NATIONAL SATURDAY CLUB

The Bright Foundation

Partner Report

2025–2026

THE BRIGHT FOUNDATION

this Club is supported by Sussex Community Foundation and Southern Water's Goodwill Fund for Hastings and St Leonards

The partnership between The Bright Foundation and the National Saturday Club has delivered an inspiring and impactful first year of Saturday Club activity, offering 13–16-year-olds in your local community a transformative extracurricular education experience.

Through the National Saturday Club programme, young people have connected with dedicated and skilled educators at your institution, gaining access to the exceptional resources, facilities and expertise you provide. This opportunity has been enriched by a dynamic national programme, including industry-led Masterclasses, celebratory Graduation Ceremonies and the end-of-year Summer Show.

With a focus on engaging young people from underserved communities and underrepresented backgrounds, the programme provides a proven framework for civic engagement. It enables institutions to strengthen their role within the local community, reduce barriers to access and participation, whilst nurturing young people's practical and creative skills. It also empowers young people to pursue a breadth of diverse educational and career pathways, both at your institution and beyond.

The following pages celebrate the achievements of the Saturday Club at The Bright Foundation in 2025–26. These achievements were also showcased at the National Saturday Club Summer Show at London's Somerset House in July 2026. Drawing on evaluation findings, this bespoke report highlights the reach, outcomes and overall impact of your Club.

Your Club

17 Club members

5 tutors and staff

69 hours of activity were delivered

The Bright Foundation Film&Screen Saturday Club

Tutors and Staff
Alice Denny
Sarah Buller
Sophie Barnard
Sophie Goldstone

Student assistant
Samuel Morris-Segal

Supported by the British Film Institute, the Film&Screen Saturday Club celebrates and explores the breadth of the film and screen sector. At the Club, members embrace the art of storytelling and its ability to entertain and inform our society and culture. They also develop key transferable attributes such as problem-solving, persistence and collaboration, while gaining practical and technical skills in filming, editing and production.

In their first year as a Film&Screen Saturday Club, The Bright Foundation had members filming something new every single week, exploring mock-umentaries, film noir, documentaries and music videos along the way. From a Vogue-inspired 73 questions video to a short film about bumblebees striking for equal rights, the programme celebrated each member's unique voice and joy in the filmmaking process.

“It’s been a delight working with you all, I loved seeing you all experiment, laugh, challenge yourselves and come together as such a strong team with a unique voice. I honestly can’t wait to see what you all put out into the world in the future… your voices are much needed. ”

Sarah Buller, Club tutor



Club member demographics

94%
from a Widening Participation background*

41%
do not have a parent or guardian who has been to university

41%
receive free school meals

59%
live in the 30% most deprived areas

6%
have a disability

35%
have special educational needs

65%
have a neurodivergence

6%
are D/deaf or hard of hearing

18%
have experience of care

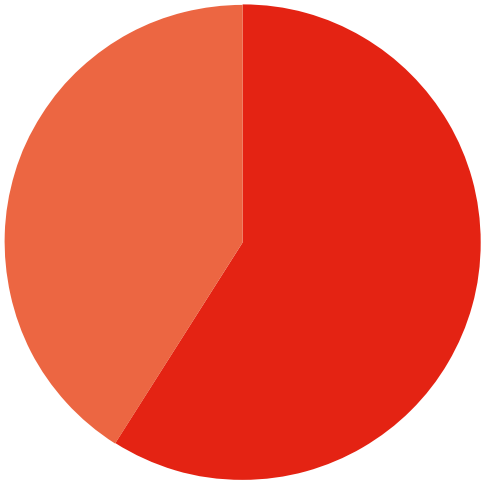
6%
have caring responsibilities (are a young carer)

