

# Older and wiser?

*Creative ageing in the UK  
2010–19*



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## Images:

*Front cover*

**Laser-cut artwork from the Digital Makers project at FabLab, Belfast**

Photo courtesy of FabLab Belfast

*Inside front cover*

**Age Cymru's cARTrefu participants use collage to explore wishes for the future**

©cARTrefu, Age Cymru



## FOREWORD



A decade ago, in my role as the Government's adviser to the elderly, I wrote the foreword to the first report the Baring Foundation produced as it launched its Arts and Older People grants programme. That report – *Ageing Artfully* – revealed a number of arts organisations that were reaching out to older participants to provide opportunities to dance, make music, act, draw and more. It was clear that this was an important field of activity, supported by a nascent but strengthening body of evidence about the value of the arts in later life – for mental wellbeing, physical wellness and, of course, the sheer joy of it. However, activity was largely local, fragmented and lacking in national profile.

Since then, the Baring Foundation has gone on to spend more than £6 million, drawing in a similar amount through partnerships with arts funders across the UK.

This new report shows the powerful impact of this funding and strategic activity from the Baring Foundation and others. There is now a significant and broad arts and older people's sector, with arts organisations of all sizes seeing older people as an important audience for their work and providing opportunities for older people to take part in creative activity. The research case for the health and social benefits of the arts is now unarguable as the recent investment in social prescribing highlights.

However, we can't stand still! This report shows there is more to do, particularly in making sure that what the arts can offer is shared equally among all our diverse communities. It is wonderful to read that some care homes have seen how the arts can enrich the lives of their residents. It demonstrates that this is an experience we can all have in the frailer years of our lives.

Ageing is one thing we all have in common. It is in all our interests to ensure that this work continues to flourish.

**Baroness Bakewell**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, there has been growing recognition that the arts bring joy and enrichment to our lives and that engagement with the arts carries with it a number of additional positive impacts. This is particularly true as we age, with arts engagement helping to overcome social isolation and loneliness, maintain health and wellbeing and increase resilience. With people over 65 accounting for almost a fifth of the UK's population and inequalities becoming more entrenched as we age, the need for a better quality of later life has never been more acute. This report explores the part played by the arts in enriching later life. It does so through a combination of desk-based research, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations and visits to some of the projects that form the basis of case studies.

Between 2010 and 2019, the Baring Foundation dedicated its arts funding to participatory activities involving older people. The Foundation commissioned this report from King's College London as an overview of the ways in which the field has developed during the period it has been active, but by no means confined to the activities it has funded.

*Older and wiser? Creative ageing in the UK 2010–19* finds that the creative ageing movement originated in the 1970s and gestated slowly over several years. Over the past decade, there has been a significant growth in the quantity and quality of creative ageing programmes and in the profile of these activities. This growth has taken place unevenly between and within the four nations of the UK.

Centred on practice in social care and health settings, cultural and community venues and digital space, *Older and wiser?* presents case studies of exemplary activity and provides many illustrative examples. It finds that creative ageing activities are at their best when they are high in quality and person centred. It also notes that work has become better differentiated to cater to an increasingly diverse older population.

This report draws attention to the growing number of artists developing, discovering or returning to their practice in older age, and it highlights the growing involvement of older people in designing and delivering participatory arts activities and cultural programmes. It also documents ways in which training and networking opportunities for artists and others working in the field have been enhanced and a body of evidence has developed to support practice.

Consideration is given to the factors that prevent older people from becoming involved in creative and cultural activities – from psychosocial and economic barriers to practical impediments such as lack of available transport – and the ways in which these are being overcome.

Concluding with an overview of the challenges that lie ahead, *Older and wiser?* offers a comment on the need for greater recognition of the excellent work being undertaken in the field of creative ageing and ways in which this might be extended.

To secure the sustainability of the field, dedicated creative ageing policy in each nation of the UK will be crucial. Additional resources will need to be made available to facilitate ongoing engagement with the arts as an integral part of age-friendly communities. In this endeavour, a greater effort will be necessary to reach marginalised older people and those who find it hard to participate in creative and cultural activities due to ill health.

