



## Engaging Families through Arts Award: Q Club's Arts Award Story

### Introduction

During 2014 the [Family Arts Campaign](#) and [Arts Award](#) worked together to pilot projects across the UK, trialling different ways to integrate families into the activities undertaken by young people completing their Arts Award.

This document is a case study of a pilot project carried out by Derby QUAD and Déda by running Arts Award as a strand of QUAD's pre-existing *Q Club*.

### Q Club's Arts Award project

<b>Centre</b>	<a href="#">QUAD</a> : A creative hub that connects people and businesses to art and film, creating opportunities for entertainment, education and participation.
<b>Partners</b>	<a href="#">Déda</a> : A dance-focused arts programme of performances, classes and dance development activity based at Déda, Derby.
<b>Arts Award Level</b>	<a href="#">Discover</a>
<b>Art form(s)</b>	Visual Arts (Photography, Sculpture, Drawing) and Dance
<b>Aim</b>	To encourage family members to become more actively involved in the creative activities that their children take part in (in Derby) and for those children to achieve an Arts Award Discover.
<b>Participants</b>	<a href="#">Q Club</a> supports young people with additional support needs, and for this particular project, organisers decided to encourage all family members to participate. This required a supportive and structured programme of work that could be adapted to suit the needs of each family, allowing them to access as much or as little guidance and instruction as they needed – and in some circumstances, the incentive to complete a project with focused activities. One family, consisting of two adults and two children, referred themselves for the project as their eldest daughter (11) was interested in becoming a regular member to the Q Club group.

The Club's programme of arts activities and events were designed to help participants complete their Arts Award Discover using Arts Award logs and having lead artists and a trained adviser at both Déda and QUAD to guide them through the process.

The participant family engaged in Arts Award through group activities and suggested performances/activities, which included;

- An Exhibition Interpretation with Artist Helen Jackson introducing two activities relating to QUAD's 'Supernatural Season' and the exhibition 'An Answer is Expected' by Susan Mac William in the gallery and 'Beyond' on the stairs and corridors.
- A dance related workshop with Alice Vale at Déda exploring the genre of Circus in performing arts.
- Tickets to 'Go and See' a Cinekids film screening, the Kessoku performance or Family Day at Déda together as a family
- The opportunity to attend 'Derby Feste', a post-summer annual festival of free city-wide live performances, which coincided with the project
- Some research, together as a family, about an artist or arts organisation
- An opportunity to share with the rest of the group what was discovered about the arts in Derby, or arts and artists internationally

In addition to these, organisers also invited families into an introductory session in order to meet the lead adviser, receive a tour of the host venue (QUAD) and look at how parents and carers could be involved as active participants. The documentation involved was also introduced by Artist Angela Terris.

## Impact

The Q Club family had had little previous engagement with QUAD and Déda other than accessing the cinema and a street dance club. Both children already had their own individual creative interests including music, dance and some digital media, but these were experienced independently of each other and their parents. As a family, they visited National Trust sites and spent holidays engaging in local activities. The eldest daughter had heard about projects at QUAD that peers had taken part in and was interested in finding out what else was available. Through referral, an invitation was sent and the project was seen as a positive way to introduce the family to QUAD and the eldest child to Q Club. For the family this was a great opportunity to engage in something together and also gave the flexibility for each child to develop their own focus and interests, whilst actively supported by their parents and working alongside their sibling.

Through participation the family enjoyed the opportunity of a 'behind the scenes' tour of QUAD as well as finding out about a much broader programme of activities than they were previously aware of. The project exceeded their expectations with added fun at all activities. They enjoyed working as a team and found it a positive experience to work towards and achieve something together. For both the parents and the children it was an opportunity to work with others, get to know families, and share experiences and knowledge of further support and activities in the city.

Sessions facilitated the participation of adult family members, which enabled different generations to engage together. There was also a positive bonding between siblings, with

activities encouraging them to support each other and to work, reflect, and experience creativity together.

Through participation the family enjoyed coming up with new ideas, identifying the possibility for self-expression, and one family member said “you can do what you want and go as wild as you want with your own ideas, not just do what others are doing!” The experience has encouraged them to look and pay more attention to their community – appreciating the art they are surrounded by and having an interest in what they see around them, noticeably in Derby this includes architecture, sculpture and graffiti.

Adult participation has been key to the delivery of this project. Adult family members have enjoyed the challenges, some of which were out of their own comfort zone, as well as participating alongside their children whilst also supporting them in developing new interests and experiencing different art forms.

Discussions and conversation between parents and coordinator were ongoing, and feedback from this particular project has highlighted that to support young people, particularly those with differing support needs, clear structure, instructions and suggestions are invaluable to parents, enabling them to support different siblings equally as well as have an understanding of what is expected and what they are aiming to achieve. Providing a framework to activity and an end goal to be achieved can however be just as important in supporting adult family members.

This project has highlighted the importance of involving families in projects that support vulnerable young people. They offer the opportunity for parents to be involved and also include siblings in a creative experience, providing an opportunity for them also to achieve and develop new skills and interests.

This project has shown that family engagement can be successfully integrated into achieving Arts Awards. Organisers have taken this experience and embedded family inclusion into future Q Club projects through providing the information and guidance to parents to support their children and enable further sibling support, in order to enable the whole family to experience the arts together whilst supporting each other to pursue their individual interests.