



# Celebrating 12 Years Of The 64 Million Artists Public Programme

[Development And Impact Report](#)

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**64** Million  
artists

Report by tialt - there is an alternative  
March, 2026

Image Credit: Lucian Koncz

# Introduction

## The Power Of Everyday Creativity

By Jo Hunter - Founder 64 Million Artists

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Photo Credit: Donna Ford



By Jo Hunter - Founder 64 Million Artists

In 2026, 64 Million Artists is closing its Public Programme after 12 years catalysing everyday creativity across the UK. We have worked with over 1 million participants, contributed to public policy, inspired teams, conducted research and taken care of the people we've worked with. As we move into a new phase, with a focus on creative facilitation and training, we wanted to reflect on the impact of our public programme and how things have changed (or not) over the time we've been working.

We have always maintained the importance of creativity at both a micro and macro level. 64 Million Artists began life as a personal project that was transformative for my wellbeing, but quickly became a much larger campaign as we recognised the importance of creativity to the way people show up in their lives in home, at work and at school, and how much that had been dampened by the education system, the way we work, and the inequitable ways we think about creativity across the UK.

# 12 YEARS!



## 1 million participants

We have campaigned not through words, but through action; encouraging people to express themselves, explore, imagine, create, play and take risks; and we have partnered with tiact over the last few years to better explore what happens when they do. We have always said 'we believe everyone is creative and that when we are creative we can make change in our lives and in the world around us.' In this report we want to explore those things together, how our own personal world changes as we access our creativity, but also the broader impact of that on the world.

In my mind there has never been a more important time to encourage creativity. In a world that is divisive, where many are struggling, and where our integration with technology threatens to impact our humanity, we have seen that creativity fosters connection, both to ourselves and others. Thinking and acting creatively is a tool for challenging many of our systems that are broken. It allows us to look at things differently and to question what we see. It also allows us to reimagine in a restorative way, rather than pushing ourselves until we fall over.



When we made the decision to close the public programme we wanted to end as we began, campaigning for the importance of creativity at a macro scale, by encouraging creativity at the micro. We're handing over our resources, our ideas and our strategies to see if we can spread the ripple effect of our work even wider than we could have previously anticipated. This report aims to be part of that, to equip others with our learnings so that they can continue this process of exploration, but also of sharing. The more we can demonstrate the impact of creativity, the more we can campaign for creativity in our workplaces, our systems and in our relationships.

64 Million Artists has always been a collective endeavour. This report is born of the hundreds of people who have created prompts with us, led workshops, been co-researchers and sent us stories; as well as the 1 million people who have participated over the years. We hope their voices will shine out to you through this report and we are very grateful for everyone who has been with us for the ride.

## Creativity, as Evidence

A poem shared by Dianne Casey as part of The January Challenge 2026

*It didn't save me.  
Do you remember thinking it would?*

*Not the big gestures.  
Not the grants, the readings, the polite applause.*

*I mean the smaller things.  
The sentence that let me stay.  
The notebook that didn't ask questions.*

*Creativity came like weather.  
Uninvited.  
Persistent.*

*It said: keep your hands busy.  
It said: listen closer.  
It said: don't explain this yet.*

*I used it to survive rooms.  
To leave conversations without leaving my body.  
To tell the truth sideways.*

*I never called it healing.  
I called it making.*

*Some days it was just breath with a job.  
Some days it was the only witness who didn't interrupt.*

*You want change?  
Fine.*

*It changed who I answer to.  
It changed how long I stay.  
It changed what I no longer apologise for.*

*That's the story.  
You can have it.*

NEXT

The Micro Story



# The Micro Story

## Creativity And Individual Change

At the individual level, participation in creative activities through 64 Million Artists' programmes catalyses profound personal transformations that ripple through people's professional lives, relationships, and sense of self.

Keep scrolling

Photo Credit: Dorina Ford

## Rediscovering Creative Identity

Many participants arrive believing they aren't creative people. This perception, often rooted in educational experiences that 'educated creativity out of them', creates a barrier between people and their innate creative capacity. Yet through gentle, permission-giving prompts and activities, individuals experience revelatory moments of self-recognition.

One participant captured this shift simply: "I learned I was a lot more creative than I realised." Another reflected: "I've realised I am more creative than I give myself credit for... It's given me back some fun and joy."

This rediscovery fundamentally changes how people see themselves and their capabilities. As one participant noted: "Creativity isn't just about 'making' something - it's also about how we interact with the world and with others, and about looking at things in different ways."

"Having been told at an early age that I had 2 left feet, that I could join the choir only if I mimed, that art was not my strong point and I should not choose it as a subject in school I thought for years that creativity was not for me but then with retirement my life changed. I discovered lots of classes to keep the old folk off the streets and joined anything that took my fancy. Crucially I learned how to play again."

## Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience

Creative activities function as both refuge and processing space during difficult times. Survey data from recent years of The January Challenge (TJC) consistently showed that between 85-90% of participants reported positive impacts on their wellbeing. The qualitative responses reveal more on how this works.

For some, creativity provides therapeutic space for reflection: "My reflections became quite therapeutic and introspective as opposed to being about creative outputs per se." Others describe it as reconnection with fundamental aspects of themselves: "[TJC] helped me to reconnect with fun, play, with my inner child and to rest myself."

One participant in Creative Courage powerfully articulated creativity's role during burnout:

"I wanted to bring the creativity and joy back into my professional practice (as an innovation lead) - after a destabilising and demotivating period at work. I wanted to reconnect with my creativity and develop a practice that worked for me."

The reframing capacity of creativity emerged as particularly significant: "To be creative in both thinking and doing is possible... It has reframed how to approach life and especially difficult parts of life."



Collage Credit: Rora De P.