Research and evaluation will continue to be needed to evidence the benefits of creative ageing and to enable advocacy for work in this area. More artists and carers must be trained and supported to work with older people to cope with increased demand. Continued networking for professionals in the field will enable skills and knowledge to be shared.

Creative participation can contribute to a longer, happier, healthier life. It can help to amplify the voices of older people and enhance their contribution to society. It can help to overcome negative stereotypes and reduce our fear of ageing. There is work to be done, but the time has come for the benefits of creative ageing to be realised.



# Introduction to creative ageing

## Changing demographics

There are more than 12 million people of pensionable age in the UK, representing 18.9 per cent of the population.<sup>1</sup> By 2041, this is expected to increase to more than 16 million people (22.3 per cent of the population), with the proportion of people aged 85 years and over doubling to 3.2 million.<sup>2</sup>

The older population is growing at a faster rate than younger age groups, with the number of people aged between 65 and 84 years increasing by 23 per cent to 10.6 million between 2008 and 2018 and the number of people aged 85+ increasing by 22.8 per cent to 1.6 million over the same period.<sup>3</sup> This is partly as a result of the baby booms of the post-war period and the 1960s, combined with a low birth rate at the turn of the millennium, and partly due to the lengthening of life expectancy between 1920 and 2010.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the older population is becoming more diverse as a result of positive net migration and thriving lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities.

While people of retirement age tend to be wealthier than their younger counterparts, largely as a result of rising property prices, pensioner poverty is increasing. The sudden implementation of plans to raise the state pension age for women from 60 to 65 has had a dramatic effect on women born in the 1950s. An estimated 1.9 million older people live in relative poverty and 1.1 million in severe poverty,<sup>5</sup> with single women, ethnic minorities and those over 80 the worst affected.<sup>6</sup>

Wealth influences how long we can expect to live and how many of our later years will be enjoyed free of disability or long-term illness. The Centre for Ageing Better – which received a £50 million Big Lottery endowment in 2015 as part of the independent What Works Network informing government policy – warns that:

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As we get older, the steady accumulation of a lifetime of advantages or disadvantages, together with differences such as in our ethnicity, in where we live and in our income, results in vastly unequal levels of health, wealth, happiness and security in later life. [...] While the twentieth century's advances in public health, nutrition and medical science have given us the gift of longevity, so far this century we have failed to respond with sufficiently radical action to ensure everyone enjoys these extra years.<sup>7</sup>

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As the population ages and inequality increases, staying healthy in later life becomes a major challenge. The UK's Industrial Strategy acknowledges that: 'Staying active, productive and independent is important to our increasing numbers of older people. The challenge is

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2018). *Population Estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2018*: [ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2018](https://ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/annualmidyearpopulationestimates/mid2018)

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2016). *National Population Projections: 2016-based Statistical Bulletin*: [ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/2016basedstatisticalbulletin](https://ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/2016basedstatisticalbulletin)

<sup>3</sup> *Population Estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2018*, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> The King's Fund. n.d. *Mortality Rates in the UK: Why are Improvements in Life Expectancy Slowing Down?* [kingsfund.org.uk/projects/mortality-rates-uk-why-are-improvements-life-expectancy-slowing-down](https://kingsfund.org.uk/projects/mortality-rates-uk-why-are-improvements-life-expectancy-slowing-down)

<sup>5</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2018). *Individual Wealth by Age Band: Great Britain, July 2014 to June 2016*: [ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/adhocs/009320individualwealthbyagebandgreatbritainjuly2014tojune2016](https://ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/adhocs/009320individualwealthbyagebandgreatbritainjuly2014tojune2016)

<sup>6</sup> Office for National Statistics. (2017). *Persistent Poverty in the UK and EU: 2017*, Table 9. *UK Persistent Poverty Rates by Age, 2008–2015, percentage individuals*: [ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/articles/persistentpovertyintheukandeu/2017](https://ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/articles/persistentpovertyintheukandeu/2017)

<sup>7</sup> The Centre for Ageing Better. (2019). *The State of Ageing in 2019: Adding Life to Our Years*. London: Centre for Ageing Better, p. 4.

to innovate, so older people's aspirations are met and so better, more effective care supports an independent lifestyle as they age.<sup>8</sup> This report argues that participation in creative and cultural activities has a significant part to play in happier, healthier later lives.

