

EVALUATION BOOKLET 2023  
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**fun  
palaces**

# WHAT IS FUN PALACES?

Fun Palaces is a 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 and celebration.

Fun Palaces include arts, craft, science, tech, digital, heritage and sports activities, all led by local people, sharing their own passions 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 with communities.

“

**I think what's lovely about being a Fun Palace is that it's part of a national thing... there's lots of other Fun Palaces going on, we can all be a part of something really big together.**

Fun Palaces Maker 2023

**...the beauty of the Fun Palaces is that you can capture a really diverse group of people who come together for a certain period of time while it's running and they all forget their prejudices for that time that they're involved.**

Fun Palaces Maker 2023

**In total there have been  
2669 Fun Palaces made by  
48,000 local people with  
820,000 participants**

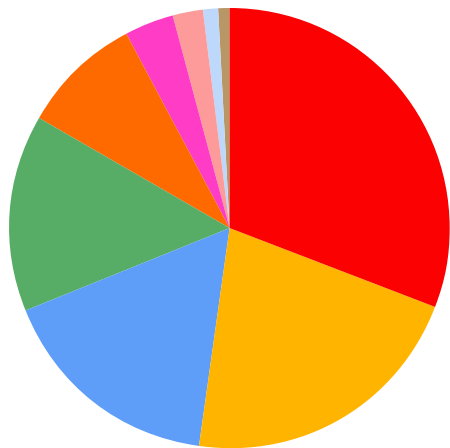
**In 2023 there were:  
175 Fun Palaces  
2272 Makers  
34,258 participants**



# Fun Palaces 2023

## WHERE DID THEY HAPPEN?

Fun Palaces started in the UK. In 2023 Fun Palaces took place in all four UK nations, as well as Canada and Australia.

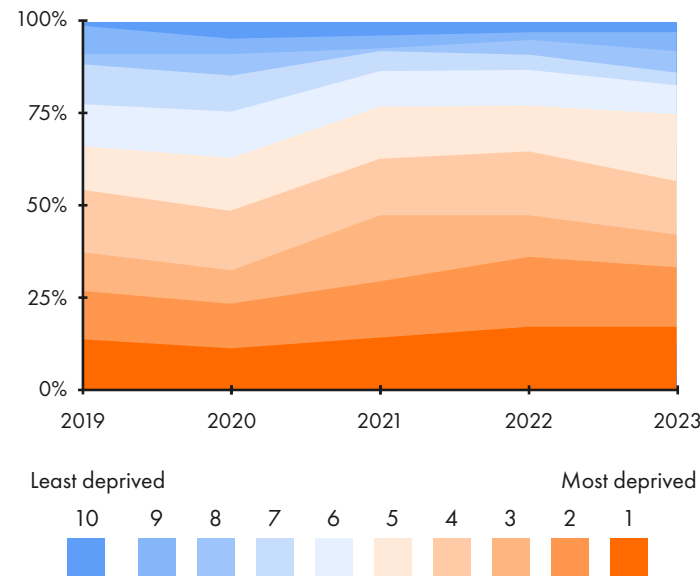


- North England: 52
- South West: 36
- London: 28
- South East: 24
- Midlands: 15
- Wales: 6
- Scotland: 4
- Northern Ireland: 1
- International: 2

## THERE ARE MORE FUN PALACES IN DEPRIVED THAN AFFLUENT AREAS

The majority of Fun Palaces happen in the most deprived areas. In 2023, **56%** took place in the most deprived third of postcodes. In 2023, **35%** of lead Makers came from the most deprived third of postcodes.

Venue locations mapped by level of deprivation:



## TYPE OF VENUE

- LIBRARIES 47.4%
- COMMUNITY CENTRES 7.4%
- MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE 7.4%
- SHOPPING CENTRES 5.15%
- COMMUNITY GARDENS & PARKS 4%
- ARTS CENTRES 4%
- THEATRES 4%
- CASTLES 1.7%
- ART GALLERIES AND STUDIOS 1.15%
- FAMILY LEARNING CENTRES 1.15%
- SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES 1.15%
- OTHER - 8%

and also: a pub, a church, a hotel, a guest house, a care home, a business centre, a medical centre, a music venue, a car park, an office, a ship, a sports club, a radio station

# WHO MADE FUN PALACES?

Fun Palaces are made by teams of Makers. In 2023 the median Fun Palace was made by 8 people. 2023 80% of Fun Palace Makers agreed that their Fun Palace brought people from different backgrounds together.

**30%**



of Maker teams included people of different ethnicities to one another

**31%**

of Maker teams included people under 18

**30%**

of Maker teams included someone over 65

**84%**



of lead Makers were female

From 21-23:

**16%**



of Lead Makers identified as LGBTQ+

**29%**

of Fun Palaces Lead Makers stated they had a disability or health condition.

