



# Fun Palaces Campaign 2019

**SHARING SKILLS, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES,  
CREATING TINY REVOLUTIONS**

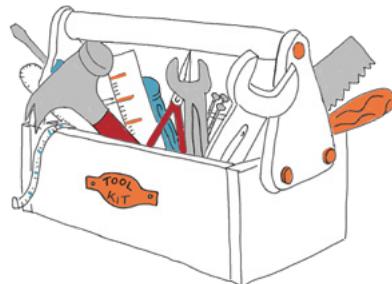


# What is Fun Palaces?

- Fun Palaces is a national and international campaign for cultural democracy, promoting culture at the heart of community and community at the heart of culture.
- The first weekend of October every year is the Fun Palaces weekend of action.
- Fun Palaces include arts, craft, science, tech, digital, heritage and sports activities, all led by local people - Fun Palaces Makers - sharing skills, hobbies and encouraging active participation from everyone.
- The weekend is a catalyst for change at a local and grassroots level.
- Our workshops and our Ambassadors Programme support our work.

*"Fun Palaces is a delight and should be a national treasure. It truly brings people from different backgrounds together, it makes the arts accessible, it provides alternative and creative education, and you have loads of fun while participating in it. While still a relatively young initiative, it is doing something that the arts and culture sector has always struggled with; it meets people from all backgrounds on their own terms, and the content is created by those local people, for all. I loved this work from day one and it is led by people who are passionate, who are filled with love in their souls, and truly trust and believe in the power of local communities to lead change. A joy."*

Derek Bardowell, author of 'No Win Race'  
and philanthropy adviser



All illustrations by  
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In total there have been  
**1758** Fun Palaces made by  
**39,000** local people with  
**562,000** participants



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2019: **391** Fun Palaces, **6256** Makers, **111,552** participants

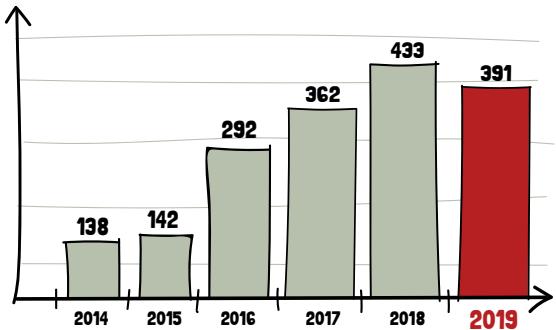
2018: **433** Fun Palaces, **9000** Makers, **110,000** participants

2017: **362** Fun Palaces, **13750** Makers, **126,000** participants

2016: **292** Fun Palaces, **4800** Makers, **124,000** participants

2015: **142** Fun Palaces, **2079** Makers, **50,000** participants

2014: **138** Fun Palaces, **3183** Makers, **40,000** participants



*“Brilliant, can't believe how many people gave up their time to run workshops, how many local people turned up to participate, and the variety of amazing activities on offer... and that it was all absolutely free!”*

Fun Palace Maker, Hangleton and Knoll Fun Palace





# The Difference Fun Palaces Makes

**Our 2019 evaluation process revealed that Fun Palaces...**



...is a **UK-wide and increasingly global** campaign celebrating the difference local people can make to their community.

...helps people to learn and (re)discover **passions, skills and knowledge** that they can share with their communities, from dance, local heritage, singing, languages, coding, carpentry, martial arts to how to make dhal. Participants are often **inspired to become Fun Palace Makers** themselves the following year.

...creates possibilities for **learning** and **connection** while grappling with the local impacts of **critical issues and current affairs** like Brexit, climate change and other global matters.

...brings people from different ages and backgrounds together, highlighting the spirit of **individual communities**.

...supports individual and community **wellbeing**, helping people feel **happy** and **less lonely**.

...makes cultural and community spaces and activities more **inclusive**, reclaiming space for everyday culture, and encouraging the use of unusual spaces for community activities.

...has helped create a **shift** beyond “community engagement” to an experience of **culture that is people-led and co-created: with, by and for all**.