### The benefits of arts engagement

In recent years, there has been growing awareness of the joy of creative and cultural participation and its positive impacts. Interviewed for this study, the Chief Executive of Care England, Professor Martin Green, cited the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health and Wellbeing as a significant driver of this recognition. In July 2017, the group published *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*, which argues that 'arts engagement may be envisaged as a factor that can mitigate the effects of health inequalities while policies are implemented to eradicate their causes'.<sup>9</sup> The same report discusses the impact of arts engagement on physical and mental health, social isolation and loneliness. A chapter dedicated to older adulthood collates much of the evidence pointing to the beneficial effects of arts engagement in later life and presents relevant case studies.

Despite heightened awareness of the individual and social value of arts engagement, the Taking Part survey – conducted since 2005 by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in association with Arts Council England (ACE), Sport England and Historic England – shows that attendance at cultural events and participation in creative activities typically decline after the age of 74.<sup>10</sup>

Opportunities for creative and cultural engagement are unevenly distributed around the UK, adversely affected in certain areas by the loss of arts officers from local

authorities and the closure of libraries and community centres. This means that, while the London Borough of Lewisham is so well provided for that six high-quality organisations have set up the Older People Arts Network,<sup>11</sup> many parts of the UK are lacking appropriate opportunities for older people to nurture their creativity.

### The Baring Foundation and creative ageing

The Baring Foundation uses its 'resources to enable civil society to work with people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage and to act strategically to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality'.<sup>12</sup> It does this by working with 'voluntary sector organisations which try to improve the quality of life of people experiencing disadvantage or discrimination'.<sup>13</sup> In setting priorities for its dedicated arts strand, the Foundation identifies areas that are ripe for investment and that present an opportunity for long-term strategic development.

In 2009, the Foundation decided to invest its arts funding in improving the quality of life of older people in the UK, with a focus on creative participation. The Foundation's Director, David Cutler, would later describe this as 'one of the best decisions we have ever made'.<sup>14</sup> Beyond ageism, it was envisaged that the disadvantage or discrimination experienced by older people might include poverty, isolation, racism, sexism and practical barriers such as health or transport. Accordingly, the Foundation's main objective for the arts and older people programme became to 'increase the quality and quantity of the arts for older people, especially vulnerable older people'.<sup>15</sup>

Older age can be defined as anything over 50 and refer to 'old people, seniors, elders, older people, the elderly, people of advanced

Participation in creative and cultural activities has a significant part to play in happier, healthier later lives.

8 HM Government. (2017). *Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain Fit for the Future*. London: HM Government, p. 77.

9 All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. (2017). *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*. London: APPGAHW, p. 29.

10 Inglis, G. & Williams, J. (2010). *Models of Sporting and Cultural Activity: Analysis of the Taking Part Survey*. London: DCMS.

11 Older People Arts Network: [trinitylaban.ac.uk/take-part/for-adults/inspired-not-tired/older-people-arts-network-opa](http://trinitylaban.ac.uk/take-part/for-adults/inspired-not-tired/older-people-arts-network-opa)

12 About the Baring Foundation: [baringfoundation.org.uk/about-us/our-purpose-and-values/](http://baringfoundation.org.uk/about-us/our-purpose-and-values/)

13 Cutler, D. (2009). *Ageing Artfully: Older People and Professional Participatory Arts in the UK*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 4.

14 Cutler, D. (14 October 2014). *Arts in Care: a UK Perspective*. Speech to Arts in Care Contexts Seminar, Perth Concert Hall.

15 Cutler, D. (May 2015). *Getting On – Arts and Older People: A Baring Foundation Programme 2010-2014*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 1.

‘There were pioneers in this field long before we became involved and our size is such that we can only act as a catalyst.’ **David Cutler, Director of the Baring Foundation, 2013**

age’.<sup>16</sup> In Northern Ireland, a discussion around language is taking place that may see a move away from ‘older people’ in favour of ‘later in life’. In Greater Manchester, work is organised around key life events rather than numerical age. For its programme, the Baring Foundation took older adults to be anyone over 60, with a special interest in people aged 75+.

