

**The Baring
Foundation**



THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN CREATIVE AGEING

Second edition with new case studies
from councils across the UK

by David Cutler

About the Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation is an independent grant maker, founded in 1969. Its purpose is to tackle discrimination and disadvantage through strengthening civil society, in the UK and abroad. The Foundation's arts programme since 2010 has focused on older people. This has had many aspects including funding partnerships with all four of the UK's national arts councils and the British Council. Much more about this programme can be found in a new publication – *Towards the End* to be published in late 2017.

About the author

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Creative 'day care' at Meet Me at the Albany, co-produced by Entelechy Arts and the Albany, supported by Lewisham Council.

Foreword

There's a wonderful scene in the film 'Dead Poets' Society', in which the late Robin Williams, who plays an unorthodox English teacher in an exclusive, stuffy New England private boys school, tries to persuade his students of the value of the arts. He gathers his students, the sons of lawyers, doctors, bankers and industrialists in a huddle in the centre of the classroom, and whispers, "Boys ... medicine, law, these are noble pursuits, but they merely sustain life. Poetry ... that's what we stay alive for". For me, this simple statement speaks to the true depth and power of the arts for older people. This report, and the case studies it describes, provide an excellent summary of the many benefits that the arts can bring to older people in improving their health and wellbeing, maintaining their independence, and reducing the costs of care. However, the report also highlights the impact the arts can have on tackling loneliness; and loneliness has been identified by older people themselves as one of, if not the most important factor affecting their quality of life¹. It is the profound impact of the arts on the quality of older people's lives, the meaning that it gives to their lives, that is perhaps of greatest relevance to local authorities. After all, isn't improving the quality of life (and quality of life chances) of its residents the ultimate *raison d'être* of a local authority, and isn't art in all its wondrous forms, together with a sense of purpose, ultimately what we all stay alive for?

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1 What do older people expect from health and social care in the community?, Petra Kliempt, Danny A Ruta, Simon A Ogston, Marion E McMurdo. 2000; *Quality of Life Research*, pp 257-257.

Key messages

- An ageing society is a cause for celebration but brings with it an increased demand for local services and funds, including for local authorities.
- This compounds the pressure on local authorities at a time of severe funding cuts.
- The arts are effective at connecting isolated and lonely older people with the wider community, including across generations.
- There is good evidence that the arts have a positive impact on the physical and mental well-being of older people, including those living with dementia. This is acknowledged for instance in National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance.
- This means that the arts are a good way for local authorities to deliver key policies such as prevention and supporting older people continuing to live at home.
- The arts can also help social care services run better, for instance by supporting the retention of care staff through offering more fulfilling jobs.
- Local authorities have roles and interests regarding health and well-being; the arts and culture; older people's services; social inclusion; and community leadership.
- This combination of roles make local authorities uniquely well placed to take a lead on arts and older people.
- However, most local authorities have yet to acknowledge these connections and to fully engage with arts and older people.

The case for local authority involvement in arts and older people

INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT UPDATES OUR 2013 PUBLICATION CALLED LOCAL AUTHORITIES+ OLDER PEOPLE+ ARTS = A CREATIVE COMBINATION.

Since then a lot has changed but a lot has remained the same. Arts for older people work is taking place in rather more local authorities than it was, and this report has a series of new case studies. These projects have often been encouraged through the use of external funding, for instance from Arts Councils or from independent funders like the Baring Foundation. While the case for local authority involvement in the arts remains the same, the strength of these arguments and evidence is becoming more accepted, most importantly by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), which covers England.

The implications of an ageing society for local authorities are manifold and immense, as was recently examined in the Local Government Association's report *Ageing: the silver lining*. It is to be welcomed that the same report recognises the role of culture and the arts in creating age-friendly cities.

The funding cuts described four years ago have only deepened, with total spending having been reduced by roughly a third on average in real terms since 2010. It is therefore important to acknowledge that local authorities are currently grappling with severe cuts and will probably continue to do so for a long time to come. This is intensified by rising demands from, among other things, an ageing society. So why should the leadership of local authorities find time and resources to engage with arts and older people? This first section seeks to answer that question by setting out the benefits of participation in the arts for older people and why these can help local authorities deliver some of their policies, and even save resources into the bargain. The second section comprises a series of case studies of work by local authorities around the UK demonstrating what can be achieved practically, usually with very little resource. Finally, we include some suggestions for resources and further guidance.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

There is no uncontested definition of **old age**. Sometimes rather than attempting to define an arbitrary chronological boundary, the phrase 'third age' is used for people who are fit and active but who could receive a state pension, and 'fourth age' for people who have become physically frail or live with impairments in intellectual performance. The Baring Foundation's arts programme has been funding work for people over the age of 60 and much of our focus has been on people in residential care as they tend to have very poor access to the arts. Our belief is that all human beings have the capacity to be creative throughout their lives up to their last moment.

This report embraces the **full range of the arts** including, visual arts, drama and story-telling, music and singing, digital arts, photography and film-making, among many other forms. There is a great value in this work being led by professional artists but there is also an important role for amateurs and the voluntary arts. Much of what the Baring Foundation funds is 'participatory art' where the older person is part of the creative process. This can be empowering in a number of ways for older people, but being a member of an audience also brings its benefits.