6%
are refugees or asylum seekers

29%
are from an under-represented ethnic background

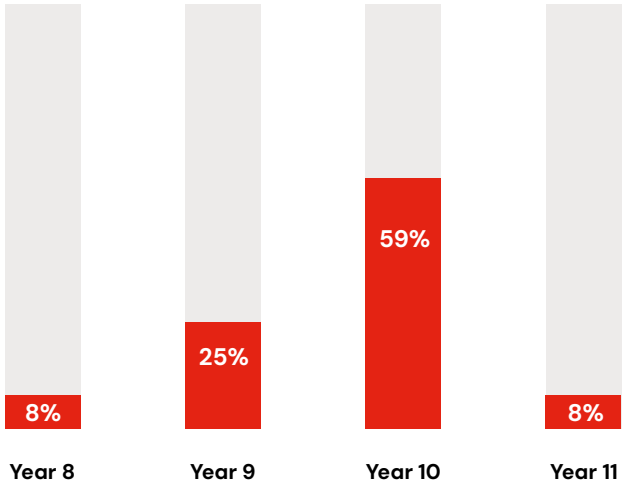
* The National Saturday Club identifies young people to be from a Widening Participation (WP) background if they: receive free school meals; have experience of the care system; speak English as an additional language; experience disability; parents/ guardians haven't been to university; are refugees or asylum seekers; are young carers; are from a military family; are from an under-represented ethnic background; have special educational needs; have a neurodiversity; are D/deaf or hard of hearing; are from a Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, Showman or Boating community; and/ or those who live in the 30% most deprived areas [Index of Multiple Deprivation].

Gender



59% Female **41%** Male

Education



29%
are home educated

Before the Saturday Club

9%
have never taken part in out of school activities

36%
are not taking part in any other out of school activity this year

55%
had not visited the Saturday Club venue before

> “My daughter has been able to discover her passion and pursue further education in film and media.”

Parent

“I liked learning about the film industry, including acting, making films and the different connections that can help you get into it.”

Club member

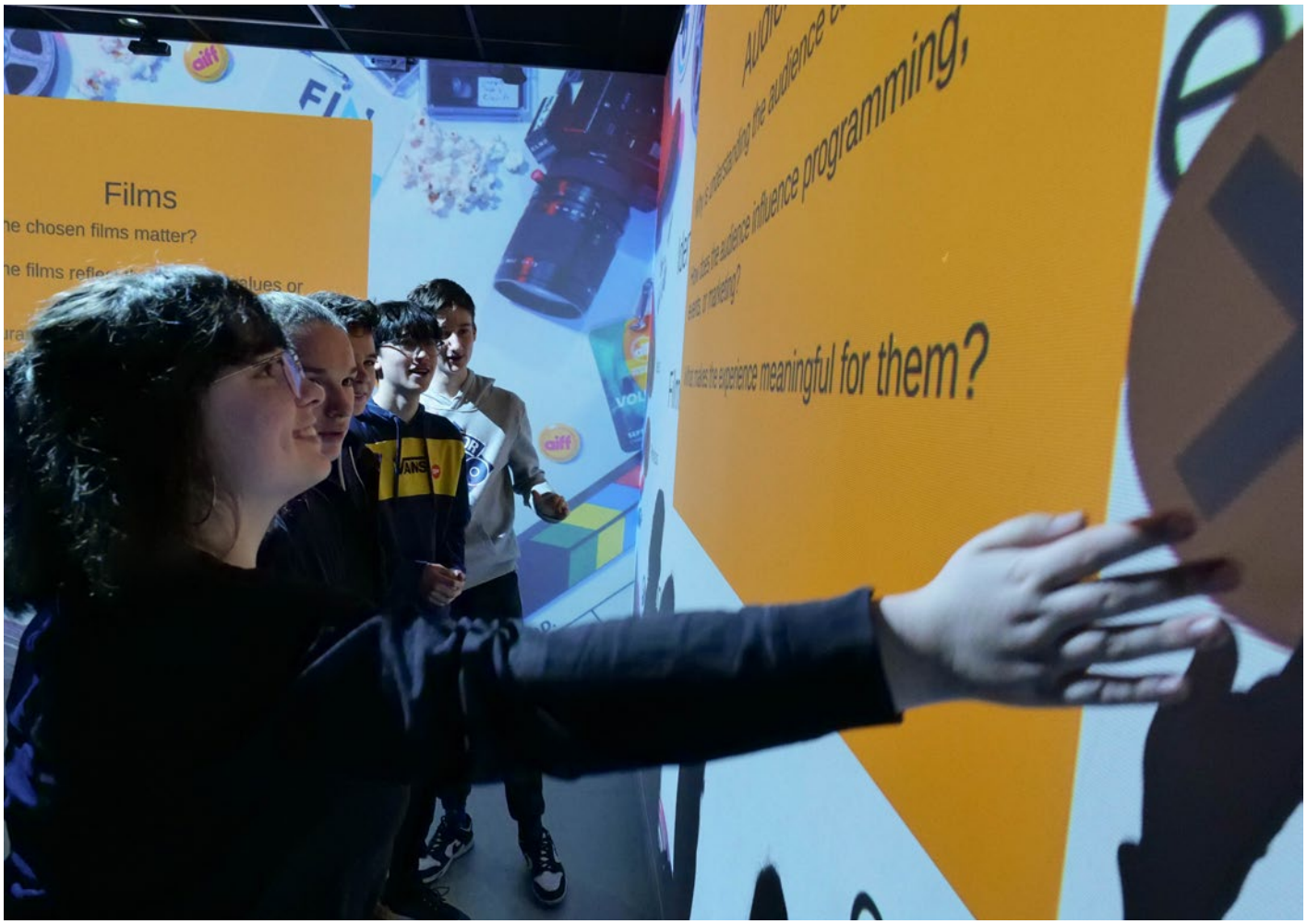
“I enjoyed using the projection cube and creating our own film festival because it was really engaging and gave us the chance to talk about film with our group.”

