

Chair of the Steering Group



ChalleNGe is Nottingham's Local Cultural Education Partnership.

We are hosted by Nottingham Trent University, and have an extensive range of partners who all share a vision to amplify youth voices and co-create more creative opportunities for children and young people growing up in Nottingham.

Our role

ChalleNGe seeks to act as convenor, catalyst and collaborator to support arts, education and community partners in achieve our shared ambitions.

We seek to:

- amplify youth voice and embed it in planning
- champion the rights of children and young people to express their creativity
- identify and disseminate good practice
- maximise the engagement of young people with culture and creativity as a vital element in Nottingham's future.





Programmes and Projects

Friendly Creative City' programme, with 5 key strands:

LOUD & CLEAR: Amplifying youth-voices & participation

- Growing and supporting [Connecting Notts](#) (our Youth board) and the new Young Creatives Network
- Increasing the influence of [Primary Parliament](#)
- Strengthening children's participation in regular arts activities in community spaces, local art festivals & showcasing opportunities (ie. Bulwell Arts Festival, Clifton Arts Festival, Hoopla with City Arts, Shine Theatre with Playhouse, Summer programmes at Lakeside Arts, Young Creatives commissions, collaborative Summer Pop Ups)
- Developing [Family Arts Explorers](#) as an annual programme for first-time go and see experiences.



CULTURAL RUCKSACK: Our city-wide collaborative schools programme seeks to deliver a cultural guarantee for all pupils, supporting schools to embed more visits to Nottingham cultural venues within their enrichment programmes. We are developing more connections with home-school networks, Alternative Provision settings, and Secondary schools – providing a coordinated arts and cultural offer for Nottingham based schools and venues.

CREATIVE TASKFORCE: Developing our Teaching for Creativity network, with Creative Practitioners, Teachers and Access Specialists through our SEND/Galleries group. Supporting the city's [Art of Belonging pledge](#) for refugee children & families and [Celebrating Languages](#) projects to reflect local heritages and diversity.



NATURE CONNECTIONS: Supporting arts-based nature projects, with links to UoN environmental research, Citizen science projects & international links with other Child Friendly Cities & Cities of Literature; linking to the 5 pathways to nature connectedness through a range of action-learning projects and our Nature Connections Community of Practice.

CHILDREN'S FUND: Developing a new collective fundraising scheme to increase children and young people's access to arts and culture, developed in collaboration with arts organisations, venues and businesses. Harnessing new place-based campaigns to meet the needs of children and young people and the arts education sector.



ChalleNGe Vision

Nottingham's diverse population of children and young people are imaginative, innovative and creative - informing and inspiring cross-sector partnerships that champion creativity in schools and communities.

ChalleNGe Mission

To facilitate and enable collaborations and connections to ensure all children and young people in Nottingham engage with relevant, inspiring and accessible arts and cultural experiences.

Steering Group Chair role

We are particularly keen to receive applications from people who understand the value of creativity and culture for children, young people, their families, communities and local places. We are looking for knowledge and expertise in one or more of the following areas: Education; Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; Fundraising; Marketing and Communications

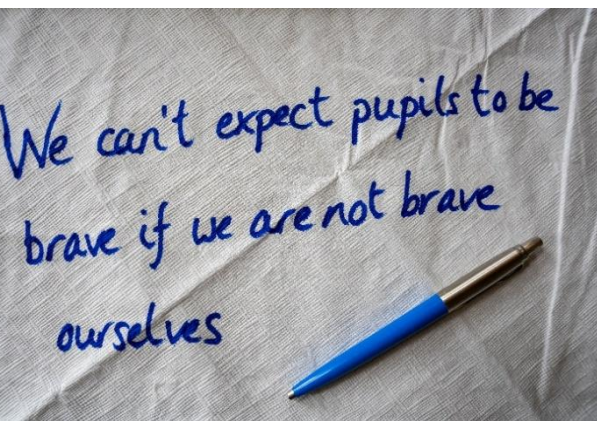
We are looking for a Chair who:

- can communicate the benefits of creative learning, creative skills and creative thinking to schools, communities and our society as a whole.
- has an active interest in collaborations in the city, local communities and groups.

Role description of Chair of the Steering Group.

We are looking for someone who will:

- Be skilled at chairing meetings in an inclusive way, providing opportunities for everyone to take part in discussions
- Chair in a style which enables the discussion to reach a timely conclusion, whenever possible.
- Act as an advocate for the ChalleNGe partnership - using their knowledge and experience to promote ChalleNGe's vision, mission and activity within their networks and wider partnerships.
- Can demonstrate commitment to addressing inequalities of opportunity and engagement in arts and culture for children and young people in Nottingham



- Will advocate for children and young people's involvement in culture, education, the arts and creativity (in their widest sense).
- Be willing to attend events as a representative of ChalleNGe, and be accountable to the Steering group and NTU
- Liaise with NTU, when appropriate, on matters of personnel, reputation, finance, GDPR and safeguarding as NTU is the accountable and host agency.
- Provide advice and guidance to the staff who work with ChalleNGe
- To agree agendas and reports for steering group meetings
- To advise and support on funding and development plans, Challenge Strategy
- Be willing to get involved where co-ordination, advocacy, advice and arbitration is required, in areas where there may be disagreement or controversy.
- Make sure that good communication takes place between host bodies, funders, key partners

ChalleNGe does not pay Steering Group members to carry out this role. It is voluntary (and may tie in with your existing role within the arts, education or community sector if you are supported by your organisation to be a ChalleNGe partner). Reasonable expenses (ie. travel) can be claimed and reimbursed.