Finally, case studies have been drawn from all four nations of the UK. **Devolution** means that structures, regulation, policies, powers and resources regarding local government, older people and the arts are different in the four jurisdictions of the UK. Structural change has been greater in some places than others. For instance, the number of Councils in Northern Ireland has been cut from 26 to 11 in the last few years. Even so, the general principles and thrust of the argument remain the same.

THE BENEFITS OF THE ARTS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The arts have an intrinsic value and for many people are indispensable in some form to giving their lives purpose, meaning, joy and delight. Access to culture is a human right and is regarded as such by the United Nations. Beyond this, it is increasingly accepted that the arts have many other benefits, for instance their role as an economic driver, including in regeneration, is recognised by many local authorities, including in generating tourism.

Outlined below are some key benefits of the arts for older people which have a particular relevance for local authorities, such as improving mental and physical health and well-being, including in tackling loneliness.

Mental and physical health and well-being

There is a growing body of scientific evidence as to the positive effects of the arts on physical and mental health and well-being. In 2000, Dr Gene Cohen undertook a seminal study which was published in *The Gerontologist*². The study was a randomised control trial of 300 people with a median age of 80. One group was involved in arts programmes and the other was not. The findings were statistically significant, showing that the arts participants had: better health; fewer doctor visits; less medication usage and increased activities and social engagement. The conclusion drawn was that a very significant reduction in public expenditure could be achieved through greater involvement in the arts by older people.

In 2011, the Baring Foundation commissioned the Mental Health Foundation to conduct a systematic review of peer reviewed literature which was published as *An evidence review of the impact of participatory arts on older people*. They came to the following conclusions regarding mental and physical well-being:

- Engagement in participatory arts can lead to increased confidence and self-esteem.
- Participating in community arts can counterbalance low mood and anxiety after loss.
- For people living with dementia the arts can improve cognitive functioning, communication, self-esteem, enjoyment of life, memory and creative thinking.
- Particular art forms may lend themselves more than others to significant physical health improvements (such as cardio-vascular, joint mobility and breathing control) including dance, singing and playing musical instruments.
- Involvement in participatory arts can have the added bonus of a consequent increase in general daily activity.

Overall the report came to the conclusion that 'it is evident that engaging with participatory art can improve the well-being of older people and mediate against the negative effects of becoming older'.

This conclusion has been given the most authoritative backing by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). In its guidance note on *Older People – Independence and mental wellbeing of older people* published in December 2015 and followed up in a standard, NICE recommends that service providers with a remit for older people, including local authorities:

'Provide a range of group activities, including multi-component activities combining one or more of the following:

² *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 46, No 6, pp. 726-734.

- Singing programmes, in particular, those involving professionally-led community choirs
- Arts craft and other creative activities.^{3†}

This guidance relates to public health – that is, funding for work in the community.

And a word on loneliness...

Loneliness is not confined to older people but it is a pressing issue for many due to changes that occur later in life which are likely to increase the risk of isolation. It is estimated that over 1 million people aged over 65 are lonely. Loneliness also correlates strongly with other problems and is associated with poor physical and mental health. Older people can feel isolated living alone in the community if they have nobody visiting them to whom they have an emotional attachment, even if they do have visits from health and social care professionals. This can also be true in shared living conditions such as care homes.

The arts are an effective way to address loneliness but tend to be overlooked by older people's services, both voluntary and statutory. There are, however, some examples of such work in *Tackling loneliness in older age – The role of the arts* published by the Baring Foundation in 2012 in partnership with the Campaign to End Loneliness. It is accepted that loneliness and social isolation is a health risk of similar significance to obesity, smoking and substance abuse.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ARTS AND OLDER PEOPLE – OPPORTUNITIES

“Local authorities are ideally placed to encourage arts for older people due to their combination of roles and interests.”

Local authorities (especially unitary and upper tier ones) are ideally placed to encourage arts for older people due to their combination of roles and interests in health and well-being; arts and culture; older people's services; social inclusion; and community leadership.

³ NICE guideline (NG32), December 2015, para 1.2.1.

Health and well-being

The allocation of a responsibility and some resources regarding public health to local authorities in England by the Government in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 has been a great opportunity, as well as a challenge. Public Health Directors have a statutory place on Health and Well-being Boards which in turn take the lead in determining local need as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. These have become the main mechanism for local authorities to influence the Clinical Commissioning Groups as the local decision-makers for NHS funding.

There are a multitude of issues that deserve attention within public health strategies (early intervention and prevention, housing and advice services, to name but a few). Their advocates will see them all as candidates for attention and resources. However, the official recognition of the case for the arts by NICE should be an encouragement to local commissioners to fund arts activities for older people. The case for the relevance of the arts for the physical and mental well-being of older people has been further emphasised by an extensive and authoritative inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. Its report, *Creative Health*, was published in July 2017 and also underlines the importance of local authorities in this sphere.

Some local authorities have relevant specific strategies, for example, for people living

with dementia. Around 850,000 people live in the UK with dementia and most people living in care homes will have a dementia diagnosis. The arts have much to offer people living with dementia and there is particularly strong evidence as to the benefits of singing and music. There are many project approaches available to local authorities to use the arts in this context and arts organisations themselves are becoming

“The official recognition of the case for the arts by NICE should be an encouragement to local commissioners to fund arts for older people.”

much more aware of their role. In 2015, the Baring Foundation coordinated the publication of *Becoming a dementia-friendly arts venue: A practical guide*.

