

Get Creative

Get Creative Festival 2018 Toolkit

January 2018

Spring into action: it's time to Get Creative

Get Creative Festival is a national celebration of everything creative, taking place across the UK from 17 – 25 March 2018. The annual festival is a merger of the previous Get Creative Weekend and Voluntary Arts Festival – now joined together to make one huge nationwide event. Get Creative Festival shines a light on all the great cultural activity that takes place right across the UK on a regular basis and encourages people to try their hand at something new and creative.

During the festival arts organisations, societies and community groups are invited to put on participatory creative events that are either free or cost-recovery. The festival is supported by a range of major cultural organisations, including Voluntary Arts and the BBC, but the programme of activities is mostly run by grassroots groups and arts organisations of all shapes and sizes throughout the country.

This toolkit provides a short introduction to the Get Creative Festival and explains how you can be part of this annual event by putting on your own event, however big or small it may be.



Members of The Quilters' Guild live on air at BBC Radio Bristol as part of Get Creative Weekend 2017

How it all began

Like most good ideas, we borrowed the concept for the Voluntary Arts Festival from someone else!

Since 2007, thousands of people across Belgium have been enjoying the 'Week of Amateur Arts' (or WAK as it's known there). This annual event connects people with opportunities to get creative in their local area and demonstrates to government and policy makers the value of community-led creative activity.

Voluntary Arts thought a similar event to WAK would work well in the UK and Republic of Ireland too, providing an opportunity to showcase the wide variety of community-led groups, projects and festivals that work tirelessly and passionately to enable others to benefit from everyday creativity.

After piloting the idea in Scotland in 2011, this annual event has continued to grow and develop and builds momentum year on year. With hundreds of events taking place – involving thousands of participants – each

year, the Festival became a highlight in the calendar for many creative groups as means of showcasing their activities and attracting new members.

The Get Creative campaign began in 2015 and quickly became a powerful message across the cultural sector and in broadcast media. The annual celebration of Get Creative grew from a day in 2016 to a weekend in 2017 with more than 650 events up and down the country, they included a steam-bending furniture making in Manchester, learning circus skills in Northern Ireland, making art on the side of a mountain with dancers in Wales, an interactive workshop mixing Shakespeare and dance in Dundee, and an audio tour of historic King's Cross in London to name just a few.

Bigger and better together

The decision to merge the two events was an easy one and a natural progression, bringing together the efforts of a great group of organisations and the passion that local groups and organisers have for the existing festivals. The new Get Creative Festival takes place for the first time in March 2018 with the aim of being the biggest celebration yet.

Why take part in Get Creative Festival?

To raise your profile

The extra exposure brought about by the Get Creative Festival and the support of the festival's partners can help raise your group's profile in the local and national media and flag up your activities to potential new participants, volunteers and audiences.

To grow your group

Keen to attract new members? The Get Creative Festival is the perfect opportunity to introduce your group or organisation to a new audience and get more people involved in your regular activities or programme.

To recruit new volunteers

The Get Creative Festival is a great opportunity to showcase what you do and inspire new people to get involved and help to support your activities year-round as regular or occasional volunteers.

To celebrate your achievements

We know you work hard all year round, both behind the scenes and in front, taking part in Get Creative Festival is a chance to come together and celebrate all that you've achieved.

To feel part of something huge

Knowing that you're part of a nationwide event celebrating creativity reminds us all that we're part of something big and incredibly important. The more groups and individuals take part in the Get Creative Festival, the stronger the message we can send about the importance of everyday creativity. So let's make it a big one!

What could you do during the Get Creative Festival?

There are so many ways to get creative, this could include everything from guerrilla gardening, baking and heritage to more widely recognised creative activities, such as knitting, photography, dance, drama, music. The list goes on!

Whatever your art or craft form, you are welcome to be part of the Get Creative Festival. If you're not sure what kind of event you could host, see if these ideas give you some inspiration...

Open rehearsal

If your drama group, choir, orchestra, dance troupe or band meets for a weekly rehearsal, why not open your doors during the Get Creative Festival and invite people in? An open rehearsal is a relaxed, unpressured way for people to see what you do, and perhaps be inspired to join in.

Special performance

Maximise on the extra publicity that the Get Creative Festival may bring by putting on a special one-off show and find ways to involve new visitors to show them the joy of participating.

Come and Sing/Play event

Sometimes it's not until you try something that you know how much fun it is. Give people a chance to share your enjoyment by running a taster session, open day or 'have a go' workshop providing a gentle introduction to your activity.

Craftbomb

Brighten up your community with an explosion of colour and creativity. Join forces with other makers in your area and showcase your crafty creations in a public place during the Get Creative Festival, such as your local high street, school yards, public park or community garden.