An initial sum of £3 million was made available for the years 2010–14 (later reduced to £2.75 million due to economic uncertainty). At the same time, the Foundation sought to mitigate the risk of being ‘drawn into a pattern of long-term provision’, by ‘having further influence on those who *are* responsible for long-term provision and thus bringing about lasting improvements in the quality of life of many thousands of disadvantaged older people in future’.<sup>17</sup> In 2013, Cutler modestly told an audience in Sydney that: ‘There were pioneers in this field long before we became involved and our size is such that we can only act as a catalyst, in particular trying to engage policy makers and larger funders.’<sup>18</sup> In order to achieve this, the Foundation extended its work in this area by another five years. The total sum invested in the programme was more than £6 million.

This report spans the period in which the Baring Foundation has been active in the area of creative ageing, but it is by no means confined to the activity of the Foundation. The brief for the research underlying this report was to capture more broadly the ‘development of arts and older people activity in the UK over the last decade’.<sup>19</sup> That said, the contribution made by the Foundation to the past decade of activity – described by one respondent to this study as ‘mind-blowing’ – is impossible to ignore.

### Creative ageing as a sector or field

At a roundtable discussion on arts and health funding in April 2012, Director of the London Arts in Health Forum, Damian Hebron, raised ‘questions as to whether the field of participatory arts with older people can really be termed a “sector”, and the degree to which such a label is valuable’.<sup>20</sup> At the same event, Alice Thwaite of Equal Arts argued that arts and older people ‘must be defined as a sector, for without proper recognition of this area of enormous need, it will not be properly funded’.<sup>21</sup>

Three months later, François Matarasso (who would go on to become a trustee of the Baring Foundation), identified that:

The difficulty is that, in comparison, say, with arts and health, the boundaries of arts work with older people are hard to define. Arts and health practice is diverse but it unites around a core goal of improving health. There is no single common purpose among organisations working in the arts with older people: indeed, from some perspectives, this group could include all arts organisations that do not exclusively serve younger people.<sup>22</sup>

The following year, Baring’s Arts Adviser, Kate Organ, asked ‘whether there is a body of practice with enough commonality and specificity to represent a sector of “Arts and Older People”. Or a need for one’.<sup>23</sup>

In interview in 2019, David Slater, Director of Entelechy Arts and previous Artistic Director of the Capital Age Festival, responded to a question about how he would like to see the field developing by expressing the hope that this work did not become a field, instead focusing on finding ways to support older people to access the arts in sophisticated and joyous ways. However, this terminology was more widely accepted

<sup>16</sup> Allen, P. (July 2018). *Arts in Care Homes: A Rapid Mapping of Training Provision*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Matarasso, F. (July 2012). *Older People and the Arts: A Mid-term Programme Review*. London: The Baring Foundation, p.25. Italics in original.

<sup>18</sup> Cutler, D. (12 November 2013). *Creative Ageing in the UK: Past, Present, Future*. Speech to the Fifth International Conference on Arts and Health.

<sup>19</sup> The Baring Foundation. (July 2018). *Invitation to Tender: Research on the Development of Arts and Older People Activity in the UK over the Last Decade*.

<sup>20</sup> The Baring Foundation. (25 April 2012). *Arts and Health Funding – Roundtable Discussion*, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *Older People and the Arts: A Mid-term Programme Review*, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Organ, K. (March 2013). *After You Are Two: Exemplary Practice in Participatory Arts with Older People*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 7.

by other respondents, so perhaps we can safely speak of a field or a sector while remaining mindful of more existential goals.

### Reporting on creative ageing

After a brief account of the method used to compile this report, an overview is given of the various motivations underlying creative ageing, from moral arguments to a consideration of individual and social value. A brief history of the period before 2010 is sketched before moving to consider the period of intense activity that has characterised the past decade. Evolution of the field takes account of the locations that have been harnessed to the cause of creative ageing including social care, health, and cultural and community venues, alongside the digital realm.