There are usually 4 day-time meetings a year.

Attendance at meetings.

You will be expected to attend 4 Steering Group meetings a year. Occasionally, there may be task groups set up for specific pieces of work.

Attendance in task and finish groups / working groups.

Steering Group members are actively encouraged to take part in specific activities introduced by ChalleNGe.

Attendance at events.

Steering Group members are invited to take part in the organisation of annual events and funding efforts.

Act as a partner in a network.

To collaborate with partners in the Op Group and Connecting Notts group and represent ChalleNGe in strategic partnerships.

Steering Group members are expected to act in the best interests of ChalleNGe and must act as a group and not as individuals.

Benefits of joining the Steering Group

Play an important role in a city-wide partnership that makes a difference for children and young people's opportunities.

Work with a range of people from different organisations, bringing your own perspective and experience.

Access training and development opportunities.

ChalleNGe Steering group members

- Amanda Spruyt** Nottingham Contemporary
- Amy Bere** Nottingham Trent University
- Andy Reeves** Nottingham Playhouse
- Ekua Ghansah** Child Friendly City, Nottingham City Council
- Edward Boott** Nonsuch
- James Parkinson** Lakeside Arts, University of Nottingham
- Joanna McIntyre** Prof of Education, University of Nottingham
- Louise Button-Lowth** Nottingham City Museums and Galleries
- Lucy Davies** Connecting Notts
- Michael Aspinall** Nottingham Music Hub
- Michelle Rensler** Nottingham College
- Nigel Cooke** Chair of Young Creatives Nottingham
- Rick Hall** Writer, Researcher, Project Manager



How to apply

To apply to join the Steering group as Chair, please email cathy.mahmood@ntu.ac.uk with a covering letter outlining your interest and experience by 15 May 2026.

We will shortlist and invite people for further conversations with representatives from the Steering group and wider structures. You are welcome to contact Cathy for an informal conversation prior to submitting your interest.

Read on for more background on the Partnership and our structure, and browse the website www.challengenottingham.co.uk @ChalleNGeNottm

Nottingham's Cultural Education Partnership

ChalleNGe is a city-wide partnership of arts, cultural and heritage organisations who work closely with schools and community partners to address barriers to creation and participation. ChalleNGe partner organisations seek to deliver a cultural learning offer that is relevant, visible and accessible, designed by, with and for children and young people. They agree to take risks, share knowledge, tackle challenges and do things differently to ensure wider groups of children and young people get the opportunity to make, create, imagine and innovate.

Our partnership is made up of a rich and diverse range of organisations from across the city – their work brings ChalleNGe's vision to life - from in-depth and long-term partnerships with schools, free family arts programmes, targeted provision for young refugees, health and wellbeing programmes, and city-wide festivals.

All ChalleNGe partners endeavour to share knowledge and collaborate on evaluation approaches so that ChalleNGe can collect data and share stories presenting a city-wide picture of our collective efforts to transform cultural engagement and creative opportunities for children and young people. ChalleNGe partners are accountable to each other and strive to be inclusive organisations, reflective of the diverse city we live in.

ChalleNGe Structure

Steering Group

12-14 individuals with skills, experience and capacity to provide governance to ChalleNGe. This group is responsible for strategic direction, financial overview, monitoring, evaluation, forward planning and risk management. Steering Group members collectively have experience in culture and/or education, business and planning, they actively use their networks and influence to support ChalleNGe. They meet four times a year.

ChalleNGe staff and freelancers are employed by NTU. NTU also carries out the financial administration and is accountable for the funding that ChalleNGe receives.

Operations Group

The Operations group comprises Cultural Learning representatives of arts and cultural organisations in the city. By signing up to ChalleNGe and attending the Operations Group, arts partners commit to taking part in our overarching evaluation, sharing learning and advocating for ChalleNGe. They meet at least four times a year, with additional Community of Practice meetings for various strands of work (such as the SEND/Galleries group, Nature Connections, and Art of Belonging Consortium).

Connecting Notts - Youth Cultural Partnership

Our youth board meets monthly, with representatives aged 16-26yrs, drawn from ChalleNGe partner organisations, young creatives and sixth forms.

ChalleNGe staff team The part time ChalleNGe Manager (3.5 days) and part time Marketing and Partnerships Coordinator (3 days) are employed by Nottingham Trent University.