

3 - 12 OCTOBER 2025

SEEN

LEWISHAM

A CELEBRATION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Impact report



BROADWAY



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

LOTTERY FUNDED

Headline achievements



10
days of activities



56
events



7,303
in-person audiences and participants
(51% increase from 2024)



223
digital audiences



1,084
school children engaged
(300% increase from 2024)



238
artists and practitioners taking part



200
children and families at Family Day



1,495
pop-up library engagements



48
creative businesses participating



450+
hours training and work experience



380+
hours mentorship for emerging artists



7
emerging artists funded



7
new creative works developed

Introduction

2025 marked the second year of SEEN Lewisham, a bold multi-arts festival that celebrates the borough's diversity and creativity. Building on the legacy of our year as the Mayor's London Borough of Culture 2022, SEEN Lewisham is a celebration of the cultural diversity and inherent talent that makes our corner of London unique.

Expanding the festival to 10 days this year was an ambitious step forward and allowed us to bring even more artists and communities together. By moving the festival to October, SEEN Lewisham connected with Black History Month and the cultural programmes of organisations across the borough.

Audience voices:

“ The festival is a great example of how diversity and generational integration in the UK are actually a huge success story.”

“ It is important to make the arts accessible to those facing challenges that may not even consider it was something for them.”



Impact highlights

Survey data and feedback interviews with over 200 audience members, artists and participants showed SEEN Lewisham's impact.

Audience and community

- **Local and diverse:** 60% of audiences were from Lewisham and surrounding boroughs; 76% were from Black, Asian and Dual Heritage ethnicity groups.
- **Pride and belonging:** 94% agreed that SEEN gave them a sense of belonging and made them feel proud of Lewisham.
- **Repeat attendance:** 37% of people came to more than five events.
- **Growing cultural engagement:** 21% had never visited Broadway Theatre before; of these 84% would now like to return.

Audience voices:

“ It represents what Lewisham is and always has been. Diverse, unique and welcoming. ”

“ It's theatre we can relate to. Going to West End shows is expensive and I can't relate as (they are) not diverse enough. ”

“ A festival such as this is vital for the large diverse community in Lewisham to feel a sense of belonging. ”



Artists and cultural practitioners

- **Artist development:** 86% of emerging artists on the Mentor Programme developed creative practice and skills; 72% increased their networks; 40% had a clear idea of the next stage in their career.
- **Growing industry skills:** 250+ hours paid work experience and shadowing for training technical practitioners through partnerships with Goldsmiths, University of London and Lewisham Music.

Artist case studies:

Demi Francesca Wilson:

Receiving a grant through the Mentorship Programme enabled Demi to develop and stage her first original creative work – something she says would have remained “in my mental drafts for another decade, potentially forever” without this support. The experience inspired her to apply for further funding to take her play to Edinburgh. “The programme gave me something to work towards and the opportunity to actually believe in myself as an artist.”

Maria Georgiou:

Taking part in the Mentorship Programme enabled Maria to create her first theatre piece. Maria gained new skills and clarity about her strengths, saying “It was my first piece ever created for theatre... I feel like I’ve learned so much in such a short space of time.”

The programme put Maria in touch with people who could support her to take the next steps, including the Cyprus High Commission’s Cultural Sector. Maria is now looking to access more funding to develop and tour her work. “If you’d have told me last year, I’d be doing this, I’d be like, what the hell are you talking about? Don’t be ridiculous.”



Children and families

- **Schools programme:** 1,084 schoolchildren engaged through workshops and performances.
- **Family Day:** 100% of respondents said their experience was excellent and agreed that free, local creative activities like Family Day are important for children.



Children and families voices:

“ I liked that every artefact was authentic, I liked how the man explained it very well. ”

Year 5 student

Why is SEEN Lewisham important?

“ To show my mixed-race kids that their community values them. ”

“ We came to the Family Day. There was so much on offer for me and my 3 and 6-year-old. I expected to stay about 45 minutes and we were in the theatre for hours. The whole event gave me a really warm feeling particularly in light of nationwide tensions around migration in recent months. It is important to celebrate our diversity in south London and be proud of it. ”

Local economy and cultural sector

- **Boosted Catford's profile:** 8 million+ impressions via outdoor advertising; coverage on BBC London, Radio London, Theatre Weekly.
- **Strengthened cultural partnerships:** worked in partnership with Nouveau Riche, IRIE! Dance Theatre, Goldsmiths, University of London, and more
- **Supported creative businesses:** 48 businesses showcased at SEEN Market Day.

Voices of businesses and participants

“ Positive experiences need to claim space on the streets of Catford. ”

“ A culturally diverse festival brings communities together. The marketplace is a key part of that – alongside the other festival elements, it creates a space where culture, creativity, and enterprise can thrive together. ”

“ Goldsmiths were delighted to contribute event programming and placement students to SEEN, as well as taking part in the SEEN marketplace. Overall, our experience of working on SEEN was very positive, providing a range of benefits to Goldsmiths, our academic staff, and students. ”



Legacy

SEEN Lewisham 2025 has created a lasting impact:

- **Artist development:** mentees are now pursuing funding and touring opportunities and developing new creative companies.
- **Lasting cultural opportunity:** partnerships developed during SEEN Lewisham have led to regular culture programming at Broadway for Lewisham communities.
- **Increased togetherness:** festival feedback has shown that at a time of uncertainty and division, SEEN Lewisham provided a much-needed sense of hope and togetherness.
- **Community demand:** Audiences and artists overwhelmingly want SEEN Lewisham to return.
- **Capacity and resources:** Delivering a larger festival highlighted the need for increased staffing and dedicated marketing support.
- **Development timelines:** similarly, longer lead times for partnership building and development will support us to deliver most effectively.
- **Mentor Programme:** Feedback showed the value of longer delivery time, more peer support, and legacy opportunities for artists.
- **Audience development:** We will develop targeted outreach and programming to engage a broad and diverse audience, particularly amongst Asian communities.

Next steps

SEEN Lewisham 2025 has created a lasting impact and set the stage for future growth. Looking ahead, evaluation has shown us areas for learning and development:

These insights will support us to continue to develop SEEN Lewisham as an inclusive, high-quality cultural festival.



Acknowledgements

SEEN Lewisham was co-produced by Broadway Theatre, Nouveau Riche and Lewisham Council.

The festival's Creative Director was Ryan Calais Cameron.

SEEN Lewisham worked in partnership with Goldsmiths, University of London as Programming Partners, and was supported by organisations including IRIE! Dance Theatre, ASKI, Tony Fairweather Productions, Lewisham Music, and LEAN.

Funders and supporters:

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Thank you to our principal sponsor
Kromanti rum.

“

In these divisive times it's so important to celebrate the different cultures in Lewisham, to share our history (much of which still doesn't make the mainstream) and to be together, bums on seats in our area. ”

audience member

Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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