As policy and activity differs widely in the four nations of the UK, each of these is considered separately, together with a relevant case study. A consideration of the ways in which the field has diversified over recent years gives way to a discussion about the abiding barriers to older people

participating in creative activity. In anticipation of increased demand for participatory arts among the older population, an account is given of the various training and professional development programmes available to artists and the activities and tools available to formal and informal carers. Attention is paid to the networking opportunities that have been made available to those working in the field and to the growing evidence base underlying it. This report concludes with immediate reflections on the development of the creative ageing movement to date and an account of the work that still needs to be done.

Our culture tends to celebrate youth and to undervalue the contribution to society made by people of advancing age. But older people have a wealth of experience they can bring to bear, and the ‘voices and imagination of older generations have a vital part to play in shaping understanding and decision-making in the public realm’.<sup>24</sup> As we shall see, the arts have the potential to act as a vehicle for this expression.



Our culture tends to celebrate youth and to undervalue the contribution to society made by people of advancing age. But older people have a wealth of experience they can bring to bear.

**Image:**  
Streetwise Community  
Circus workshop

Photo courtesy of Arts Council  
Northern Ireland

## Method

This report has been compiled at King’s College London through a combination of desk-based research, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations and visits to some of the projects that form the basis of case studies. Desk-based research was initially centred on the multifarious reports the Baring Foundation has produced about various aspects of the field, from high-profile programmes to training opportunities and from digital developments to local authority involvement. Research was extended into literature produced by arts and older people’s organisations and the range of policy documents produced in the four nations of the UK. Resources such as the Age of Creativity website and the Repository for Arts and Health Resources were consulted for details of grey literature.<sup>25</sup>

Between November 2018 and July 2019, interviews were conducted with the following people working in the field of arts and older people.

Name	Organisation	Date
Kelly Barr	Age Cymru	13 December 2018
Andrew Barry	Royal Exchange Theatre Elders Programme	13 December 2018
Rebecca Blackman	Arts Council England (ACE)	13 December 2018
Lorraine Calderwood	Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI)	21 November 2018
Paul Cann	Campaign to End Loneliness	17 January 2019
Nick Capaldi	Arts Council of Wales (ACW)	17 January 2019
Farrell Curran	Age UK Oxfordshire	10 January 2019
David Cutler	The Baring Foundation	19 July 2019
Evan Dawson	Live Music Now	13 December 2018
Kate Duncan	City Arts	24 January 2019
Jenny Elliott	Arts Care	4 February 2019
Anne Gallacher	Luminate	19 December 2018
Kate Gant	Creative Health CIC	21 November 2018
Joce Giles	Sadler’s Wells Company of Elders	21 December 2018
Martin Green	Care England	29 January 2019
Alison Holdom	Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	13 December 2018
Gemma Jolly	Alzheimer’s Society	24 January 2019
Susan Langford	Magic Me	3 December 2018
David McDonagh & Cordelia Wyche	Flourishing Lives at Claremont Project	3 December 2018
Janet Morrison	The Baring Foundation	16 January 2019
Joan Parr & Milica Milosevic	Creative Scotland	13 December 2018
Arti Prashar	Spare Tyre	26 November 2018

<sup>25</sup> Age of Creativity website: [ageofcreativity.co.uk](http://ageofcreativity.co.uk); Repository for Arts and Health Resources: [artshealthresources.org.uk](http://artshealthresources.org.uk)

Name	Organisation	Date
David Slater	Entelechy Arts	3 April 2019
Alice Thwaite	Equal Arts	24 January 2019
Yemisi Turner-Blake	Paul Hamlyn Foundation	8 February 2019
Esme Ward	Manchester Museum and The Whitworth	11 January 2019

Each respondent was asked the same questions, with freedom to deviate as desired. The questions were as follows:

- When did you start working with the arts and older people and why?
- What was the field like when you found it?
- What is the value of your activity to your immediate beneficiaries and to staff and carers?
- What are the benefits to artists?
- Which challenges have been overcome (in your organisation and the field more generally)?
- How can any remaining barriers to participation be overcome?
- How would you like to see the field develop?
- What would help you in your work?

