

Social Care Institute for Excellence and
All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing

The Role of the Arts and Culture in Social Care

Policy Briefing – July 2017

Key Messages:

- **The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived.**
- **The arts can help meet major challenges facing social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health.**
- **The arts can help save money in social care.**

Background

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW) has undertaken a major Inquiry into the role of the arts in health and wellbeing, with which the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has been involved. The Inquiry yielded a substantial report – *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing* – providing strong evidence that creative and cultural activities can have a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing.¹ Taking up the findings of the Inquiry, this briefing sets out some of the ways in which the arts and culture can help in social care.

Children and Young People in Care

High-quality arts participation helps to build skills, develop self-confidence and assist young people in preparing for the transition into life after residential care.² SCIE and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) urge those responsible for the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people in care to ensure access to the creative arts.³

The Laming Review looked at why, when only one percent of children went into care in England and Wales, 33 percent of boys and 61 percent of girls in

custody had been in care.⁴ This found lower than average educational attainment and higher than average behavioural difficulties. More than 1,000 children have attended TR14ers dance workshops, which take their name from the postcode for Camborne, one of the most deprived towns in the UK. The workshops have been credited with a drop in antisocial behaviour, a 90 percent reduction in truancy and increased educational attainment, and police estimate that ten young people a year have been prevented from being labelled a persistent young offender as a result.⁵

In light of this and other evidence presented in *Creative Health*, we recommend the inclusion of arts-based activities in the repertoire of services provided for children and young people in care.

Older People's Services

A growing body of evidence and practical experience shows that engagement in the arts should be considered an integral part of healthy ageing. Social isolation and loneliness affect people of all ages. In older adults, social participation is more beneficial for health than giving up smoking. Around the country, community-based creative and cultural opportunities are being offered to older people as a way of overcoming social isolation and loneliness.⁶ An analysis of data from more than 15,000 older people published by Age UK in February 2017 found that engagement in creative and cultural activities made the highest contribution to overall wellbeing.⁷

Sense of meaning and purpose in life can diminish with age. An estimated 40 percent of older people living in care homes are affected by depression, compared with 20 percent of older people living in the community. People with depression have a 50

1 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. (2017). *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing* is available at: artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appg/inquiry

2 See, for example, *Twilight Zone*: www.artscare.co.uk/2014/08/19/twilight-zoneproject-for-looked-after-young-people

3 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2010). *Looked-after children and young people*. London: NICE, p. 42.

4 Prison Reform Trust. (2016). *In Care, Out of Trouble: How the life chances of children in care can be transformed by protecting them from unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system (The Laming Review)*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

5 The health and wellbeing effects of the TR14ers have been acknowledged by the NHS Live awards. clahrc-peninsula.nihr.ac.uk/research/c2-connecting-communities

6 As just one example, see Windle, K., George, T., Porter, R., McKay, S., Culliney, M., et al. (2016). 'Staying Well in Calderdale' Programme Evaluation: Final report. Lincoln, University of Lincoln.

7 Green, M., Iparraguirre, J., Davidson, S., Rossall, P. & Zaidi, A. (2017). *Summary of Age UK's Index of Wellbeing in Later Life*. London: Age UK.

percent higher risk of early death than their contemporaries without depression, which is comparable to the risk associated with smoking; in the over-65s, this risk jumps to 75 percent. Participatory arts sessions in care homes yield improvements in residents' wellbeing and the quality of care being provided by staff.⁸ Artists' residencies in care homes prove popular with participants and carers alike, animating and personalising the care environment.⁹ We support the proposal of artists' residencies in every care home.¹⁰

Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care for the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Andrea Sutcliffe, has pointed to the role of the arts in enabling people to live full and meaningful lives, identifying the best care homes to be 'flexible and responsive to people's individual needs and preferences, finding creative ways to enable people to live a full life'.¹¹ We hope that this positive view will lead to more examples of care home providers securing culturally stimulating environments for their residents and staff and incorporating the arts into care packages. An imaginative and holistic approach, which positively impacts on the wellbeing of residents, will make care homes more attractive to commissioners. SCIE has curated a digital resource, funded by the Baring Foundation, to increase their confidence and skills of care home staff in engaging residents in the arts.¹²

The Integration of Health and Social Care

The arts have a part to play in the ongoing integration of health and social care through the Better Care Fund, personal budgets and preventing or delaying entry into residential care and hospital.

Staying Out, supported by the Better Care Fund and operated at ARC – a multiform arts centre in a deprived ward of Stockton on Tees – offers weekly art and craft activities to people aged 65 and over who have been discharged from hospital or are socially isolated. Participation offers cognitive and physical stimulation, particularly around the use of fine motor skills, while stimulating a measurable sense of achievement and wellbeing.¹³

Plans to improve services for people with learning disabilities and/or autism being developed via Transforming Care Partnerships pave the way for enhanced community services which can include arts engagement. TIN Arts in Durham offers a

contemporary dance course for people with learning disabilities which is funded through personal budgets.¹⁴

Falls are a major factor in older people entering residential care. One hour of dancing per week for six months by healthy older people has been shown to improve cognitive, tactile and motor performance while proving more engaging and popular than many falls prevention programmes. Demand for older people's dance classes now outstrips supply.

Evidence is emerging that arts engagement helps to delay the onset of dementia. Musical training can enhance the plasticity of the brain,¹⁵ and visual art can improve cognitive functioning.¹⁶ Engagement in creative and cultural activities can improve the quality of life for people with dementia and their carers.

Arts on Prescription

As part of a move towards place-based care, social prescribing seeks solutions to psychosocial problems in the community beyond the clinical environment. The most common outcomes of such community referral schemes are: increases in self-esteem and confidence; a greater sense of control and empowerment; improvements in psychological wellbeing; and reductions in anxiety and depression. Arts on prescription is a vital part of social prescribing, providing participatory creative activities that help to restore people's wellbeing and reduce anxiety, depression and stress.

Information and Contact Details

The APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing is chaired by Rt Hon. Ed Vaizey MP and Rt Hon. Lord Howarth of Newport CBE, and the secretariat is provided by the National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing. *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing* was researched and drafted by Dr Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt at King's College London.

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⁸ See, for example, cARTrefu: www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/case-studies/cartrefu-arts-in-care-settings

⁹ Langford, S. (2016). *Magic Me's Artists' Residencies in Care Homes Programme: Learning from phase one, April 2015–March 2016*. London: Magic Me.

¹⁰ Thwaite, A. (14 June 2017) *The Arts in Later Life*: lahf.wordpress.com/2017/06/14/the-arts-and-later-life

¹¹ Sutcliffe, A. (2 June 2016). *The Art of Being Outstanding*: medium.com/tag/care-quality-commission

¹² SCIE digital resource for the arts in care home: <http://www.scie.org.uk/person-centred-care/arts-in-care-homes>

¹³ Staying Out: arconline.co.uk/whats-on/community-workshopsand-classes-adults/staying-out

¹⁴ TIN Arts: www.tinarts.co.uk/index.php/2-uncategorised/17-getin2dance-pdf

¹⁵ Anderson, S., White-Schwoch, T., Choi, H. J. & Kraus, N. (2014). Partial Maintenance of Auditory-based Cognitive Training Benefits in Older Adults. *Neuropsychologia*, 62, pp. 286–96.

¹⁶ The Big Brain Maintenance Experiment: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/54MwYnJLnvbHbT5KsBRg9Tv/the-big-brain-maintenance-experiment