



"I'm fully supportive of celebrating the arts and creativity in care settings. It's a powerful way to give voice to people's experience."
James Bullion
Care Quality Commission (CQC)

A Manager's Guide to Arts in Care Homes

Why and how to develop arts activities in your care home



"Art is freedom and expression – a tool which enables one to open up a person and discover their needs."

FATMA MAKALO
MANAGER, BRIDGESIDE LODGE

"The chance to try something new at my age doesn't seem possible but I've made so many things, some that I've given to my family members. I love the singing whilst we craft that sometimes just seems to happen."

AUBURN MERE
RESIDENT

"When I think of the future of arts in care homes I don't just think of paints and paper, I think about music, movement, drama, crafting, gardening, singing, writing, creating food, poetry and the digital arts. My motivation for introducing arts is because I understand how important creativity is to people who live in care homes, how excited people feel to learn something new and how the arts are tools for people to build connections and communicate with each other."

MARLENE KELLY
MANAGER, AUBURN MERE

"Art is not limited to paint and a brush; it involves anything creative that expresses your imagination. Since focusing on art, every day we see the benefits to the residents' wellbeing including improved hydration, nutrition and new friendships. Our art activities provide opportunities to learn something new and then a sense of achievement and pride in what has been created. We believe the atmosphere created by art helped us achieve an 'Outstanding' rating by CQC."

SHONA BRADBURY
MANAGER, APPLEBY HOUSE

"I passionately believe that just because someone lives in a care home they don't stop being entitled to high quality arts and culture, or to a participative experience that is more than just something to pass the time."

SUSAN LANGFORD
DIRECTOR / FOUNDER, MAGIC ME

"Arts and crafting have the ability to ignite, encourage and inspire. Crafting is a welcome distraction from dementia and gives my life purpose."

GAIL GREGORY
DEMENTIA CRAFTIVIST

"Much of the success we've had, especially since the pandemic has been the strength of relationship between our organisation and the staff in the care home. We learn so much about the day-to-day from chats with staff. Which residents especially need some musical attention on a particular day, who might be receiving end-of-life palliative care. Also the music being for the staff themselves as well as just for the residents."

THOM ROWLANDS
GENERAL MANAGER, THE SPITZ

"The Care Quality Commission is increasingly looking for ways in which care homes support people to express their individuality, and having an active arts programme in the care home is a terrific way in which this can be evidenced. So, arts are good for the person, good for the staff and good for the service - go on, dive in!"

ED WATKINSON
WATKINSON-CONSULTING LTD

A Manager's Guide to Arts in Care Homes

Why & how to develop arts activities in your care home

"I wholeheartedly endorse this 'Managers' guide for care homes'. The integration of arts and creativity into care homes has shown remarkable benefits for individuals, team members and the community. This guide provides valuable insights and practical steps to harness the transformative power of the arts in enhancing quality of care and overall wellbeing. I encourage care home managers to embrace these principles and embark on a journey that enhances care and enriches lives."

HILARY WOODHEAD EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NAPA

Contents

Introduction	4
1: What are the issues and challenges?	6
2: Practical ideas for getting started	14
3: Working with the Care Quality Commission	21
4: Further ideas and inspiration	26
Managers' guide to arts in care homes	30
Thanks & contributors	31



Photo by Ivan Gonzalez, Bradbury Grange Care Home.
Live Music Now musician Maz O-Connor Fleming

Introduction

At National Activity Providers Association (NAPA) - the UK's leading activity and engagement charity - we support care services to prioritise wellbeing and promote activity, arts and engagement. Our vision is of a UK where wellbeing, activity and engagement is an integral part of care provision, where people with care and support needs live meaningful and connected lives.

We know that this vision is desirable, realistic and achievable. Since NAPA began its work in 1997, we have seen so many examples of ways in which everyone in care communities - including individuals receiving care, staff teams, relatives and friends, volunteers and artist/facilitators - can benefit from access to the arts. By involving the wider local community, even more can be accomplished.

This guide aims to show care home managers how to deliver this vision of creative, connected, vibrant communities. We explore some of the issues and challenges in doing this work. We explain how you can capture what you are doing in your arts projects and use this evidence in your reporting to the Care Quality Commission. We show how managers can lead the way, and the sorts of practical steps you can take to get things moving. Ideas,

inspiring examples and links to a wide range of resources are also included.

Ultimately, NAPA hopes that care home managers show leadership in building arts-focused communities - showing their staff teams that the arts is part of their core, caring role; it's not a luxury or optional extra.

The guide has been developed by NAPA's Arts in Care Homes programme, working with three managers from care homes in England, incorporating input and suggestions from Activity Providers, care staff, artists and arts organisations. While the guide is aimed at care home managers, it may also be of interest to Activity Providers and other staff members interested in developing arts activities in care homes. For the purposes of this guide, we will refer to care homes for older people, but it may have relevance to managers of other types of care settings.

NAPA believes that all care homes have the potential to be creative, connected communities, offering a wide variety of person-centred, comprehensive arts activities and ongoing opportunities for cultural participation for everyone. We hope this guide helps managers in their efforts to achieve this.



Photo by Rich Rusk. Gecko for Magic Me's Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

NAPA's Position statement

Arts and care quality

The arts play a significant role in improving care quality in various ways:

- 1.** Engaging with the arts, such as through music, visual arts or performance, can have a positive impact on mental and emotional wellbeing. This is particularly important in care homes where individuals may be experiencing stress or anxiety.
- 2.** Encouraging providers to engage with the arts can help develop empathy and compassion. This, in turn, can lead to becoming more person-centred and improve relationships.
- 3.** For individuals who may have difficulty communicating verbally, the arts provide an alternative means of expression. The arts can be used to help individuals convey their emotions and experiences.
- 4.** Studies have shown that art interventions, including listening to music or engaging in art-based activities, can reduce stress and even alleviate pain. This can be particularly valuable for individuals' living with dementia.
- 5.** The arts offer diverse perspectives and can help providers better understand the cultural, social and individual backgrounds of individuals. This cultural competence is essential for providing equitable care.
- 6.** Incorporating the arts into care homes can make these environments more engaging and welcoming. Artwork, live performances or interactive exhibits can create a positive atmosphere that contributes to overall wellbeing.
- 7.** Training professionals in the arts, can improve their observation skills, creativity and ability to think critically. These skills can enhance their assessment and care planning abilities.

The arts can significantly improve care quality by addressing the emotional, psychological and cultural aspects of care and support. They promote holistic care, empathy and creativity, ultimately contributing to better experiences and outcomes.

1

The arts in care homes: What are the issues and the challenges?

“Culture here is defined as broadly as possible and rejects the notion of high and low art. It can be a favourite TV soap or a well-loved piece of orchestral music. Similarly, creativity can be humming a tune or an oil painting that takes a month to complete. The arts should also be defined as broadly as possible to include visual arts, including in the care home environment and outdoors; music and singing of all types; crafts including knitting; dance and performance; drama including film and TV; and photography, including the use of smart phones. It can range from circus skills to live comedy, from a granddaughter’s rapping to creative writing exercises with a local author and an invited school class.”

DAVID CUTLER DIRECTOR, THE BARING FOUNDATION

What do we mean by ‘art’?

Lots of people tend to think of ‘art’ as drawing or painting, but the arts mean much more than that. There is something to interest and involve everyone. There are many different types of art forms – visual arts (such as drawing, painting and sculpture), performance-based art (such as music, drama and dance), creative writing (including poetry and literature) and digital arts to name just a few.