Arts and cultural services

Where the responsibility for the arts lies in a local authority will vary greatly as structures have become diversified, but what is universal is the pressure which these funds and officers are finding themselves under. Some authorities will continue to directly run arts organisations, for instance concert and theatre venues, but more and more are placing these in independent trusts.

Although only a minority of museums and galleries overall are run by local authorities, so far it is more likely that these will remain within local authority control. Many museums and galleries already think hard about how they can engage with older people, some spurred on by work with older people developed by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a programme called Meet Me At MOMA. An important source of support and expertise is the Age-Friendly Museums Network, hosted by the British Museum and funded by the Baring Foundation.

Although direct management of arts provision will become less common, local authorities continue to fund the arts, albeit in most cases with shrinking budgets. Often local authority arts officers will play a key role in drawing additional resources into an area, for instance recently in the Arts Council England's Creative People and Places Fund.

Each of these roles allows the art service or its equivalent in a local authority to consider the cultural needs and ambitions of older people and to combine these where appropriate with other aspects of the authority's response to older people, for instance in adult social care. There are a number of fine examples of this in the case studies at the end of this report.

“Local authority arts officers can play a key role in drawing additional resources into an area.”

Finally, it is important not to forget another hard-pressed service, local libraries. There are many opportunities for libraries to be a first port of call for culture for older people. This can be especially fruitful as a partnership between older people's organisations and arts organisations. A collective of cultural organisations in Wiltshire has, for example, recently won funding from the Arts Council England and Baring Foundation Celebrating Age fund to offer opportunities for activities and live performances in libraries and community centres.

Older people's services and social care

A local authority has a number of roles regarding its older residents. It can choose, for instance, to fund a variety of voluntary organisations to provide services. However financial pressures faced by local authorities have meant that they have very often felt compelled to restrict themselves to statutory requirements around social care. Even there it has been common to raise thresholds for eligibility in order to ration supply against dwindling budgets.

All local authorities will acknowledge though, that it is usually both better for an older person as well as cheaper for the local authority, for that older person to stay at home as long as possible rather than go into residential care. However, this does mean that people living in residential care tend to be much frailer than they would have been one or two decades ago. Although the case has been proved that early action and preventative services for older people have clear overall savings compared with much more expensive clinical and social care interventions, in a climate of cuts some local authorities are focussing only on acute need.

The arts have a role to play here. This can either be through their use in day care to make this more attractive and enlivening or sometimes through taking them into a person's own home. An especially bold example can be seen in the case study of the London Borough of Lewisham in this report (page 19) where the borough has funded an arts centre, The Albany, and specialist arts organisation, Entelechy Arts to provide day care.

Only 6-8% of care home provision in England is run by local authorities. Where that is the case, they are ideally placed to consider the integration of the arts into the running of the home. However local authorities have a much greater role in

commissioning places in residential care and, in so doing, considering what quality of life an older person may have there, including in terms of the arts and cultural activities. The amounts that local authorities may feel able to pay per placement, however, may weaken their leverage in negotiating for better quality

of services as these fees may sometimes barely cover the basics of care. These matters are considered in more depth in a joint publication by the National Care Forum, the National Association for the Provision of Activities for Older People (NAPA) and the Baring Foundation published in 2011 called *Creative Homes*. This included ten case studies of good practice.

“In Lewisham, the borough has funded an arts centre to provide day care.”

The arts can play a valuable role not only in the lives of residents but also in the working lives of the paid carers. They can help carers engage with residents in new ways and learn more about them, for instance through the creation of memory boxes and through reminiscence. Carers can develop their own creative skills which is likely to increase their job satisfaction. Ladder to the Moon, a participatory arts company, has undertaken research showing that this even reduces absenteeism and improves staff retention, an important issue to remember in low paid work where employers can find recruitment challenging. A study by MB Associates for Suffolk Artlink estimated a Social Return on Investment of £4.20 for every £1 for a programme called Creative Carers where artists instilled a creative approach in care homes.

Interest in the role of arts in social care is certainly increasing, for instance, within the English umbrella bodies for not-for-profit care providers (the National Care Forum - NCF) and for the private sector (Care England). NCF runs annual awards on the use of the arts in care homes. In England, the regulator the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has been clear about the value they place on culture and the arts in care homes and now requires that to be deemed outstanding a care home must demonstrate creativity. The Baring Foundation has supported the Social Care Institute for Excellence to put online a wealth of advice, case studies and resources as to how care homes can use the arts. In Scotland, the Care Inspectorate has produced a resource pack on the arts which has been distributed to all care homes. In Wales, Age Cymru supported by the Arts Council Wales and the Baring Foundation has run 'artist in residence' schemes in over 100 care homes. The Baring Foundation is also supporting an initiative called a Choir in Every Care Home run by Live Music Now.

Finally, personalised budgets are becoming an ever more important aspect of social care. So far there have been few examples of these successfully being used to pay for the arts for older people but Escape Arts (Stratford-upon-Avon) have used this mechanism for people with dementia, as has Equal Arts (Gateshead, Newcastle upon Tyne).

