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Celebrating Remarkable Creativity: Meet the Fantastic for Families Awards 2026 Shortlist

Discover the remarkable organisations and initiatives delivering excellent family and age-friendly arts and culture across the UK. The 2026 shortlist for the Fantastic for Families Awards, organised by Family Arts Campaign, celebrates the creativity, innovation and positive impact of cultural experiences bringing people together and enriching lives.

Family Arts Campaign has announced the shortlist for the Fantastic for Families Awards 2026, recognising the organisations, artists and cultural venues making a remarkable difference to families and older people through the arts. This year's finalists demonstrate the power of creative experiences for all ages - to strengthen wellbeing, build connections and ignite imaginations, while offering meaningful support to people and communities who need it most.

The shortlist is presented as **26 Stories of Family Arts**: a collection of inspiring stories that reveal the people, ideas and achievements behind this year's shortlisted activities and initiatives.

From imaginative family experiences to innovative age-friendly outreach and creative approaches to audience engagement, the shortlist spans three award categories: **Best Family Arts Activity, Best Age-Friendly Outreach, and Audience Impact & Innovation.**

The shortlisted organisations demonstrate excellence not only in the quality of their artistic work, but also in their commitment to making arts and culture accessible, welcoming and

relevant to diverse audiences. Many go above and beyond to support families experiencing challenging circumstances, creating opportunities for respite, shared discovery and meaningful connection. At a time when these opportunities are so important, the Fantastic for Families Awards shine a light on the remarkable work taking place across the country and invite audiences to discover and share these stories.

Anna Dever, Executive Director, Family Arts Campaign, said:

“We are delighted to announce the 2026 Fantastic for Families Award nominees. The commitment to creating accessible, imaginative and joyful experiences is clear in the work of every shortlisted organisation. The nominees are a wonderful testament to the power of arts and culture to bring communities together, and to the passion, creativity and dedication of the people who make these experiences possible.”

The full shortlist of organisations is:

Best Family Arts Activity

This award celebrates excellent family arts activities that offer high-quality creative experiences for audiences and participants of all ages.

- **Buxton Opera House: Outdoor Opera House**
- **Creative Active Lives CIC: Inclusive Family Fun Club**
- **Curious Arts: Mini Pride**
- **Dulwich Picture Gallery: ArtPlay Pavilion**
- **Gatis Community Space: #LoveTheReans Festive Lightwalk and Panto**
- **Kirkleatham Museum: The Wonder Room**
- **Orleans House Gallery: All The Things**
- **OUTSIDE: The Festival of Brilliant**
- **RivelinCo: Midsummer Festival**
- **Rugby Art Gallery & Museum: Spiral Spot**
- **Starcatchers: Narnia in Wester Hailes**
- **The Auckland Project: Hearth Beacon Series**

Best Age-Friendly Outreach

This category recognises remarkable outreach initiatives designed specifically for older people, including age-friendly activities, events, creative resources and wider forms of support that help people engage with arts and culture.

- **Alive Activities: Toddlers That Came to Tea**
- **Chichester Festival Theatre: BOLD**
- **Corn Exchange Newbury: Ageing Creatively**
- **Derby Theatre: Dementia Carers Cafe**
- **ExEl Theatre Company: Film Making Workshops**
- **Sinfonia Viva: Melodic Moments**
- **The Place: Seasoned – A Mixed Bill of works created for Older Dancers**

Audience Impact & Innovation Award

This award celebrates creative organisations and cultural event organisers demonstrating innovation, adaptability and a strong commitment to reaching families in need and making a meaningful difference to their lives.

- **Concrete Youth: Blueprint - Reimagining Audience-Led Sensory Theatre**
- **Creative Active Lives CIC: DigiTribe Online Youth Activities**
- **Focal Point Gallery: Denim**
- **Little Angel Theatre: Bobbins Big Adventure – Prison Project**
- **Live to Your Living Room - Online Gigs**
- **Luca Silvestrini's Protein: The Magic Flute**
- **Northern Stage: The Welcome Project – ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)**

The Fantastic for Families Awards are presented by Family Arts Campaign, the national Investment Principles Support Organisation for arts engagement and families, funded by Arts Council England.

The winners of the Fantastic for Families Awards 2026 will be announced at the Online Awards Ceremony on Tuesday 15 December from 6.30pm. The event is open to all, with free tickets available at https://buytickets.at/familyartscampaign/2472938.

Visit the Fantastic for Families Awards 2026 page to discover the full shortlist and find out more.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

About Fantastic for Families

We help people across the UK discover trusted arts and cultural providers in their local area that are Fantastic for Families or committed to providing Age-Friendly events, activities or initiatives for older people.

We want families to have confidence and trust in their local arts and cultural offerings, and to know that they will receive a warm family welcome.

You'll find art, craft, theatre, dance, music providers and a lot more in our Fantastic for Families Directory. We only list organisations that have either committed to the Family Arts Standards, Age-Friendly Standards, or both. These accredited badges are a sign of quality and reassurance of an excellent welcome for families and older people. www.fantasticforfamilies.com

About Family Arts Campaign

Family Arts Campaign is the largest, fully cross art form and collaborative initiative to support cultural engagement amongst families.

The Family Arts Campaign's core mission is to ensure that every child and family in the country has access to a range of high-quality creative and cultural opportunities, regardless of their social background or where they live. The Family Arts Campaign supports the cultural sector to understand and support the diverse needs of families from all backgrounds, particularly those who may not think arts and culture is "for them".

We support art galleries, museums, theatre companies, artists, heritage sites, music makers, circuses, festivals, libraries, and everything in between.

Over 1100 cultural organisations hold the Family Arts Standards accreditation, with over 500 also committing to the Age-Friendly Standards, which provide guidance on improving access for older people and participants.
www.familyarts.co.uk