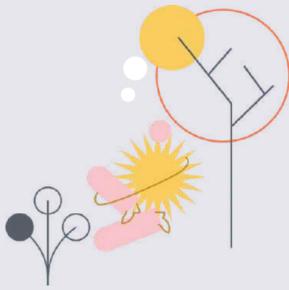
The January Challenge 2025 - Birdwatching Workshop by Lira Valenzuela

## Mindful Presence and Connection to Place

Creative prompts that invite noticing; looking up at birds, observing natural materials, paying attention to immediate surrounding, cultivate a quality of presence that participants find both **calming and revelatory**.

After a birdwatching and creative response workshop, one participant shared: "I feel more connected to nature, the patterns, the colours, seeing the beauty of ecosystems allowed me to expand my mind." Another added: "After this walk and crafts I feel so peaceful and inspired by nature."

This isn't simply about nature appreciation; it's about developing a capacity for **mindful engagement and slowing down**. One person reflected: "It reaffirmed my trust in the power of culture, song/music and community. I know now more strongly than ever that these tools are pure medicine."



## Deepening Relationships

Creative shared experiences open new channels of **connection**, even with people we already know well. One TJC participant discovered: "I connected more with my niece who was also doing the challenge and we compared our projects and helped us understand more about each other's feelings."

Distance becomes less of a barrier when creativity provides a **shared language**: "I've used the challenges to connect with dear friends who live overseas, it's been really special to be in daily constant communication with them and connecting over creating endeavours. It's led to us sharing some really nice quality time together."

In group settings, the quality of connection shifts when people create together. From a maternal wellbeing workshop: "The feeling of **sharing experiences and being attentive to each other** gave me a boost of happiness." Another participant reflected: "I was able to feel free and a child again."



Word Portraits by Hugh Middleton School Students



The January Challenge 2024 - Workshop by Black Box Belfast

## Permission and Self-Compassion

Participants regularly fed back that creative practice teaches people to be **gentler with themselves**. The iterative, experimental nature of creativity, where 'failure' is reframed as learning, offers a different model for approaching life's challenges.

One January Challenge participant's reflection captures this beautifully: "I learned not to be too hard on myself and that posts didn't have to be perfect... I learned to love the process."

After a community workshop, someone shared: "Thank you for giving us space to create in a no pressure place." Another simply noted it was "Space to create and chat, made a fruitful pause between work and family, I felt really welcomed and included."

## The Cumulative Effect

These individual transformations in confidence, wellbeing, relationships, and self-perception compound over time and ripple outward. People who rediscover their creativity can change how they show up in their families, workplaces, and communities.

As one participant synthesised: "It was lovely to share and feel part of a collective across the country - wonderful to be prompted to think differently." Another captured the sustaining quality of creative practice:

"I've learned to craft a haiku, to collage, to assemble, to film, to snap. Most of all I've found a calling of sorts: making novel. And I'm certain this group helped unlock that. Just gotta write that novel now!"

What emerges is a picture of creativity not as an add-on to life, but as a fundamental human capacity that, when rekindled, helps people navigate uncertainty, build resilience, strengthen relationships, and reconnect with joy and purpose in their daily lives.

"The January challenge was a bit of a lifeline for me when I became very poorly with Long Covid. Creativity was a way of connecting with others and processing what I was going through too. I'm so grateful for friends made and also the chance to rebuild gradually. January became a month to look forward to rather than dread and making space creativity is now a non-negotiable. A chance to process the tough stuff from a distance and to spread joy too. Win win right?!"

NEXT

The Meso Story





# The Meso Story

## Organisational Collaboration And Co-Creation

Building partnerships, working strategically, and being responsive to a broad range of needs made up the 'middle layer' of Public Programme development.

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## From Personal Experience to Collective Impact

The January Challenge began twelve years ago from a simple premise: a personal creative practice that Jo Hunter wanted to share with others. But from the very beginning, there was a dual vision to play, what Jo describes as "the micro to the macro". This section focuses on the 'meso' - the middle layer of change that was led by 64 Million Artists as an organisation: developing ideas, building partnerships and acting strategically with other organisations.

As Jo reflects:

*"The culture sector was saying 'we need to get people to value culture' whereas we were saying 'we need to give everyone opportunities to explore their own creativity and discover that they are part of making culture themselves'"*

This dual focus on intimate personal change leading to sweeping cultural transformation has shaped every strategic decision in the Public Programme's evolution.



## Learning Through Partnership

The path to the now established 'networked creativity' model emerged through experimentation, listening, and critical turning points that revealed fundamental truths about how creativity operates within and across communities.

A realisation emerged early in the process that creativity requires time and space for reflection, not just quick participation. The team continually chose depth over ease, betting that meaningful engagement would ultimately reach more people than 'viral simplicity'.

Another early realisation was that creativity-led change had to be developed with and by the communities taking part. The role of 64 Million Artists was not to develop prompts and exercises to be shared with specific communities or broad publics, but to facilitate co-creation with people ensuring relevance, ownership, and authenticity from the start.



The January Challenge 2024 - workshop by Alex Rigby-Williams



The January Challenge 2024 - workshop by Zeyi Cao

## The Scale Realisation

It soon became clear that partnerships were the only way forward to develop creativity-led change at scale, as Jo explained:

*"If you really want to reach 64 million people, we can't do it with our group of three staff, five staff, 6 and 10 staff, whatever. We have to work in partnership to make sure that it feels relevant, that it feels owned by other people and then it feels meaningful to a real range of people. And the only way to do that is to work with a real range of people to put it together."*

This demonstrates a realisation that the team could never fully understand how creativity shows up in primary schools, SEND schools, care homes, prisons, banks, and community centres across the UK. They needed partnerships embedded in those contexts with people who had lived experiences of them.

## Intentional Design Principles

## Tailored Spaces Over Universal Approaches

01

The team came to understand that targeting 'everyone' disregards barriers to participation. As Head of Public Programmes, Jemima Frankel articulates:

*"If you give it away and really give absolute permission to people to adapt it and use it in a way that works for them, but also really involve them in the making of it, you can end up with resources that feel very tailored and informed by other practice."*

This principle recognises that a simple idea requires complex application. The January Challenge concept is straightforward, but how it manifests in a Welsh-speaking community centre versus a dementia care home versus a corporate workplace requires deep contextual understanding and adaptation.