Social inclusion and community development

Local authorities are fundamentally concerned with building communities which are inclusive of all of society and that are good places for everyone to live and to thrive. This has had many different incarnations over time, from community development in the 1970s to 'place shaping' in the last decade, but the principles at the heart of this work are the same. The local authority is a democratic institution which needs to listen and respond to all its citizens.

The arts are especially effective at giving a voice to those who tend to be ignored and at building relationships across societal divides. This is true too when it comes to older people. The most obvious instance for this is the great variety of

intergenerational arts across the country, perhaps typified by the well-known specialist arts organisation in the East End of London, Magic Me. Typically, primary school children visit a care home over a term to produce a piece of art, in the process building up relationships that give joy and better understanding to both generations.

Care homes can become isolated from the communities that surround them. Indeed they even may be objects of fear, where younger people dread the prospect of spending the end of their lives. This is a dangerous tendency and needs to be challenged. Other countries are addressing this in innovative ways. In Finland, for example, a local authority in Helsinki has set up and runs Comprehensive Service Centres. These comprise residential care, including for people with dementia, along with a range of community facilities in the same building. The entrance might include the local library and the in-house restaurant is good enough for a visitor to want to spend their lunch time there. Once again the arts can play a powerful role. The Baring Foundation has funded 17 exemplary projects across the UK to link care homes to their communities. Descriptions of many of these can be found in *After you are two* by Kate Organ, published by the Baring Foundation in 2013.

Older people, including those with severe restrictions on their lives, are still citizens and part of the community. They have a right to be heard and the arts can be a more effective and creative way of doing this than traditional consultations. An example of this can be found in the London Borough of Haringey where arts venue, Jackson's Lane, has been using Forum Theatre with older residents.

“Older people have a right to be heard and the arts can be a more effective and creative way of doing this than traditional consultations.”

Leadership and coordination

Perhaps most importantly of all, the local authority has a preeminent role in drawing together and making coherent the needs of the local population and the services which they are receiving from the public, voluntary and private sector. This unique strategic position is only strengthened by inclusion of the arts.

The prime example of this must be Manchester which is described in more detail as a case study at the end of this report. The City Council has mandated 'making Manchester a great place to grow old in' as a central policy, underpinned by a Valuing Older People's Unit, and has woven this thinking into all its services and policies. The Unit has brought together all the City's main arts bodies into a unique working group to create a cultural offer for older people. This is an excellent model which deserves

replication and which has required a very small amount of resource from the local authority whilst leveraging in substantial resources from others such as the Big Lottery Fund. Most importantly of all, it has achieved a world class cultural offer for its older citizens.

The Baring Foundation has supported a number of exchanges between age-friendly cities to consider culture with positive results. For instance, Brighton City Council now also has regular meetings between the local authority and many stakeholders for culture and heritage to discuss how to improve its offer for older people.

Manchester's age-friendly city approach also inspired Fonds Vor Cultuur Participatie (FVCP), a Dutch state funder similar to the arts councils in the UK, to devise a new programme of its own. Arts organisations are invited to bid for a grant of 40,000 euros over two years which must be matched by the local authority. So far ten organisations have received this accolade and a total of 24 will do so after future funding rounds. In an agreement with FVCP, the local authority must consider how it can incorporate age-friendly culture into its policies and programmes. The programme includes an annual conference and showcase for each city on the issue. All the cities are then visited by a judging panel and a further prize of 20,000 euros is awarded to the best.

CONCLUSION

The combination of these five roles and interests of local authorities – health and well-being; arts and culture; older people's services and social care; social inclusion and community development; and leadership and coordination – makes them uniquely well suited to promote arts in the lives of older people. Against this must be acknowledged the reality of deep financial cuts which are forcing some local authorities to retreat into a minimalist conception of statutory duties. This report argues that not only are the arts an entitlement for all, including older people, but they have additional benefits which can help local authorities deliver their own objectives. This is especially the case in health and social care, where the arts can be a key ingredient in a range of measures which can make older people more able to continue to live at home, or if they move into care, can make that more successful both for them and their families, as well as for the people who care for them. The arts can be effectively woven into many existing local authority strategies, for instance regarding dementia.

However most local authorities have yet to accept the role that arts and older people can play in delivering their objectives, even potentially in reducing their costs. As the population continues to age along with accompanying financial pressures, the case for local authority leadership in arts and older people will only become stronger.

Case studies

THE BARING FOUNDATION IS GRATEFUL TO COLLEAGUES FOR IDENTIFYING AND IN SOME CASES WRITING THE CASE STUDIES BELOW.

BELFAST CITY COUNCIL

Belfast City Council and Belfast Strategic Partnership aim to make Belfast an age-friendly city by adopting the World Health Organisation approach and have developed an Age-friendly Belfast Plan 2014-2017 with the support of older people across the city.

The vision is that Belfast will be **a city where older people live life to the full**. This includes, promoting a positive view of ageing, reducing isolation, encouraging participation and creating age-friendly neighbourhoods.

The Council is convinced of the significance of the arts in realising this vision. A key action in the *Age-friendly Belfast Plan* was for Belfast City Council to develop an annual Older People's Art Festival connecting with the Public Health Agency's regional Arts and Older Peoples' Programme delivered through Arts Care and the Arts Council for Northern Ireland.

Several arts festivals were organised, reaching 2,000 people in two large events in 2014 and 2015. However, it has now been concluded that it would be more effective to deliver programmes in a range of venues and work with partners to engage people in long-term programmes.