Club member

Masterclass with Crossing the Screen

Dominic introduced Club members to Crossing the Screen and the Eastbourne International Film Festival before exploring the key elements involved in creating and programming a film festival. Club members were then set a brief to develop their own mini festivals, working in groups to decide on a theme, target audience and film selection. Each group created a festival concept and considered how their programming choices would appeal to their chosen audience. The Masterclass concluded with group presentations, where Club members shared their ideas and received feedback, before being invited to take part in a future animation workshop at the festival.

Crossing the Screen is the organisation behind the Eastbourne International Film Festival, a celebration of independent cinema and emerging filmmaking talent. The festival showcases innovative work from filmmakers around the world while supporting learning through screenings, workshops, seminars and community programmes. With a strong focus on education and engagement, Crossing the Screen helps young and emerging creatives develop their understanding of filmmaking and connect with the wider film community.


Films
programming,
for them?


Eastbourne
International Film Festival


Congrat
ulations!
National Saturday
Graduation Ceremony
Congratulations



Summer Show and Graduation Ceremonies

Club member work on display
The Club presents "Tales of Hastings" a series of short films that were written, produced and directed collaboratively by Club members. Genres span mystery, comedy, period drama and time travel with all films set in Hastings – where the Club is located.

The Saturday Club year culminates in the Summer Show, a public exhibition of Club members' work at London's prestigious Somerset House, as well as end-of-year Graduation Ceremonies hosted at the Institution of Engineering and Technology.

Summer Show

The Summer Show took place from 11 to 14 July 2026 and was a joyous celebration of the year's achievements. Each Club had their own display, curated by expert exhibition designers, to showcase their Club members' work. Special events were hosted, including Private Views for Club members and a VIP Private View for network guests, industry representatives, cultural sector professionals, government officials and policy-makers.

Graduation Ceremonies

Graduation Ceremonies were hosted at the Institution of Engineering and Technology in London. These provided an important moment for Club members to recognise their achievements throughout the programme and to look ahead to future study and career possibilities. Club tutors and inspiring guest speakers addressed the young people with inspiring speeches and each Club member received a Certificate of Achievement, in the presence of their family, friends, peers and tutors.

In focus:
The Bright Foundation Film&Screen

Dr David Parker

Each year the National Saturday Club works with independent evaluator and education specialist Dr David Parker to evaluate the National Programme and its impact on the young people and network. This year The Bright Foundation were part of the Club sample for the national independent evaluation, contributing to the national report.