*“It was fantastic! It brought together members of the community who don’t usually get the opportunity to get together. I spent time with people of all ages and I think one or two re-discovered their passions because they had the chance to try out some activities that they hadn’t done for a while. Today, I really felt that I had something to offer my community and that it was valued by those who participated.”*

**Billund Fun Palace, Denmark**

*“We had a Fun Palace last year and just about every day since, we’ve had a Fun Palace here. Thank you so much for kick-starting all of our community involvement.”*

**South Molton Fun Palace**

*“We can do whatever we need to, we want to, no boundaries, no constraints and I feel that’s incredibly inclusive.”*

**Stirchley Baths Fun Palace**

*“Fun Palaces have changed the way we think about the arts and participation. They remind us that relevance and diversity arise naturally and the arts become a significant part of everyday life when the arts cede power and agency to ordinary people to express their own creativity and harness it to bring about personal and community change. It’s radical, far-reaching and transformative.”*

**Lyn Gardner, Journalist and Critic**



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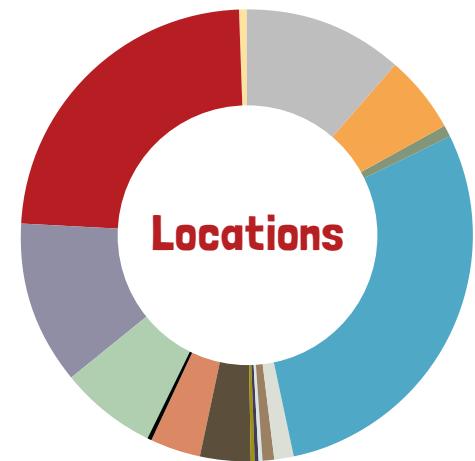


# Fun Palaces 2019 – where did they happen?

Fun Palaces started in the UK. In 2019 there were Fun Palaces in all four UK nations as well as in Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Greece, Canada, United States, Channel Islands and Denmark.

*"I'm excited by the opportunity to make much more of the canal towpath as a historic and environmental place and I want as many other people as possible to enjoy it."*

S9 Canal Art Walk Fun Palace



\* England geographical designations based on Arts Council England's area definitions.

In 2019 Fun Palaces took place in:

National Trust Properties  
Forest Schools Shopping Centres Recording Studios  
Health Centres Theatres  
Council Buildings A Railway Station  
Town Halls Artist Studios Trains  
Libraries Cinemas Cafes

# Libraries

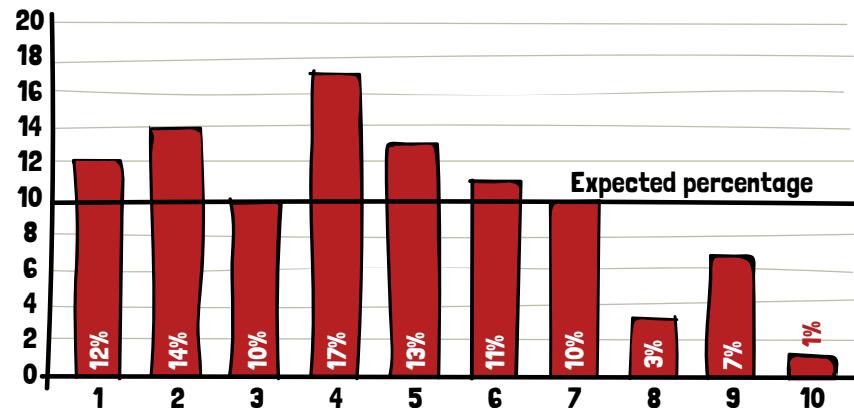
Forests Schools Museums

A Market A Corn Exchange A Prison Camp  
Universities  
Churches Galleries Parks Local History Archives

# Community Centres

A Tourist Information Centre A Battlefield  
A Field A Charity Shop An Adventure Playground  
A Pub A Canal Towpath Co-Working Spaces

Venue locations mapped by level of deprivation



1 is the most deprived and 10 is the least deprived

\*Data covers venues in England only due to different categorisation systems in Scotland, Wales, NI. The Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks all postcodes in England by deprivations. Each decile is 10% of the population.