Everyday creative activities such as cooking, crafts, sewing and calligraphy also come under the banner of ‘art’, and can be a friendly, accessible way of getting more arts activities into your care homes. Using nature as a stimulus for arts activities can be a lovely way of encouraging more use of gardens and outside spaces within care homes. As well as encouraging people to go outside, bringing in natural objects can be a great starting point for creative discussions and art activities.

NAPA wants to encourage care homes to offer more ways to get involved in the arts – whether

by people participating themselves or by enjoying other people’s artistic efforts, such as watching a performance or a film, listening to music, reading poems or learning about the history of art. We would also like to encourage more opportunities to do artistic activities such as painting, drawing, poetry, stories, music, dance, plays and sculpture. When developing person-centred arts, it is important to offer a wide range of art forms because each person’s responses and sensory reactions will vary hugely.

Benefits of arts in care homes

Arts activities and engagement can improve the wellbeing, health and happiness of all those who are living in, working in and visiting your care home. By developing a comprehensive person-centred arts offer, you will enable the people you support to live more purposeful, motivated and meaningful lives and increase job satisfaction and morale in your care staff. Research and anecdotal evidence suggest that involvement in and

access to the arts has multiple beneficial health outcomes for older people in terms of fewer falls, increased appetite, improved sleeping patterns and less anxiety.

A massive selling point for the arts is the potential to reduce costs in care provision. There is a body of related research around this, particularly highlighting the benefits of music in terms of alleviating anxiety for people living with dementia, resulting in a reduction in sedative medication being used and the cost implications of dance in terms of fall prevention.

"We found when Live Music Now were coming into the home the atmosphere would completely change. Music evokes so many different memories, but it can also be used as a prompt to bring people together. For residents who can become anxious and agitated as a result of their underlying dementia/mental health, the intervention of live music performances has reduced their anxiety resulting in them taking part in a meaningful activity, that has promoted their wellbeing, therefore having good quality outcomes for people. I think that the biggest impact overall that we are seeing through your input... is a 50% reduction in the use of all sedative medications being administered and 100% reduction of all PRN medication!"

ADAM HESSELDEN
MANAGER, WOFFINGTON HOUSE
CARE HOME, WALES



READ ►

Live Music Now - case study on the impact of live music in social care and care homes

An arts offer can also be a unique selling point for your home, helping to boost occupancy rates and attract and retain staff. A good comprehensive person-centred arts offer can provide useful evidence for CQC visits and help in the marketing of your care home.

Person-centred offer

Access to the arts can serve as a distinctive selling point, benefiting both your occupancy rates and staff recruitment and retention efforts.

Beyond its aesthetic value, a comprehensive person-centred arts offer can provide practical advantages, such as supporting regulatory compliance during Care Quality Commission (CQC) visits and enhancing your care home's marketing strategy.

Just as care within your home is personalised, so should be your arts and cultural offerings. This means taking various factors into account:

- Ensure that all artistic activities are thoughtfully designed and planned to cater to the unique needs of each individual. This might involve adapting the content or format to suit individual capabilities and preferences.
- Recognise that individuals will possess varying levels of physical and cognitive abilities. The arts offer should accommodate these differences, encouraging everyone to participate and benefit.
- Individuals have their own distinct likes and dislikes. By aligning arts activities with their preferences, you can create a more engaging and meaningful experience. For instance, an individual who loves classical music may like to attend a discussion on music history.
- Individuals may respond differently to group and one-to-one interactions. Some thrive in a social setting, benefiting from group art classes or performances, while others may need more personalised attention to fully engage with artistic activities.

By ensuring that your arts offer is person-centred and accommodates the diverse needs, abilities, and preferences of each individual, you not only enhance their quality of life but also strengthen your care home's reputation and appeal to prospective customers, creating a win-win situation for all stakeholders.

Your community

The most important resources in your care home are the people – the people who live there, the staff teams providing the care, and the relatives, friends and volunteers who visit regularly. All these people have a wealth of creative talents and skills, even if these are hidden or undiscovered. By identifying the interests and skills of all these people, and nurturing, supporting and developing them, your creative community will start to grow and flourish.

Connecting with the wider community can bring new energy and ideas into care homes. Intergenerational connections with local nurseries, schools and colleges have massive benefits for both parties. Local museums, archives or arts centres are increasingly open to developing activities or projects with the care sector or sharing resources. Local shops, organisations and groups may also wish to be involved in arts and cultural activities or projects.

Care and arts partnerships

Partnership work with artists and arts organisations can play an important part in the development of creative care home communities. There is now a growing number of artists and arts organisations who have a lot of experience of working in care homes, resulting in a deeper understanding of the needs of these communities and how their arts practice can contribute to quality care provision. Working with arts partners can result in a richer, more diverse and adventurous arts offer in your care home. Good partnership working with artists and arts organisations in practice means welcoming them, agreeing shared priorities and expectations for the activities and how many people might be involved, supporting their sessions and providing opportunities for feedback, discussion and mutual learning.

“We have seen many impacts on residents from the arts including increased self-confidence, new friendships, improved eating and drinking, laughter and improved speech. During music sessions with Live Music Now, the residents and staff taking part are united in one goal, singing; this has no barriers. The dementia experience means that some residents will not remember they were singing, but the sessions continue in the day to elevate their moods.”

SHONA BRADBURY MANAGER,
APPLEBY HOUSE



READ ►

NAPA, National Care Forum and Care England - findings from survey on care and arts partnerships

Artist in residence projects

NAPA would like to encourage more work involving artists in residence in care homes, allowing artists to have opportunities for sustained visits and interactions with care home communities. Time for artists and care home teams to build a relationship is essential. It enables an exchange of skills, knowledge and different approaches between them, leading to a richer and more appropriate arts offer. In the ‘Dare to Imagine’ report about the Magic Me Artists Residencies in Care Homes (ARCH) programme (2019 – 23) the research by Anglia Ruskin University found that: *“Embedding creativity in care homes was facilitated through building relationships with care home staff, building staff confidence, involving them in (activities) and engaging them with the power of participatory arts.”*

"We can do the basic stuff...But what I've found with this...was the impact it has had on everybody...It was art to another level."

CARE HOME MANAGER, MAGIC ME ARCH PROGRAMME



READ ►

Anglia Ruskin University and Magic Me - Dare to Imagine ARCH report

Leadership and the arts

Managers have an important role to play in developing an arts culture. For example, they can give permission to their staff - implicitly and explicitly and leading by example - to get involved and try new activities. When managers model a curious, playful, and flexible approach, this gives everyone permission to play, take risks, make mistakes and try new things.

Trust, value, respect, and no judgement are all key ingredients for building creative communities, and when led by strong, creative and supportive managers can enable individuals to flourish and be creative. Arts facilitators, be they staff members, volunteers or artists/therapists, need to feel safe, supported and listened to, as do the individual participants. Emphasise to your staff team that art thrives on 'mistakes' and 'accidents' and there is no right or wrong way to be creative.

Art and art therapy

There is a considerable body of evidence that many different art forms can have therapeutic benefits when delivered appropriately in care. However, it is important to distinguish informal arts engagement with more formal art therapy sessions delivered by trained

therapists. Arts engagement in care homes, often led by staff and artists is primarily done for pleasure and stimulation - although therapeutic outcomes may happen as a result. Art therapy delivered by professionally trained art therapists is a mental health treatment, also known as art psychotherapy, that has its roots in psychoanalysis. There is definitely a place for both approaches to arts engagement in care homes, but the format, delivery and intention will differ. In this guide, we are focussing on a more generalised arts approach rather than on art therapy.