Context and institutional setting

The Bright Foundation is a youth arts organisation based in Hastings and St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex, founded by Oscar-winning costume designer John Bright whose professional work runs through Cosprop, the internationally recognised film and theatrical costume house. Despite this industry lineage, the Foundation's mission is not narrowly focused on costume or heritage sectors. Polly Risbridger, CEO of the Bright Foundation, explains that its purpose is the creation of meaningful creative opportunities for young people in an area where economic hardship, educational disadvantage and limited access to cultural provision intersect with unusual intensity.

Hastings consistently appears in national indices of deprivation, and the Foundation has oriented its entire programme strategy around this context. Its provision spans experience days, school partnerships, a Children's International Film Festival and a Benbow Youth Film Collective for 11 to 15 year olds, alongside BFI Film Academy provision for 16 to 19 year olds. The Saturday Club joins this ecology as its most recently launched strand, beginning in January 2026 at the Foundation's Benbow Arts Space on London Road, St Leonards-on-Sea.

The Benbow Arts Space is a dedicated youth arts venue, distinct from the Foundation's Barn Theatre and Museum site. Its character as a working creative space rather than a formal educational setting shapes the Saturday Club's atmosphere and pedagogy. The Club began as part of an intentional widening of the Foundation's intermediate provision: a sustained weekly programme bridging the Benbow Youth Film Collective and the BFI Film Academy, designed to serve young people who need a more gradual, relational and lower-pressure route into sustained creative engagement than either of those programmes provides.

The Foundation explicitly targets young people who are experiencing school anxiety, have low or no school attendance, are at risk of exclusion or are already home educated, alongside those managing neurodivergence, emotional-based school avoidance and disrupted educational pathways. This positioning is a deliberate organisational choice to go deeper with a smaller, more

carefully supported cohort rather than to maximise enrolment. The publicly accessible description of the Club on the Foundation's own website foregrounds this target group directly, framing the Club as a safe and inclusive space in which young people can work at their own pace and build friendships, a description broadly consistent with the staff account of delivery.

Programme structure and delivery

The Club commenced on 17 January 2026, running three-hour sessions on Saturday mornings (10:30–13:30). As an inaugural-year programme launching in January rather than September, its total number of delivered sessions falls below the full-year models operated by most other clubs in the evaluation sample. Sessions are delivered by Sarah Buller, described on the Foundation's website as Creative Practitioner, and produced by Sophie Barnard, whose role extends from session logistics into the relational and communication infrastructure that shapes the programme's accessibility.

The physical environment of sessions is designed to signal informality and creative invitation from the moment participants arrive. Chairs are arranged in a semi-circle facing a large projector screen; cameras, editing equipment and creative materials are integrated directly into the room rather than stored out of sight. Music videos or visual references play as participants come in, creating a studio atmosphere rather than a classroom one. These environmental choices are pedagogical: they model the kind of creative space the session aspires to be and lower the social threshold for entry among young people whose anxiety is partly triggered by institutional or school-like environments.

The programme follows three broadly sequential phases. An initial period of relationship-building and technical familiarisation gave way to the national programme's Expression of Self project and then to the development of collaborative short films building toward the Summer Show. Within these phases, Buller plans activities with deliberate flexibility, adapting pace and format to the group's evolving social dynamics and individual comfort levels. The group began making films almost immediately: practical production activity was not deferred until confidence had been established, because Barnard regarded immediate creative engagement as a way of beginning to build confidence.

Participants work in small production teams, cycling through roles across directing, camera operation, sound recording, scripting and editing. By the time of the evaluation interview, the group had produced approximately 35 short films. This volume of output, achieved across a relatively short programme, reflects an ethos of repetition and experimentation rather than single-outcome polish: participants are encouraged to try ideas quickly, make mistakes and return to them, and to accumulate capability through high-frequency practice rather than extended perfectionism. Editing takes place on laptops, iPads and phones, with dedicated software, with the access to professional-grade equipment being regarded by staff as particularly significant for young people without equivalent resources at home.