*"Through our Hove Park Fun Palace I made a new contact with the tennis club and they will now run free sessions for the low income families/children living in our neighbouring estates."*

Hove Park Fun Palace



# What happened on Twitter



In the month before and after the Fun Palaces weekend of action Fun Palaces earned  
**403,300 impressions on Twitter, 877 retweets, 2100 likes, 111 replies and 436 new followers.**



Oxfam Swansea @OxfamCastleSt · Oct 6, 2019  
What is a Fun Palace?  
This picture shows one definition :  
4 women from 2 continents singing in front of bookshelves full of #Art & #Science books, underneath @StephMastoris' prints of @EisteddfodUrrd #Peace messages 😊  
#FunPalaces #foundInOxfam #Swansea



ΣυνΑθηνά @synathina · Oct 6, 2019  
@FunPalaces in #Athens just started! The beautiful pedestrian street memories from the city is ready to present many activities #synAthina



Fun Palaces Scotland @FunPalacesScot · Oct 6, 2019  
That's #funpalaces 2019 with 26 glorious celebrations of everyday creativity, sciences, heritage & culture across Scotland. Thanks to our makers & friends! 😊

It's going to be an exciting year with our new partners @SLIC1991 & @EdenCourt & keep 3/4 October 2020 in your diaries!



Kirklees Libraries @KirkleesLibrary · Oct 6, 2019  
We ended our weekend of #FunPalaces with a group rea Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice @FriendsBateleyL @Fu @stelluffy





**JourneysFestival Int** @JourneysFest · Oct 5, 2019  
 Arabic Calligraphy workshops at North City Library #Manchester are making some beautiful creations.  
 #Manchester pop along and creative!  
 Open 'til 4pm  
 #FunPalaces #JourneysMcr #RefugeesWelcome #Manchester  
 #calligraphy #Acesupported #CultureMatters



*"I love it being international too. I saw a lovely message on twitter from somebody in New Zealand saying 'good morning', that makes you feel part of this whole big world, it's great."*

Lancaster Fun Palace

**Big Sky Arts** is at The Luxe Cinema. October 7, 2019 · Wisbech  
 Yesterday I had the pleasure of joining in with a Fun Palaces event held at The Luxe Cinema in Wisbech. In between showing people how to use a green screen and stop motion animation, I even managed to sew myself a little cloud! Others were sharing card games, minecraft, sewing, Pom Pom making and the history of IT.  
 Next year there's already plans to make it an even bigger and better event! I can't wait 😊 What skill could you share? Perhaps you know how to juggle, how to beatbox, french plait hair or even play the harmonica! We'd like to see you there next year 😊  
 Thanks to Wisbech Projects CIC for organising the event and The Luxe Cinema for hosting it. Until next year Fun Palaces 😊



**Kathryn Welch** @Kathryn\_Welch\_ · Oct 6, 2019  
 Our youngest Maker, Farah, enjoyed teaching people how to make worry dolls because "someone taught me, so now I can teach other people"  
 #FunPalaces





# Who made Fun Palaces?

**Fun Palaces are made by teams of Makers. In 2019, the average Fun Palace was made by 18 people.**

- **45%** of Makers came to a Fun Palace as a participant before they decided to be a Maker.
- **32%** of Makers and **11%** of Lead Makers have a disability or health condition.
- Fun Palaces are made by all ages with **12%** of Maker teams including people under 18 and **7%** including people over 65.
- **15%** of Maker teams included BOTH people under 18 AND people over 65.
- **11%** of Makers identified as LGBTQ+.
- **78%** of Makers are female.
- **17%** of Maker teams included people from an ethnic minority.

**Over a third of Lead Makers were most likely to live in the most deprived 30% of postcodes in England.**

**See page 20 for full demographics from 2019**

*“Making a Fun Palace is important to us because it gives our neighbours and community the opportunity to come together in a space where everyone is equal and anyone can join in with whatever they’d like to do - things they may never have tried or thought of trying before - and share their skills in an encouraging, safe space. It gives a glimpse of what community can be, and for links, ideas and inspiration to be made.”*

**Bishop's Stortford Fun Palace**

*“We need ways to bring people together to create a shared sense of community and culture beyond this, to show that diversity is a strength, to connect people creatively and to showcase what can be achieved when we work together. A Fun Palace does all that and more, that’s why it was important.”*

**Billund Fun Palace, Denmark**



*“With this being our very first Fun Palace, we were able to see the warmth felt by everyone involved - from attendees to Makers. From people in the community saying they wanted to be involved next time, to people asking how they could get involved in the community more. We are so greatful for having taken part and the effect Fun Palaces has had.”*