In October 2016, the City worked in partnership to deliver a Positive Ageing Month programme, with over 200 diverse events being organised across the city and approximately 10,000 older people participating throughout the month. As well as arts and cultural programmes, Positive Ageing Month also included active living and lifelong learning activities. These activities were supported and hosted by over 60 partner organisations and the programme included links to over 100 ongoing programmes and well as bespoke events. A number of the arts organisations received dementia awareness training prior to the month, and some have signed up to the Age-friendly Belfast Charter and are now developing specific dementia-friendly events and showings.

Active, socially engaged older people are less likely to become lonely or isolated. It is very encouraging to see people enjoying the activities and for us to receive positive feedback from the participants. This highlights how important it is to continue providing opportunities for our older people to get involved with the cultural life of their city:

“I’m exhausted! Best October ever.”

“It’s been great and you keep learning every time you come.”

“I am on my own, so was a bit apprehensive about coming but everyone has been great.”

“It’s amazing how happy this has made my mum.”



Play Resource Warehouse 'Strut and Stroll' project, part of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Arts and Older People's programme. Photo © Brian Morrison

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Lost in Art (Ymgolli mewn Celf) is a project aimed at people living in the community with dementia. The sessions are led by professional artists who are also Dementia Friends.

The aim of the project is to explore the role of the visual arts in addressing issues which can affect people with dementia, including social isolation, confidence, communication and quality of life and well-being. People with dementia often experience poor quality of life due to reduced independence, reduced activity and reduced social contact. This reduction of social contact is often the result of the stigma associated with the condition and in light of this, there has been increased interest in finding activities which people with dementia can engage with and enjoy without feeling patronised or stigmatised, and which stimulate the participants both mentally and physically, making them feel valued and deemed capable. One such activity is art. Indeed, Bangor University's evaluation of the *Lost in Art* programme⁴ identified a range of benefits which included suggested improvements in communication, mood, and memory.

Lost in Art has been running for five years in Denbighshire, funded by the Arts Council of Wales and Denbighshire County Council. The project runs in 11 week blocks and has been based at Ruthin Craft Centre and in various locations in Rhyl, where participants are encouraged to engage with current exhibitions. The participants are sometimes, and as a personal choice, joined at workshops by a family member where they are encouraged to work both together and separately.

Each project includes a visit by children from a local primary school. Following a visit to the school by a member of the Alzheimer's Society, where pupils learn about dementia and become Dementia Friends, the children and their teacher spend an afternoon engaged in artistic activity with *Lost in Art* members, getting to know one another and enjoying the opportunity for some intergenerational exchanges.

Lost in Art was started by and led by Denbighshire Arts Service, Denbighshire County Council. The project is part of a regional *Lost in Art* collaboration between Conwy County Borough Council, Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council. *Lost in Art* was developed with the support of the Dementia Services Development Centre at Bangor University. The *Lost in Art* Regional programme builds on these ideas, providing an art programme across four counties for people with dementia to enjoy.

⁴ *Lost in Art too...? Evaluation of art sessions provided by Denbighshire County Council, 2012, see: <http://dcdc.bangor.ac.uk/evaluations.php.en>*

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

Gwynedd is a rural county in Wales. It is very aware of the challenges of dealing with social isolation and the role of the arts in this. Its Community Arts Unit has a Community Grants Fund, which amongst other things brings people together through festivals and performances.

Recently, £12,000 has been awarded specifically to reach isolated older people. The three-month project has been led by professional musicians from Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias, a local music school

Eighteen older people at Awel y Coleg's extra care scheme in Bala were joined by the pupils, ranging in age from four to seven, from Ysgol Bro Tryweryn school, Frongoch, to participate in three specially created music sessions.

Introductory sessions were held at both the school and Awel y Coleg at the beginning of the project, before both generations came together to share their musical abilities and talents at Grŵp Cynefin's extra care facility at Bala.

The project *Music Memories – Connecting Generations* was piloted using alternative methods of reaching and working with older people in two rural areas – Bala and Gellilydan near Blaenau Ffestiniog.

82-year-old Helen Margaret Roberts from Bala, said: "I've thoroughly enjoyed the sessions, as it brought both of my great joys together – singing and spending time with children".

Siân Ellis from Grŵp Cynefin housing association, which owns Awel y Coleg said, "Our residents are fortunate to have community facilities, including a restaurant and rooms suitable for hosting activities and relaxing, as well as their own personal and private flats. But loneliness and the feeling of isolation is a real issue for many older people in north Wales".

At the last session, friends, families and parents were invited to attend a concert-style performance at Awel y Coleg, where residents and children performed some of the songs. They included Welsh favourites *Oes Gafr eto?*, *Holi a Ci Ci* and a special song composed by one of William Mathias' tutors, Marie-Claire Howorth.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Kent began a journey to embed arts and culture into commissioned services back in 2012. An initial pilot with public health focussed on improving the well-being of

young people and resulted in the *Arts and cultural commissioning toolkit*⁵, to help arts providers understand the commissioning process. This early work led to Kent being selected as a national partner in the Cultural Commissioning Programme⁶ (CCP). Working with New Economics Foundation (NEF), Kent developed a theory of change to map the short-, medium- and long-term aims, focusing on influencing policy and colleagues, changing internal processes and capacity building in the local creative sector.