The environment of your care home

Some care homes - those that embrace creativity as integral to everyday life - have worked hard to create stimulating environments with lots of interesting objects and pictures for people to explore and interact with things. The traditional 'hotel style' home is often very smart and tidy looking, but a more home-like feel will have lots of items to evoke memories and encourage spontaneous interactions and connections.

Homes following the Butterfly Approach*, for example, use warm and vibrant colours to enrich hallways and living areas, and encourage teams to take a multi-sensory approach to the design and feel of the environment, such as textured '3D' elements for people to touch and items linked to the life stories and interests of people living in the home, for example a typewriter, a bicycle or a map of the world. Some homes have created a 'whiteboard' or 'blackboard' style paint on one wall with a supply of chalks or pens to encourage people to draw and write on these spaces, so they are changing daily. In these kinds of environments, it creates possibilities for those living in the home to respond creatively in the moment, rather than wait for organised activities to happen.

* The Butterfly Model of Care was developed by Meaningful Care Matters™ (formerly Dementia Care Matters™), an international transformative support and culture change organisation based in the United Kingdom with more than 20 years of experience in this field. The Butterfly Model focuses on delivering emotion-focused care that connects with people in a dignified, human way. It addresses the holistic needs of the individual and supports quality of life for each person living with dementia across the whole of their lived experience.

“Each day, team members can be encouraged to create new ‘invitations’ out on the tables for people to discover and explore – an open book is more likely to be read, colouring pages and pens, wood carvings and ornaments, pictures of famous paintings, song sheets or a poem linked to the season. For those sitting in chairs, there is a focus on avoiding empty laps, so there is always something to hold and touch within reach. Efforts are made to check the sight line of people who spend long periods of time in bed or in a reclining chair, so that there is something that is interesting to look at e.g., an enlarged photograph of a loved pet, or a hanging crystal which catches the beams of sunlight.”

SALLY KNOCKER THE BUTTERFLY APPROACH, MEANINGFUL CARE MATTERS

Whole home approach

Many care providers have paid Activity Provider posts, but over the past few years there has been a swing towards the ‘whole home approach’ – where all members of the care staff team have a joint responsibility for providing and supporting meaningful activities as part of person-centred care. NAPA advocates a combination of the two, that is, having an employed activity provider working alongside care staff colleagues using a whole home approach. NAPA would also like to see a recognition of the role of care staff and Activity Providers, reflected by pay scales.

Staff-led art activities

Something which undoubtedly limits activity provision and the potential for arts in care homes is current staffing levels, issues around recruitment/retention and staff rotas/ratios. Some care homes address issues related to the dependency of individuals when allocating activity hours/ratios. Care homes are currently using an NHS model for staffing ratios and a ratio calculated specifically for social care would be beneficial.

Although NAPA cannot advise on weekly hours, we do recommend that the ratio of 1:6 is the absolute maximum number of individuals receiving care to one Activity Provider. For groups with more complex needs, a ratio nearer 1:4 would be recommended, unless it is a larger group activity like putting on a concert or singing. Most group activities are improved by having four or fewer individuals involved because it can be more meaningfully tailored to their abilities, likes and preferences.

A carer’s assistance may be helpful for Activity Providers when working with people with more complex needs, particularly if their preference is to join a group rather than a one-to-one activity. Drawing up an activity plan for each individual, much like a care plan, will help to determine how many hours they require. You may find that some may need two or three hours a week, while somebody else may require five or six. These activity hours will be constantly changing as an individual’s needs change and new members join.

Arts activities are known to improve physical and mental health so everyone should be involved in planning their activities to ensure they are personally meaningful and beneficial. Having a comprehensive arts offer may help to attract people with different skillsets from different backgrounds, potentially helping to revitalise and energise care homes.

Digital arts/connections

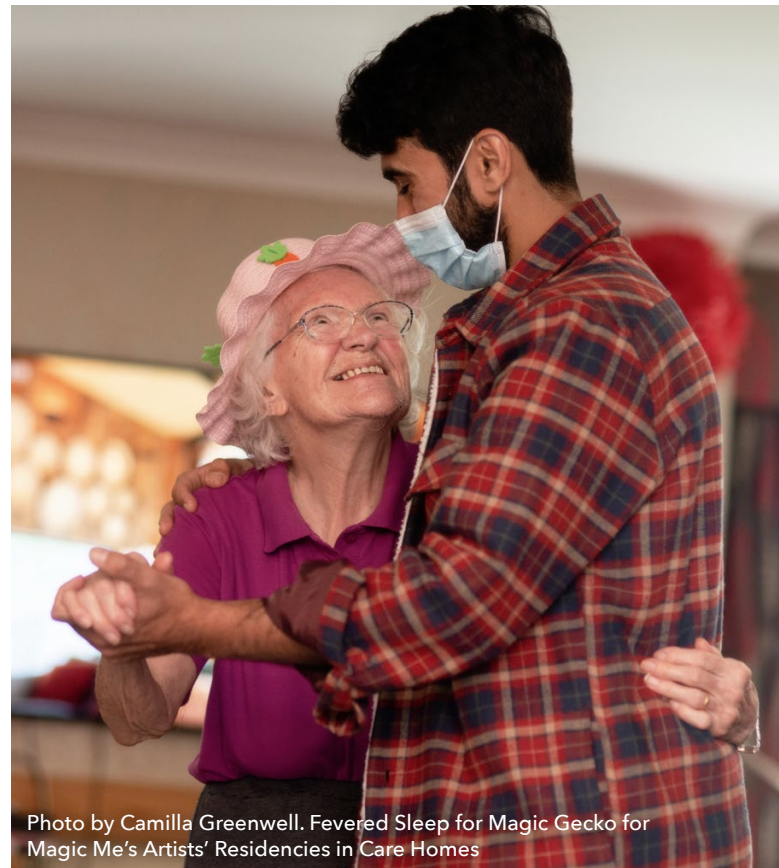
During the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, lots of innovative work was done by care homes and arts/cultural partners to keep individuals and staff stimulated, motivated and connected to relatives, friends and local communities. Online meetings and digital technology allowed care homes to maintain contact when personal visits stopped and, in some cases, links were made nationally and internationally.

NAPA worked on a project with Innovations in Dementia and members of The Dementia Craftivists, where people living with dementia led online arts and craft sessions with care homes, connecting with small groups of individuals and staff. We were amazed by the positive outcomes, meaningful connections and opportunities for creativity that resulted.

Although online contact cannot replace personal engagement, digital options should be considered. Some settings invested in tablets in order to keep in contact with relatives during Covid-19. As well as accessing free web-based content there is also the potential for using the device as a creative tool. iPads come pre-loaded with simple film-making (iMovie) and music-making (GarageBand) apps, plus there are a wealth of free creative apps on the App Store and Google Play Store. Many art galleries and cultural institutions have taken great strides in terms of digitalising their collections and providing creative opportunities and resources for care homes. This increased use of digital technology and resources in care homes in response to Covid-19/lockdowns has led to an increased awareness of the importance of arts, creativity and community. This learning should be built on going forward.

Thinking about 'quality'

It is necessary to move away from the output/product being the only sign of success when creating art - the process is just as important and interesting. However, people



understandably want to create things they feel proud of. Working with an artist or someone specialised in a specific art form can be invaluable. Knowing 'insider' tips can save a lot of time, enabling participants to really learn and develop their art skills. However, don't be afraid to experiment, think outside the box, make mistakes and try new things - that's what being creative is all about! Being playful can really help when doing arts activities but it's important to also be mindful not to present arts engagement in ways that may seem patronising or childish.

