

# VITAL CONNECT

## Overview 2025/2026

**VITAL CONNECT** offers the partner schools, a physical theatre “shot in the arm”, aiming to boost resilience and liberate the imaginations of young people in regional areas. VITAL CONNECT delivers bespoke workshops, inter-school engagement, mentoring, performances, professional contact, interactive digital platforms, and a direct way to reduce the barriers to the arts that schools currently face. The result: high-quality arts provision across Northern Ireland.

## Key project aims

<p><b>Digital Grid</b> – access to Bruiser digital learning platform.</p>	<p><b>Development</b> – supporting staff and young people to build on their existing skills and resources.</p>
<p>Supporting the curriculum through extensive <b>support in devising</b> and <b>scripted modules</b>.</p>	<p>Providing opportunities for students to <b>access live performances</b> and workshops delivered by industry professionals.</p>

## Activity plan for VC schools

Vital Connect supports teachers and pupils throughout the academic year through a variety of direct and indirect engagement methods – we provide lots of opportunities to access theatre/creativity in the classroom, in your school and in local theatre venues.

Activity	More info
<p>Digital Grid</p> <p>Sep 2025–June 2026</p>	<p>Digital Grid at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5. The Digital Grid will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Bruiser Digital Handbook – A selection of pre-recorded lecture videos and workshop exercises, with notes and additional resources designed for KS4 and KS5.</li> <li>● How To Demo Videos – A collection of mini video series on topics such as Set, Sound, Costume and Lighting Design.</li> <li>● Investigating Performance – Resources on everything from self tapes to starting your own theatre company.</li> </ul>
<p>Development of skills and learning tailored to the curriculum</p> <p>Jan – June 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● KS3 workshops: designed to support up to 30 KS3 students with their GCSE selection, Bruiser will deliver 2hr workshops that support students to engage in activities that will be needed for GSCE drama, through games, group work and fun.</li> <li>● A Day with Bruiser– up to 30 KS4 and/or KS5 students will attend a full day event consisting of three 90 min workshops, an end of day performance + Q&amp;A from actors/facilitators in the Bruiser Style at a local theatre.</li> <li>● Bespoke Workshops– Each school will receive 4 x 2hr workshops (or equivalent to 8 hrs) that support the curriculum and feed into the whole school ethos. These workshops will be designed in response to the needs of each Vital Connect school.</li> </ul>
<p>CPD for staff</p> <p>May–June 2026</p>	<p>Each Vital Connect school will receive access to all of our 2026 Continued Professional Development Teacher Training sessions, dovetailing the resources/ learning opportunities available to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>workshop 1:</b> An introduction to Bruiser style and Physical Theatre Techniques</li> </ul>

- **workshop 2:** Exploration of key Practitioner on the curriculum.
- **workshop 3:** Exploring technical theatre for the classroom.
- **workshop 4:** Unlocking creativity through Devising Techniques
- **Masterclass:** Advanced Bruiser technique with Artistic Director Lisa May

Bruiser in a Box:

Live Performance in your school

Oct 6–24th 2025

### **The Boy Who kicked Pigs by Tom Baker**

Packed full of the verbal and visual ingenuity that Bruiser is known for, this “horrible little show about a horrible little murderer” is jam packed with physical comedy, inventive staging and ensemble playing, in Bruiser’s trademark style. This is a Bruiser show for the whole school!

Live theatre tour with accompanying tailored support. Each Vital connect school will have access to our Bruiser in a box 2025 performance in their school, with a post show Q&A with the actors and a separate digital conversation with Director Lisa May.

Bruiser in a box is suitable for all students from KS3+ and we invite Vital Connect schools to treat this as an opportunity for all students to enjoy live theatre. (suitable to the capacity of your hall/ performance space)

Devising support

Sep 2025– April 2026

### **Devising**

Stage 1 – Devising in the classroom

Each school will receive 6x 2hr workshops (or equivalent to 12 hrs) to support the devising modules within the curriculum.

Stage 2 – Mid-Process Consultancy

Bruiser’s Artistic Director and/or Education officer will provide digital surgeries, providing critical feedback at the mid-way point of the process, and provide technical and performance advice and consultancy.

Stage 3 – Refining Surgeries & Performance

Bruiser’s Artistic Director and/or Education Officer will visit The School in the polishing/late stages of devising/rehearsal for up to a 1/2 day, to help students prepare for performance.

## Remuneration

Vital Connect is substantially funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, with participating schools receiving £4,950 worth of engagement from Bruiser programmes.

**Vital Connect schools pay a total of £1000.00** for participation in the Vital Connect project for the academic year of 2025/26.

## Contact Information

For any inquiries on this project, reach out to:

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