



The Den Festival

What to Expect Guide



What is the Den Festival?

The Den Festival is a festival taking place over four weekends, launching on the 9th May and running until 1st June 2025.

There are lots of things going on each weekend such as workshops, shows, comedy, music, dance and drama.

The things going on have been chosen by local people of Tameside who have been working with the Royal Exchange Theatre in volunteer roles called Ambassadors and Champions.

When is the Den Festival?

The Den Festival is at Stalybridge Civic Hall for four weekends:

- Friday 9th May (launch event)
- Saturday 10th & Sunday 11th May (weekend 1)
- Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th May (weekend 2)
- Saturday 24th & Sunday 25th May (weekend 3)
- Saturday 31st May & Sunday 1st June (weekend 4)





How long is it?

You can come to the festival for as long or little as you want.

Each activity varies in length and drop-in activities are designed to allow you to choose how long you join for.

Our workshops and performances are a set length from 30 minutes to a few hours.

However, no matter where you are, if you want to walk away to take a break you always can do.

Activity guide

In the festival, everything taking place is either a performance, a workshop or a drop-in activity.

Performance – this is something you sit in the Den to watch. Some performances allow the audience to interact.

Workshop – arrive at the start time to join in this activity.

Drop-in – arrive at any point during the time stated to get involved with this free creative activity, and stay for as long or little as you want.

Performance

Workshop

Drop-in



Arriving at the Den Festival

This is what Stalybridge Civic Hall looks like from the outside.

The entrance is this door on the right.

When you first enter the Civic Hall you will see our friendly security officer. They will just need to have a quick look inside your bag, if you have one.

Next you will see our box office where you can chat to our helpful front of house team. They can help with buying tickets or answering questions



The big structure in the middle of the room is the Den. This is our mobile in-the-round theatre space.



What is inside the Den?

There are three rows of seats that go round in a circle. The round space in the middle is the stage.

There are lights and speakers on the roof of the Den which light the performers and play any music or sound effects. There are three projectors which can project onto the walls of the Den.



What other spaces are there?

The Civic Hall has small rooms with a glass front at opposite sides of the room which look like this.

During the festival, you will be able to go inside some of these rooms. Inside there will be:

- An information hub which will have boards that you can read to learn more about the festival, the Den and other things going on in Tameside
- A children's hub with activities such as colouring
- A costume display
- A room that will have an exhibition by a company called Phantasmagoria
- A prayer room
- A calm room

What is a calm space?

The calm space is a room anyone can use if they just need to go to a low sensory environment.

Toilets

There are toilets, including an accessible toilet on your left as you enter the Civic Hall.

People who can help

If you need some help when you arrive, you can go to the desk at the entrance where our box office staff are located.

Our VEAs (Visitor Experience Assistants) can also help you if you need anything whilst at the festival.

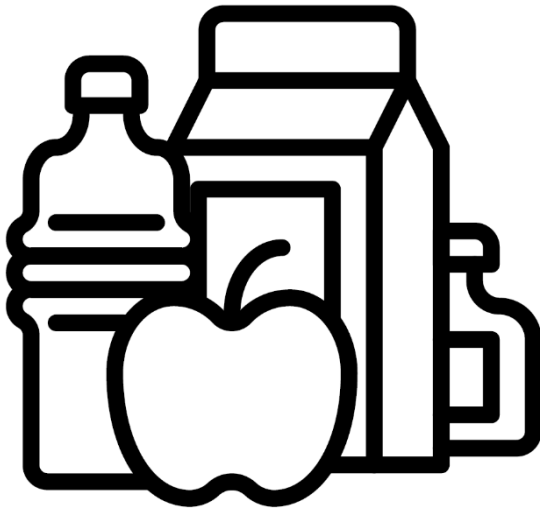
They will be around the space and will be wearing orange t-shirts which say 'staff' on them.



Ear defenders

There are ear defenders available to borrow. Please ask a VEA for these.

Food and drink



There will be free tea and coffee available at the festival.

When we have shows on, there will also be a bar where you can purchase alcoholic and soft drinks, as well as snacks.

What are Family Mornings?

10:30 – 12:30 every Saturday and Sunday will be Family Morning at the festival.

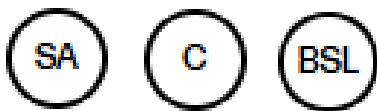
Family Mornings are aimed at families with children aged 12 and under.

The activity for each Family Morning changes, but on Saturdays you can expect a calmer & quieter morning, whilst on Sundays you can expect things to get noisier and more energetic.

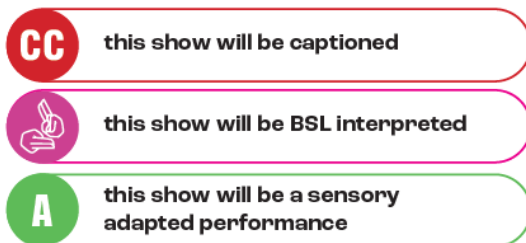


What are adapted shows or activities?

Some of the performances might have icons next to them on the website or in the brochure.



On the website they look like this.



In the brochure they look like this.



A **captioned** performance means that the scripted elements of the show will be displayed as text on a screen.



A **British Sign Language (BSL)** interpreted performance has an interpreter translating the show into BSL.



A **sensory adapted** show has the following changes made:

- Softening any loud noises, removing any flashing or strobe lights and avoiding

sudden or surprising moments.

- Low level lighting remaining on throughout the performance.

Everyone is very welcome to attend our Sensory Adapted Performances – they are an inclusive, enjoyable experience for all.

Events guide



Launch Event – Welcome to the Den

This event will take place in the Den and around it.

There will be crafts, facepainting and music.

At 7:30pm there will be a one-hour music performance by singer Kyla Brox.