Specialised use of arts

The arts can have a significant role to play in specialised care, such as for people living with dementia or nearing end of life. The wellbeing benefits of music and dance in dementia care are well documented. Care staff in every care home will vouch for the seemingly magical properties of music to connect with individuals with whom it may be hard to interact. Poetry is also a very accessible art form, if presented in

engaging ways and it can provoke a great deal of conversation and creative exchanges.

Arts engagement using sensory stimulation e.g., 'Namaste'* type sessions should be considered for people in later stages of dementia and can also be very effective in palliative and end of life care. Singing, storytelling, drama and dance can play a part in the treatment of people with Parkinson's or people who have had strokes. They can be used as part of physio and rehabilitation programmes, approved by speech and movement therapists and physios. Individuals who are cared for in bed may feel excluded and isolated from many group activities in care homes. They can be included in arts provision though, if the activity is taken and delivered to them on a one-to-one basis by staff and artists.

**The Namaste Care programme was developed in the USA and focuses on enhancing quality of life through a range of physical, sensory and emotional care practices. These include improving pain management, ensuring proper nutrition, using music, aromatherapy and personalised nurturing communication with each individual person.*



READ ►

Live Music Now - song writing in end of life



READ ►

NAPA - engagement at end of life toolkit

Breaking down the barriers

NAPA believes that all care homes have the potential to be creative communities. We realise, however, that there are many difficulties and barriers to developing arts

in care homes. We think some of these issues may be helpful for managers to consider and discuss with their staff teams when developing activities.

What does 'art' mean to the people in your home?

In order to develop a meaningful arts offer in your care setting, it is a good idea to begin by addressing attitudes around 'art' with your care community. Many people are put off by the word 'art'. They may have set views on what 'art' is, think it has little relevance to their lives, that they are not good at it, or that art is only for a certain type of person. Lack of understanding about what is meant by 'art' and attitudes within care homes can prevent people from trying new things or seeing the relevance and role of the arts in terms of care provision.

Negative associations with 'art'

People often say 'I can't draw or sing' or are shy about being asked to perform in front of other people. These are powerful feelings, often stemming from negative comments from family or teachers during childhood, and they need to be sensitively addressed. Many people who don't think they are artistic are actually very creative. Developing a creative mindset in your care setting, as led and demonstrated by the manager and senior staff, will give others permission to be creative and can help to develop an adventurous, exciting environment to live and work in.

Introducing art without questioning

Often people will say 'no' if asked to join in an arts activity. Instead try to encourage people to get involved by offering a more personal invitation: "It would be lovely if you would join me..." or "I wonder if you'd like to come and see what we are up to next door?" Setting up a collection of intriguing art materials, books, images or objects can be a way of encouraging

people to engage of their own accord. Alternatively, you could take a selection of art materials and objects to individuals and engage in one-to-one interactions.

Different ways of taking part

Some individuals may prefer to sit and watch and that's fine - it's important to let people engage in whatever way feels best for them. If you provide a safe, relaxed atmosphere where people feel supported and cared for, they may well join in after a while. For many people though, being a member of the audience, enjoying other people's creativity will always be preferable.

It's important to stress to your staff teams that when people choose to take part in a creative activity, or not to take part, they are exercising their right to make a choice. If people don't take part, avoid seeing this as a failure. We must always take the cue from the person, understanding how they would like others to support them to join in.

Assumptions

Sometimes it is relatives who may have unrealistic or fixed expectations in terms of the interests or hobbies of the individuals receiving care. It is also possible for people's needs and interests to have changed considerably by the time they move into a care setting. It is important to consult and work with relatives and friends and take their thoughts and often complicated emotions around their family member on board but ultimately activity engagement and involvement in the arts should be led by the individual.

Lack of funding and resources

Perceived lack of resources shouldn't prevent you from bringing arts activities into your home. Arts activities don't necessarily cost lots of money. Be creative and come up with solutions if cost is an issue. Consider upcycling items, getting things from charity shops, asking for donations from relatives and local

communities and being imaginative about the spaces within your care home.

As discussed earlier, the arts actually have the potential to reduce costs in other areas of care provision related to medication and falls, whilst improving wellbeing and happiness. Highlight the reason why it is important to document wellbeing outcomes of sessions to your staff teams. Also, consider sharing specific examples, stories and anecdotes about the wellbeing benefits of the arts to funders and people in charge of budgets as this may result in additional allocations of funds within the care setting or wellbeing budgets, specifically for arts engagement.

Some museums and galleries have funding and projects designed to engage with care homes. An example is Liverpool Museum's free House of Memories app with pictures of objects from across the decades, which are brought to life with sound, music and descriptions, and provide an easy-to-use way to help people living with dementia explore things that resonate with them.



2

Practical ideas for getting started

“The delivery – right pace and speed and clarity of speech – is very important. Give people time to process what you’ve just said before you move on. We need to create the right environment, make it special. Be flexible and relaxed. It’s about the enjoyment of the participation. If everyone is having fun, go with the flow.”

AGNES HOUSTON DEMENTIA CRAFTIVIST

Introducing the arts into a care home that has few creative activities on offer may not be easy, and it will take energy and enthusiasm – but you must start somewhere!

From the very outset, managers need to champion the wellbeing benefits of the arts – for example, the importance of identity, meaning, purpose, occupation and motivation.

Roll up your sleeves and involve everyone, keep chipping away and try to take everyone on a journey together.

Do an audit of interests and skills

Begin by doing an audit of the skills and interests of the people you support, staff and family and friends who visit regularly. Arts activities and projects work best when they are led by people with enthusiasm for the topic so draw on your community.

Talk with individuals or in groups about art and creativity and encourage everyone to share their views. Ensure everyone has an opportunity to contribute and to feel listened to. Discussion could be framed by questions such as: ‘What are your dreams, wishes and aspirations?’, ‘What do you think of when you hear the word ‘art’?’ or ‘What would you like to try?’ Have a flipchart and different coloured pens to jot down thoughts, responses and doodles.

Make sure these ideas are captured and individuals’ care plans adjusted accordingly. We have seen amazing examples of people moving into care homes and developing a new sense of identity and increased confidence and purpose through involvement in the arts, when given appropriate support and encouragement.

Starter activities to learn more about your community

You can even be creative about the way in which you learn about your community’s artistic and cultural interests. Here are some practical examples of how to go about this:

- Have a pile of magazines and ask people to make collages of an ideal care home or ‘creative community’ using images, colours and words that inspire them. You could all work on one big image together. Chat while you are working and share the completed images with everyone at the end.
- Make a mind map, with ‘Creative Community’ or ‘Arts’ in the centre, leading out to related ideas, activities, feelings, local organisations, idea projects, types of art, feelings about art etc.
- Invite people to share words or phrases about what ‘art’ means to them and attitudes to ageing creatively and make this into a poem.



Photo by Evan Dawson. Westbury Court, Gloucestershire.
Live Music Now musician Sadie Fleming

- Give people 'wish cards' and ask them to jot down their dreams and aspirations – can you make some of these wishes come true?
- Art dating – ask people to customise name badges or stickers with different coloured dots to reflect their interest in music, drawing, dance, creative writing or theatre. Invite people to pair up with others or make a small group of people with the same colour dots on their badges to have a chat.

Involve all of your community

Having people with an interest in arts and creativity within your staff team can be really helpful. It might be worth adding a question about arts/cultural interests and hobbies to staff interviews so you are aware of relevant skills when new people start.

Encourage your staff to share their talents in constructive and appropriate ways as part of the care provision. You could try pairing up people with identified skills (staff members/individuals or relatives) to co-lead

sessions together, making the process more collaborative and fun.

