

# **Creativity. Community. Culture.**



## **Celebrating the impact of UKSPF in Sunderland**

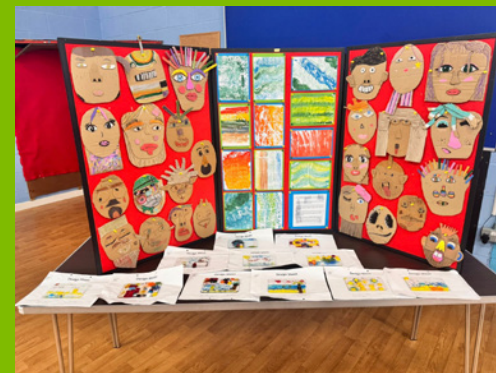
Creative organisations across Sunderland are using UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment to deliver ambitious, community-led projects that are transforming neighbourhoods and inspiring pride of place.

This quarterly round-up highlights just some of the creative activity supported during Summer 2025.

Since 2014, The Cultural Spring has worked across South Tyneside and Sunderland, working with inspiring local, regional and national artists to bring workshops, performances and subsidised cultural experiences, and leave a lasting legacy of communities interested in the arts.

The A Space to Create venues have been busy delivering creative activities and events for their local communities. These have included:

Box Youth & Community Centre took their young people on Go & See visits to cultural venues in Sunderland, to experience creativity that is happening across the city. The young people particularly loved going to the theatre for the first time and have helped choose which shows to see. Box Youth delivered their 'Summer of Art' - a series of creative workshops for their youth groups, culminating with an exhibition in late August.



Washington Millennium Centre held consultation sessions with their local community to explore what creative activities they would like to take part in, starting with ceramic workshops and with many more planned up to Christmas including macramé, mosaics and crocheting.

Sunderland Headlight took their service users to visit the studio of Incubate Printmaking in Ouseburn, to take part in an artist-led printmaking workshop. Incubate Printmaking will deliver sessions to make printed t-shirts. Headlight are also planning a series of workshops including glassmaking and printmaking.

Emerging watercolour artist Nadeem Aslam was supported and mentored by community artist Lindsey Grieves to deliver watercolour workshops. Over the summer Nadeem worked with Young Asian Voices to deliver sessions for their young people, and with Sunderland Headlight to explore the wellbeing of painting. Click [here](#) to see a video of their Go & See.

ICOS (International Community Organisation of Sunderland) continued their sessions with artist Sabina Sallis, and in August took over the EXPO Pavilion on Keel Square to host an exhibition of their artwork, exploring Eastern European



women's stories of migration to Sunderland. The takeover included a day with the group hosting sessions in the Pavilion, including movement warm-ups, design and creation of a tablecloth and a sharing of a summer feast. They are continuing their sessions and have formed a new collective called the Pierognie Collective.

Active Families delivered a 'Mocktails not Cocktails Paint & Sip' evening at Broadway Community Centre which saw an artist lead the group to create individual paintings. They have planned a further 2 events including foraging wreath making and glass fusion workshops.

Grace House are working with artist Michael McNally and their parent carer group to explore how they can co-create together. They are exploring drama and performance and how this can improve wellbeing. The sessions will run through to December.

Sunderland Training and Education Farm are working with their girls group to co-produce Halloween and Christmas events at the farm.

The A Space to Create Network has also facilitated a session where the venues were able to meet and hear from local funders, including Arts Council England, Sir James Knott and the Community Foundation North East.

For further information about joining any of the activities please contact the community organisations directly.

Find out more: <https://theculturalspring.org>

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Sunderland  
Heritage  
Partnership

The Sunderland Heritage Partnership brings together more than 30 organisations, venues, societies and individuals to raise the profile of Sunderland as a heritage destination. Through collaborative working, the Partnership aims to engage new and younger audiences with Sunderland's rich history and to protect its heritage assets for future generations. The partnership programs regular meetings, workshops, events and festivals.

Between 19 July and 3 August, the Sunderland Heritage Partnership, supported by the Digital Heritage project, promoted a two-week festival of heritage in Sunderland. Sunderland Summer Heritage 2025 brought together a programme of nearly 40 events for all ages, including talks, tours, performances and craft workshops, timed to coincide with the beginning of the school summer holidays. This was the first time all event listings and promotion for the Heritage Partnership's annual festival (which in previous years has run under the title of #LoveSunderlandHeritage), has been done principally through the Partnership's own website, the new digital platform [sunderlandheritage.org](https://sunderlandheritage.org). A beautifully printed brochure was also produced, featuring the Heritage Partnership's new logo and branding.

Photo credit: Courtesy of Sunderland Heritage Partnership

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Highlights of the festival included a sold-out talk on US political history in the suitably appropriate surroundings of Washington Old Hall to coincide with the performance of Hamilton at the Sunderland Empire, a popular river trip with Sunderland Maritime Heritage aboard their restored fishing vessel Wildora and the opening of Washington F-Pit museum for the duration of the festival, with public information sessions about the planned renovations at the site and Albany Park.

The Heritage Partnership also held a bustling open session at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens with information tables to promote the work of our venues, societies and groups.

Find out more and access the full programme:  
<https://sunderlandheritage.org>





Culture House Sunderland is delivering an exciting programme of exhibitions, events and creative outreach across Sunderland's library network, supported by UKSPF funding. With a focus on early years, older adults and young people, the activity aims to build literacy, reduce isolation and grow community connection through creativity.