Kent used the commissioning of a community mental health and well-being service



A 'Value of Touch' workshop run by artist Wendy Daws and Kent Association for the Blind, supported by Kent County Council. Photo by: Gary Weston - <http://www.spaghettiweston.com>.

⁵ See: <http://www.artscommissioningtoolkit.com>

⁶ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/public-services/cultural-commissioning-programme>

to test how arts and culture could be embedded into service provision. Using a strategic partner and delivery network model, and a shift to commissioning for outcomes, meant that the market could be opened up to providers not traditionally engaged in public service provision. So far, six arts and cultural organisations have been awarded innovation grants. Whilst these are not part of the mainstream offer, the hope is that those which prove to be effective can move to longer term delivery in the future. It's a big step from where we started when commissioning arts and culture in this context was considered risky and quite an alien concept. The challenges and lessons learnt feature in a joint NEF and CCP report, *The Art of Commissioning*.

Building on this, and drawing on widespread evidence that participating in creative activities can positively benefit the lives and health of older people, commissioners in Kent are keen to ensure that arts and culture become part of the new older person's well-being offer. In Age UK's recently published Index of Wellbeing (February 2017) 'creative and cultural participation' (of all 40 indicators) makes the biggest overall contribution to well-being.

As part of this work, KCC is putting resources into nurturing partnerships between arts and VCS organisations for commissioning, and for joint initiatives outside of this context. The work to date has shown that this is the most realistic way of arts becoming part of mainstream service delivery and that partnerships can create a more inclusive offer and better outcomes.

Over the past year KCC has supported a number of arts organisations to develop their work for older people. Moving Memory Dance Theatre Company is delivering creative movement activities in a range of settings and has been developing its

ground-breaking 'Digital Doris' kit to incorporate digital projection into participatory and performance work. Artist Wendy Daws has been delivering 'Value of Touch' – a wonderful series of workshops and exhibitions of art created by blind and partially sighted members of the Kent Association for the Blind.

Ideas Test have been working in

partnership with Swale CVS and Swale Seniors to deliver 'Young At HeArt' – creative activities for people aged 55+. Bright Shadow has been honing its skills in creative activities that are fun, meaningful and accessible to people living with dementia and their carers.

“ Work to date has shown that... partnerships can create a more inclusive offer and better outcomes. ”

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

Lewisham has consistently recognised the contribution that arts organisations can make in supporting vibrant, healthy and inclusive communities.

Within Lewisham, there are an increasing number of lonely older people, many living with debilitating long-term health conditions. Frail older people are at greater risk of adverse outcomes, including disability, hospitalisation and admission to care homes. Frailty leads to loss of independence and impairs quality of life and psychological well-being. It poses challenges for families and caregivers as well as health, social and other support services.

Austerity has brought significant cuts to local social care budgets and established models of providing day care and social support are no longer sustainable. Lewisham recognised the importance of thinking and acting differently, shifting its focus from delivering services to meet needs to supporting the capacity of its communities to become more resilient in meeting needs on their own, with clear pathways to specialist support and guidance where needed.

Meet Me at the Albany grew out of a question shared by Lewisham senior managers with two ACE National Portfolio Organisations: What if frail, isolated older people had the opportunity to go to an arts centre instead of a day centre? In addressing this question the authority demonstrated a clear willingness to collaborate and develop a strong and effective partnership with The Albany – an arts centre in Deptford and Entelechy Arts, our two arts partners.

The programme successfully bid for funding from an innovation fund created for the voluntary sector by the Council and was awarded an initial grant of £130k in 2013/2014. These funds have since been renewed. There was a willingness to take risks with the proven track records of the two cultural partners acting as a guarantee.

“What if frail, isolated older people had the opportunity to go to an arts centre instead of a day centre?”

Now there are over 100 isolated older people engaged in arts activity on a weekly basis. The local social housing corporation has added its own investment with artists now embedded in sheltered accommodation units for the elderly across Lewisham. The initiative has caught the imagination of local residents and there is now a large and

active cohort of local volunteers whose time, energy and fundraising skills are contributing to the legacy and sustainability of the programme. In addition participants pay a modest fee for attendance, lunch and transport.

And of course the model has produced great art. Meet Me has provided new

“The initiative has caught the imagination of local residents and there is now a large and active cohort of local volunteers.”

contexts for artists to have their own practice challenged and developed by working co-productively with (formerly) isolated older people. Meet Me has been cited by the Arts Council England in its journal *Create* as a model of best practice⁷. The journalist Tanya Gold wrote: ‘This is either a unique experiment in provision for the elderly, if you write like a bureaucrat, or something

as lovely and hopeful as a poem’. Meet Me was also cited as a best practice model in the UK Government’s 2016 Culture White Paper.

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Manchester is one of a small number of Age Friendly Cities globally recognised by the World Health Organization. From this prestigious position it has always understood the importance of culture, as seen in its strategy *Making Manchester a great place to grow older in: 2010–2020*. A central unit in the local authority brings together the NHS, the voluntary sector, other public services and older people in a powerful and long-term partnership.

The centrepiece of this for the arts is the Age Friendly Cultural Working Group which is supported by a part-time coordinator.