Staff can also act as mentors to each other, training or assisting other members to lead arts activities and share the load. In Parkwood House, (Southern Healthcare in Devon) for example, their laundry worker, a keen photographer, has now been given a few hours to run a Camera Club taking a few people out to the local park to take photographs.

Involving relatives, friends and volunteers who have skills and interests they may wish to share can be hugely beneficial and make them feel more a part of your care community. Create a dedicated arts committee, comprised of interested individuals from various roles, to oversee and drive the arts offer.

Get some activities going: start small

Start with taster staff activities, introduce artist-led sessions and involve families, volunteers and local groups.

An enticing food and drink offer is always a good way of encouraging people to join in initial discussions or to trial art activities. A cheese and wine party, cocktail evening or curry night might provide a good incentive for people to come along.

It might be fun to incorporate some kind of art taster in the form of a music performance, karaoke or a communal art activity like a magazine collage, simple origami, plate painting or making tissue-paper flowers.

Regular arts programme

Ideally, over time an ongoing regular arts programme would grow to include a range of arts opportunities: staff-led activities, artist-led sessions, spontaneous art engagement activities, individually focused, or person-centred activities and online engagement. Think about organising activities for national days and other seasonal events. NAPA produces a monthly digital calendar with ideas and resources for every day of the year.

Celebrate your achievements

Be proud of the outputs from the arts programme and think of ways of sharing within the home and to a wider audience locally and nationally. Stories which include anecdotes, quotes and photos can be very effective.

Develop links with your local newspaper or radio station, involve your care provider's marketing department if they have one and share posts and stories on social media if you have permission. Facebook seems to be a good platform for doing this as lots of care homes have Facebook pages.

NAPA can also help you to spread the word about your arts activities. Tell us what you're up to and plan an event for the National Day of Arts in Care Homes to highlight your arts provision and community initiatives.

Link up with other care homes to share learning and be inspired. NAPA is currently

developing work around care home twinning and an Arts in Care Homes 'badge'.

Frequently asked questions

Why should care home managers prioritise the arts?

The arts can help improve team morale and can be especially helpful during difficult times.

A comprehensive arts offer will be attractive to prospective individuals and their relatives, potentially improving occupancy rates.

A vibrant home with evidence of arts and creativity can help to attract and retain staff

A comprehensive arts offer can have a positive impact on a CQC quality rating.

The arts can bring excitement and energy and can transform care homes. It can lift spirits and help your staff team and the people you are providing care for to bond with each other.

The arts provide an important means for people to express painful emotions, connect and to commemorate loved ones who have passed.

Arts can help everyone living in, working in and visiting homes? to live meaningful, happy and fulfilled lives.

How can we develop arts in our care setting when we don't have the money, time or resources?

Many of these issues can present real barriers. Practical considerations related to risk assessments and red tape around getting DBS for volunteers are also cited as problematic.

Not all care homes are equal in terms of budgets, staffing levels, Wi-Fi and digital resources – it is important to recognise this and to acknowledge that these things can hamper the development of arts activities. However, some of these issues can be resolved and most importantly, arts activities do not necessarily require lots of money. What they do require is creativity, enthusiasm, planning and teamwork. By involving everyone in discussions and planning around arts, and thinking creatively, your arts offer can grow and flourish.

Documenting the outcomes of art sessions and the beneficial outcomes for individuals and staff teams will help you demonstrate to budget holders the benefits and related implications in terms of savings made elsewhere.

There are lots of national and local community funds that could provide necessary resources to develop care home arts activities, especially projects involving local communities, intergenerational partnerships or more long-term artist residencies. Applications can be time consuming and tricky though! Try to build relationships with funders and keep up to date with related funding streams. Talk to your local arts organisation or venue about the possibility of applying together.

My staff aren't interested in art. How can I involve and motivate them?

It is important for the manager and senior staff within care homes to support and encourage the staff team when developing arts activities. Often a lack of motivation comes from a fear of not being good at drawing, so helping your staff to understand that the 'arts' is a much broader term, where everyone's contribution is valid, is essential.

Invite a local artist to come and do portraits or cartoons of individuals and staff and use this as an introduction to related activities.

Specialised arts training for staff could also prove helpful. NAPA and several arts organisations have developed specialised art training courses for staff.

Encourage staff members that do have an interest in creative activities to lead on taster arts activities and to support and mentor less confident staff members.

Setting specific achievable goals and artist mentoring may also help.

Ask your staff team to suggest an art project for your home to work on.

Do any of the people receiving care have any related interests and experience or specific art skills they could share? You could consider

pairing them up with a staff member for extra support to lead an art activity.

We want to do more art in our care home. How do we start?

The most important ingredient in arts in care homes is enthusiasm and this can be contagious. Start planting the seeds of creativity within your care home and see what grows. In the first place, almost anything in terms of arts provision is better than nothing so initially it might be best to think small. You have to start somewhere and once begun and nurtured, creativity and the arts have a habit of developing a life of their own and leading to other things.

Start off by setting aside some time to do some internet research on arts in care homes? – there is plenty of stuff out there, so see what you are drawn to and inspired by. Then find out the interests/talents of individuals, staff and relatives, and start planning with them. Contacting a local arts organisation could also be very helpful. It is a good idea to do some trial art sessions or start with a small art project.

We don't have enough space in our care setting to do art, what can we do?

Don't panic! Though it is helpful to have a dedicated space to do arts activities, store art materials and works in progress, there are ways around it. Is there a space in your care home that is underused? Do you have a large dining table with space for storage underneath or a corner suitable for a multi-purpose arts cupboard? Could you consider transforming a redundant space into a creative area or arts hub? Again, you could start small and expand as interest develops. The most sustainable and meaningful arts provisions need space for creativity to flourish.

Alternatively, perhaps you could turn a wall or space within your home into an art gallery or develop a performance space in your garden.

Consider developing mobile arts resources to take to individuals. Bring arts into every corner of your care home with the help of

interesting objects and images, for example: a 'magic basket' full of nature-related objects, a 'museum on a tray', a poetry satchel, party trolley, a mobile garden or a costume hatbox.

Could you suggest art activities to get us started?

Use your knowledge of individuals' interests but keep an open mind and see what provokes engagement, curiosity and interactions. Organise some arts taster sessions, based on art forms that people would like to try. Ceramic-related activities such as plate painting, using a pottery wheel or clay modelling are a fun, tactile way to get people interested. If someone is working at a more sensory level, then moulding a soft piece of clay in their hands is still beneficial.

Think about offering a combination of art forms. Some people will respond to music, others to words or visual imagery. By offering different ways to engage, your arts offer will be more person-centred, and you may find something to please and involve everyone. Remember there are no rights and wrongs. The most important thing is to ensure people feel safe, included and that activities are enjoyable and achievable.

Set up a table or 'art station' in a communal area piled with art materials, books, images and objects and see what happens. Offer a wide range of art materials if you can, including pencils, paints, pastels and clay for visual arts.

For poetry and creative writing activities, consider poetry anthologies, magnetic fridge poetry and online poetry readings.

Play different types of music and ask people to respond by painting what it makes them think or feel or by using words or movements.

Set up a dedicated art group and explore different art forms, using online resources to help you. Explore a different art activity every month; visual arts, creative writing, drama, dance and crafts.



Photo by Rich Rusk. Gecko for Magic Me's Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

History of art or art appreciation sessions can be a good starting point for developing related activities. Explore a different artist or arts movement every session and try out related arts activities.

Use nature as your inspiration for arts activities. This could include drawing, making prints, pressing flowers, poetry, watercolours, ceramics, listening to and singing to nature related songs and bird song/animal recordings, photography, paintings, short stories, playwriting, music making, making garden mobiles/windchimes and seasonal crafts.