There will also be another event taking place outside. This event is called Street Fest and involves stalls selling food and drink as well as some live performances.

Weekend 1



Family Morning: Phantasmagoria's Magical Travelling Emporium

This is a drop-in activity designed for children.

It will be using their 'Cabinets of Curiosities' which look like this.



Circus Skills

This is a drop-in activity where a circus performer will demonstrate and teach a variety of circus skills.

LUCKY TONIGHT!

This is a performance that is combined with a pub quiz.

The performer tells you her story in between asking pub quiz questions which you can answer in groups if you wish.

The audience puts their answers into tablet devices.

You can choose to just watch if you prefer.



There will be a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter at this performance.

Family Morning: Doodle Dance



There will be two workshops within Family Morning. The first is for children aged 3-6 and the second is for children aged 7-11.

This workshop combines doodling and drawing on paper using chalk, with movement.



Doodle Dance

There will be another Doodle Dance workshop which is for anyone aged 12 years and above.



Act in the Den

This is a workshop with up to 20 people in it.

This workshop is about performing and will involve games and activities to teach you the basics of acting.

Company Chameleon Double Bill



This is a dance performance.

There will be two 15-minute duets (a performance by two people). There will be a 15-minute interval between these two performances.

Before the show starts, there will be a five-minute curtain raiser by a local children's dance group. A curtain raiser is a short performance that happens before a show begins.

Weekend 2



Family Morning: Creative Self Celebration

This drop-in activity involves using air dry clay to make a little clay pot you can take home while listening to storytelling.

Grooves in the Den: Taster Workshop

This is a workshop where Carnival organization, Global Grooves will teach you some drumming beats.

There will be up to 30 people in the workshop.

It is for all abilities and anyone over 11 (but under 14s must be accompanied by an adult).

This workshop will be in the rehearsal room of the Civic Hall and you can expect it to be noisy.



Grooves in the Den: Performance Workshop



This workshop will teach you a short routine so that you can be part of a big performance on the last day of the festival.

You don't have to do the performance if you don't want to.

There will be up to 30 people in the workshop.

It is for all abilities and anyone over 11 (but under 14s must be accompanied by an adult).

This workshop will be in the rehearsal room of the Civic Hall and you can expect it to be noisy.

Elders Company Workshop



This drama workshop is for anyone over 60 and there will be up to 20 people.

It will give a taste of what it is like to be part of the Elders Company at the Royal Exchange theatre.



No Such Thing as Ordinary

This is a show with 6 actors in it.

The 2pm performance will have a BSL interpreter and will be sensory adapted.

The 7pm performance will have captions.



Family Morning: Armchair Adventures: A Shakespeare Adventure

This workshop is for up to 20 children and their adults.

It will involve storytelling and games centered around the Shakespeare episode of the podcast series, Armchair Adventures.



Fresh Voices

This is a show comprised of three 20-minute plays.

The plays are totally different individual stories.



Tameside Creative Network.

Creatives in the Den

This is a day where you can drop in at any point between 1pm – 7pm to meet other creative people in Tameside.

There will be industry professionals you can talk to and ask advice, as well as workshops.

At 6pm the artist mixer will start. Read below to learn more.

Artist Mixer

This event is run by the Tameside Creative Network. The network is a group for local creative people to meet.

Anyone can come to the mixer.

Bridge Fest in the Den



This is a 2-hour music performance, featuring different performers.

Some performances will be in the Den and some will be in the Civic Hall space outside the Den.

This event will be noisy.

Weekend 3



Family Morning: Den Building

This is a drop-in activity where you can help build or explore a large cardboard den and build your own mini den that you can take home with you.



Instrument Petting Zoo

In this drop-in activity you can pick up and play musical instruments. There are also musical games you can get involved in if you want.

Best Mates, Top Bins & Venga Venga



This is a performance that is made up of four 15-minute plays.

The 2pm performance will have a BSL interpreter and will be sensory adapted.

The 7pm performance will have captions.



Family Morning: Story Chest Adventures

This is an interactive workshop you can pick objects out of a chest and the two storytellers will create a story from them which they will act out.



Behind the Seams

This workshop will show how costumes are created and you will have the chance to design your own on paper.



Exploring Shakespeare's text

This performance based workshop will look at text from Shakespeare and help you understand it and how to perform it.



Shakin' up Shakespeare

This performance is made up of sections of plays by Shakespeare, performed by young people.



The Taming of the "Shrew"

This is an adaptation of the Taming of the Shrew.

It will be captioned.

30 minutes before the show, the performers will roam the Civic Hall and interact with audience members in character.

There is an interval half way through the show.



Weekend 4



Family Morning: Phantasmagoria's Magical Travelling Emporium

This is a drop-in activity designed for children.

It will be using their 'Cabinets of Curiosities' which look like this.

Congrats!



This is a 30-minute play which has been created and performed by young people.

Intro to lighting

This workshop will teach you about lighting in theatre.

You don't need to know anything about technical theatre to join this workshop.

There will be up to 20 people.





Intro to sound

This workshop will teach you about sound in theatre.

You don't need to know anything about technical theatre to join this workshop.

There will be up to 20 people.



Comedy in the Den

This is a stand-up comedy event.

There will be four comedians, with one of them hosting the evening.

There will be two breaks during the 2 hours.



Family Morning: Be Hear Now

Half the session will involve music games whilst the other half will be an interactive

concert led by a professional musician.

You do not need to have had any prior music experience to join in.



Grooves in the Den

This is a Carnival drumming performance in the Den.

There will be up to 60 performers, most of which are community performers.

This will be a loud performance.

Celebrate in the Den

This is a drop in event in the main Civic Hall space to celebrate the end of the festival.

Arrive at any point after 6pm and before 8pm.

Expect music and performances.

