



York

Make Space York Festival 2026

Get involved! Facilitators, creatives, organisations and community groups come and part of the Make Space Festival of Free Events, taking place in June 2026. The festival brings teenage girls into York's parks to try new things, meet new people and feel confident and welcome in public space.

Dates and locations

13 & 14 June 2026 - Rowntree Park

20 & 21 June 2026 - Second York park (TBC)

Events run across both weekends, during the daytime.

How you can get involved

You can apply to:

- Run an activity or workshop
- Host a drop-in stall (activities, crafts, awareness, information)
- Join the wider project team and help make the festival happen

Activities can include sport, movement, arts, creativity, wellbeing, nature based sessions, performance or anything that works well in a park and would appeal to teenage girls. If you think "this could work outdoors" then I would love to hear from you.

About Make Space York

The Make Space York project started by Abigail Gaines in 2021 with engagement with teenage girls on what would make Rowntree Park more welcoming to them. This led to co creating an area in the park with girls with equipment they asked for, and also the festival of free events. The festival began in 2023 - the UK's first dedicated programme of park-based events for teenage girls. It has since become an annual festival, reaching around 350 girls each year.

The project exists to address the well evidenced drop-off in park use as girls enter their teenage years. Many girls tell us parks do not feel welcoming or that there is nothing for them. This festival is about changing that, through visibility, activity and joy in public space.

The project won a national Green Flag award in 2023 for Best Initiative in the UK to increase park use by women and girls. The project as a whole has featured as a case study in research and guidance used across the UK. The project is run by Abigail with support from volunteers and continues to evolve and be shaped by York teenage girls.

Running an activity or event

Sessions can be:

- A one-off activity (1 to 1.5 hours)
- A drop-in activity stall (2-4 hours)

You would be responsible for your own equipment and delivery.

Facilitators can choose to:

- Volunteer their time
- Request a fee (£50, £75 or £100 per session, depending on activity and length)

The project has a limited budget, so not all paid requests can be accommodated. We aim to create a balanced, varied programme that appeals to a wide range of girls. All facilitators are promoted through festival marketing, social media and partner networks.

Key practical information

Activities are usually aimed at girls aged 10-18, but age ranges are flexible and some can include girls from age 8 and others may include adults.

- Sessions run outdoors in the park
- Events are free to attend
- Public liability insurance and a risk assessment are required (support available)
- Parents and carers remain responsible for their children
- A limited amount of basic equipment such as tables, stools and a gazebo may be available to borrow, however having your own equipment helps

Stall holders

We are also inviting interest from stall holders, particularly on Saturdays.

Stalls may include:

- Information or awareness related to girls and women
- Drop-in creative or activity stalls
- A small number of food or refreshment stalls

Community groups and small charities can usually take part free of charge.

Small fees apply to individuals/businesses (from £15-25) and food stalls (fee TBD generally £100+).

Details shared at application stage.

Expression of interest

If you are interested, please complete the expression of [interest form](#). Submitting a form does not commit you to taking part and not all applications will be selected. We aim for variety across the programme.

For questions, contact:

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hello@rowntreepark.org.uk

Thank you for helping us continue to make space for girls in York's parks.