Could you suggest an art project for our whole community to work on?

Once you have started trying out a few arts activities, a really good way to start building your creative community is to work on a group art project. Hold a group meeting to decide on a project to work on together, perhaps using a theme or national day as a starting prompt. We suggest that for a first group art project, you maybe start with something small, realistic, low-cost and easily achievable. See if you can agree on an art project with a specific goal and an achievable, tangible outcome.

Some inspiring examples

100 hearts

"This is an ideal project for February and Valentine's Day. At Auburn Mere we created this project in memory of people we had loved and lost."

Marlene Kelly

Order 100 small blank canvasses. 7cm by 7cm is a good size and invite everyone in your care community to draw a heart, however they choose, using a variety of supplied art materials.

Leave a table with all the canvasses and supplies out for a month, with a sign giving the basic instructions. Supplies need to include a variety of acrylic paint tubes. No right or wrong – people can turn hearts into other shapes, use multiple colours or respond however they want to, sometimes by doing something completely different.

Display the finished artworks in a communal space within the home or your local community and invite participants for a celebration. The display can be 10 canvasses by ten canvasses with only a 2cm gap between each canvas.



Drawing on memories

Create drawings and other artwork based on happy memories. Starting points for this could be looking at photo albums and having discussions about celebrations, being in nature, memorable sporting events or favourite pastimes.

Invite staff teams, relatives and friends to share memories to get the conversations going.

Consider multisensory aspects of memories – what does the memory sound/smell/taste/look/feel like.

Set up some memory drawing sessions. To begin with this might involve an artist, staff member, relative or volunteer who likes drawing, responding to memories shared by individuals, and making simple drawings. This may encourage individuals to work on their own drawings. Alternatively, you could invite people to share their memories in paintings, collages, 3D models or poems.

Think about different ways of displaying and sharing these memories – you could hold an exhibition, produce a book or newspaper or develop the stories into a performance.

Visit [Drawing Life website](#) for more ways to encourage drawing

"Drawing facilitates the handing down of living history - events and customs from the past - that might otherwise be lost forever if not drawn or recounted. Everyone has a story to tell, and the memory drawings illustrate many proud contributions people have made to family and society."

Judy Parkinson Project Director Drawing Life

These hands have...

Working in pairs draw round everyone's hands, including all individuals receiving care, members of staff, relatives and friends. You can do this over the course of a few months. Don't forget to write the hand owner's name on the back.

During another session, give the hand outlines back to the owners and ask them to support each other by cutting out the hand outlines, filling them in with colour or patterns and/or responding to this statement - "These hands have...".

Display the hands around a large room or down a corridor. You could connect them all into a large circle, using string to make 'hand bunting'! Have a celebration event and encourage people to talk about what their hands have done.

"Hands are a popular subject for community artwork and they can tell us so much about people and the lives they have led. I developed this project with residents and staff teams within a care home. We loved finding out more about each other and the results were proudly displayed in the corridor."

Alison Teader, NAPA Arts in Care Homes

Photo albums

Encourage staff, relatives and volunteers to take and print photos from activities and outings to make albums or scrap books. Go a stage further by writing up accompanying 'stories' including anecdotes and quotes to go with the pictures. Allocate a small amount of funds to get pictures nicely printed - some print company apps offer 50 free prints every month (Snapfish, Photobox, Freesnaps etc).

Bridgeside Lodge Care Home

Taking the arts into every corner of your care home

These examples below all come from the three managers who have helped to devise this guide. They may help you think of ways to develop under-used spaces in your care home into 'art hubs':

- The Appleby Art Studio - an underused cinema room has been turned into an art studio for regular sessions involving the local community, led by artists and staff
- Appleby Namaste room - a room has been turned into calm, restful space for one-to-one Namaste sessions
- Appleby Allotment - an unused corner in the garden has been turned into an allotment for growing vegetable and flowers
- Auburn Mere Doodle wall - an area of a communal room has been turned into a doodle space for individuals receiving care, staff and visitors
- Appleby Tate - a corridor of this home is devoted to the exhibition of artwork
- Bridgeside Lodge performance space - a garden area has been turned into an accessible concert space for regular concerts from professional musicians from The Spitz, and the whole care community is invited.

3

Working with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)

“The CQC is always looking at how people are supported to live full lives, and art is a true expression of individuality, passion and joy. With the new CQC assessment framework there has never been a better time to focus on the arts, as the evidence will support a favourable rating.”

ED WATKINSON DIRECTOR, WATKINSON CONSULTING

Activities evidence shared by the care home provides assurance to CQC that the support provided is person-centred and promotes the wellbeing of the people using the service. CQC have stated that their new approach to regulation is that it is ‘always on’ and is more about ‘continuous assessment’ rather than an ‘exam-based’ model.

In NAPA’s experience, care homes that get ‘outstanding’ CQC ratings often have a person-centred comprehensive arts offer or have developed arts projects with artists or an arts/cultural organisation. We believe that the arts have the potential to support the key CQC questions and quality statements.

Preparing the evidence for CQC

There are six ‘evidence categories’ and each quality statement will use a selection of evidence categories to come to a judgement about the Quality Statement.

The evidence categories are:

1. Feedback from people who use services
2. Feedback from staff and leaders
3. Feedback from partners
4. Observation
5. Processes
6. Outcomes.

So, a good way of providing evidence is surveying people about activities and how good the provision is - this way the evidence is objective and based on people’s views. These

surveys could be part of wider surveying, but it is important that activities are recognised in whatever the service does.

How can care homes show that the arts work they are doing actively supports meeting the Care Quality Commission’s standards and guidelines?

The key is to provide concrete evidence of how your arts activities enhance care provision, promote wellbeing and align with the specific CQC standards. Clear documentation and a proactive approach to compliance are essential.

Below we offer some guidance on how to go about this:

Identify relevant arts initiatives

Identify specific arts initiatives or activities within your care home that relate to the CQC standards. For instance, if you have art-based activity programmes that aim to improve mental wellbeing, link them to the most appropriate standards.

Similarly, you could categorise your arts initiatives under the current five CQC domains. Describe how each initiative contributes to meeting the specific criteria within these domains.

Community arts initiatives

Consider evidence of how you engage with the local community in terms of arts and culture ie highlighting the art work of people in the community, using local artists and groups, opening up the home for community

arts activity and reflecting local themes - eg fishing if by the sea, mining in the NE / Wales, steel industry in Sheffield etc.

Document the process

Keep detailed records of your arts-related activities. Document the planning, implementation and outcomes of these initiatives, and include dates, participant feedback and any relevant artwork or creations.

Demonstrate how art has improved people's lives

Provide evidence of health improvements such as reduced medication, more engagement, fewer GP and hospital visits, increased appetite and better sleep.

Collect participant feedback

Gather feedback from individuals, friends, family and staff members involved in the arts activities. Use surveys, interviews or focus groups to collect their opinions and experiences. Highlight positive feedback as evidence of impact.

Use an evidence-based approach

Whenever possible, link your arts initiatives to existing research and evidence supporting their effectiveness in improving care outcomes. This strengthens your case with empirical data.

Three of the four key factors of wellbeing for older people identified in Age UK's Index of Wellbeing in Later Life, shared below, are particularly relevant when demonstrating positive mental, physical and social wellbeing outcomes from arts and cultural participation:

- Participation in enjoyable, meaningful activities was the biggest direct factor for wellbeing. This could be in creative, cultural, civic and/or social activities.
- Physical activity is extremely important, too – this is the 2nd biggest individual factor.
- Having positive social interactions with others is a common thread throughout wellbeing. In fact, the social domain accounts for 33% of one's wellbeing.

