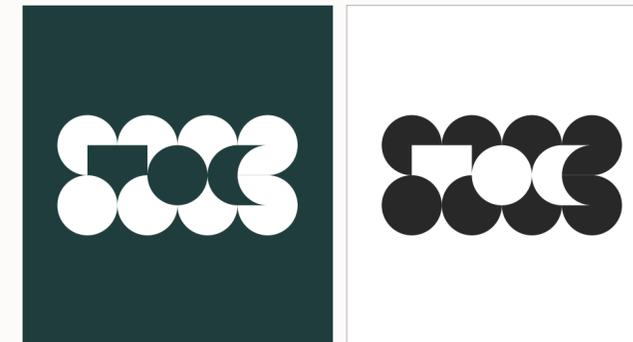


> where space is tight

If space is tight you can use the circles symbol alone to represent the brand.

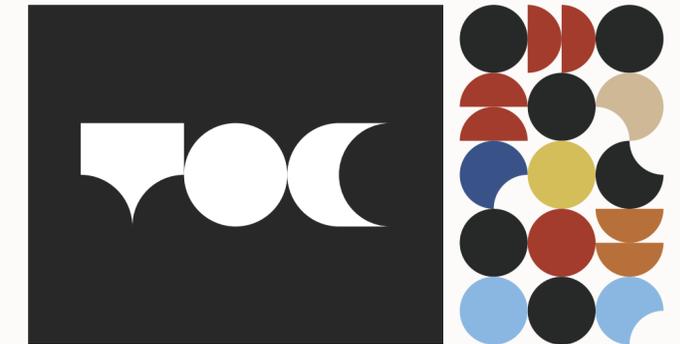


You can use the logo in black, white or any one of the 8 colours. Just try to make sure that it sits on a contrasting background.



> other uses

The logo gives lots of flexibility and chances for creativity. You can scale it up, shrink it or use the circles in animation and patterns.



> Using the Logo

The logo is the UK Town of Culture's main identifier. You can use it to represent your town's interest in the competition, mark your EOI or drum up excitement for the competition.

We want you to use it as you see fit. On your social pages, in emails or on the side of bus.

[DOWNLOAD THE ASSET PACK](#)

Colours

> palette

The slate-grey of Wales, the deep blue lochs of Scotland, the proud red brickwork of the North West.

It's not just a collection of colours, it's a snapshot of the UK and can be used across your marketing materials and communications.

Reflecting your area is a key part of the brand so select the colour combinations that reflect your area.

Slate



A rich grey inspired by the slate quarries and mountains of Wales.

Causeway



Deep green echoing the Giant's Causeway and the rolling fields of the Emerald Isle.

Loch



A dark, still blue mirroring the depth of Highland lochs and ScotRail itself.

Mist



A rich blue reflecting the North Sea and the North East's heritage of shipyards and coal.

Industry



A proud red symbolising Manchester's mills, Liverpool's brickwork, and the North West's industrial heartbeat.

Forge



Warm amber symbolising the foundries at the heart of the Midlands' manufacturing past.

Sandstone



Soft off-white reflecting the chalk cliffs and sandstone fields of the South East.

Coast



Bright, golden yellow inspired by coastal light, beach sands, and the South West.

Q&A

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UK Tow of Culture

Q&A

› key answers to help support your EOI

For any further questions, please contact uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk

For more detail, read the full Expression of Interest guidance for bidders document.

[READ THE EOI GUIDANCE](#)

› Who can apply?

- We welcome bids from small, medium and large towns across the UK.
- Towns are required to engage community groups, local businesses and cultural leaders as well as the relevant local authority to establish a bidding partnership.
- While areas apart of Greater London are precluded from bidding, this does not prevent these areas or London-based organisations to join a bid partnership

