

ST. HELENS YOUTH BRASS BAND



Registered Charity Number: 1009301

2026 v1.1

Conductors Pathway Applicants Pack



Introduction

St Helens Youth Brass Band (SHYBB) have been funded by Sound! Music Hub to run a young conductors education and experience programme from October 2026 to Summer 2027.

We are looking for a small number of young people aged 13-21 to form a learning community to journey through this programme together, supporting and learning from each other as well as professional mentors. We are looking for young people who have strong ensemble experience who are looking to try out conducting over a significant time period

SHYBB is a volunteer-led organisation based in St Helens offering progressive brass band playing education and performance experiences across 4 bands catering for ages 4-19 from complete beginners to advanced. Rehearsals are from 9.30am-12.30pm, on Saturdays, weekly in term time. You can find out more about us at www.shybb.uk

Prospective applicants are welcome to informally come and visit rehearsals and ask any questions on 12th September between 9:30-12:30 at Ormskirk Street United Reformed Church, St Helens.



What does it involve?

If you are selected for the programme you will:

- Attend a number of workshop days throughout the year led by professional conductors and music educators to learn secure basic and developing conducting technique (you must be available for the first session on 17th October 9am - 11am)
- Attend pre-agreed SHYBB rehearsals on Saturday mornings to receive ongoing mentoring and regular podium opportunities with a range of SHYBB bands
- Have the opportunity to conduct small informal performances through the year such as small ensembles in community settings
- Progress to the opportunity to conduct an item in a formal concert or competition with SHYBB
- Experience several field trips to observe conductors rehearsing a different ensemble, including professional ensembles, watch the performance and review together your learning
- Be part of and contribute to a supportive small learning community, reviewing and reflecting on your progress with your peers and mentors.

This could be for you if:

- You live and/or are at school/college and/or are a member of a youth music ensemble in the Liverpool City Region.
- You are already 13 and no more than 21 by the end of June 2027.
- You can play an instrument to Grade 6 standard (this can be any instrument and you do not need to have completed an exam).
- You have experience in playing in a conducted musical ensemble.
- You have musical theory knowledge to at least grade 5 theory standard (the exam does not need to be taken).
- You are curious about developing conducting skills and have not yet had very much opportunity or teaching for this.
- You would enjoy spending significant time working with brass bands including in particular the youth bands at SHYBB who encompass absolute beginners to diploma standard players..
- You would enjoy bringing your instrument to contribute to small ensemble work to help your group develop conducting skills together.
- You can commit to the dates listed in the Key Dates section.
- You have the time to do regular reflections on your skills in between sessions, including reviewing the videos taken of your own conducting.

Application process

Applications should be submitted at <https://forms.gle/cA9Quic5WEtNmwaL7> by 5pm Wednesday 16th September. Applicants will be informed of the outcome by 5pm Saturday 3rd October.

Form questions

Alongside personal and demographic information, the application questions consist:

Written questions - please keep each answer to no more than 300 words

1. Why are you applying for this programme, how does it fit with your musical aspirations?
2. What do you think makes someone a good leader of a musical group?
3. Tell us something about what you know about brass bands and why you might enjoy spending this year working with them.
4. Imagine you are conducting a piece and the band aren't responding in the way you hoped. What might you try?

Video questions

Please add a link to a public, unlisted Youtube video of yourself answering the following questions. Please upload a video that is no more than 5 minutes in length and filmed in a single take. The camera should be focussed on you. We are not looking for a polished video, just using a phone camera in selfie mode is perfect.

1. Imagine you become a brilliant conductor, if you could conduct any piece of music with any group of musicians what would you choose and why?
2. Tell us about a time when you were part of a group and helped it work well. What did you do and what did you learn about yourself?

Personal Reference

Provide the name and email address of an adult who knows you in an educational context and can confirm your suitability and potential commitment to the programme. This could be someone you know through music, or someone from school or another activity you participate in. This cannot be a tutor or trustee associated with SHYBB or your family member

Key Dates

All locations are Ormskirk Street United Reformed Church, St Helens, unless otherwise stated. Some dates may need to change due to extenuating circumstances.

Regular podium practice

Regular podium practice will be delivered as part of SHYBB rehearsals on Saturday mornings in St Helens.

Initially planned workshops - all participants must attend all of these initial workshops. Additional dates for workshops after February will be added as we move through the year:

- 17th October 09:30-11:00
- 14th November 09:30-12:30
- 17th January 09:30-16:00
- 7th & 8th February 09:00-16:00 (Wirral).

Podium Performance opportunities - these will be shared and agreed across the cohort. Additional performance opportunities will be added as we move through the year.