“Manchester’s Age Friendly Cultural Working Group brings together 34 arts and heritage organisations from the internationally famous to smaller and newer groups.”

This mechanism brings together 34 arts and heritage organisations from the internationally famous Whitworth Gallery (Museum of the Year 2015) and Halle Orchestra to smaller and newer groups. Each of them considers what they can do alone and together to give the best possible offer to older residents. This has resulted in much innovation, such as the community radio ALLFM

creating Vintage FM, where older people train to become radio presenters and produce locally relevant arts programmes. Another innovation has been age-friendly

⁷ Create, Arts Council England, 2014: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/create/create-issue-1#section-6>

programming specifically for the Chorlton Arts festival and a pop-up museum.

A key product of the Age Friendly Cultural Working Group is the Culture Champions scheme. This began in 2011 and since then over 140 older people have been recruited and supported as community ambassadors. They use their networks of older residents to encourage them to try out a variety of arts events throughout the year. This is helped by a regular newsletter packed with events and activities – from the Manchester International Festival's My Festival Takeover taking place in care homes to Music for Dementia sessions happening in a local community centre.

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

Nottingham City Council (NCC) continues to work to deliver bespoke arts projects, in order to enhance the wellbeing of older people living in the city. It has long established projects and works in partnership with cultural venues and arts organisations including: City Arts; Theatre Royal and the Royal Concert Hall; Nottingham Contemporary; Nottingham Playhouse and the New Art Exchange. All these organisations are funded directly by NCC and as part of their agreements they make specific provision for older people either within their programme or as special projects, often raising additional funds from charities and trusts.

Imagine is a three year arts project delivered into care homes, funded by the Baring Foundation, the Arts Council England and Nottingham City Council and delivered in partnership with City Arts and the University of Nottingham as a research partner. This project's budget ended in September 2017; however one element of the project

– the Armchair Gallery – has generated a distinct brand and secured additional funding from the Nominet Trust and the Baring Foundation to continue using digital technologies to bring great artworks from national collections to older people in a variety of community venues in the city where they live or visit. The project will work nationally with distinct cultural venues including the Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford, The Lowry in Manchester, Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Mr Straw's House, Nottinghamshire.

“ These organisations are funded directly by NCC and as part of their agreements they make specific provision for older people either within their programme and or as special projects. ”

The Imagine partnership has also been successful in securing Celebrating Age funding (from the Arts Council England and Baring Foundation) to deliver another

three-year arts programme, celebrating the artistic contribution older people make by commissioning new work that will be shared locally, regionally and nationally by working with venues throughout the UK.

The Theatre Royal and Royal Concert Hall Nottingham have been running weekly arts courses for the over-55s since 2011, following a regular dance workshop programme with Northern Ballet. The venue now offers over 120 weekly places for courses in dance, creative writing, song-writing and drama. Led by experienced professional tutors, each course provides stimulating and challenging material for its participants, as well as providing a place for friendship and socialising. Feedback from participants has always been very positive... "So good! I can now put my socks on without sitting down" and "Very imaginative... felt my confidence grow". The venue is also able to provide bespoke 55+ workshops via its many visiting companies. This has seen internationally renowned companies including the Birmingham Royal Ballet, Rambert and the Contemporary Dance Company of Cuba working with older people.



Museum Care Ambassadors, an award-winning programme supported by Nottingham's Museum Service.

Nottingham's museum service recently won an award for its Museum Care Ambassadors volunteer programme. The programme sets out to inspire older people by bringing artefacts from the museum's collection into care homes, allowing them access to collections they wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to visit due to mobility and health issues. The volunteers train and learn how to develop sessions to stimulate discussion around a theme or topic, allowing older people to reconnect with local heritage, arts and culture. From May to December 2016 a small team of dedicated volunteers gave 256 hours of their own time setting up and delivering sessions to older people in care homes. This has brought about real change and has had a direct impact on people's happiness: "I can't wait for these sessions to happen they are the highlight of my week" said one lady, and "I never thought I would get so emotional seeing things we used as children, it's a real treat".

OLDHAM COUNCIL

Oldham Council has various provision for creative ageing, such as the Singing the Brain Sessions which are run every Wednesday afternoon by the Music Service and the Memory Clinics run by the Library Service, in addition to other offers such as Books on Prescription. However much of the arts work with older people is developed and delivered by Gallery Oldham which is run by the local authority. The gallery and museum now sit within the authority's Health and Wellbeing Directorate. They have a long tradition of delivering craft activities and reminiscence workshops in care homes and day care centres throughout the borough. The following projects have been delivered by the Gallery.

Making Memories

Making Memories was a two-year creative reminiscence project funded by the Baring Foundation. Gallery Oldham worked in partnership with arts organisation Arthur and Martha, taking their collections to care homes, housing providers and day centres. They used their collections to inspire poetry, creative writing, printmaking, textiles and printing activities. An easy-to-follow, recipe-style book for creative reminiscence was published.

Making Memories (2)

Using the evaluations and feedback from participants engaged in the Making Memories project, Gallery Oldham then developed its core offer for older people further. This now includes:

- Past Times reminiscence boxes available to hire
- A bespoke creative reminiscence box service for care homes, with training for staff
- See the Me, a bespoke theatre based training package tailored for groups, carers, community organisations and health professionals
- Gander and Gab – a gallery trail created in partnership with Springboard carers group
- Curator talks, handling sessions and arts activities for a variety of groups including for example, the Stroke Association, Springboard and Henshaws.

