



The Albany  
Douglas Way  
Deptford  
SE8 4AG

[www.thealbany.org.uk](http://www.thealbany.org.uk)

[www.funpalaces.co.uk](http://www.funpalaces.co.uk)

## 1) What is Fun Palaces?

*“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, 2020

- Fun Palaces is a national and international campaign for cultural democracy and community connection that began in March 2013.
- The first weekend of October every year is Fun Palaces weekend of action.
- Fun Palaces include arts, science, tech, digital, heritage, craft 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.
- The Makers – local people creating Fun Palaces in and with their own communities – are the core of our work. You can [read Maker Stories here](#) and see Makers share their experience in [our films and evaluations](#).

## Our Manifesto

We believe in the genius of everyone, in everyone an artist and everyone a scientist, and that creativity in the 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.



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## 2) How does Fun Palaces operate?

Although Fun Palaces take place across the globe, the majority of Fun Palaces' work happens across the four UK nations. The Fun Palaces HQ is based at the Albany in Deptford, London and we are currently a team of eleven, Stella Duffy, Sarah-Jane Rawlings and Kirsty Lothian each working two to three days a week sharing overall responsibility for the national year-long activity and our seven regional Ambassadors ensuring we are continuing to impact at a grassroots level, maximising our capacity for growth and learning. Dan King, the twelfth member of the team looks after our external communication, working with us at key times throughout the year.

The Fun Palaces Campaign is a not-for-profit Unincorporated Association working in partnership with The Albany, Deptford SE8 4AG.

## 3) What do the Ambassadors do?

Our [Ambassadors](#) shine a light on the creativity and culture of local people; support the emergence of a self-led network of local cultural leaders (we call them Makers); connect people and organisations (including and especially their host) to collaborate for change from the grassroots up; make the most of local and regional strengths and assets, and share widely what they have learned.

**For the most part, the Ambassadors do this by making and maintaining connections.**

All of our Ambassadors are local people, working with a variety of partner organisations across the UK. Like the Fun Palaces HQ team, they are all part-time, meaning that the other work that they do and their own interests and passions feed in to and are supported by, their work with Fun Palaces.

We currently have Ambassadors in Cornwall, Northern Ireland, North Wales, Scotland (Edinburgh and Inverness) and Sheffield. Recruitment for three more Ambassadors in Rotherham, Gateshead and Devon begins in Autumn 2021.

## 4) How is Fun Palaces funded?

In September 2019, Fun Palaces was awarded £1.5m from The National Lottery Community Fund's UK Portfolio. This is for five years (Sept 2019 - Sept 2024) and covers the core work of the campaign. We also currently have a £15k grant from ACE to run libraries workshops, deferred from 2020.



Other income amounts to about 6% of our annual turnover and comes from donations and income earned through running workshops and thought leadership presenting opportunities.

*“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”.* **Lisa Wells, Portfolio Officer, The National Lottery Community Fund**

### 5) How has Fun Palaces fared during Covid 19?

2020 has been a huge year for everyone, and Fun Palaces has been no exception. Communities have needed creativity and connection like never before, and Fun Palaces Makers, Ambassadors and the team have supported each other, their neighbours, communities and colleagues to make those creative connections richer than ever. In particular, we created the [Tiny Revolutions](#) campaign to share hyper-local, Covid-safe connections, and encourage the ongoing work of which the annual weekend is just a part.

#### In 2020 there were:

364 Fun Palaces  
in 1250 locations  
with 2000 Makers  
and 85,000 participants (77,500 online, 7,500 in person).

16% of Lead Makers had a disability or health condition.

5% of Lead Makers were shielders.

92% of Lead Makers were white. (This is higher than in previous years and it is really important to us to reverse this trend).

(A Lead Maker is the person who registered the Fun Palace on the website.)

85% agree that their Fun Palace creates a stronger sense of community spirit.

68% agree that making their Fun Palace contributed positively to their wellbeing.

64% feel more confident getting involved in community activities.