- Late November & December - Assorted informal Christmas performances
- 12th December - Brass Explosion (formal concert)
- 21st March - Family and Friends concert (formal concert)
- 11th April - Brass Band England Youth Champs competition
- July - Assorted summer performances, both formal and informal
- 20th-24th August - SHYBB tour, location TBC

General Information

In taking part in the programme you agree to:

- Be able to commit to attending SHYBB regularly for Saturday mornings (most weeks in term time). In particular the workshop dates shared in the key dates section.
- Commit to attending and conducting at a number of informal and formal concerts during the academic years (specific dates will be agreed and shared between the cohort selected)
- Sign up to a shared commitment to the programme which the group will agree together including receiving developmental feedback, supporting observing others carefully, and kindly and engaging positively with all aspects of the programme.
- Follow the general code of conduct for members of SHYBB, including additional codes of conduct
- Agree to videoing yourself conducting through the programme and regularly review that material following podium time for self reflection.
- If you are under 18, provide parental/guardian permission to apply and attend the required commitments
- If you are 18+, agree to completing our safer recruitment process including an enhanced DBS through SHYBB and committing to our safeguarding policies
- Allow SHYBB to capture information about your progress through the programme, including a survey at 6 months afterwards, in order to evidence the impact of the funding.
- Agree to use the Spond app for communications within the programme.

Contact and Location



Address

Ormskirk Street United Reformed Church,
St Helens,
WA10 2JZ

info@shybb.uk

What if I'm not a brass player or don't play in a brass band?

That's not a problem, as long as you can demonstrate the musical basis needed on any instrument and think you would enjoy working with a brass band we'd encourage you to apply. If you haven't experienced a brass band before please watch some online videos to familiarise yourself with the style and range of music to be sure you want to spend the year significantly engaged with brass bands! (Spoiler- you do , they're the best!)

I don't have any conducting experience, do I have a chance of being successful?

Absolutely! This programme is aimed at young people who have never had a chance to conduct or perhaps have some irregular or informal experience. We're looking for a diverse group of young people who are wondering if conducting is something they would like to explore engaging with, and we'll be starting with the very basics.

I don't want to study music at University or make a career as a professional musician - am I still eligible?

Yes. The brass band movement is an amateur movement where many conductors operate as amateurs, conducting alongside other jobs. We are recruiting for this programme in the same spirit, looking for participants for whom music is an important part of their life, but this does not need to be their professional aspirations.

I am studying music, with some conducting experience, am I eligible?

The aim for this programme is to provide an opportunity for young people who have no experience, or minimal experience, conducting. This is not intended to supplement conducting studies or significant experience elsewhere.

What if I can't attend all of the dates?

We are looking for people who can commit to most of the programme but we understand that sometimes other family or life commitments make this difficult. The first few workshops and generally good commitment are essential, alongside proactive communication ahead of time in the case of being unable to attend. The group will be able to work together with their mentor to agree who attends some of the specific concert dates. Repeated non-attendance may result in the participant being asked to leave the programme.

How will you decide who is selected?

An initial sift will be done by the SHYBB Musical Director and a trustee according to a predefined scoring criteria. The final selection will be done by those people along with an independent panel member working in musical education. We are looking for a diverse group of young people who can demonstrate their potential, enthusiasm and willingness to learn together so reserve the right to make final decisions based on the cohesion and development potential of a learning community.

Why do you require a certain standard on an instrument, a level of theory knowledge and experience playing within ensembles? What happens if I do not meet any of these criteria?

Brass band conductors are expected to have strong skills in reading musical notation and a good understanding of the theory behind the notation. In addition, candidates with limited experience playing with ensembles will likely not have a good understanding of the role and skills of a conductor. We believe that without this knowledge, participants will struggle to access the programme.

Is there any financial support available for me to access the programme?

The programme will be delivered free of charge however we anticipate the following costs for participants:

- Travel to get to regular workshops, rehearsals and concerts in and around St Helens.
- Additional cost if you wish to take part in the residential aspects of the February workshop, to be held on the Wirral.
- Additional cost for those programme participants who wish to conduct on the SHYBB tour in August 2027.

If any of these costs will be prohibitive for you, please let your contact at SHYBB know following your acceptance on the programme. A portion of the funding is set aside to cover these costs for participants from low income households.

SHYBB Key Contacts



Jay Hall
Musical Director



Peter McDonough
C-Band Conductor



Darren Humphries
pBuzz Conductor



Paul Aden
Chair of the band



Rebecca Duke
Secretary of the band



Helen Melling
Safeguarding Lead

GDPR & SHYBB Policies

Applications will be processed only for the purpose of making decisions about the successful participants and unsuccessful applications will be deleted 3 months after the decision date.

Aggregated and anonymised data across participants will be used to evaluate the programme, and will be reported to Sound! Music Hub, it may be reported publicly. All individual data will be deleted 12 months after the end of the programme. In addition participants may ask for their information to be deleted at any time following the end of the programme.

Policies

Safeguarding and Welfare

The Charity is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All activities are delivered in line with the Charity's Safeguarding Policy.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Charity is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion and complies with the Equality Act 2010.

Participation should be accessible and welcoming, regardless of background or personal characteristics. Reasonable adjustments will be made where possible.

Policies

All policies and risk assessments are available in full at shybb.uk/policies

Health and Safety

Participants and parents/carers must follow health and safety instructions given during activities and events. Risk assessments for all activities can be found at shybb.uk/policies.

Concerns, Complaints, and Discipline

Concerns should normally be raised informally in the first instance with the Musical Director or a trustee.

Acceptance

Participation in the Charity's activities indicates acceptance of the band handbook and associated policies.