02

## Ownership From the Beginning

Emerging learning informed the team that ownership must be built in from inception. This means:

- Involving partners in **designing the prompts themselves**, not just delivering pre-made content
- Supporting partners to develop **wraparound resources** that meet their community's specific needs
- **Paying people fairly** for their expertise and labour in this co-creation process

The development of the Creativity Champions and Ambassadors models put these principles into action, directly supporting changemakers from a broad range of contexts to lead the development of bespoke resources for their communities, by drawing on the support of the core team and the extended network.

03

## Diversity of Reach and Representation

The strategic diversity of partnerships operates on multiple levels. As Jemima explains: "There's a real 'why' in having diversity and who those partners are, because it's about having individual influential champions and it's also about existing within systems and networks."

This means cultivating both:

- Grassroots champions: individuals embedded in specific communities who can bring creativity to life in authentic, responsive ways
- Institutional partners: organisations within sectors (NHS, education, justice) that can influence policy, infrastructure, and systemic change

The 2021 programme marked an intentional shift toward this model, working with "three influential champions... in a really openly, very intentional way of being like, let's bring in different voices. Let's open up the curation and see what happens." The results showed clear evidence that "working with those people really supported a broader representation and diversity of people taking part."

## The Timeline of Iteration

The journey from a single programme to a national network didn't follow a straight line. Yashoda Rodgers, Public Programmes Manager, reflects on this fluidity:

*"A lot of it was online and just how the programme has just shifted very organically and very responsively... we've always adapted to what people have shared with us... we had a January Challenge, then we had the weekly prompts and we went for a stage of having weekly drop-ins. Then we've then we moved away from the weekly prompts and focused on Gather Round [a project focused on bringing people together in physical spaces and using creative prompts to develop mutual action on pressing social issues]"*

### Public Programme Development Timeline

Early Years (2014-2019): Building the Foundation

2014

First January Challenge with approximately 200 participants

Focus on daily email prompts and individual participation

2019

Reached approximately 5,000 participants

Beginning to understand the power of shared creative experiences

Expansion Period (2020-2022): Testing Models

2020

Approximately 15,000 participants during first pandemic year

Shift to more online facilitation and community building

2021

Introduction of three-programme model with influential champions

Clear evidence that diverse voices in curation expanded reach and representation

2022

Scaled to 50,000 participants

Formalisation (2023-2024): The Creativity Champions Model

2023

January Challenge reached 75,000 participants

- Creativity Champions model embedded as core organisational strategy
- First tailored Champions Packs developed
- Introduction of paid co-creation partnerships

2024

Reached 160,000 participants

- First cohort of 15 paid Local Creativity Champions across England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland
- Champions embedded across library, education, health and social care, charity, and prison sectors
- Significant investment in professional development and support infrastructure

Deepening Impact (2025-2026): Tailored Resources and Community Networks

2025

Reached 360,000+ participants

- Eight tailored Champions Packs developed (Schools, Libraries, Care Homes, Welsh Speakers, Dementia Support, and more)
- Over 2150 pack downloads with 320,000+ impressions
- 500+ people participated in facilitated events
- 500+ people participated in facilitated events
- Development of Gather Round methodology as sustainable toolkit
- Ambassadors leading targeted workshops for specific demographics (autism community, Black women, LGBTQ+ groups, people with early-onset dementia)

The Gather Round Evolution

Gather Round represents the next iteration of this thinking; a 'flatpack toolkit' that enables Creativity Champions to host their own creative gatherings without 64 Million Artists' direct presence. As the team describes it:

*"Born from the belief that our innate creativity is a force for connection, understanding and action... adapted to include hands-on creative activity, Gather Round brings people together to explore social issues, and take action on tangible steps forward."*

As Yashoda reflects:

*"Throughout everything we do in the programme, it's always been about... how we meaningfully share... it's not just the doing... it's how can you meaningfully share this?"*

Gather Round formalises what had been emergent practice - giving people not just creative prompts but the scaffolding for facilitating meaningful collective experiences. As Yashoda reflected: "It's not just a prompt, it's the resource of how to hold space and how to... gather."



## The Mechanisms of Scale

Working more closely with smaller groups, whether Ambassadors, Creativity Champions, or targeted cohorts, serves multiple purposes:

1. **Understanding mechanisms:** Seeing 'up close' how creative practices create change in specific contexts
2. **Building evidence:** Generating stories and data that illuminate the broader impact
3. **Developing models:** Testing what works so others can replicate and adopt
4. **Creating ownership:** Building a distributed network where "it's not doing to do with us anymore, but actually... it feels well owned by hundreds, if not thousands of people"

## The Power of Responsive Design

What emerges from this history is a portrait of an organisation that has consistently chosen listening over assumption, adaptation over rigidity, and distribution over control.

As one Creativity Champion participant shared:

*"It was the first time we're taking part in the challenge as an organisation, having previously taken part as individuals. We used it to start to build a community around making and having regular meet ups in the local pub. The support from their organisation for us was brilliant and we felt that we could ask questions and receive thoughtful answers."*

This captures the essence of the model: **thoughtfulness begets thoughtfulness.** When 64 Million Artists gives genuine thought to how creativity can serve different communities, provides real resources and support, and treats partners as co-creators rather than consumers, those partners extend the same care to their own communities.

The Public Programme model hasn't just scaled impact numerically, from 200 people in 2014 to more than 360,000 in 2025. It has fundamentally redistributed creative agency, building a national infrastructure where creativity can flourish in contexts the founding team could never have imagined or reached alone.