Recruitment, referral networks and access

Recruitment combined open-access sign-up with active referral through a network of schools, attendance officers, local charities, youth services and community support organisations. A particularly important relationship developed through attendance intervention work linked to emotionally-based school avoidance support, enabling the Foundation to reach young people who were beginning to disengage from mainstream education before complete withdrawal or permanent exclusion. This early-intervention framing differentiates the Club's recruitment from most others in the evaluation sample: the Foundation is not simply offering an enrichment programme to those already engaging with formal education, but positioning itself as a point of re-engagement for those for whom formal education is itself the barrier.

The sign-up process identified a structural access challenge with practical implications: standard digital registration forms, with their length, complexity and implicit assumptions of ease, can themselves constitute a barrier for anxious or neurodivergent young people and

their families. In response, the Foundation developed a highly relational onboarding approach encompassing phone calls with parents and carers, individual meetings before the first session, visual stories introducing the venue and staff, and flexible handling of registration and consent documentation. Barnard is emphatic that these practices represent good communication for all participants and families rather than specialist accommodation for a particular group, though they carry particular weight for those for whom institutional processes are a source of anxiety.

This relational infrastructure extended beyond the initial recruitment period. Parents and carers became active partners in sustaining participation throughout the programme: in several cases, young people who stopped attending following periods of heightened anxiety were gradually supported back into sessions through sustained communication between Foundation staff and families. Staff associated continued participation and re-engagement with this labour-intensive relationship-maintenance work.

No Getting to Know You survey data or Club Information metrics are available for Bright Foundation at the time of writing, limiting the demographic and quantitative analysis that can be offered here. The qualitative profile of the cohort, drawn from the evaluation interview, describes young people managing a range of intersecting challenges including neurodivergence, anxiety, school avoidance and disrupted educational histories.

Member experience and impacts

> "It has been an absolute delight and privilege to work with the young people over the last 5 months, to see them open up, take ownership in the roles, to play, to allow them to see the real skills they have that are vital in working in Film&Screen and how to use them to mirror what's happening in the film industry."
>
> **Sarah Buller,** Creative Practitioner, Bright Foundation Film&Screen Saturday Club

The building of trust within the group took considerably longer than Sarah Buller initially anticipated. What had seemed likely to require only a few weeks of relationship-building continued developing across almost the entire programme, with participants gradually becoming more comfortable sharing ideas, taking creative risks and collaborating openly. Staff understood this extended timeline in relation to participants' previous difficulties with educational or group settings. Sarah Buller's response, to hold the space rather than to expedite forms of rule-bound group norms, was to allow trust to develop without accelerating formal group norms.

One participant's trajectory illustrates how one member participated differently over time. Initially near-silent in sessions, he showed little visible engagement for several weeks, leading staff to question whether he was finding value in attending at all. Over time, however, through filmmaking tasks and visual development work, he began expressing highly detailed and distinctive creative ideas. His contributions emerged through visual storytelling, scriptwriting and design rather than through verbal performance in group settings, and he ultimately wrote the script for one of the group's final collaborative films. Buller's account of this development highlights a structural feature of the programme: it offers multiple different modes of contribution, so that young people who are not comfortable with verbal or performative participation can contribute creatively without relying on verbal confidence within the group.

The filmmaking environment enabled some participants to recognise the legitimacy of creative ideas that they had previously been self-conscious about. Sarah Buller reflects that young people who had come to regard their interests or imaginations as socially marginalised became, over time, more willing to introduce those ideas into collaborative work and more confident that the group would receive them well. This reframing of creative identity, from private or embarrassing to shared and productive, is one of the forms of development most consistently described across the evaluation sample. At Bright Foundation, it appears to be occurring in a more explicitly remedial context than elsewhere: participants are not simply being extended, but rebuilding confidence in creative agency after difficult educational experiences.

Tutor monitoring data provides a specific insight into what improved retention during the programme: "When the young people had a role they knew they were going to be doing the next week in the next session it definitely improved attendance." This is a useful practitioner observation: the sense of a continuing creative responsibility, of being needed in a specific role at the next session, was more motivating than a general invitation to return. It is also consistent with communities-of-practice accounts in which having a recognised role can strengthen commitment.