#### **St Margaret's House Fun Palace**

*“We called ourselves Wisbech Radicals as the area has a history of people standing up for those less fortunate... So that’s why it’s important to us to do this, using your words and principles through Fun Palaces helps us explain another way (being nice to each other and sharing!)”*

#### **Wisbech Radicals Fun Palace**



*“Grange Big Local made a Fun Palace for 3 main reasons: to bring the community together; to showcase all the amazing talent in the area; and so that we can listen to people in our area about what they want and need. It is a way to build links and to celebrate those links. For me, it is a day of warmth, kindness and generosity. This was our third Fun Palace event, each year we find that the infectious positivity surrounding the Fun Palaces project grows.”*

#### **Grange Big Local Fun Palace**

*“Through its genuine commitment to everyday participation in the arts by people from all sectors of society, Fun Palaces has the potential to bring about a radical shift in the perception of culture, community empowerment and cultural ownership. People become confident in their own creativity, knowing that their participation and production has value and influence at community, regional and national level.”*

#### **Lisa Wells, The National Lottery Community Fund**



## What's it like to make a Fun Palace?

- **82%** of Makers (the people who make Fun Palaces happen in their communities) were happy or very happy with how their Fun Palace went.
- **75%** of Makers met someone new as a result of making a Fun Palace, **85%** brought in new people to their Maker team and **81%** are planning on staying in touch with them.
- **89%** felt that Fun Palaces created a strong sense of community spirit and **84%** felt that Fun Palaces helped bring people from different backgrounds together.
- **95%** of Makers think their Fun Palace made people feel happier.

*"It has made me more committed to giving others the opportunities to try things that they would either not think they'd be interested in or be unable to try."*

Fun Palace Maker 2019

*"Fun Palaces has strengthened my views about how vital active local community members and projects are to the overall wellbeing of a community."*

Fun Palace Maker 2019

## What Was the Impact on Makers?

- **63%** of Makers learned a new skill as a result of making a Fun Palace.
- **66%** of Makers now feel more confident in getting involved in community activities and **65%** felt more part of their community since making their Fun Palace.
- **59%** felt that running a Fun Palace contributed positively to their well-being - feeling happier and less lonely.
- **73%** felt part of a national or international campaign, which was a motivating factor in working for change in their communities.



*"We have seen how it empowers young people and gives them a tangible sense of community/arts event organisation and what it takes. We gave them performance opportunities and a place to share their thoughts. The process was very much as important as the final product."*

**Fun Palace Maker 2019**



# What happened at Fun Palaces?

**28% of Fun Palaces addressed current social issues such as climate change, Brexit, austerity, gender equality or migration.**

*"I've become more enthusiastic about environmental issues and nature."*

Fun Palace Participant

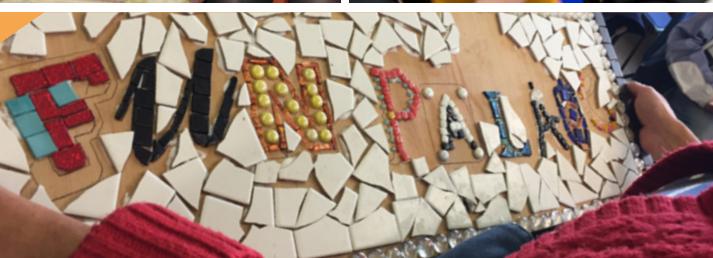
*"I'm a bit more open to a wider range of activities and less of a technophobe."*

