

What works in culture, health and wellbeing?

Introduction

Voluntary Health Scotland works with its members and others to address health inequalities and improve health related policy, systems and partnership working in order to help people and communities live healthier and fairer lives.

Culture is recognised as central to Scotland's wellbeing people who face the greatest health inequalities (poor health, low incomes, living in a high SIMD area) have the lowest participation in cultural activities so benefit least from cultural interventions.

Our aims

Through our project *Culture, Health and Wellbeing* we are collaborating with arts and health practitioners across sectors to maximise the role of the arts and culture to:

- Support **primary prevention and early intervention** by building capacity and supporting vulnerable people before mental and physical health conditions manifest.
- **Reduce stress** and thus **enhance immune function and higher cardiovascular reactivity**
- Encourage **health promoting behaviours**
- Support people to **engage** with healthcare providers and clinical interventions
- Help people to **manage their conditions and support recovery** by providing a stability and structure
- **Relieve pressure** on frontline services
- Affect the **social determinants** of health by developing social cohesion and reducing social inequalities
- **Enhance self-efficacy** and develop **coping mechanisms and emotional regulation**

Our methodology and actions

Methodology:

- build bridges and strengthen dialogue between the arts and health sectors
- identify and promote evidence about patient outcomes that are improved through cultural interventions.

Actions:

- Organised a meeting for the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group (in our role as Secretariat) on *What Can Arts and Culture do for Health Inequalities?*
- Held three cross-sectoral round tables on *Keeping the Conversation Going About Culture, Health and Wellbeing*

- Held a national conference for 140 people: *Get the Picture, Culture, Health and Wellbeing* with keynote speaker Professor Sir Harry Burns
- Published 8 posters and 8 accompanying blogs by arts and health organisations to highlight the evidence on cultural interventions and health
- Held a joint seminar with the Scottish Rural Health Partnership on *Culture, Health and Wellbeing in Rural Scotland*
- Collaborated with the Arts and Health Scotland network to present an event for 70 people at Glasgow Royal Infirmary *Keeping the Conversation Going – A Collective Voice*
- Became Secretary of the Arts and Health Scotland network
- Engaged with Scottish Government, Creative Scotland, NESTA, Museums and Galleries Scotland and the Cross Party Group on Culture, to help forge new links between the cultural and health sectors.
- Started to map Scottish evidence on the impact that cultural interventions have on patient outcomes
- Explore the wider evidence, including the *Creative Health* report (UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing) and the early findings of a World Health Organisation project examining international evidence.

Cheyne Gang

- A community singing group for people with long term respiratory conditions
- Set up in 2013 by three practice nurses: now operating in seven locations
- Referrals via GP practices, local newspaper advertising, links with Pulmonary Rehabilitation and word of mouth
- Uses singing to teach breathing techniques to support recovery and management of a range of respiratory conditions
- Undertook pilot feasibility study using AQ20 forms to measure patients' quality of life on joining the group and 6 months later:
 - Improved physical health: less inhaler use, fewer flare ups of COPD and no new hospital admissions
 - Improved mental health with increased confidence and less stress and anxiety.
 - Less lonely and social isolated; improved capacity and health to enjoy social contact.

Impact Arts

- A cultural partner in community led approaches to tackling local issues
- Work with nurseries, schools and community groups, predominantly across Scotland's 15% most deprived data zones
- Deliver creative workshops on food growing, gardening and environmental art, and a wild walking group
- Support vulnerable young people, through primary prevention and early intervention, helping them to build capacity and engage in positive outcomes

- 85% of young people on their Creative Pathways programme received SQA Accreditation (2017/18)
- 524 positive destinations (employment, apprenticeships, further education) achieved by young people, and 90% of school-aged participants re-engaged back at school (2017/18)

The Teapot Trust

- A national charity providing hospital based art therapy to children and families coping with the physical and mental challenge of a long term condition
- Art therapy provides a way of expressing and dealing with feelings of anger, upset, or of anxiety about medical procedures, helping children to feel more in control and to cope better with their condition and treatment
- Open group sessions in outpatient clinics enable any child attending to come to the art table to paint, draw, and collage or model clay and engage with an art therapist
- Promote a range of research evidence about patient outcomes in relation to art therapy; currently collaborating with Dr Ania Zubala, University of Highlands and Islands to produce their own research evidence

Art Angel

- A Dundee project of 20 years standing run by people with lived experience of mental illness
- Supports people aged 16+ with mental health problems in their attempts to get better and stay well through active participation in the arts
- Deliver a wide range of art, photography, creative writing, film and drama groups that provide safe spaces so that people can experience social and psychological stability, structure and belonging
- Referrals are from GPs, Community Psychiatrist Nurses, Psychiatrists, hospital wards and outreach project work
- 85% of people attending Art Angel said it improved their recovery, 90% said it improved their wellbeing, 84% said they learned new skills (2018)
- Evaluate regularly: see: https://www.artangeldundee.org.uk/creative_evaluation.html

Football Memories Scotland

- Originally established in 2009 by the Scottish Football Museum and Scottish Football Heritage Network, now a partnership between Alzheimer Scotland and the Scottish Football Museum
- Uses skilled facilitators to engage male dementia sufferers in a discussion about their football past times, prompted by photographs and memorabilia.
- Positive effects of football reminiscence on participants' mood, communication and alertness have been measured by the University of Glasgow: *Football Memories: Impact of non-pharmacologic treatments on Alzheimer's and Dementia sufferers* (2010)

- The added benefits to carers (improved mood, quality of life and respite) has been established by Schofield et al: *Scottish Football Museum Reminiscence Pilot Project for People with Dementia: A Realistic Evaluation*.

Conclusions

- Cultural interventions have an important role to play in an integrated health and social care system, with a focus on prevention, anticipation and supported self-management, and taking a person centred and assets based approach.
- Realistic Medicine seeks to address the over-medicalisation of health. Scotland's Chief Medical Officer has written about the 'magic of the arts' and their benefits for physical, mental and social wellbeing.
- Cultural interventions should play a role in realising the six National Public Health Priorities.
- The roll-out of 250 new community link workers to help address health inequalities provides new opportunities for social prescribing arts and cultural interventions.
- The Culture Strategy for Scotland presents a new opportunity to build stronger collaboration and meaningful coproduction between the cultural and health sectors.
- The third sector is a crucial innovator, collaborator and evaluator in this area.
- The Arts and Health Scotland network is an important development in sharing good practice, evidence and learning
- Whereas there is robust UK and international evidence about the impact of cultural interventions on patient health and wellbeing, more evaluation of Scottish interventions would be beneficial, as currently the evidence is mostly grey literature

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