As Jemima reflects:

*"We aren't the experts in prisons, we aren't the experts in care homes. But what we are, what we have expertise in is facilitating inclusive creative spaces and supporting other people to do the same... that's what we bring. That's what the campaign is. It's giving it away with the confidence that we have something to say about it and also the confidence that it's really informed by experts in the different areas."*

This represents the core of the Public Programme and broader 64 Million Artists model: **knowing what you know, acknowledging what you don't, and building partnerships that honour both.**



The January Challenge 2025 - @Thomas Medical Practice, Exeter

NEXT The Macro Story





# The Macro Story

## Emerging Collective And Systemic Change

From the outset, 64 Million Artists has operated with an implicit theory of change: that widespread individual experiences of everyday creativity can accumulate into collective shifts in how culture is understood, valued, and practiced.

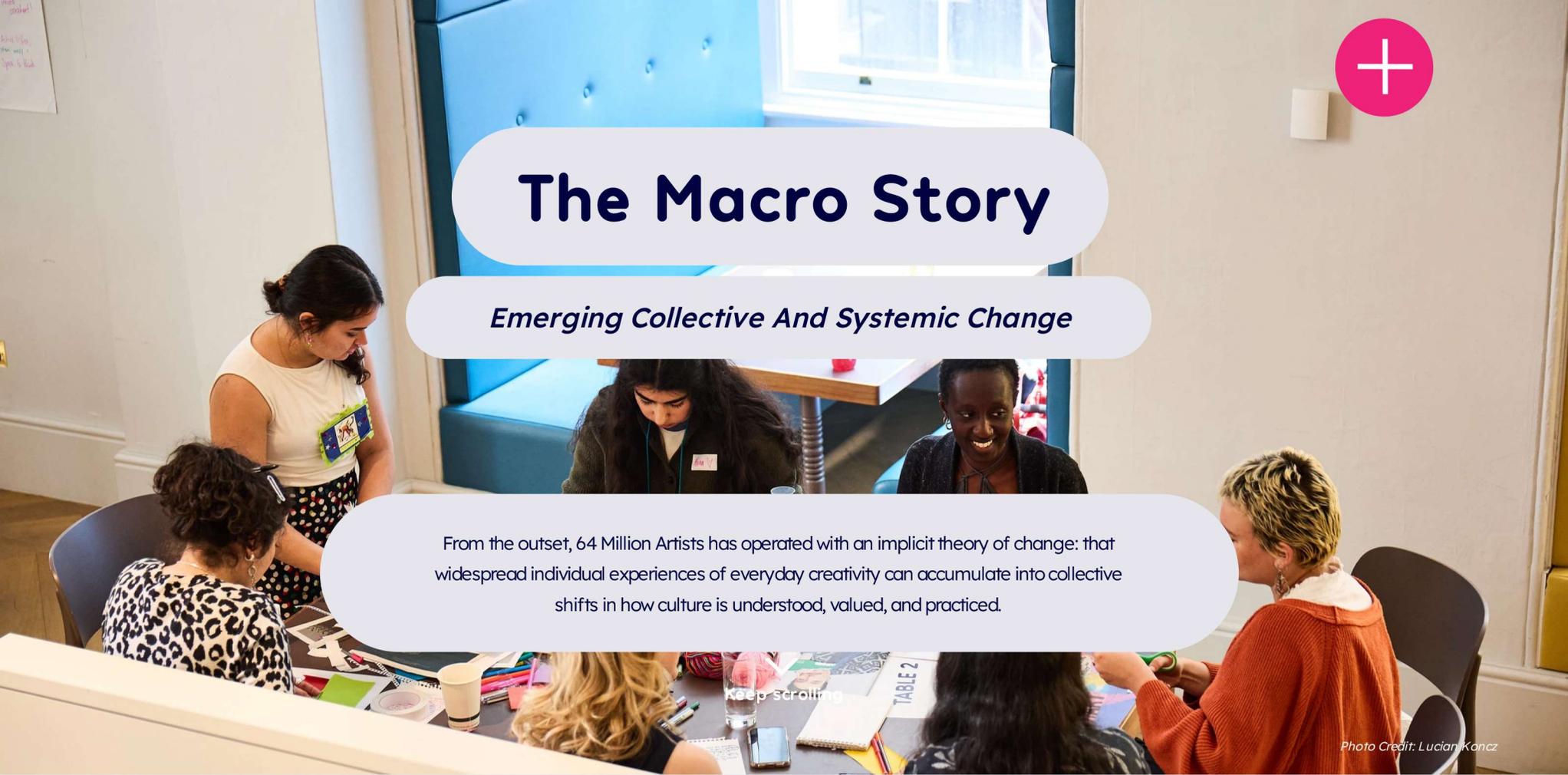


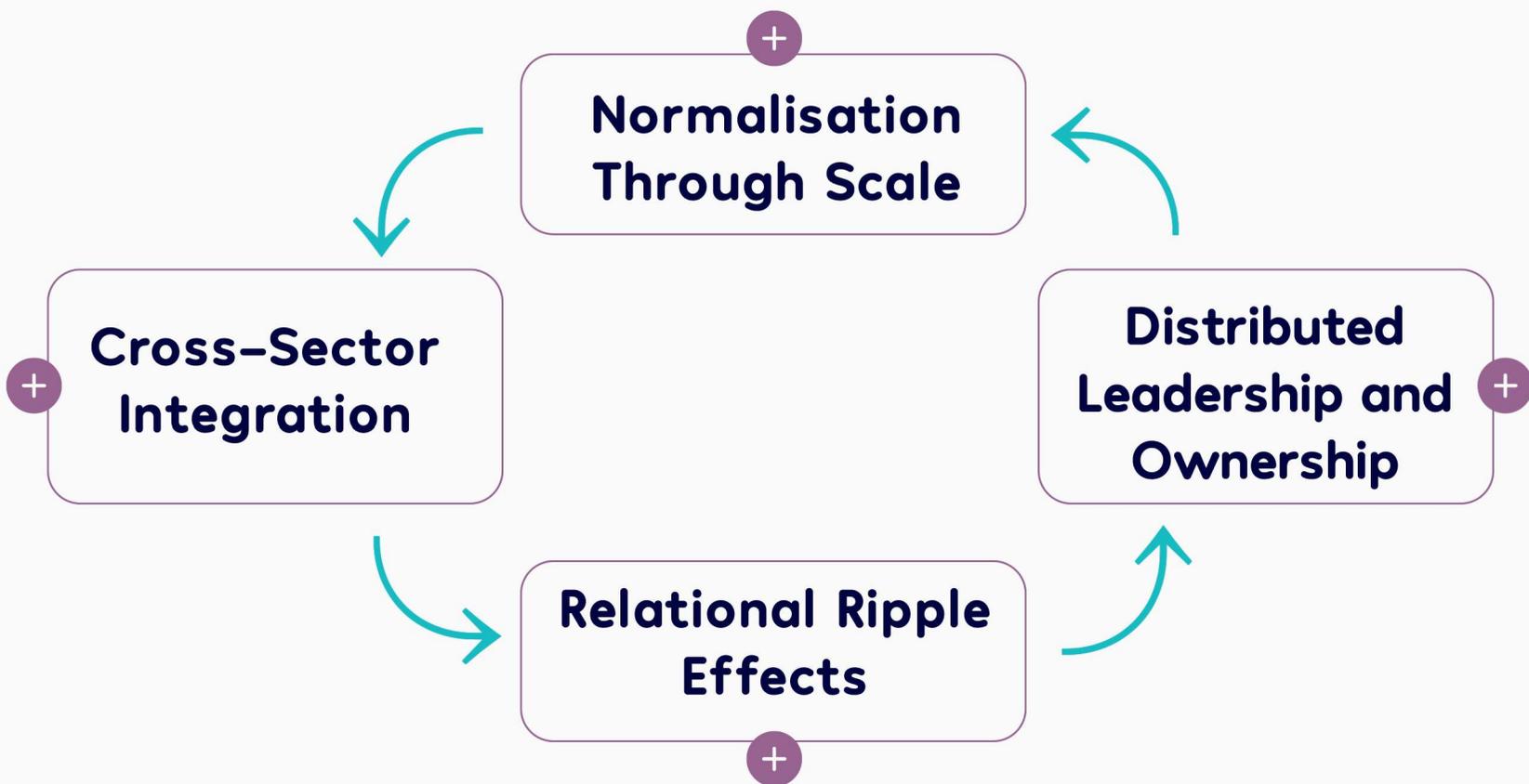
Photo Credit: Lucian Koncz

# From Individual Creativity to Cultural Systems Change

At the macro level, the Public Programme has contributed to systemic change by challenging entrenched cultural assumption in the UK that creativity belongs primarily to professional artists, cultural institutions, or formal education settings. Instead, the programme has consistently positioned creativity as a universal human capacity that is essential to wellbeing, community connection, and civic participation.

This reframing represents a shift in cultural norms and expectations, influencing how individuals see themselves, how organisations engage their communities, and how systems increasingly recognise creativity as integral to social outcomes.

Over time, this has contributed to a gradual redistribution of creative agency, from centralised cultural institutions toward a more distributed, participatory cultural ecosystem. The work continues.



### Cross-Sector Integration

Another key mechanism has been the integration of creativity into non-cultural sectors. Participants and partners have embedded creative practices within organisational systems such as healthcare settings, local authorities, educational environments, and workplaces.

Through this process, creativity becomes not an additional activity, but a tool for achieving wider system goals, including improving wellbeing, supporting staff resilience, strengthening relationships, and enabling collaborative problem-solving.

This cross-sector integration represents a significant pathway for systemic change, as it shifts creativity from the margins of policy and practice into core organisational functions.