"The Index can be used to start conversations about what is needed at local and national levels to help older people achieve a good amount of wellbeing. This person-centred and quantitative intelligence supports and poses a challenge for Government, policymakers and service practitioners.

AGE UK INDEX OF WELLBEING IN LATER LIFE

Record training and staff involvement

Showcase how staff are trained and involved in delivering arts-based activity and engagement. This demonstrates commitment to the CQC's emphasis on a well-led and caring environment.

Address risk management

Address any potential risks associated with arts activities, such as safety concerns or emotional reactions. Describe how your facility manages and mitigates these risks to support compliance with CQC safety standards.

Show continuous improvement

Highlight any changes or improvements made based on feedback and evaluation. This shows your commitment to continuously enhancing the quality of care you provide through arts initiatives. If you do satisfaction surveys, share the results and action plans to address any issues raised in them, including how the arts might contribute to this.

Report or present on the arts work

Prepare a comprehensive report or presentation that clearly outlines how your arts activities align with CQC standards. Use visual aids, testimonials and data to support your claims. Evidence shared with CQC about the outcomes of arts engagement needs to be concise and snappy and should focus on the headlines and how it improved the lives of people.

Engage with CQC

Share your findings and evidence with the CQC during inspections or when requested. Be prepared to discuss how your arts activities contribute to the overall quality of care.

Responding to CQC's key questions

A lot of the evidence gathered through the use of creative approaches to personalised care is likely to fall under the 'caring' quality statements. This is where the personalised care elements are most strongly featured, such as whether the service is supporting emotional wellbeing, personalised and individual care, supporting and protecting people's human rights, reflecting people's emotional, cultural, social preferences, supporting people to connect to community and activities etc. The quality statement about Workforce wellbeing and enablement to deliver person centred care is also very relevant.

Below, we present some suggestions for ways you can respond to the five CQC key questions through your arts offer:

? 1. Is the service safe?

Quality statement: Involving people to manage risks

To mitigate the risks associated with an arts offer, NAPA suggests that managers conduct a thorough assessments of needs and preferences, provide appropriate supervision and support, and ensure a safe and inclusive environment

Consider... after doing appropriate risk assessments, explore creative opportunities such as running an outdoor nature printing session, working with clay, visiting a local gallery or inviting a school group to join in with a community display or project.

? 2. Is the service effective?

Quality statement: Assessing people's needs

Good care homes are always inclusive and respect the needs of individuals. By developing your creative arts community, you are providing individuals and staff with the opportunities to grow, both personally and as a team. This will help support people to live happier, healthier lives.

Consider... taking a fresh look at the arts activities and interests of every individual. It's easy to assume Maggie always wants to knit or Ali likes to draw birds, but are there other things they might want to try? A fresh 'audit' of opportunities and choices could be added to individual care plans with related goals. Perhaps their interests could be expanded so Maggie teaches local school children how to knit or helps to make items for a local baby unit. Maybe Ali could start a bird watching group or be supported by staff to make a bird table. Meeting needs like this can turn a simple activity into something that can really benefit someone's quality of life and therefore the effectiveness of the service you provide.

There is a wealth of research that highlights the wellbeing benefits of participation in the arts: see [Age UK Index of Wellbeing in Later Life](#). By embedding the arts into the everyday life of your care home, it is likely that you will improve the health, happiness and wellbeing of individuals and staff.

? 3. Is the service caring?

Quality statement:

Treating people as individuals and responding to people's immediate needs

Ensure the cultural needs of individuals are met with the arts materials you provide. If, for example, you have individuals of Asian background, consider exploring traditional patterns or botanicals using gel plates or carved blocks, play Indian folk music, discuss a mystery object or a piece of Asian artwork or invite a kathputli puppeteer to visit. The wider the arts offer, the more personalised and embracing the service will be.

Consider... an art project based on people's 'wishes'; can you make any of them come true?

Quality statement:

Workforce wellbeing and enablement

Arts projects allow opportunities for staff to deliver person-centred care and utilise their skills and strengths to meet personal goals as well as enhancing job satisfaction and morale. Participating in the arts is known to have a calming effect and is the ideal way to foster connections and conversations between everyone living and working in the care setting.

Consider... inviting staff to lead on projects based on personal interests and 'buddying' them up with people who share similar interests. Maybe start a staff art club?

Quality statement:

Kindness, compassion and dignity

Meaningful arts engagement is about being in the moment with someone and really listening and responding to them in order to allow space for personal expression and connection.

Consider... spontaneous arts activities that can be used to respond to a specific need without any preparation. This could be as simple as picking daisies to make a posy or chain, watching a webcam of birds in the forest, playing a recording of a nightingale or giving someone a bag of colourful silk scarves to hold and lay across their lap. Using colour, touch and calming sounds can transform a difficult moment for someone instantly.

? 4. Is the service responsive to people's needs?

Quality statement:

Person-centred

Meaningful arts engagement demonstrates person-centredness, providing opportunities for people to share their stories, wishes and memories.

Consider... creating a 'memory tree' - people could hang a photo of a loved one or a favourite quote written on a hand-painted leaf, affixed to an image of a tree. Perhaps a corner of a room could be set aside for quiet reflection with seasonal pieces from nature to touch and hold, such as acorns or shells with the sounds of birdsong or waves on the seashore.

Quality statement:
Listening to and involving people

Arts can be a great way of encouraging people to give meaningful and useful feedback about their care. It can be a useful way to find out the things that matter most and to empower people to have more influence over their daily life.

Consider... Using poetry or drama to collect people's views on specific issues related to their care setting. A poem might reveal interests, likes or memories or a love of words and the rhythm of memorable poems. A piece of improvised drama might explain a dislike of something or even a way of discovering a preference.

? 5. Is the service well led?

Quality statement:
Shared direction and culture

The arts can also contribute to the wellbeing of staff and enhance their job satisfaction and motivation, by making them feel part of a caring, inclusive community where their skills, stories and interests are valued.

Consider... Developing opportunities for staff to lead on new activities but also to learn new skills and take part in arts activities and training for personal development.



Photo by Hannah Lovell. Bridgeside Lodge National Day of Arts in Care Homes 2022. L-R Arthur Lea, Resident JC, Ben Hazleton, Alice Zawadzki, Isabella Bonfanti, Resident JR, Marcus Bonfanti - part of The Spitz 'Next Generation' project

4

Further ideas and inspiration

Read

Research:

[The Index of Wellbeing in Later Life, Age UK](#)

Report:

[Every Care Home a Creative Home, The Baring Foundation](#)

Consultation:

[Arts & Culture in Every Care Home, NAPA](#)

Book:

[Care Aesthetics, for artful care and careful art \(2022\), James Thompson](#)

Research

Websites:

[Creative Health and Wellbeing, Arts Council England](#)

[The CARE Aesthetics: Research Exploration \(CARE\)](#)

Report:

[Dare To Imagine ARCH report, Anglia Ruskin University and Magic Me](#)

Connect

Websites:

[National Activity Providers Association \(NAPA\)](#)

[Arts in Care Homes \(NAPA\)](#)

[Luminate Scotland](#)

[Age & Opportunity's Bealtaine Festival](#)

[lcARTrefu Wales Creating artists in residence, Wales](#)

Be inspired

Blogs:

[Tales of our mission to spread #LiveMusicFor Wellbeing, The Spitz](#)

[Too Young for Dementia, Gail Gregory](#)

[Latest Blogs, Scottish Care](#)

