

An aerial photograph of a coastal city at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, red, and purple. In the foreground, a large, light-colored building with a prominent golden dome is visible. The building has a complex roof structure with multiple levels and a balcony. In the background, a beach and other buildings are visible, with lights starting to glow as the sun sets. The overall scene is a vibrant and scenic view of a coastal urban area.

**AED**

# National FINAL GUIDE 2026

# Welcome

## Welcome to the National Final 2026

We are delighted to welcome dancers, teachers, families and supporters to this prestigious event - the culmination of months of dedication, hard work and outstanding performances across the Regional Finals.

Reaching the National Final is a remarkable achievement and reflects not only technical ability, but also artistry, commitment and passion. Every performer should feel immensely proud to be part of this exceptional standard of competition.

Our aim is to provide a professional, inspiring and celebratory environment where dancers can perform at their very best, support one another and enjoy this special experience.

We wish you a wonderful time at the National Final and look forward to celebrating your achievements.

Congratulations to each and every one of our National Final dancers.





# Tickets

All audience tickets can be purchased in advance via the link below. We strongly recommend booking in advance to avoid queues on the day. Tickets will also be available to purchase at the front desk, subject to availability.

## **Click here to buy tickets**

*Please bring your QR code with you (either printed or on your phone).*

On arrival:

- Your QR code will be scanned
- You will be issued with a wristband
- Wristbands must be worn at all times

## **Wristbands**

All wristbands must be worn securely on the wrist at all times. Please note that wristbands:

- Must not be attached to bags
- Must not be kept in phone cases
- Must not be carried separately

*The theatre team will be checking wristbands at venue entrances throughout the event.*

# Venues & Parking

The National Final will take place across two venues:

- The Congress Theatre
- The Winter Garden

**Congress Theatre Address:** Carlisle Rd, Eastbourne BN21 4BP

**Winter Garden Address:** 14 Compton St, Eastbourne BN21 4BP

*Although located side by side, these venues operate separate entrances and facilities. Please ensure you are entering the correct venue for your performance or attendance.*

## **Auditorium Access**

Auditorium doors will open daily from 8:30am.

*Please ensure your wristband and/or ticket are ready for inspection upon entry.*

## **Wi-Fi**

Complimentary Wi-Fi is available throughout the venues.

Network: TEGFree

## **Parking**

A range of parking options is available in and around Eastbourne for those attending the National Finals. Free on-road parking is available throughout Eastbourne. Please check local signage for any restrictions or time limits.

## **Car Parks**

The following nearby car parks operate 24 hours a day:

HCP Trinity Place Car Park, Trinity Place, Eastbourne, BN21 3BZ (414 spaces)

Devonshire Park Car Park, Eastbourne, BN21 4JJ (120 spaces)





# Arrival & Registration

All participants must register upon arrival using the designated entrance for their venue.

**Please allow sufficient time for:**

- Registration
- Queueing during peak periods

To help manage capacity across both venues, we kindly ask performers and accompanying adults to arrive no more than **1 hour before their scheduled dance.**

**Once dancers have completed their performance and attended their results presentation, we ask that they vacate the dressing room areas promptly to allow space for the next performers.**

## **Winter Garden**

There is one main entrance for:

- Performer registration
- Dancers and teachers
- Audience members

*All attendees should enter via the front doors of the Winter Garden.*

## **Congress Theatre**

There are two separate access points:

### 1. Welcome Building

- Performer registration
- Dancers and teachers

### 2. Main Congress Theatre Entrance

- Audience/parents only

*Clear signage and stewards will be available to guide you.*

# Dressing Rooms

## Winter Garden

If performing in the Winter Garden, dressing facilities will be located in:

- The Gold Room Dressing Room

*Further instructions will be provided on arrival.*

## Congress Theatre

Dressing areas will be located in large conference halls.

### **Please note (for both venues):**

- Tables, chairs, changing pods, limited hanging rail space and bin bags will be provided
- No mirrors are available
- Spaces are not allocated to individual schools

### **We kindly ask all schools to:**

- Be considerate of others
- Use only the space required
- Share dressing areas respectfully

## Lost Property

Any unattended items found in the auditoriums or foyers will be removed and taken to the Lost Property Collection point (the Registration Desk of the Welcome Building).

### **Dressing Room Rules (All Venues)**

- No eating or drinking (except water)
- Water will be provided - please bring refillable bottles
- Do not occupy space unnecessarily
- Personal belongings are left at your own risk
- **Please vacate dressing areas after your results presentation to allow space for incoming performers**





# Food & Beverages

A range of food and beverage options will be available throughout the National Finals to ensure dancers, teachers and families are well catered for during the day.

## **Congress Theatre Café**

The Congress Theatre café will be open daily from 8:00am, serving:

- Hot drinks (tea, coffee, etc.)
- Cold drinks
- Light meals and snacks

## **Outdoor Food & Beverage**

In addition, food stalls will be located outside the Congress Theatre, offering a variety of options throughout the day.

## **Seating Areas**

- Outdoor seating will be available
- This provides a relaxed space for families and dancers between performances

## **Bar Service**

Bars within the venue will be open from 11:00am until close. We encourage all attendees to plan ahead during busy periods and allow time for queues, particularly between sections.

## **Auditorium Restrictions**

No food or drink may be taken into either auditorium. We kindly ask all attendees to use the foyer and designated seating areas for refreshments.

# Merchandise

Official All England Dance merchandise will be available throughout the National Finals.