Fun Palace Participant

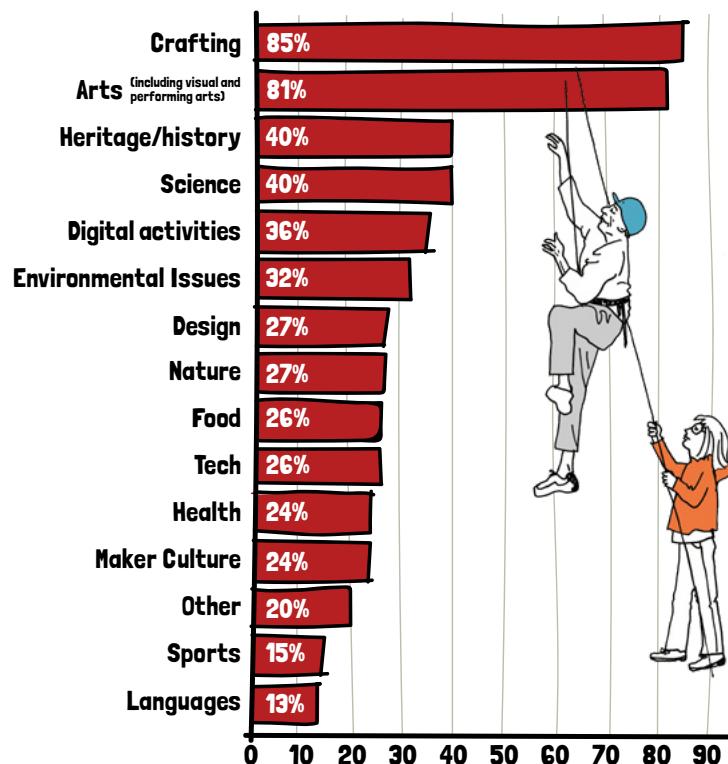
Fun Palaces are made by communities for communities and activities were therefore shared in a range of languages including:

**English, Welsh, Chinese, Spanish, Lithuanian, BSL, Greek, Farsi, Norwegian, Makaton, Cornish, Danish**





## Activities in Fun Palaces included:





# Who joined in?

- Participants ranged from 8 to 90 years old, with the majority aged 36-45.
- **21%** were from an ethnic minority and chose to identify in different ways including: Arab, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Cornish, Irish, Latin American, Mexican, Northern Irish, Somalian, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese, Welsh, White Eastern European.
- **10%** identified as disabled.
- **86%** were female, **14%** male.



# What difference did Fun Palaces make to participants?

- **78%** of participants had never been to a Fun Palace before and **31%** of participants had never been to the Fun Palace venue before.
- **98%** of participants would recommend Fun Palaces to their friends and family.
- **54% of participants said they'd like to get involved next year and 32% said they had a skill they could share at a future Fun Palace**, including art, cooking, singing, languages, drumming, flash mobs, henna mehndi, coding, floristry, martial arts, castle making, confidence building and positivity.

*"It was so very positive for both Makers and participants. It stimulated and nurtured relationships between people and allowed new ideas to ignite between the volunteers. I had underestimated the impact it might have on everyone. It has inspired the team to create more Fun Palaces in the future. Thank you!"*

Buxton Fun Palace



# How we help to make it happen: Fun Palaces Ambassadors

**83% of Makers in Ambassador regions had contact with their Ambassador.**

*Fun Palaces celebrate the talent, creativity and kindness at the heart of local communities everywhere proving that amazing things can be achieved when you put communities in the lead. Fun Palaces have created a model that goes beyond participation, letting local people create culture for themselves.*

**Matt Leach, Local Trust**

Our Ambassadors work with partner organisations to support local people to create the culture they want to see in their own community. The connections between individual Ambassadors, local communities and the partner organisations they work from extends the work Ambassadors can do locally and regionally.

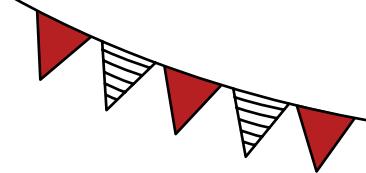
We hold quarterly Action Research days around the UK with the Ambassadors and local Fun Palaces Makers, learning from each other, deepening our understanding of the work we are doing together to widen our impact. This is the core of Fun Palaces – radical social change through tiny revolutions of connection –

a cup of tea, a chat, new friendships grown in sharing skills or co-creating a local event.

With the support of The National Lottery Community Fund we are extending our existing programme to Northern Ireland with partners Big Telly Theatre, the north of Scotland with Eden Court Inverness, central belt Scotland with the Scottish Library and Information Council and in Wales with National Trust Wales. Ambassador roles continue in Cornwall at FEAST and Cornwall Museums Partnership and in Sheffield at Sheffield Theatres. In 2021 we will add Ambassadors at Rotherham Council, Sage Gateshead and Libraries Unlimited in Devon.