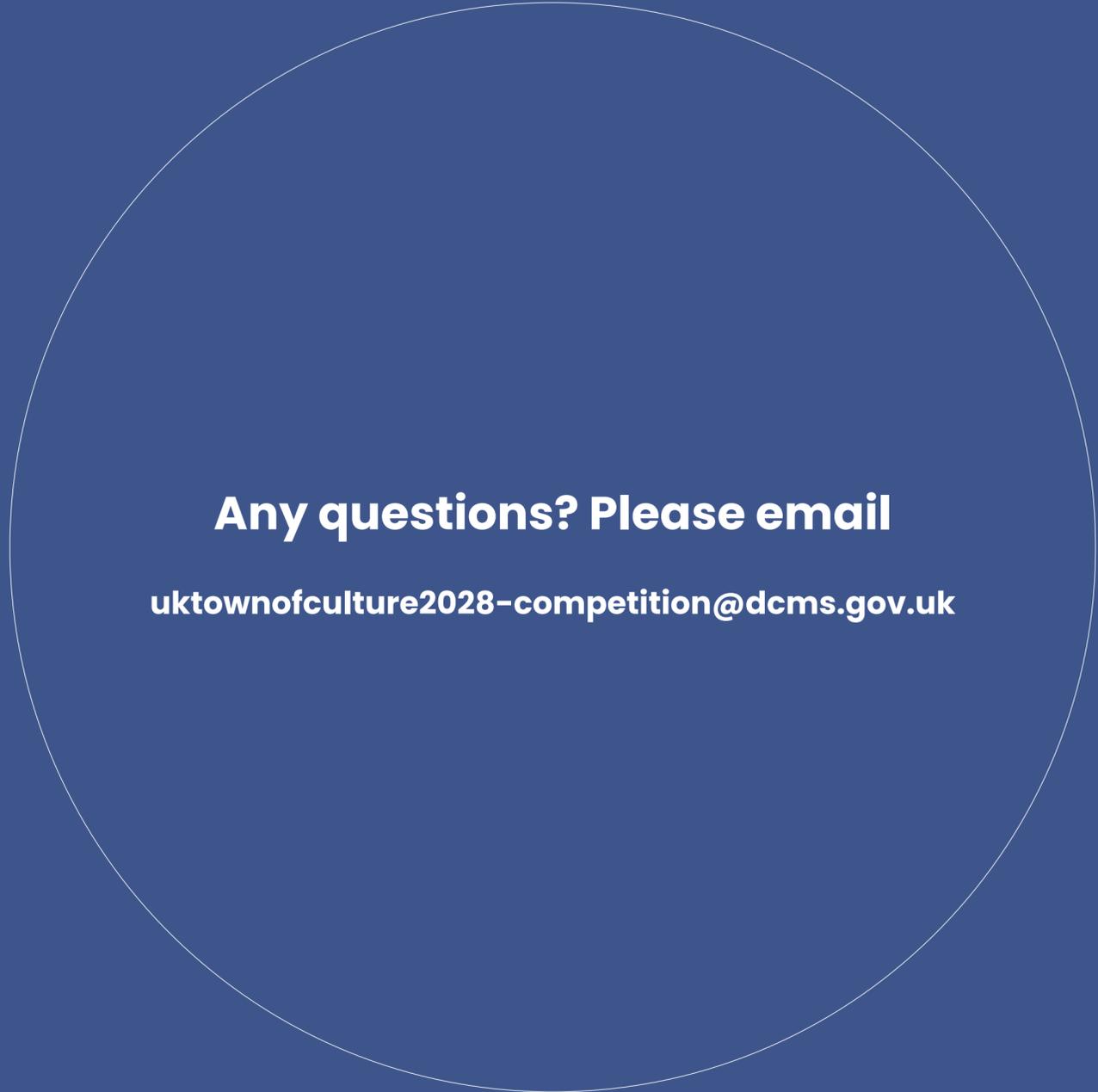
› Once our town has submitted an EOI, what happens next?

- The deadline for EOIs is 31 March, 2026. An expert advisory panel, chaired by Sir Phil Redmond, will assess the EOIs against the competition criteria and select a shortlist of places.
- DCMS expects to announce the shortlist which will advance to the next stage of the competition in Spring 2026.

› Should my town enter the UK City of Culture or the UK Town of Culture?

- Every town in the UK is unique and adds something special to our national story. We want the UK Town of Culture competition to reflect the widest range of towns possible.
- Whilst large towns can apply for either UK Town of Culture or UK City of Culture, the competitions are different in scope and it's up to individual large towns to decide which competition they could best submit a competitive bid for.
- The current UK City of Culture competition features updated guidance aimed at encouraging larger towns to apply for that competition.

Get in Touch



Any questions? Please email

uktownofculture2028-competition@dcms.gov.uk

thank you