

Cultural Hubs is an exciting initiative which aims to ensure that all of our young people have access to a full and active cultural life. At the heart of the scheme is a belief that young people have the right to be both consumers and creators of culture. By working together schools, museums, galleries, theatres and other heritage and arts organisations can open up a wealth of new opportunities for young people to experience and create a new and rich diversity of cultural products.

Cultural Hub Durham builds upon some of the existing good practice in this area, but seeks to push the boundaries even further. In practical terms, this has led to 10 schools across County Durham working in partnership with high profile cultural organisations based in the region including BALTIC, Beamish Museum, Dance City, Seven Stories and Durham County Council Libraries, Learning and Culture. The Cultural Hubs programme is able to provide schools with a direct line of access to these flagship organisations. For some of the young people involved, this has given them their first point of contact with the cultural treasures that the rest of us take for granted.

Funded by Arts Council England and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Durham was selected by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) as one of only three locations in the country to be designated as a Cultural Hub in 2005.

Cultural Hub Durham is managed by **The Forge**, a specialist creative agency developing high quality participatory arts with young people, practitioners and educators throughout County Durham, Sunderland, nationally and internationally.

Since the start of the three year project, Cultural Hub Durham has seen a significant £1.3m investment in the area into 10 core schools and 6 cultural organisations in the North East. This has helped to give young people access to a full and active cultural life by linking schools directly to flagship organisations. At the heart of the scheme is a belief that young people have the right to be both consumers and creators of culture.

Effective partnership working and joint planning between the cultural and education sectors has been instrumental to the success of this initiative. Partners have collaborated with one another to create a plethora of fantastic work!