### Normalisation Through Scale

By reaching over one million participants, the programme has helped normalise everyday creativity as a common social practice. This scale matters not only in terms of numbers reached, but in shifting perceptions of what is typical or possible.

When creativity becomes visible as an everyday behaviour across workplaces, schools, and communities, it begins to function as a social norm rather than an 'exceptional' activity. This process of normalisation is a key pathway through which cultural attitudes shift over time.

### Distributed Leadership and Ownership

A central mechanism of systemic change has been the intentional transfer of creative leadership from the core organisation to participants, partners, and communities. Models such as Creativity Champions, Ambassadors, and Gather Round have enabled individuals embedded within diverse systems, from health and social care to education, justice, and corporate sectors, to adapt and embed creative practice within their own contexts.

This distributed model operates as a form of cultural infrastructure-building, developing local capacity, confidence, and ownership so that creativity can continue independently of the originating programme. As a result, systemic change has not relied on direct programme delivery alone, but on cultivating a network of practitioners capable of sustaining and expanding the work.

### Relational Ripple Effects

The Public Programme has also generated systemic impact through relational diffusion; the spread of ideas and practices through personal and professional networks.

Participants frequently report sharing creative approaches with colleagues, family members, or communities, initiating secondary and tertiary waves of engagement. These ripple effects often occur beyond the visibility of formal evaluation systems but are consistently evidenced through anecdotal feedback and longitudinal participant stories.

Such relational pathways are characteristic of complex social change processes, where influence travels through trust networks rather than hierarchical structures

## Alignment with Wider Cultural Policy Shifts

These mechanisms of change align closely with broader policy movements across the UK that increasingly recognise creativity as fundamental to social wellbeing and cultural democracy.

Strategies such as Arts Council England's Let's Create, alongside parallel priorities within devolved cultural and health policies, emphasise participation, everyday creativity, and cross-sector collaboration. The Public Programme has both reflected and contributed to these systemic shifts by providing practical, evidence-informed models for how such ambitions can be realised in practice.

In this way, the programme has functioned not only as a participant-facing initiative, but as a field-building intervention helping to shape discourse, demonstrate viable approaches, and influence how cultural value is understood across systems.