Over the summer, Culture House delivered a packed programme of activities and events for children, families and adult audiences. Young visitors at our Creative Smart City Hubs at Houghton and Washington Libraries, and City Library at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, had a range of activities to choose from, with craft sessions, film screenings, Claymation, digital art, story sessions, author visits, music and movement.

Adult groups thrived this summer, with our Research Your Family Tree sessions attracting families and promoting a passion for research for all ages. Board game afternoons have also been successful, bringing joy and laughter to the library. The adult social and craft group is growing, creating a supportive space that combats isolation and fosters friendships. Participants express particular enjoyment in meeting new people.

At the Expo Pavilion in Keel Square Culture House delivered exhibitions with partner organisations Pink Collar Gallery, North East Young Dads and Lads, Fans Museum and The Art Café.



### Coming up:

The popular Wear Friends sessions are a relaxed and informal space for older adults to enjoy board games, try a new craft, explore digital technology and make friends over a cup of tea. Wear Connected provides older adults the opportunity to explore digital tools creatively and Explore Your Family Tree sessions give the opportunity to connect with others while getting support to explore our archives and Ancestry.

Taking place between 25 October and 1 November, a busy October half term programme across our sites will see Halloween-themed film screenings and craft sessions, digital art sessions, our weekly early years Rhyme and Shine session and specialist SEND storytelling sessions.

All information about our events and activities can be found here:  
**Events & Bookings | Sunderland Libraries**

Find out more and book: [culturehousesunderland.co.uk/events](https://culturehousesunderland.co.uk/events)

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MINERVA  
ARTS & WELLBEING

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Minerva Arts & Wellbeing ran a programme of ceramics and fused glass courses in Sunnyside, Sunderland. We worked directly with 24 learners, with a further 8 who had enrolled on earlier courses continuing their creative journey with us. The sessions provided a safe hands-on space to make and learn, which helped people express themselves, lift their mood and feel less isolated while building skills and confidence.

We also widened our reach, engaging new groups, organisations and individuals we had not worked with before. Our strengthened partnership with ICOS was central to contacting residents who have felt cut off since last year's race riots. Together we offered information, advice and guidance alongside the classes and referred participants to other trusted organisations so they could access a wider mix of cultural and community opportunities. This approach supports individual wellbeing and opens lasting routes into arts and culture, helping people reconnect and strengthening the local community.



From October to December, Minerva Arts & Wellbeing will run a varied programme of taster workshops and short courses in fused glass, fragrance making, textiles, ceramics and batik. Sessions will align with seasonal themes for Halloween, Bonfire Night and Christmas, providing a structured introduction to new skills in a welcoming and accessible setting.

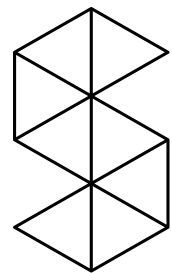
Look out for further opportunities through our social channels and website to reach a wide cross-section of the community. Feedback gathered through short forms and conversations at each session will inform our next programme, identifying demand for longer courses and ensuring our offer remains responsive to local needs.

Find out more:

<https://www.minervaartsandwellbeing.com>

Follow us: **Facebook** | **Instagram**





# SUNDERLAND CULTURE

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Sunderland Culture brings together some of Wearside's most cherished and important cultural venues and activities, and works to realise the ambition of a city brimming with creative potential. Sunderland Culture delivers a creative programme of events and participatory activities in communities across Sunderland, including Arts Centre Washington, National Glass Centre, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art and Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.

Over the summer we ran an exciting summer offer of free and low cost activities for families and children as well as our popular programme of adult classes and courses, with 5,848 people taking part during June to August.

Families enjoyed ceramics and hands on glass experiences at Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art and National Glass Centre, while at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens History Mondays, Wellbeing Wednesdays and Arty Fridays encouraged visitors to explore amazing museum objects and collections and get inspired to make and create.

Arts Centre Washington's programme offered young people the chance to try their hand at new creative activities through a series of free, day-long workshops offered through the Bright Lights Young Artists Collective Summer School, the Teenage Craft Club Summer School, the Washington Young Film Makers Collective Summer School and the Creative You Junior Animate Club.



Photo credit: Mark savage

And the Culture Start Summer Sparks program delivered 91 exciting free creative sessions in community venues around the city for children under 12, while its new Future Creatives programme offered young people free opportunities to get involved in the local creative scene – from Dance Bootcamps to Short Film Labs, DJ Skills to Music Production and more.

Looking ahead, Wearsiders looking to get in the mood for Autumn, seasonal activities like Creepy Creatures, Spooky Glass Fusing and Teenage Craft Clubs will keep families entertained and inspired.

### **What's On | Sunderland Culture**

Autistic young people aged 16-25 can take part in the Special Interests Club – a free, creative club at Arts Centre Washington to explore and celebrate special interests: Gaming, music, fandom, animation, dungeons & dragons, photography, DJing, trains and transport, manga and much more!

### **Special Interests Club | Sunderland Culture**

And adults can discover new creative outlets with art workshops, get together and wellbeing activities.

### **Learn & Create - Adults | Sunderland Culture**

Find out more: <https://www.sunderlandculture.org.uk>

Follow us: **Facebook** | **Instagram**



# Celebrating Impact. Shaping Futures.

The Connecting and Catalysing Our Culture, Creativity & Engagement Project is made possible through funding from the UK Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund via Sunderland City Council.

This year the programme will support hundreds of creative events and community-led activities that help Sunderland's people and places to thrive.

"I've discovered that I am actually quite a creative person! Thanks so much for a great session, I'll definitely be doing it again."

Workshop participant