Several members who initially struggled to attend consistently, due to anxiety rather than disengagement, gradually re-engaged and became deeply involved in the final production phase. Sophie Barnard's account of sustained family communication enabling this re-engagement is an important corrective to any reading of inconsistent attendance as lack of motivation. Persistence in maintaining the relationship with participants through periods of absence is itself part of the programme's methodology.

Film practice and creative learning

Alongside its social and emotional dimensions, the Club provides substantive exposure to professional filmmaking processes. Sophie introduces scriptwriting, story structure, pre-production planning, camera operation, editing workflows, sound recording and collaborative production roles, not through formal instruction as a precondition for making but through active practice within production contexts. Participants encounter industry terminology and workflows as working tools rather than as abstract knowledge to be acquired before creative work can begin.

A recurring collaborative storytelling exercise captures the pedagogical balance the programme seeks. Participants build collective narratives line by line through folded paper exercises, each contributing without being able to see what the others have written. The activity simultaneously models narrative structure, removes the pressure of individual authorship and builds group creative confidence through a process in which everyone's contribution is equally present in the final piece. This approach is used partly for its pedagogical efficiency but also because it externalises the collaborative risk in ways that reduce anxiety around new practices and imaginative work.

The careers dimension was built into the programme plan from the outset. The planning form records the intention to include guest speakers who would talk about how they got into the industry and their journey, alongside digital badging through Coastal Catalyst. This framing – career pathways made visible through personal narrative rather than abstract information – is consistent with the programme's broader relational pedagogy: understanding how someone else found their way into the screen industries is more useful to these young people than a list of qualifications.

The professional aspects of filmmaking are to the fore and made explicit. Participants are shown real production documents and industry workflows, and tasks are actively framed within the sessions as fulfilling, creative work, while preserving the playfulness and experimentation that makes the environment safe enough for more anxious participants to occupy. This dual framing, real-world work and playful creation, is one of the programme's characteristic features and is given sustained focus by facilitators: the balance can easily tip toward either unproductive informality or the kind of performance pressure that would drive some participants away.

The use of Hastings and St Leonards as production locations extends the programme into the local environment. Location scouting around the beach, skate parks, public spaces and independent venues introduces participants to their town as a creative resource rather than simply a backdrop to daily life. Relationships with local filmmakers, artists and creative businesses, alongside encounters with the Cosprop costume collections, situate the Club within a broader local creative ecology. Towards the end of the programme, participants are producing short documentary and promotional films for local organisations, giving the work a genuine civic and professional audience.

National programme integration

The national dimensions of the programme were experienced positively overall, and Polly Risbridger describes the network itself as one of the programme's principal attractions: the opportunity to connect Hastings-based young people with peers and creative environments beyond their immediate locality carries particular significance in a coastal town with more limited cultural infrastructure.

The group attended a regional Masterclass at Eastbourne College connected to the Eastbourne International Film Festival. Staff valued the visit partly as an opportunity to observe the group beyond its familiar setting. They interpreted members' willingness to engage with others and participate in a new professional environment as a sign of increased confidence since January. For young people whose prior experience of institutional environments had been largely negative, this observation was particularly meaningful.

Analytical reflection

The Bright Foundation Saturday Club is, in terms of its access ambition, an explicitly targeted offer. Where other clubs with high widening participation characteristics reach their cohorts through geographic proximity, school partnerships or community networks, the Bright Foundation has made the decision to orient its programme specifically toward young people who are not currently being reached by any other provision, including, in many cases, mainstream schooling itself. This produces a programme that is correspondingly different in character.

The pedagogical model is highly immersive, offering immediate practical engagement with filmmaking. It provides a range of production roles which maximises engagement, and also distributes the perception of creative risk and chance of 'failure' through collaborative storytelling exercises. The commitment to forms of personal, relational recruitment and onboarding, along with the sustained communication with families during periods of inconsistent attendance are responses to local challenges and barriers. The production of approximately 35 films within a half-year illustrates the programme's emphasis on repeated practice and experimentation with a small, carefully supported cohort.

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