## Sustainability Beyond Programme Closure

The Public Programme has intentionally prioritised sustainability through distributed ownership. By investing in capacity-building, co-creation, and adaptable resources, the programme has created conditions for continued impact without centralised delivery. Creativity Champions, partner organisations, and former participants now hold the knowledge, tools, and confidence to sustain and evolve creative practices within their own systems.

From an evaluation perspective, this represents a transition from programme-based impact to ecosystem-based impact, where change persists because it has been embedded within relationships, networks, and institutional practices rather than dependent on a single organisational structure.

The most significant legacy of the programme may therefore be the cultural infrastructure it has helped to build: a widespread network of people, organisations, and systems that now understand creativity as a tool for connection, resilience, and change, and who can continue to carry that work forward independently.



NEXT

Case Studies





# Case Studies

Of The Public Programme In Practice

Below are three settings where the programme was put into practice – libraries, care homes, and prisons. Click to jump ahead, or keep scrolling to read them all.

[Libraries](#)

[Care Homes](#)

[Prisons](#)



Cumbria Libraries Workshop

## Libraries

As part of The January Challenge 2023, we worked with Cumbria Libraries as partners on the campaign. We hosted a co-creation workshop with Library Staff and members where they designed three of the creative prompts to support creative activity in library settings. Discover the Cumbria Libraries prompts in the [2023 Creativity Champions Pack](#) [here](#).

As well as designing prompts for the campaign, throughout January 2023 Cumbria Libraries championed the challenge and ran workshops with various community groups across libraries in the area, from English Cafes' supporting refugees and migrants to primary schools and youth groups.

**“The challenge gives me something enjoyable to focus on and encourages creative thinking which definitely improves my mood and motivation. I like the fact that it's so easy going and everyone can interpret and use the challenges in a way that suits them. I used the Champions Pack with many different groups across Cumbria. It was great to be able to choose challenges to suit the group and to do some creative sessions ahead of the date so we could share and spread out the output across the month.”**

Hannah Clark, Library Outreach Project Officer

They created a flipbook summarising the partnership and January activity - [Find it here!](#) This flipbook was used as a tool by the Library staff to “communicate to our partners, potential partners, stakeholders etc; some of the qualitative value of our team's work and how amazing and engaging The January Challenge is!”

This Cumbria Libraries partnership was key in 64MA developing further tailored resources in years to come - for The January Challenge 2024 we continued our partnership with Libraries. We partnered with CLIPPS Scotland to develop our very first Libraries Pack. We worked with [Kirsten MacQuarrie](#), [Sean McNamara](#) and [Leah Higgins at CLIPPS](#), and Joy McLean, Senior Librarian at West College Scotland and CLIPPS Trustee to inform and develop the resource. [Discover the Pack](#) [here](#) meet them and find top tips for how to use the creative prompts in a library setting. Kirsten and Leah shared that taking part across their Libraries built an “emotional connection” with members and that creative responses were built upon and became permanent artwork, demonstrating how the challenge “fused” the community and the staff relationships.

With the learning from this pack, we continued to develop tailored resources for library settings in partnership with organisations across the UK for The January Challenge [2025](#) and [2026](#).

64 MA were really pleased to share reflections on our work with libraries in the book [Feminist Librarianship](#), by Kirsten MacQuarrie and Amina Shah.



## Care Homes

[Hazelgrove Court Care Home](#) is based in Saltburn, North Yorkshire and is part of the [Hill Care](#) group. They first took part in The January Challenge in 2021, since then they have taken part every year, joined in our year-round programmes and become partners in the campaign!

Sharon Lewis, the activities co-ordinator has been championing creativity with residents and keeping us updated with their activity over the years...

**“We started in January 2021 whilst in lockdown due to COVID, up to the present day (2026). The first challenge we took part in was to talk to an inanimate object, Joyce talked to a lavender bag and she is still with us taking part. Our residents here at Hazelgrove have loved taking part every year and have made some amazing memories”**

**“I always read the challenges in advance so I am aware of what they are and can lead them if the residents don't (but ours usually do), the residents get to know the challenge on the day.”**

**“As an activity coordinator we are always trying to resource activities. The pack comes up with great ideas that I would not think of myself and I am always surprised at how our residents engage with them and live them, it also becomes a great talking point with families and friends.”** “It helps connect with new residents and families within the home”

- Sharon Lewis



**“It's true to say that the importance of meaningful activities in residential, nursing and dementia care homes cannot be overstated. While residents can and do enjoy activities such as cards, bingo and dominoes, activities that are designed to challenge and stimulate are really important too, as are activities that create joy and laughter. Seeing the joyful participation by residents of Hazelgrove Court Care Home in the 64 Million Artists challenge is incredible. Each individual takes so much from the challenges that stimulate them to think creatively and outside the box. The provision of activities in elderly care homes, and especially those aimed at people living with dementia, does need to be looked at through the lens of the latest research so that we can ensure that every person experiences the most positive activities.”**

- Jules Walker, Customer Relations Officer, Hill Care

In 2023 we visited Hazelgrove Court Care Home in preparation for partnership The January Challenge 2024.



We also partnered with [Hill Care](#) and [Learning for the 4th Age](#) to develop a [Champions Pack](#) for care homes, including [top tips for facilitating creative activity in care settings](#). [Discover the Champions Pack for Care Homes 2024](#) [here](#).

With the learning from this pack, we continued to develop tailored resources for care settings in partnership with organisations across the UK in [2025](#) and [2026](#), with [Champions Packs for Care Homes](#) and those living with dementia, [Creative Ageing](#), [Creative Health](#)

## Prisons

Historically, we have partnered with organisations working creatively with people in prison including Koestler, Making it Out and Clinks.

Our most notable work in prisons began when Abigail Willis, Clinical Psychologist at HMP Berwyn used some of The January Challenge creative prompts with men at Berwyn, but found that there were barriers to their usability including the resources available, and some triggering themes of love, hope, family and home. However, she understood the potential of a programme like The January Challenge in a prison environment.