Respondents working within funding bodies were asked these follow-up questions:

- Where do the arts and older people fall within your priorities?
- Is any focus on arts and older people likely to shift in the future?
- Should we be categorising the arts in this way?
- Is it valid to have a specific focus on older people, or should the focus be on community inclusivity that is age blind?

Responses provided in these interviews have been quoted throughout this report. Others working in the field, some with reservations about creative ageing, were contacted for comments and suggestions of practice examples.

King's College London issued a call for details of active arts and older people programmes. This was disseminated via several professional networks and via social media. Attempts were made to contact all the organisations that had benefited from Baring Foundation funding and participated in elders' networks and festivals in all four nations of the UK. Responses to this call are listed at the back of this report, supplemented with additional details where gaps were identified.

Sincere thanks are due to everyone who contributed to this research, particularly those who so generously consented to be interviewed and those who welcomed a curious researcher into their creative sessions. At the Baring Foundation, David Cutler, Harriet Lowe and François Matarasso provided their input with a refreshingly light touch. At King's College London, Ruth Hogarth nurtured the inception of this project, Nikki Crane and Daniel Walker oversaw its progress, Lydia Kapournioti masterfully executed the call for programme details and picture research and Josephine Walsh coordinated this report's production and publicity.

**This report was commissioned from King's College London by the Baring Foundation. The Baring Foundation is an independent foundation which protects and advances human rights and promotes inclusion. Since 2010, the Foundation's arts programme has focused on supporting participatory arts with people over the age of 60, particularly those facing disadvantage or discrimination. This commission is one of the final grants in this programme before the Foundation moves to its new funding theme of Arts & Mental Health in 2020.**

'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts' **Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948**

# Motivations for creative ageing

## Arts engagement as a human right

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948, states that ‘everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts’.<sup>26</sup> This laid the foundations for full access to culture as an inherent human right. Guidance on Article 27 elaborates that: ‘This includes the right of individuals and communities to know, understand, visit, make use of, maintain, exchange and develop cultural heritage and cultural expressions, as well as to benefit from the cultural heritage and cultural expressions of others.’<sup>27</sup> This suggests an extension of the franchise to include not only cultural but also creative activity.

In 1991, the General Assembly issued the United Nations Principles for Older Persons based on independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity. These principles advocated the full integration of older people in society including ‘access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society’.<sup>28</sup> This asserted the right of older people to the same access to society’s cultural resources as the rest of the population.

Of particular relevance to creative participation is the 2013 report to the United Nations by the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Farida Shaheed. This recommends that: ‘All persons enjoy the right to freedom of artistic expression and creativity, which includes the right to freely experience and contribute to artistic expressions and creations, through individual or joint practice, to have access to and enjoy the arts, and to disseminate their expressions and creations.’<sup>29</sup> Combined with Article 27 and the Principles for Older Persons, this provides a basis for the kind of participatory creative activity that characterises creative ageing. This is yet to find its way into policy in the UK.

In an early publication dedicated to the arts and older people, published by Age Concern, Fi Frances wrote that:

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Whether we are seven or seventy-seven, the arts can enrich, dignify and lift the quality of our lives. Whether we are joining in and making art ourselves or whether we are appreciating art made by other people, the arts in their many forms allow us to look at ourselves and our lives in fresh and life-giving ways. Through the arts, we can enjoy ourselves in the present, we can deal with our experience in our own time and our own way. Art is flexible. It stretches our imaginations, our memories and our experience. It addresses our feelings. It gives us confidence and skills. It offers us companions if we want them. It makes new people of us and also reminds us who we are and have been. In fact, art can speak to parts of us which no other aspect of human experience reaches.<sup>30</sup>

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When the Baring Foundation announced its arts and older people programme in 2009, it did so on the basis of the right of older people to access their creativity:

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The starting point of the Foundation’s new arts programme is that people continue to be creative as they age but that in some circumstances may need specific support from arts organisations to unlock and develop these talents. Older people have dreams and