Those involved in previous years have had tremendous fun, been featured in both local and national press and met new people along the way. So if you're a knitter, stitcher, quilter, embroiderer, weaver or whatever your craftform, why not get involved? [Download the CraftBomb toolkit](#) for more detailed information on how to make it happen!

Run a workshop

If your visual art or craft group has amassed a set of skills – be it oil painting or flower arranging – don't keep it to yourselves. Run a special, themed workshop during the Get Creative Festival to share your abilities with others.

Woollen Woods

Since May 2015, over 20 inspired craft displays have taken root in a variety of woodland venues and opened to the public as part of Woollen Woods. Each one is the result of a partnership between a local craft group and woodland venue, ranging from community woodlands and public gardens to National Trust properties. This project really captures people's imaginations and has led to some fantastic partnerships. If you are interested in creating an alternative way for people to engage with knitting and nature, [download the Woollen Woods toolkit](#) for practical guidance and useful advice to help you grow your own Woollen Woods.

Working together

Taking part in the Get Creative Festival is a great opportunity to get together with other groups and organisations. This could lead to a relationship that lasts year-round and is a way of reaching out to new people that you may not otherwise come into contact with. Get in touch with other groups and local arts organisations in your area to see how you could work together.

You could: Organise a showcase event to celebrate the arts activity in your village/town/ city. This could include information stands and a lively programme of workshops and performances, led by different groups, that invite people to find out more and get involved.

Take your creativity somewhere new

Why not approach a venue you've never used before, such as a library, community centre or school to host your Get Creative Festival event? Public venues like museums and shopping centres are especially good for hosting a drop-in workshop, CraftBomb display or Flashmob performance, as they can provide a captive audience and passers-by to engage with your activity.

Working with a new venue is a great way to break out of your usual meeting space and reach out to new people. The venue may also be able to help you advertise your event, meaning you could benefit from additional publicity.

Already got something planned?

If you're already holding an event that takes place on or between 17 – 25 March 2018, simply badge it as part of the Get Creative Festival and invite others to join you. List your event on the [Get Creative Festival website](#) to benefit from some additional publicity and see our [resources](#) for advice on how to spread the word about your event locally and access free marketing material (including the Get Creative logo and poster templates).

Promoting your event

Your events can be added to the Get Creative Festival map by visiting the website and entering all the necessary details. You'll be asked to submit all the essential details of your event, add accessibility information and also agree to the Event Terms & Conditions to ensure your event is suitable for the Festival. Once approved, your event will appear on our map and you can share the link around your network.

Further publicity

Think about where you usually find out about local events, and how you find out that interesting things are happening. If you are excited by your plans, chances are others will be too.

Eventbrite is a great, free online platform to plan, promote and track registration for your activities.

Posters displayed all around the area local to your Get Creative Festival event are a great way to let people know about it. [You can download our Get Creative poster templates](#) (A3 and A4) here and personalise them with your details. The details should include:

- the date/s and time/s of your event
- where it's taking place
- contact or booking information
- your website and/or social media details (Facebook/Twitter etc)

To publicise your event and share your story more widely, it is worth contacting local newspapers, radio stations, TV stations and local blogs. Find out which journalist is most likely to be interested in your event; look for those who have covered similar local events in the past, or search for those with a job title like Arts & Entertainment Editor or Culture Editor. In the first instance, email a copy of your press release and a cover note explaining your Get Creative Festival event, and then follow this up in a few days with a telephone call if you haven't heard back from them.

Use the [Press Release Template](#) to let journalists know about your event and how it's part of a nationwide festival. Television and radio programmes across the BBC will inspire creativity and reflect some of the events being held as part of Get Creative. Find out more about what's being planned here.

Social media

For updates in the run up to the festival, make sure to follow Get Creative on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Remember to use the hashtag #GetCreative both in the build up to, and during, the festival to help build this huge event.

Free resources and templates

Voluntary Arts have an extensive set of [free resources and templates](#) to help groups and organisations plan events. These include:

- How to write a successful funding application
- Risk Assessment for event organisers - a beginners guide
- Insurance for voluntary arts groups
- Events checklist - disability and access

Evaluation and learning

The Get Creative team will be sending each event organiser a survey to fill in after the festival to find out how the event went and how many people participated.

We will also be sharing a Participant Survey template and online link with you so that you and we can find out feedback from the people taking part. This helps all of us tell the story of what happened, who is getting involved (and who's not) and what difference it has made. Keep this in mind when you're planning your event and see if you can identify a volunteer to be in charge of surveying your participants.

Further info / Contact

For any further questions or information, please email info@getcreativeuk.com