# Workshops



Fun Palaces workshops support organisations, venues, community groups and individuals to come together, to plan and develop useful links, skills-sharing and local networks.

While many people attending our workshops go on to make a local Fun Palace, we are delighted that the workshops also lead to other local connections and are key in supporting people to step up and take part.

**We believe everyone can make a Fun Palace** and our workshops welcome and support anyone, anywhere to create their local Fun Palace.

**Please get in touch if you would like us to run a workshop:  
[hello@funpalaces.co.uk](mailto:hello@funpalaces.co.uk)**

*"Great opportunity to hear the impact Fun Palaces have had, whilst also being able to meet other people from the area who we could work with in the future."*

**Workshop Participant**

*"It helped us in seeing that we could do something small scale instead of worrying about putting on a big event."*

**Workshop Participant**





# Demographics and How We Counted in 2019

## In 2019 we collected a lot of data.

- **233** Lead Makers completed a survey anonymously after the Fun Palaces weekend, about what had happened, their team, themselves and their experiences (in this report, quotes credited to “Fun Palace Maker, 2019” are from this survey).
  - **72** Maker Teams filled out a survey telling us what it’s like from their perspective.
  - **70** Fun Palaces surveyed their participants, collecting **982** surveys.
  - Each year, we aim to improve our monitoring, and ask the right questions to help us know which groups are taking part in Fun Palaces.
- This year, we introduced additional questions about how Fun Palaces affects Makers’ wellbeing.
- Our surveys form the basis of this report and, along with stories, informal conversations with Makers throughout the year and regular reflective meetings, help us understand what we have learned and where to focus next.



# Fun Palaces Aim and Objectives

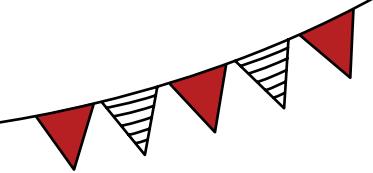
We aim to equally value everyone's creativity and every community, through working together, handing over control and challenging the status quo.

- To shine a light on and value everyone's existing creative skills and activities.
- To reclaim local and regional public spaces for all.
- To connect people (and organisations) to collaborate for change in their communities.
- To make the most of local, regional and national strengths and assets, including individuals' abilities.
- To shift the perception of culture to one that embraces and values everyone's cultural participation and production, and for resources to be apportioned accordingly.



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# Our Manifesto

**We believe in the genius in everyone, in everyone an artist and everyone a scientist, and that creativity in community can change the world for the better.**  
**We believe we can do this together, locally, with radical fun - and that anyone, anywhere, can make a Fun Palace.**



*"There are several reasons why Fun Palaces has been such a success in such a short time but the most important is that it does not see itself as a solution to anything. Like all professionals, cultural managers put themselves at the centre of their ideas about society and its needs. Fun Palaces puts culture as the centre. And because culture exists only for and because of people, that means people are at the centre. Fun Palaces does not 'put people in charge'. It knows that they are already. It tries only to help them do what is meaningful to them, their friends and their neighbours. Cultural organisations are dedicated to their own survival. Fun Palaces is not an organisation. It is a campaign or – better – an idea. The idea is that people create culture because it is essential to their being in the world. When it comes to our culture and our needs, each of us is a world expert. Fun Palaces helps us make more of who we are and what we already have."*

François Matarasso, Community Artist and Writer



*"We've brought together groups of people that wouldn't normally get to meet. In one part of the town we have some of the largest social disadvantage in the country and in the other half we've got some of the richest people in the country, we've brought them all together. We've been able to get everybody sharing, sitting next to each other, talking and we've done what we set out to do - which is build a community, a community that keeps coming back and keeps asking us, when's the next one? That's really important to me."*

**Fun Palace Maker, Ware's the Fun Palace**



# Fun Palaces

**SHARING SKILLS, CONNECTING COMMUNITIES,  
CREATING TINY REVOLUTIONS**

**NEXT WEEKEND OF ACTION  
3RD AND 4TH OCTOBER 2020**

[www.funpalaces.co.uk](http://www.funpalaces.co.uk) | [hello@funpalaces.co.uk](mailto:hello@funpalaces.co.uk) |    FunPalaces



 Paul Hamlyn Foundation