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<sup>26</sup> United Nations. (1948). Universal Declaration of Human Rights: [un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights](http://un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights)

<sup>27</sup> United Nations. (2018). *The Right to Culture: Questions and Answers*: [unesco.org/culture/culture-sector-knowledge-management-tools/10\\_Info%20Sheet\\_Right%20to%20Culture.pdf](http://unesco.org/culture/culture-sector-knowledge-management-tools/10_Info%20Sheet_Right%20to%20Culture.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> United Nations. (1991). *United Nations Principles for Older People Based on Independence, Participation, Care, Self fulfilment and Dignity*: [un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/46/91](http://un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/46/91)

<sup>29</sup> Shaheed, F. (March 2013). *The Right to Freedom of Artistic Expression and Creativity: Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights*, paragraph 85: [freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/A-HRC-23-34\\_en.pdf](http://freemuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/A-HRC-23-34_en.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Frances, F. (1999). *Arts and Older People: A Practical Introduction*. London: Age Concern, p. 65.

aspirations and can go on contributing to and improving society. The arts can play a unique role in older people's lives, especially through actively creating and presenting artistic work.<sup>31</sup>

In this endeavour, the inherent value of the arts was uppermost. Janet Morrison – former Chief Executive of Independent Age, founder member of the Campaign to End Loneliness and Chair of the Baring Foundation trustees – has written of ‘the sheer joy of taking part, the importance of being taken out of the humdrum and day to day, to being in the moment, to the expressions of identity and pleasure, reducing isolation and the wider social and community benefits’.<sup>32</sup> During a talk in Scotland, David Cutler said that, ‘Even if the arts had no positive effect on someone's health or on community relations, I passionately believe that they should be available to all as a right and an entitlement. They are fundamental to our humanity and to be deprived of them is to die from within’.<sup>33</sup>

The work of both Luminare and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI)'s Arts & Older People Programme – described more fully in the sections on national activity – is premised on a rights-based approach. In much the same way, Rebecca Blackman, Director of Engagement and Audiences at ACE, asserted in interview that the arts council responds to the moral case for access to the arts and culture to be made available to the whole population.

Susan Langford MBE, who has been working in the field since 1986, described how Magic Me evaluates its activities against the following aims:

The arts – people ‘having opportunities to work with professional artists, to have arts experiences they wouldn't otherwise have, to make work, to learn skills, to enjoy the arts in new ways and to feel proud of

what they make with a high-quality process and a high-quality outcome and sometimes sharing that with a public audience’. Personal development – communication, self-confidence, meeting and feeling comfortable with people different from themselves (in terms of age or ethnicity). Community development – growing the group, including family, friends and peers, while demonstrating to the local community that older people are talented and have a lot to offer rather than being problems to solve.

This foregrounding of the creative experience leads us into a discussion of individual and social value.

### Beneficial impacts

It is widely accepted that the personal enrichment derived from creative participation has a number of additional beneficial impacts. These are often observed as the outcomes of participatory arts activity with older people. Taking account of these positive impacts helps us to understand and evaluate creative ageing activities.

#### *Social connectedness*

Social isolation is an objective condition defined as insufficient social contact. It has become an endemic problem within our society, affecting people of all ages. Isolation can lead to loneliness, but it is equally possible to be lonely in a crowded room, a care home or within a relationship. Loneliness is defined as a mismatch between the quantity and quality of relationships we have and those we would like to have.

Of the 3.6 million older people living alone in the UK, Age UK reports that 1.9 million often feel ignored or invisible and 1.4 million are chronically lonely.<sup>34</sup> Loneliness is most likely in people over 80, on a low income, living alone in isolated rural or deprived urban communities. Loneliness is strongly associated with poor physical and mental

It is widely accepted that the personal enrichment derived from creative participation has a number of additional beneficial impacts.

