



Government must fund theatre visit for every child before they leave school, call Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre

- *Today, Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre launch the “Theatre for Every Child campaign” ahead of the next general election. They are asking for politicians to commit that every child will attend the theatre before they leave school.*
- *This ambitious yet deliverable campaign was launched today at an event attended by actors Charlie Russell, Luke Thompson and Nancy Zamit, writer Lolita Chakrabarti, and politicians Baroness Christine Blower and Barbara Keely MP*

All children have the right to experience our country’s world-leading theatre sector. The benefits are far reaching - it enhances children’s educational attainment and wellbeing¹, addresses skills shortages in the theatre sector² and boosts the economy³.

But access is unequal. Children from low-income families are missing out the most because they are less likely to have access to cultural experiences outside of school.⁴ The ongoing cost-of-living crisis has also led to teachers and parents reporting a reduction in school trips of up to 68% compared to last year, which includes theatre visits.^{5 6}

Ahead of the next general election in 2024, the Theatre for Every Child campaign asks all political parties to commit to fund a theatre visit for every child before they leave school. A pledge supported by 84 percent of parents.⁷

The campaign was launched at an event on stage at London Palladium with campaign supporters, including the following, who said:

Co-CEO of SOLT & UK Theatre, Claire Walker:

“We believe every child has the right to experience and enjoy our country’s world-leading theatre. Despite amazing work that theatres do up and down the country, access is not equal. This is not right. Which is why we are calling on all political parties to support our call for every child to attend the theatre before they leave school.”

¹ <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/cost-of-living-crisis-hits-school-spending/>

² https://www.nordicity.com/de/cache/work/15/Nordicity_UK_Theatre_Workforce_Review_Report_2017.pdf

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-economic-estimates-2019-gross-value-added/dcms-economic-estimates-2019-provisional-gross-value-added>

⁴ <https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Beyond-school-enrichment-report-onward.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/cost-of-living-crisis-hits-school-spending/>

⁶ Nationally representative by region survey of parents conducted by SOLT & UK Theatre between 30th-31st August using Find Out Now.

⁷ 2023 research, conducted by Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre.



Fozia Nisar, Deputy Head at Montgomery Primary Academy, and a member of The [Birmingham Hippodrome Education Network](#) which is made up of 44 of the most economically and culturally deprived schools in the Birmingham region reaching over 40,000 young people each year, **spoke at the event and adds:**

“As a mother and as an educator I stand firm that the key to unlocking minds is through artistic exposure: music, dance, acting are all fundamental to a child’s emotional journey and senses whereby they can explore a plethora of feelings in the safety of a theatre platform.”

Luke Thompson, actor and campaign supporter:

“I was lucky to be taken to the theatre by my school when I was growing up. It’s an exciting and enlightening experience, which can stay with you for a very long time, no matter what you want to do when you grow up. I am passionate about ensuring that every child can have the same opportunities I did. That is why I support the Theatre For Every Child campaign.”

Lolita Chakrabarti, actor, writer and campaign supporter:

“Theatre changes lives. It encourages empathy and widens our understanding of ourselves in the world. Every child should experience the transformative effects of going to the theatre. A Theatre Fund would guarantee minimum equal access, which can only benefit every child and in the end, the whole of society.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Further imagery from the event can be supplied on request.

How to get involved

Get in contact

Email us at TheatreForEveryChild@soltukt.co.uk

Show your support on social media

For us to gain government support and truly make waves outside of the industry, we need the word to spread beyond our own channels. And that’s where you can help us.



We'd love all supporters to share content to their own channels where possible with the hashtag #TheatreForEveryChild – this will pull your work through to our website and provide stakeholders and political figures an easy hub to see the amazing work being done in the sector.

Tell us about an event

The campaign aims to amplify ongoing initiatives with children and schools in the sector, so if you are planning or attending an event you can badge under the campaign, let us know and use these assets to promote it.

Attend other events

To celebrate the launch of Theatre For Every Child, numerous West End producers and regional theatres have created an amazing opportunity for state school pupils to enjoy a live show; pupils for whom a visit to a show isn't something that they can usually aspire to.

In London on 19 October, at one very special performance of Tina - The Tina Turner Musical, over 1,000 pupils will also be treated to an exclusive pre-show workshop with members of the cast and crew highlighting and demonstrating backstage careers in the theatre industry.

Almost 2,000 West End tickets have been snapped up at just £10, each to schools in areas identified by Arts Council England as having low engagement and investment in culture, as well as those with multiple areas of deprivation. They include Barking & Dagenham, Brent, Croydon, Enfield, Newham and Tower Hamlets.

On average, 31% of the students at the schools attending London shows are in receipt of free school meals and two are Pupil Referral Units whereby the entire pupil roll consists of children excluded from mainstream education.

Elsewhere in the UK, 18 regional theatres are offering £10 tickets to schools, with 7 unique performances also hosting activities as part of the Theatre For Every Child campaign offering. This includes movement workshops, workshops with composers and lyricists where attendees learn to create a micro musical, behind the scenes dance and music insights, and exclusive Q&As.

We will be highlighting activity on the website as the campaign continues to grow. Please get in touch if you'd like to host, attend or cover an event.

Important documents

Our policy document can be found on our website: <https://uktheatre.org/theatre-for-every-child/>

Media contact



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References

- ¹ <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/cost-of-living-crisis-hits-school-spending/>
- ¹ https://www.nordicity.com/de/cache/work/15/Nordicity_UK_Theatre_Workforce_Review_Report_2017.pdf
- ¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dcms-economic-estimates-2019-gross-value-added/dcms-economic-estimates-2019-provisional-gross-value-added>
- ¹ <https://www.ukonward.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Beyond-school-enrichment-report-onward.pdf>
- ¹ <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/cost-of-living-crisis-hits-school-spending/>
- ¹ <https://www.suttontrust.com/news-opinion/all-news-opinion/cost-of-living-crisis-hits-school-spending/>
- ¹ 2023 research, conducted by Society of London Theatre & UK Theatre.

About Theatre For Every Child

The Society of London Theatre (SOLT) & UK Theatre want every child to attend the theatre by the time they leave school.

We want children and young people to experience as much theatre and live performance as possible at every age, as we believe every child has the right to experience and enjoy our country's world-class theatre sector.

As a minimum benchmark, our [Theatre for Every Child](#) (TFEC) campaign asks for all political parties to ensure that all children have the chance to see a professional theatre production before they leave school.

Ahead of the next general election, we are asking all political parties to make this commitment in their manifestos.

About SOLT & UK Theatre

[Society of London Theatre \(SOLT\)](#) represents approximately 230 London-based producers, theatre owners and managers, including all the major subsidised theatrical organisations in London.

[UK Theatre](#) represents approximately 240 theatres, dance companies, producers and arts centres throughout the UK. UK Theatre also operates as a professional association, supporting over 1,400 individuals working professionally in theatre and the performing arts in the UK.

Our Vision, and the world we want to see, is a **dynamic, sustainable and world-class theatre sector**

Our Mission, and what we do as an organisation, is to **champion theatre and support our members to thrive**

We have **3 priority focus areas** that allows us to deliver on our vision and mission



1. A growing, engaged and united **membership**, including a skilled, diverse and productive workforce for now and the future
2. To inspire, attract, retain and diversify theatre **audiences**
3. **Advocate** to support growth across the sector, underpinned by robust evidence.