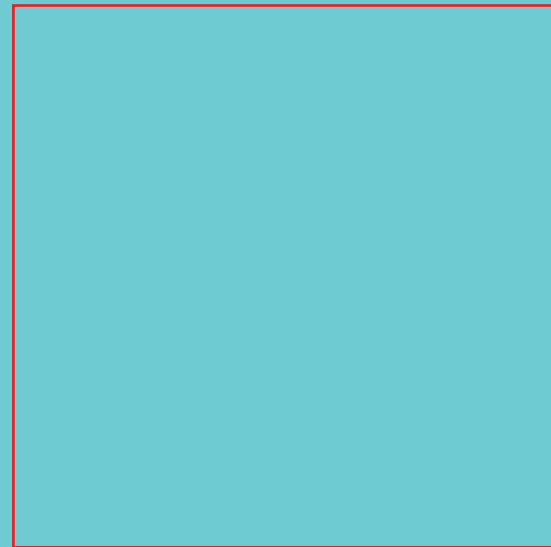


1 The state of arts and health





“the arts are, and should be clearly recognised as, integral to health and health services”

The Department of Health's Review of Arts and Health 2006

In September 2005, as part of the Department of Health's increasing emphasis on taking the opportunities offered by improving public health and wellbeing, and by joint working with other agencies, the Department began a review of its role in relation to arts and health in order to understand the contribution and potential value of the arts more fully. The Review was set up by Sir Nigel Crisp, the former NHS Chief Executive and Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health, and led by Harry Cayton, National Director for Patients and the Public. A small Working Group was set up and over 300 responses were received from senior NHS managers, NHS arts coordinators, artists, arts therapists, clinicians, charities, individual patients and users, professional bodies, academics, architects, constructors, designers and engineers. In addition, the Working Group carried out a number of literature and research reviews, and interviews with key individuals. In spring 2006, the Department of Health accepted the findings of the Review and commissioned this prospectus, in partnership with Arts Council England.

A copy of the Review can be downloaded at www.dh.gov.uk/publications



The prospectus – a celebration of the role of arts and health

This prospectus demonstrates the value of arts and health work in a range of settings. The wealth of evidence and good practice examples illustrates the benefits right across the spectrum of arts and health, including improving clinical and therapeutic outcomes, helping users to express, contain and transform distress and disturbance, creating a less stressful environment for patients, service users, staff and visitors, increasing the understanding between clinicians and the people for whom they care, bettering public health, developing and delivering more patient-focused services, and improving the experience for all.



How does the NHS engage with the arts?

The term 'arts' can include a wide range of activities. As this prospectus shows, the NHS is incorporating the arts in a variety of ways, including as a means to communicate, to improve the environment, to support staff, patients and users, to improve self-esteem, to distract and to empower, as well as to raise the standards of wellbeing, health and healthcare services. It does this in the following ways:

- **Promoting and improving health and wellbeing through public health strategies, health education and health promotion**, for example, by using theatre to discuss and communicate public health and lifestyle messages that lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, including in groups that can be hard to reach
- **Tackling major health issues:** Oldham's 'Bronchial Boogie' shows how teaching children with asthma to play wind and brass instruments has cut the time they miss from school and the number of them unable to participate in sports, and reduced their symptoms, sleepless nights and medication
- **Community cohesion, regeneration, and improving public health:** The arts encourage people to participate, which raises their self-esteem and makes them more open to change, which is often important in improving their health and lifestyle. After participating in Portsmouth's Somerstown Dot to Dot initiative, several women in the postnatal depression group joined other activities, including training for Sure Start, becoming a non-teaching assistant and becoming a member of the local Regeneration Project Board
- **Arts therapy, provided by professionally trained art, music, dance movement and drama therapists** can be particularly helpful to people who find it hard to express their thoughts and feelings verbally. An award-winning programme in Glasgow helped deliver culturally sensitive treatment to women asylum seekers and refugees with moderate mental health problems and complex trauma. Language barriers were reduced because the interventions did not depend on the spoken word



- **Improving the quality of healthcare** and promoting better clinical outcomes and more efficient use of resources, such as shortening treatment and recovery times and improving the impact of care. In acute care, the arts have proven effects on wellbeing, recovery and perceptions of pain
- **Participating in arts** projects has a positive impact on the mental health of participants by raising self-esteem and reducing social isolation, as shown in projects at Bromley by Bow Healthy Living Centre
- **Explaining and normalising healthcare**
The charity A Picture of Health and artists in residence programmes such as the one at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, provide patients with a way of expressing emotions and worries which may be hard to articulate. They also explain complex procedures through images and provide a normalising experience within stressful and invasive environments
- **Improving understanding between patients and staff, and shaping more effective training and development through the humanities:** Cambridge Primary Care Trusts and local artists have introduced arts into general practitioner education, using a theatre group to stimulate discussion and insight into mental health problems faced by patients and their doctors. A Yale University study uses art to teach the importance of observation to improve diagnostic skills
- **Creating high-quality environments that support patients, service users, carers and staff:** The King's Fund's Enhancing the Healing Environment Programme now has over 100 participating schemes. Formal evaluations demonstrate how transforming environments delivers therapeutic benefits, reduces staff and patient stress, supports staff development, and improves retention and recruitment
- **Achieving more by working in partnership** to bring in outside expertise, such as using the arts to support the development and delivery of major public health programmes. Building alliances with partners such as the police in Connecting Communities in Camborne, Cornwall, has brought football, a BMX track and a dance workshop to a deprived community, building social cohesion and encouraging physical activity

- **Improving working lives by creating supportive and less stressful environments for staff:** Salisbury District Hospital was one of the first to achieve Practise Level and provides creative opportunities for staff, including participating in the arts, trying something new, winding down after work, meeting colleagues in a different context and reducing stress – all supporting team working, staff welfare and development and creating the friendly environment frequently commented upon by staff and visitors
- **As part of the work of occupational therapists and physiotherapists:** Using natural creativity and interest in participating as part of successful rehabilitation, men at a post-discharge stroke group set up by occupational therapists at Mayday Hospital in Croydon produce complex Eagle Star quilts. As well as the therapeutic benefits, they meet and support one another, and develop fine motor skills, high levels of concentration and raised self-confidence