Live Well, Life Matters

In 2016, based on a borough-wide training needs analysis Gallery Oldham teamed up with Pennine Care and Age UK to pilot monthly advice and information sessions for carers and the cared for, alongside arts activities, reminiscences sessions and

“ This project was well received despite very little marketing, no budget and only the goodwill of partner organisations to sustain it. ”

gallery tours. This project was well received despite very little marketing, no budget and only the goodwill of partner organisations to sustain it.

Rag-a-Muffin Group

This group meets at the gallery once a month and works with poet Ian McMillan, photographer Ian Beesley, and comic artist Tony Husband. Funded by the University of Central Lancashire, this project forms part of a wider research brief commissioned by the university.

Pop-up Museum

In 2016-17, Gallery Oldham partnered with Dutch arts organisation Stichting SMAAK to bring its concept of a pop-up museum to care homes and supported housing providers in Oldham. Highly innovative, with older people trained as curators and guides, local artists lending pieces and a full month long programme of activities, this idea is one of many that Gallery Oldham hopes to progress. The idea was showcased at the gallery during Dementia Awareness week and consultation with stakeholders, partner organisations and local people has been positive as third

and fourth age older people are actively involved.

Encountering the Unexpected

In partnership with and funded by the University of Leicester, this project aims to introduce older people to and engage them in Gallery Oldham's natural history collections. The gallery has organised 'encounters' in the most unexpected of places – cafes, shops, trams etc. Utilising Oldham Theatre Workshop's extensive alumni network, they have created a character, Primrose Pudicum, The Edwardian Enthusiast. Primrose accompanies the objects, interacting with people and engaging them in discussion. This form of outreach has generated much interest and has generated a good response from older people who then feed in to the gallery's regular natural history sessions and talks.



'Encountering the Unexpected' opens up Gallery Oldham's natural history collections to older people in the area.

WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

“The Luminate Festival has one clear message: that creativity has no age!”

Using both ongoing and stand-alone projects, Community Arts in the Council has worked with key partners on several projects that encourage older people to be more physically active, reduce isolation, increase confidence and highlight the achievements of older people in the region.

The Luminate Festival is a nationwide arts festival for older people that runs over the month of October with events from the Borders to the Shetland Isles. The Luminate Festival has one clear message: that creativity has no age!

In partnership with older people's groups, Community Arts has delivered several events at the Luminate Festival, working with Craigshill Good Neighbourhood Network (CGNN) and Generation Arts, including the following.

Well Verse – after a series of workshops with poet Angela McCrum and filmmaker Alistair Cook, participants created film/poems that were screened at Howden Park Centre. The participants worked in two groups; CGNN men's group and Generation Arts. Nine film/poems were created and have already received much critical acclaim. This was a project supported by Digital Scotland and Luminate invited international contingents from Japan, Finland and Ireland to the screening to this exemplar project. The films are now available online at <http://www.luminatescotland.org/video-gallery>

Day of Dance – now in its fourth year and supported by Creative Scotland, 150 older dancers came together for a celebration of dance at the Howden Park Centre. As well as series of workshops, aerial dance, seated Charleston and film, participants also enjoyed performances by older dancers from the Scottish Ballet, Dancebase and Generation Arts. This is the first year that Generation Dance, a group of older people who love to dance, has performed – they were encouraged by seeing other groups from different regions perform and set up their own performance group. Creative Scotland sees this whole project as a model that could be widened across Scotland with the possibility of European partnerships.

Burl & Purl Club Nite – participants from the Knit & Natter group worked with DJ Paul Traynor, learning mixing skills and swapping one set of needles for another. The group then held a 'Club Nite' for the wider community to enjoy the skills they had learnt. The group 'yarn bombed' the space and each participant completed a DJ set. STV filmed the event as part of a news bulletin.

Participants loved it:

"I never thought I could do it, it was amazing!!"

"It was fantastic learning how to mix the records and DJ-ing... never thought I'd be doing something like this at my age."

"I've never been to a disco before, that was great."

"Never danced so much in years."



A Burl & Purl Club Nite, created by Community Arts West Lothian and local partners for the Scotland-wide Luminare Creative Ageing Festival.

Resources

ORGANISATIONS

Arts Development UK is the professional association for those working in the creative industries in England and Wales and central to its membership are arts officers in local authorities. www.artsdevelopmentuk.org

The National Activity Providers Association (NAPA) is the leading charity dedicated to improving the provision of purposeful activities in care homes including the arts. www.napa-activities.com

WEBSITES

www.ageofcreativity.co.uk. A specialist website run by Age UK Oxfordshire, with a wealth of examples of arts work with older people.

[www.baringfoundation.org>publications>arts](http://www.baringfoundation.org/publications/arts). The Baring Foundation has published a number of relevant reports on the use of the arts with older people.

www.scie.org.uk. Supported by the Baring Foundation, the Social Care Institute for Excellence has assembled a wide range of good practice material and case studies for the use of the arts in care homes.

<https://achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/>. Resources to encourage singing in care homes.

<http://hub.careinspectorate.com/improvement/arts-in-care/>. A toolkit for arts in care produced by the Care Inspectorate in Scotland and Luminare.

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