



A prospectus for arts and health

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We are committed to being open and accessible. We welcome all comments on our work. Please send these to Andrew Whyte, Executive Director, Advocacy and Communications, at the Arts Council address above.

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Foreword

Many people's lives are enhanced by the arts. The arts are enjoyed and valued as part of our personal wellbeing and development, and as part of community and national life. Through the arts we can express and fulfil ourselves, and engage with other people in ways that other forms of communication do not offer. The beneficial impact of the arts are felt by patients, service users, citizens and communities as well as those who work in the NHS.

This prospectus has been produced to celebrate and promote the benefits of the arts in improving everyone's wellbeing, health and healthcare, and its role in supporting those who work in and with the Health Service. In it, we show that the arts can, and do, make a major contribution to key health and wider community issues.

Some people might dismiss the arts as simply add-on activities, which have little place in a modern, technically-focused healthcare system. But this is far from being the case, as reflected in this prospectus. Those who are involved in the wealth of activity across the country have amply demonstrated the tangible benefits of arts and health. Hundreds of research projects, organisations and individuals are showing that the arts are an integral part of the nature and quality of the services we provide. They reveal the effectiveness and value of arts and health initiatives, and the benefits they bring to patients, service users and their carers, and to communities and healthcare workers in every sector.

The examples and case studies included here are a small sample of the many inspirational projects all over the country. They illustrate the scale, quality and breadth of activity, and are a tribute to the vision, commitment and expertise of all involved in arts and health. We believe this prospectus will be of interest and value to everyone working to improve wellbeing, health and the patient experience, and we commend it to you.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Andy Burnham".

Andy Burnham MP
Minister of State for Delivery
and Quality
Department of Health



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David Lammy".

David Lammy MP
Minister for Culture
Department for Culture,
Media and Sport

A celebration

The arts make a significant contribution to improving the lives, health and wellbeing of patients, service users and carers, as well as those who work in health and the arts. Together, the Department of Health and Arts Council England have produced this prospectus to demonstrate and celebrate that contribution.

The prospectus stems from the recommendations of the Review of Arts and Health Working Group, which was commissioned by the Department of Health. The Review strongly concluded that the arts are, and should be clearly recognised as, integral to health and health services. The evidence to support this is provided by numerous examples and research. Indeed, the range of activities to which the arts can contribute, including addressing many of the NHS's and society's most pressing priorities, is considerable and impressive.

At its heart, work involving the arts and health is about shaping and delivering high-quality clinical care that is focused on the needs of patients and service users as individuals or groups. Indeed, it is important to note that the sharing of artistic activity has a valuable part to play in our sense of wellbeing. This prospectus is therefore aimed at all those who work in and with the healthcare and arts sectors, to help them understand the contribution the arts can make to every aspect of their work, to highlight best practice and the evidence base, and to show where more information can be found.

In carrying out our Review, we were fortunate to be able to draw on over 300 outstanding contributions from colleagues involved in the spectrum of arts and health activities. We are grateful to all who shared

their views and experiences. Their responses demonstrate great knowledge, interest and enthusiasm for the arts and health, through hundreds of good practice examples and research studies. These illustrate the impact arts and health work has in providing a more positive experience for patients and users, improving clinical outcomes, providing arts therapies, making training and development more effective, improving communication, supporting staff, engaging communities and tailoring services to hard-to-reach groups, who are often most in need of help.

Many examples are included in this prospectus and there are many more which also offer inspiration and experience, on which others can base their own ideas and programmes. Information about these can be found in Section 5, Further Information.

We hope that you find this prospectus useful.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Cayton".

Harry Cayton
National Director for Patients
and the Public
Department of Health



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Hewitt".

Peter Hewitt
Chief Executive
Arts Council England