[Well-being Through Creativity](#)

Photo Story:

[Visions of Hope, The Guardian](#)

Create

Resources:

[Treasury of Arts Activities for Older People Vol 1](#)

Baring Foundation

[Treasury of Arts Activities For Older People Vol 2](#)

The Baring Foundation & NAPA

[Creative Care Homes, Paintings in Hospitals](#)

[Creative Communities resource pack, Creative Paths](#)

[Explore and inspire, Arts by Post booklet, NAPA & The Southbank](#)

Drawing Life Resources and films:

[Life Drawing](#)

[Tutorials](#)

Play

Apps:

[Liverpool Museum, House of Memory App](#)

[Bloom App](#)

Watch

Films:

[Still](#)

Film from the Gecko Theatre Magic Me residency at Lime Court, Dovercourt, Essex

[Dementia Craftivists](#)

Made by people living with dementia who have a passion for arts and crafts

[Drawing Life Films](#)

[Documentary on how creative arts benefit people with Alzheimer's](#)

Listen

Various:

[Live Music Now Concert Library for Care Home](#)

[Actors reading famous poems](#)

[Well I Know Now](#)

(Spotify Podcast)

Develop

Live Music Now - Music

In care training for staff teams and bringing musicians in care homes

Age Exchange

training in the field of Reminiscence Arts practice

Step Change-Design

Garden & design workshops to support care staff of all levels

NAPA practice development resources:

Activity Support Service

FREE confidential phone line and email service for anyone with a question or concern relating to activity and engagement

Telephone 0800 1585503 or email supportline@napa-activities.co.uk

NAPA News

FREE Resources

Arts in Care Homes 'Beacons'

Here are some inspiring examples of care homes that offer a range of interesting arts opportunities. The managers of these three homes helped write this report, sharing their learning and suggestions.

Auburn Mere Care Home

Location: Watford, Hertfordshire

Type of home: residential care for older people and people living with dementia

Contact: auburnmere.co.uk

Number of beds: 35

Arts-related activities: art and craft sessions, intergenerational work, movement, singing, community projects

Community connections: Cathartic CIC, a service that creates imaginative art programmes that have a positive impact on health and wellbeing

Creative spaces or resources: A simple farmhouse that seats 12 people is the hub of activity in the home

Unique selling point: Tuesday morning arts and craft sessions, involvement in community art projects and in-house singing sessions.

Appleby House

Location: Epsom, Surrey

Type of home: residential dementia

Contact details: 01372 739933

Number of beds: 75

Type of care provided: supporting older people living with dementia

Arts-related activities: painting, music, singing, dancing, poetry, creative writing, gardening and cooking

Community connections: regular sessions with pupils from Epsom Primary School

Creative spaces or resources: Appleby 'Tate', Namaste room, art studio and allotment

Unique selling point: one sees the importance of art on entering the home. Underused rooms/ areas have been developed into creative spaces/hubs.

Bridgeside Lodge Care Home

Location: Islington, London

Type of home: specialist care for younger people with neurological and spinal conditions and people living with dementia

Contact details: 0844 472 5175

Number of beds: 64

Arts-related activities: regular group and one-to-one music sessions provided by professional musicians

Community connections: the charitable music organisation, The Spitz shares an office in the home

Creative spaces or resources: performance space in garden

Unique selling point: in-house arts organisation, The Spitz provides regular one-to-one sessions and group concerts by professional musicians. The musicians were registered as key workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Managers' guide to arts in care homes

The quick read

- Do some research using the internet and relevant resources.
- Do an audit of existing skills/interests of individuals, care staff and relatives.
- Contact local organisations, museums, galleries and groups.
- Invite everyone who is interested in helping develop your arts offer to a meeting. Use creative ways to encourage discussion and make plans.
- Set up an 'arts station' in a communal area with an assortment of art materials.
- Plan a simple community arts project, involving interested people.
- Consider developing rooms or spaces within your care homes into art hubs, including somewhere to display artwork.
- Add a question about arts/cultural interests and hobbies to staff interviews.
- Create a dedicated arts committee, comprised of interested individuals from various roles, to oversee and drive the arts offer.
- Do a callout to your local community for required items such as art materials, musical instruments or tablets.
- Offer arts training in the form of online or in-person courses.
- Combine art forms and include multisensory elements in art sessions so people can take part in different ways.
- Update care plans based on interests and preferences and pair individuals up with staff with relevant interests and skills.
- Document your activities by taking photos or films and capturing anecdotes and quotes.
- Develop mobile arts resources as a way of taking arts engagement into people's bedrooms and every corner of your care homes.
- Be proud of your achievements and share news about your arts activities in newsletters, via local and national press, and online.
- Collaborate with local artists and arts organisations to bring in expertise, energy and fresh perspectives for your arts initiatives.
- Consider organising regular art exhibitions or showcases within the care home to celebrate the creative work of the whole care community.
- Gather feedback from everyone involved to check on the effectiveness of the arts offer and make continuous improvements.
- Consider hosting arts and cultural events, such as live music performances or art workshops.
- Let NAPA know what you are doing so we can help inspire other care homes.

Thanks & contributors

NAPA would like to thank everyone who has contributed ideas and suggestions and helped with the development of this guide. This includes members of NAPA's RAIN group, The Dementia Craftivists, Thom Rowland, Douglas Noble, Suzy Cooper, David Cutler, Anna Park, Sally Knocker, Julia Lawrence, Mike Phillips, Susan Langford, Judy Parkinson, Ed Watkinson - Watkinson-Consulting Ltd, Catherine Ross and Karen Culshaw.

Particular thanks must go to the three care home managers and their staff teams, currently doing inspiring work involving the arts, who took the time to share their suggestions and experiences: Shona Bradbury, Marlene Kelly, and Fatma Makalo.

Front cover photo - Appleby House Care Home arts studio.

Proof Reader: Helen Lewis Lloyd

Editor: Catherine Ross

Design and layout: Oskar Design

© copyright NAPA 2023, all rights reserved.



Photo by Camilla Greenwell. Fevered Sleep for Magic Gecko for Magic Me's Artists' Residencies in Care Homes

Why encourage more arts in care homes?

Developing your arts offer will help you to demonstrate the quality of your person-centred care. This can be a rich source of outcomes for CQC inspections.

The arts improve relationships, creating a culture of sharing, supporting and understand each other's needs better.

Everyone can try something new; learning a skill creates feelings of achievement and renewed purpose.

The arts help people to express their feelings and to release emotions in a safe way.

The arts support discussions, debates and meaningful connections.

Everyone can contribute and share their work, encouraging feelings of self-worth, a sense of identity and belonging.

The arts boost quality of life for people living with dementia; working with colour and form brings joy in the moment and doesn't require the use of memory or recall.

Actively providing arts in care can challenge ageist attitudes and inspire others.

Arts can help with staff retention and job satisfaction as they develop their own creative skills and interests.

Research shows that arts improve person-centred care regardless of someone's diagnosis and have a role to play in palliative care, too.

The arts help people to connect meaningfully with each other and to develop sustainable links with local communities.

The arts provide a space for playfulness, life-long learning and adventure.

A home with a good arts offer may be attractive to a greater range of staff applicants.

Participating in artistic activities can reduce stress, anxiety and depression, improving mental health and overall quality of life.

Artistic expression can bridge generational gaps, helping to create intergenerational connections and understanding.

Creative arts can be tailored to individual preferences, encouraging personalised and enjoyable experiences.

Art can serve as a creative reminiscence tool, helping individuals recall and share meaningful memories from their past.

The presence of arts and creative activities can help to create a positive first impression for potential clients and their families.