HMP Berwyn is a men's prison in Wrexham, North Wales. We have been working with Occupational Therapists at Berwyn over the last 3 years, piloting creative challenge programmes and co-creating prompts with men.

- Men took part in hosted creative workshops with prison staff, including post-grads and occupational therapists, using appropriately selected January Challenge prompts
- Staff were supported by 64 Million Artists to host a creative prompt co-creation workshop and gathered feedback from the men about what would work well and be useful
- There were discussions between the team around appropriate incentives, outcomes and intentions for the programme

This work led to the development of a wall calendar of 30 creative prompts designed by the men, appropriate to a prison environment. Staff at the prison supported the distribution of the calendars with art materials, and daily reminders on prison computers. Some men were involved in creating videos demonstrating how to do the prompts to encourage their peers to take part. Prompts were all things that were possible to do in a prison environment. They included;

- Make a 'connect the dots' image for someone else to fill in. Your image can be as simple or complex as you like.
- List 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel or touch, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
- Carve, sculpt or make a self-portrait out of something you have to hand. It could be soap, bread, or whatever you can find.

A second wall calendar was designed the following year, with simple adaptations to the wider January Challenge prompts. In 2026, we were really excited to support staff from Berwyn to distribute the calendar to 19 prisons across England and Wales.

Feedback from the men includes:

**“It gave me something to distract myself”**  
**“Helped to take my mind of my situation”**  
**“I liked being part of something bigger”**  
**“I liked doing something different every day”**  
**“I liked the process of doing, allowed a break from prison thoughts”**

NEXT

Strategic Development





# Strategic Development

## How We Learned And Evolved The Public Programme

By Jo Hunter - Founder 64 Million Artists



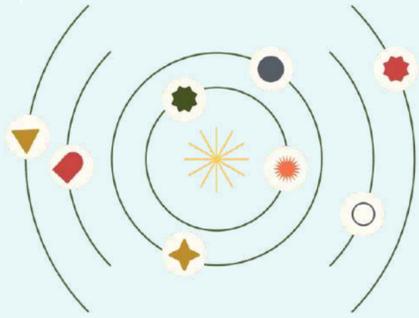
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The January Challenge 2025 Ambassador Workshop



By Jo Hunter - Founder 64 Million Artists

64 Million Artists began as a personal enquiry that quickly became a public one. By experiencing creativity for myself, I became more curious, more connected and more interested in why systemically our creativity is not encouraged. That curiosity (with the support of my co-founder David Micklem) became 64 Million Artists and the growth of the company over the last 12 years can I think be attributed to maintaining that cycle of learning individually, as a team, and as a network.



### Everyday Practice of Creativity

The continual practice of everyday creativity running alongside the building of a business was foundational to how we operate at 64 Million Artists. When we were benefitting from accessing our own creativity, we were more courageous, more connected and more curious. It has made us much more responsive as an organisation and although we had to balance responsiveness with strategy (something we didn't always get right), our practice of creativity meant we were always connected into ourselves and our purpose and able to pivot and change when we needed to.



Photo Credit: Donna Ford

### Curious Enquiry

Our public programme began rooted in research and this has been a really important aspect throughout the life of our work. Whether that has been hosting our own enquiries such as Everyday Creativity and Cultural Democracy in Practice; working with academics at Kings College London or UCL on studies around the impact of creativity on health and wellbeing; collaborating with fiat and our co-researchers on the broader impact of creativity; or simply embedding reflective practice into our team meetings and 121s. When your work is always embedded within a question, it brings flexibility, richness and a stronger appetite for risk, because if you fail, you're still learning.

### Rest and Reflection

Rest has also been important to healthy growth. By working a 4-day week and taking August off, we were able to ensure ideas had room to breathe and that we all had energy to deliver them. When practices like this slipped, we could automatically see the negative impact on the wellbeing of staff and the quality of the work. This is a really challenging one to stick to, especially when things feel fraught. But I learned the hard way that letting yourself burn out is only going to do the same for your work.

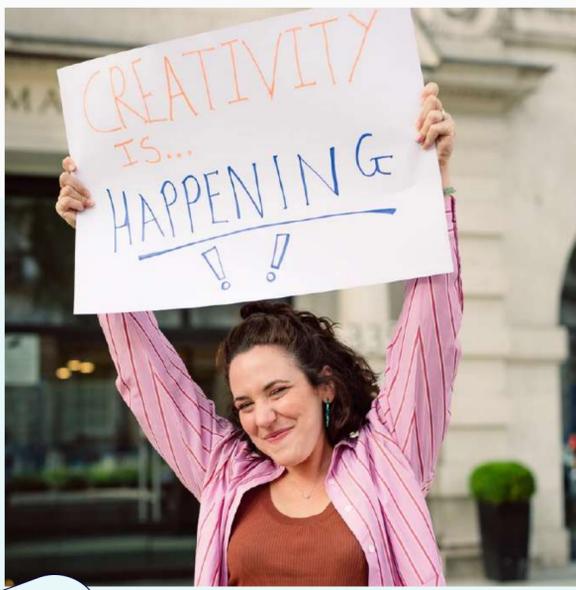


Photo Credit: Donna Ford

### Putting people at the centre

Both within our team, and within the wider programme through our Champions and Ambassadors we prioritised equitable representation, hearing everyone's voices and taking care of people. This meant understanding people's needs but also ensuring the basics of paying people well, treating them with kindness, and ensuring they were able to take responsibility for their wellbeing. Doing this meant that we were always building ambassadors for our brand and our work because that they would want to talk about it and bring people in. The January Challenge, which reached over 360,000 people annually by its last year, was still grown most significantly by word of mouth. When you treat people well, they will pass it on, and that growth becomes exponential.