The merchandise stand will be located in the Congress Theatre foyer and will offer a range of items to commemorate your experience at the Finals.

## Items include:

- Event-branded clothing
- Souvenir items
- Accessories and gifts

This is a wonderful opportunity for dancers and families to take home a keepsake from the National Final.

The whole range is also available online - [click here](#).

We recommend purchasing early during your visit to avoid disappointment, as some items may be in limited supply.





# Performance Information

## Stage Procedures

Please note the following backstage arrangements:

- Enter the stage from Stage Right
- Exit the stage via Stage Left
- A run-round route will be available where required

*Further instructions will be provided by AED team members and venue crew throughout the event.*

## Mics

Individual mics will be used for Musical Theatre; a maximum of 3 mics per group can be used, and our team will support dancers in correctly putting them on.

## Stage Size

**Congress:** 13m x 13m

**Winter Garden:** 10m x 6m

# Results

## **Results Format**

Following the success of this format at the Regional Finals, there will be no traditional line-up at the end of each section.

Once dancers have performed, they may leave the stage area. At the Congress Theatre & Winter Garden, dancers may have the opportunity to watch subsequent sections from the balcony while remaining under AED supervision. Alternatively, dancers will remain in the holding area until their Results section.

All dancers will return to the stage for the Results presentation, a finale-style celebration. This format is designed to create a more enjoyable, celebratory experience for both performers and audiences.

## **The Judging Process**

All judging panels comprise two industry professionals and one of AED's own adjudicators. All are fully briefed in the requirements of each genre and in AED's assessment criteria. Each panelist marks independently and submits their scores directly to the invigilator. Individual marks remain confidential and adjudicators do not see each other's scores, ensuring a fair, consistent and impartial assessment process. The panel do not know the final results until they are formally announced on stage.

## **Results**

- In all Solo sections, a Winner and Runner-Up will be selected.
- In all Duet, Trio and Quartet sections, a Winner and Runner-Up will be selected.
- In Group sections, a Winner and up to two Runners-Up will be selected.

## **AED National Finals Awards Ceremonies**

AED National Finals Awards are presented to the competitors achieving the highest overall marks in the Junior, Intermediate and Senior age categories within each genre.

Winners of these prestigious awards are requested to attend the relevant Awards Ceremony:

- Junior Awards Ceremony: Friday 31 July at 5.30pm
- Intermediate and Senior Awards Ceremony: Sunday 2 August at 3.15pm

**Award winners will be notified through their teacher prior to the ceremony. Attendance is strongly encouraged so that achievements can be recognised and celebrated publicly.**

## **Results will take place as a finale-style presentation:**

- Dancers return to the stage to music
- Each section enters in order, forming a line across the front
- Be invited to take a bow or curtsy

*Further details will be sent to teachers soon and we ask for your cooperation to help brief performers prior to the finals.*



# Props

Guidance for prop drop-off and collection is outlined below. Please ensure all timings are adhered to in order to support the smooth running of the event.

## **Congress Theatre**

Props should be dropped off via the stage loading bay at the rear of the theatre. This area will be clearly signposted.

Drop-off & Collection Times:

- 8:00-8:45am
- Scheduled lunchtime
- Up to 30 minutes after the last section of the day

## **Winter Garden**

Props should be dropped off at the performers' holding area via the main entrance.

Drop-off & Collection Times:

- 8:00-8:45am
- Scheduled lunchtime
- Up to 30 minutes after the last section of the day

## **Important Information**

- All props must arrive fully assembled and performance-ready.
- Props must not be constructed or assembled backstage.
- After use, props should be collected at the next available opportunity when the prop access door is opened.
- Due to limited storage space, props cannot be left backstage throughout the day.
- Please ensure props can be moved safely and within the time limits set out in the AED Rules.

*Further guidance regarding the use, storage and handling of props will be provided prior to the event.*

# Visiting Eastbourne

Located on the beautiful Sussex coast, Eastbourne is one of the UK's most popular seaside destinations, offering a mix of coastal scenery, independent shopping, family attractions and a vibrant food scene.

Whether you're staying for the duration of the National Finals or simply exploring between performances, there is plenty to enjoy within easy walking distance of the venues.

## Things to See & Do

- Stroll along the iconic Eastbourne seafront and pier
- Explore the town centre's shops, cafés and restaurants
- Visit the nearby South Downs National Park
- Discover the stunning coastline at Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters
- Enjoy Eastbourne's theatres, galleries and cultural attractions

## Food & Drink

Eastbourne offers a wide variety of dining options, from independent cafés and family-friendly restaurants to seafront dining and takeaway options.

## Accommodation

There are numerous hotels, guest houses and self-catering accommodation options throughout Eastbourne, many within walking distance of the Congress Theatre and Winter Garden.

## Find Out More

For information on local attractions, accommodation, dining and things to do during your stay, visit: [Visit Eastbourne](#) & view the [Tourist Information Brochures](#).





# Need help?

Please do not wait until you return home if you have a concern. During National Finals there are many people available to assist you. If something is worrying you, or if you need help with anything at all, please come and speak to a member of the AED team.

We cannot promise to solve every problem, but we will always do our very best to help and support you wherever possible.



**AED**

[www.allenglanddance.co.uk](http://www.allenglanddance.co.uk)

**Enquiries:** [info@all-england-dance.org.uk](mailto:info@all-england-dance.org.uk)

**Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** [elaine.bailey@all-england-dance.org.uk](mailto:elaine.bailey@all-england-dance.org.uk)