FP Lead Makers  
Ambassador Areas

100%  
75%  
50%  
25%  
0%



Labour Force Survey  
(ONS 2019)



■ 1-2 (privileged) ■ 3-4-5 (intermediate) ■ 6-7-8 (working class)

In Fun Palaces Ambassador areas, % of people from working class backgrounds

In 2023 Fun Palaces activities were delivered in a range of languages including: Arabic, BSL, Cornish, English, Romanian, Welsh, Urdu and Ukrainian.

# WHAT IS IT LIKE TO MAKE A FUN PALACE?



**90%**

of Makers said that their Fun Palace helped to make people feel happier.



**98%**

said that their Fun Palace created a stronger sense of community spirit.



**91%**

of Makers said they would do it again!



Participants didn't want to leave, they wanted to stay longer!

Fun Palaces Maker 2023

It's events like Fun Palaces that make it a community because everybody has that opportunity to join in, to play, to work together, to make suggestions, to be considered equal.

Fun Palaces Maker 2023

We had a brilliant time, everyone that participated in Fun Palace enjoyed the activities on offer and the team helping were all fantastic and engaging. I feel very proud!

Fun Palaces Maker 2023





# HOW WE HELP TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

In 2023 we delivered **13 free, online workshops** attended by more than **300 potential Makers** including focussed sessions on sustainable community events and on young people leading.

Collaborated with **64 Million Artists** on workshops and set their Weekly Challenge in October.

Our Ambassadors worked in their areas to support Maker activity both on the weekend and year round.

We provided free posters and postcards to Makers across the UK to advertise their Fun Palaces.

We also had many one to one calls and liaised by email with makers to support with anything they needed in the lead up to the weekend.



# BUT DOES THIS CHANGE ANYTHING? YES!

**81%** of Makers felt the people involved in their Fun Palace were pulling together to do something positive in the local area, while **79%** felt their Fun Palace helped the local area to be a better place to live. **66%** of Makers learned new skills as a result of running their Fun Palace.

**71%** of Makers now feel more confident in getting involved in community activities following their Fun Palace and **66%** found that their Fun Palace opened up new partnerships, opportunities or resources for local communities.

In 2023-24 Dr Katy Pilcher, a sociologist from Aston University, conducted some academic research in to Fun Palaces (funded by the Centre for Cultural Value) to study if people who are creatively and culturally involved with their local community (ie by making Fun Palaces), are more likely to engage in civic activism as well - resolving issues that they face as a community. Her research concluded that yes, they are - though there are some barriers to participation.

**You can find out more from that study here:**

[funpalaces.co.uk/about-fun-palaces/creative-voices-activist-voices-exhibition](https://funpalaces.co.uk/about-fun-palaces/creative-voices-activist-voices-exhibition)



**We had a huge turnout and massively positive responses. Many participants felt more confident to get involved in community activities.**

Fun Palaces Maker 2023

**It brought happiness and new connections to a run down area.**

Fun Palaces Maker 2023

**It has created opportunities to collaborate with local organisations.**

Fun Palaces Maker 2023

**I love Fun Palaces because it is all about the community and confounding people and showing that great things can happen in our small market town.**

Fun Palaces Maker 2023



# DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOW WE COUNTED

In 2023 63 people answered our Lead Maker survey, out of 175 Fun Palaces.

We also held two focus workshops with Makers to find out about their experiences of making Fun Palaces and what their vision for the future of Fun Palaces is.

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.

We have found our survey numbers down since the start of the pandemic.





# AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND MANIFESTO

## 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.

## AIMS

To change how we all see and fund culture so that the culture made and enjoyed by all communities counts.

To make the most of all talents, spaces, local and national strengths, and assets, so that we live in a culturally richer and fairer world.

To encourage creativity and connection so that we have vibrant, confident, and strong communities.

## OBJECTIVES

To celebrate, value, and amplify the culture in local communities through year-round campaign work and our Weekend of Celebration.

To support venues and institutions to hand over decision-making to communities and to share resources (e.g. spaces and funds) for community and sector benefit. We achieve this through working with hosts, ambassadors and venues for community-led takeovers and supporting with workshops and toolkits.

To connect people, venues, and places to share learning and collaborate through our ambassadors programme, workshops, networking opportunities, and action research.

To inspire, equip and support communities to create, explore, and take the lead through our case studies, toolkits, workshops, and network.



**4TH-6TH OCTOBER 2024**

**JOIN OUR MOVEMENT**



**[funpalaces.co.uk](https://funpalaces.co.uk)**