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Evidence of Impact





# Evidence Of Impact

What We Know And How We Know It

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## Understanding Impact in a Complex System

The impact of everyday creativity is multi-layered, relational, and often cumulative over time. For this reason, 64 Million Artists has developed a mixed and evolving approach to understanding its impact, combining participation data, research evidence, qualitative feedback, and co-designed evaluation methods. Since 2022, this work has been strengthened through a research partnership with Tialt, bringing together academic literature, programme evaluation findings, and participatory research approaches. Together, this has enabled a richer understanding of how creativity affects individuals, organisations, and communities.

Rather than seeking a single measure of success, the organisation has focused on building a holistic picture of change, recognising that creativity's most significant effects often emerge through complex processes that cannot be captured through numbers alone.

## Building an Evidence Ecosystem

Rather than treating evaluation as a one-off activity, 64 Million Artists has worked to develop an ongoing 'evidence ecosystem'.

This includes:

- Large-scale surveys and participation data (particularly from TJC)
- Qualitative feedback and participant stories
- Co-researcher models enabling community-led inquiry
- Integration of academic research evidence
- Developing the Impact Wheel as a shared framework

Together, these approaches provide a robust and evolving understanding of impact that recognises the complexity of cultural change while generating actionable insights for future practice.



## What We Know

Taken together, the evidence consistently demonstrates that engaging in everyday creativity contributes to:

- Improved wellbeing and emotional regulation
- Increased confidence and self-efficacy
- Stronger relationships and social connection
- Enhanced innovation and adaptability
- Greater community resilience

Alongside programme data, the organisation has drawn on a growing body of research demonstrating the broader impacts of everyday creativity.

A rapid evidence review conducted in 2025 identified strong and consistent findings across academic literature. Creative activities are linked to improved wellbeing, emotional regulation, and cognitive flexibility, often creating 'positive upward spirals' in which engaging in creativity increases wellbeing, which in turn encourages further creative activity.

Research also shows that creativity supports social engagement and participation by strengthening relationships, fostering community identity, and enabling collaborative problem-solving. **Creative spaces often function as sites of belonging, inclusion, and shared learning.**

At organisational levels, creativity has been shown to **enhance innovation, resilience, and workplace performance**, particularly in environments that support experimentation and collaboration.

These findings provide an important contextual foundation for understanding the impacts observed within the Public Programme.

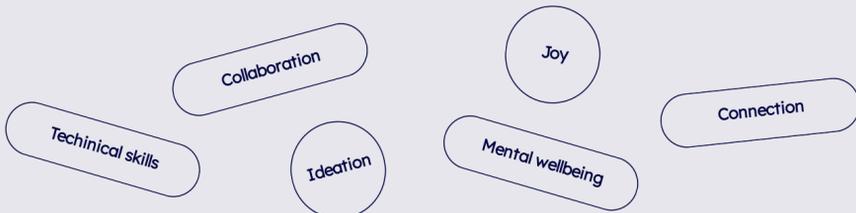
## The Everyday Creativity Impact Wheel

A Framework for Understanding Change



To bring together insights from research, evaluation, and participant experiences, 64 Million Artists and Tialt co-developed the Impact Wheel - a tool designed to help explore, capture, and communicate the value of everyday creativity.

The wheel identifies six core dimensions of impact that consistently emerge across programmes:



These dimensions reflect clusters identified through analysis of hundreds of participant responses, which highlighted recurring themes including emotional regulation, intellectual stimulation, motivation, community connection, and enjoyment.

The Impact Wheel functions both as an evaluation framework and a practical toolkit. It provides shared language for discussing impact, supports partners to design appropriate research approaches, and helps organise complex data into a coherent evidence base.

Crucially, the wheel recognises that creativity's impacts are relational and overlapping rather than linear. It reflects an understanding that psychological, social, and environmental factors interact dynamically when people engage in creative activity.

[Click here to explore the impact wheel](#)

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Next Steps





# Legacy And Next Steps

## What Is Next?



The closure of the Public Programme marks a transition rather than an ending. Through distributed leadership, co-creation, and iterative learning, the Public Programme has contributed to a wider cultural shift in how creativity is understood, from a specialist cultural activity to a core human and social capability. The evidence presented in this report demonstrates consistent impacts across individual wellbeing, organisational culture, and community resilience. More significantly, it highlights the development of **cultural infrastructure**, i.e., networks, tools, language, and local capacity, that enables the work to continue without centralised delivery.

The next phase of 64 Million Artists' work will focus on deepening this infrastructure through facilitation, training and strategic partnerships. Rather than directly delivering large-scale public campaigns, the organisation will prioritise:

Equipping leaders and practitioners to embed creative practice within their own systems

Developing and sharing practical tools, including the Impact Wheel and facilitation resources

Contributing to policy conversations that position everyday creativity as social infrastructure

Supporting organisations to integrate creativity into workforce development, wellbeing and innovation strategies

All existing programme resources are remaining available as adaptable, evergreen materials. These resources were intentionally designed to be transferable across contexts and to support local ownership.

From a systems perspective, this represents a shift from programme-based intervention to ecosystem-level sustainability. The core proposition remains unchanged: **creativity is not peripheral to social outcomes; it underpins them.** When individuals are supported to engage creatively, measurable gains are seen in wellbeing, connection, adaptability and collective efficacy. The ongoing responsibility now sits with institutions, communities and leaders to continue embedding these practices within their own environments.

As one of the participants in the final January Challenge has summarised:

*"Over the years, I've come to know creativity as the life force which gives us hope, moves us through hard emotion, connects us to our soulful selves, and make sense of an increasingly complex world. It's also fun and playful, and we need the joy that comes from it more than ever. The deep empowerment that I've felt from being creative, realising I have the power to make, create, imagine and act on what I envision has been one of the greatest gifts, and the January Challenge (and 64s emails) has been such a light and fun way to remember that again and again. I'll miss it, and hope that the ripple effects of it existing in the world will be that we all remember to keep receiving and giving the gift of creative time to ourselves and together. Thank you 64!❤️"*



Hazelgrove Court



A picture shared by Yash as part of The January Challenge 2026



Creativity is... The January Challenge 2025