

CULTURAL LEARNING ALLIANCE

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What is the Cultural Learning Alliance?

The Cultural Learning Alliance, chaired by Lord Puttnam, is an alliance of over 4,000 organisations and individuals including schools, cultural organisations, philanthropists, foundations and trusts, working together to ensure that all children and young people have meaningful access to culture in this difficult economic climate.

The community of the Cultural Learning Alliance is networked through the CLA website at www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk which showcases projects and ideas from all over the country and collects evidence about the impact and value of cultural learning. Every month the CLA news bulletin goes out online to its communities. Every day over 1,000 twitter followers and over 100 linked in professionals debate and share information on cultural learning. Culture24, currently working with the BBC on a three-year data-sharing collaboration, is the media partner of the Cultural Learning Alliance, extending the reach of the initiative to new communities.

The Alliance is led by a Steering Group consisting of representatives of the following organisations:

- Allen's Croft Primary School, Birmingham
- Arts Council England
- Clore Duffield Foundation
- Creativity, Culture & Education
- DCMS
- EarlyArts
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Museums, Libraries & Archives Council
- National Campaign for the Arts
- National Children's Bureau
- National Skills Academy, Creative & Cultural Skills
- National Theatre
- PAEback Group
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Royal Shakespeare Company
- The Sage Gateshead
- Specialist Schools & Academies Trust
- Tate
- Thomas Tallis School
- Youth Dance England
- Youth Music

Why does the Cultural Learning Alliance initiative matter?

Because access to culture and the arts can:

- Contribute to quality of life, enhancing the lives of millions of young people and the families and communities that surround them.
- Raise aspiration
- Equip young people to achieve across the curriculum
- Inspire civic engagement
- Help neighbourhoods and individuals to make positive changes
- Develop the talent of the next generation to contribute to our creative economy

What are goals of the Cultural Learning Alliance?

The Cultural Learning Alliance aims to draw on the power of its national network to:

- Develop and advocate for a coherent national strategy for cultural learning
- Unite the education, youth and cultural sectors
- Showcase excellent projects and practice
- Demonstrate why cultural learning is so important
- Roll out new, low-cost, national initiatives

The Cultural Learning Alliance believes that access to culture is a matter of fairness to the next generation – we must ensure that we are giving all individuals a fair chance at social mobility. The Alliance believes in equality of opportunity for all children and young people: a society where every young person is treated fairly with an entitlement to the tools and experiences that will allow them to lead a full and happy life.

What is the Cultural Learning Alliance calling for?

The Cultural Learning Alliance is concerned for the many young people who are vulnerable or unable to access culture independently. The recent CSR settlement is likely to have the strongest impact on these individuals and their families, and the Alliance urges government, decision makers, organisations and practitioners to pro-actively protect resources and programmes – across the education and cultural sectors – which target and reach these young people.

We are already seeing instances of how the cuts are impacting on children and young people. The Alliance is concerned about the reports of shrinking youth library services, cuts to music education provision and job losses for local authority arts and cultural professionals. In addition, new cultural facilities in schools have been cancelled, and funding for learning expertise in arts organisations has reduced. Flagship programmes such as Creative Partnerships, Find Your Talent and A Night Less Ordinary have been entirely cut.

The education and culture sectors should work together to create the right infrastructure to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts and culture, with the support of central and local government.

Cultural Learning Alliance initiatives:

The first major public event organised by the Alliance is a national debate on **Tuesday 23 November** on the future of cultural learning, taking place at the British Museum. The debate, introduced by Neil MacGregor, and attended by a key group of opinion formers, will be live streamed with open access online to all parts of the country through the live link: thebiglinkup.org.uk/watch-live/

Among the speakers are:

- **Selina Borji**, CCE Young Person's Development Group
- **John Knell**, Co-Founder, Intelligence Agency
- **Shân MacLennan**, Creative Director of Learning and Participation at Southbank Centre
- **Michael Morpurgo**, author
- **Andrew Nairne**, Executive Director, Arts Strategy, Arts Council England.
- **Anthony Sargent**, General Director, The Sage Gateshead
- **Professor Mick Waters**, former director of curriculum QCA, Professor of Education, University of Wolverhampton
- **Ed Vaizey**, Minister for Communication, Culture and the Creative Industries

The CLA is currently developing an initiative with schools to designate a lead individual in every school to become a Cultural Ambassador to encourage cultural learning and act as a link with professional arts organisations in their own areas, access, training and support and signpost parents and young people to cultural activities in their own area.

In 2009 the CLA piloted the concept of Cultural Learning Swaps, giving opportunities to headteachers and leaders of cultural organisations to swap roles for a day to learn more about each other's work. The pilot scheme involved swaps between the Directors of Tate, Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal Opera House, with the Headteachers of Thomas Tallis School Greenwich, Grays School Essex and Queensbridge School Birmingham. The programme is being expanded to roll out nationally across all parts of the country in 2011, providing a further platform for sharing information and skills.

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