



## Case Study The Drum, Birmingham

### Family Arts Festival 2014: Flat Out

As part of the 2014 [Family Arts Festival](#), [The Drum](#), in partnership with Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) and University of Birmingham, produced a dance performance titled *Flat Out*. The performance was devised by a lead dancer from BRB who worked with families living in Inkerman House, a tower block in Birmingham, near to the Drum. Workshops took place over a six week period where several families of adults, children and young people took part in sessions which included movement, music and discussion about the ups and downs of being a family living in the tower block.

The main challenge was how to recruit participants, as resident families have a diverse range of needs and additional issues that could prevent them from attending. The Drum overcame some of these obstacles by using the foyer of the building as a meeting space, sending text messages to keep them informed, and working closely with the local authority officer to relay information to residents and building staff.

The Drum aim to utilise this project as a model for rolling out further engagement projects.

Attendance figures, evaluation forms and one to one discussions with audience members and participants helped measure the project's impact. As the project was devised to enable access, no workshop or entrance fees were charged.

The project received significant in-kind support (£30,000+), mainly from [Wilmott Dixon](#) and [Shelforce](#) for the design and construction of the *Flat Out* set. Without this, The Drum would not have been able to deliver the project to the same level and quality.

The main objective was to involve isolated members and families within the local community, who would not normally engage with the Drum's programme. This was achieved this delivering a series of workshops and performances devised by these families. This began a relationship that The Drum now hopes to maintain with participating families.

[Family Arts Campaign resources](#) enabled the Drum to clearly outline the aims of the project to prospective participants and to win support and gain interest from other organisations. Evaluation and feedback from participants will be included in a final report.

The most important things learnt from *Flat Out* have been to build trust with the families and participants; to maintain communication with them; ensure the project is truly inclusive in terms of accessibility, ensure quality of content for diverse cultures, age groups and themes; value the level of experience family members have between them and provide them with a sense of ownership of the project.

Next time, project partners will ensure that there is plenty of lead in time to properly recruit participants, but anticipate that the experience itself can be successfully repeated.

The project proved a very rewarding experience for all the organisations involved who are now working together to devise future opportunities. The Drum would like to thank the Family Arts Campaign on behalf of the organisations, families and audience members for making this possible.

### **Tips for engaging families:**

- Seek out in-kind support to keep costs down
- Involve families in devising the activities you offer
- Build trust by maintaining communication with families