<sup>31</sup> *Ageing Artfully*, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Morrison, J. (July 2017). *Comment on the APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Report on Creative Health*: [independentage.org/news-media/press-releases/comment-on-appg-on-arts-health-and-wellbeing-report-on-creative-health](http://independentage.org/news-media/press-releases/comment-on-appg-on-arts-health-and-wellbeing-report-on-creative-health)

<sup>33</sup> *Arts in Care: a UK Perspective*, op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Age UK. (2018). *Loneliness*: [ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/loneliness](http://ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/loneliness) and Age UK. (September 2018). *All the Lonely People: Loneliness in Later Life*: [ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/loneliness/loneliness-report\\_final\\_2409.pdf](http://ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/loneliness/loneliness-report_final_2409.pdf)

‘Engagement with the arts, museums and creative practice can help people become more connected.’  
**Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2018**

health, particularly high blood pressure, dementia and depression, with lonely people tending to need earlier entry into residential care.<sup>35</sup> Qualitative research has identified four main strategies for overcoming loneliness: 1) improving social skills, 2) enhancing social support, 3) increasing opportunities for social contact, and 4) addressing maladaptive social cognition.<sup>36</sup> Arts engagement has a tangible contribution to make in several of these areas.

A team at the Centre for Performance Science – a partnership between the Royal College of Music and Imperial College London – has been studying the relationship between cultural attendance and loneliness. Using data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), the team looked at associations between the frequency of cultural attendance and the likelihood of loneliness while taking into account a range of socio-demographic, economic, health and social, community and civic engagement factors. They found that visits to the cinema, theatre, museums, galleries, exhibitions, concerts or opera reduced the likelihood of loneliness contemporaneously. Over time, the most robust evidence of loneliness being reduced was found when people visited museums, galleries or exhibitions every few months or more often compared with those who never engaged. This led to the conclusion that ‘frequent engagement with certain receptive arts activities and venues, particularly museums, galleries and exhibitions, may be a protective factor against loneliness in older adults’.<sup>37</sup>

The Campaign to End Loneliness, led by a consortium of organisations, strives to ensure that fewer people feel lonely in older age. As part of a preventative strategy designed to reduce costs, the Campaign

advocates access to community activities, including the arts, in safe spaces with reliable transport. Founder member Janet Morrison has described how the arts can ‘break down barriers and inspire, they can encourage people to try, sometimes for the first time in their lives, new activities. They can give voice to the previously voiceless. Through the arts older people can build and grow their confidence and feel valued. There can be enormous social benefits – creating a “look forward to” moment in the week, bringing people together and fostering new friendships’.<sup>38</sup>

In October 2018, DCMS published a strategy for overcoming loneliness in England. Informed by the work of the Campaign to End Loneliness and the Baring Foundation, the strategy recognised that: ‘Engagement with the arts, museums and creative practice can help people become more connected.’<sup>39</sup> As a result, the strategy outlined plans for ACE to work with the organisations it funds and with public health providers to help overcome loneliness as part of the social prescribing initiative that is being rolled out by NHS England.

An overview of reviews of interventions tackling loneliness conducted by the What Works Centre for Wellbeing threw up a handful of studies showing that the social contacts of older people were improved through participatory arts activities.<sup>40</sup> This is being followed by a review of grey literature about the impact of the arts and sports in overcoming loneliness. As one example of the kind of material that might be included in this review, the Craft Café run by Impact Arts in Govan, which involved 72 people aged over 60 between 2016 and 2017, found that 96 per cent of participants felt more socially connected.<sup>41</sup> Arts activities helping

<sup>35</sup> Windle, K., Francis, J. & Coomber, C. (October 2011). *Preventing Loneliness and Social Isolation: Interventions and Outcomes*. London: Social Care Institute for Excellence: [scie.org.uk/publications/briefings/briefing3](http://scie.org.uk/publications/briefings/briefing3)

<sup>36</sup> Masi, C.M., Chen, H-Y., Hawkey, L.C. & Cacioppo, J.T. (August 2011). A Meta-Analysis of Interventions to Reduce Loneliness. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 15, 3, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Tymoszuk, U., Perkins, R., Fancourt, D. & Williamon, A. (2019). Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Associations Between Receptive Arts Engagement and Loneliness Among Older Adults. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*.

<sup>38</sup> Morrison, J. (October 2012). Foreword. In Cutler, D. *Tackling Loneliness in Older Age – The Role of the Arts*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. (October 2018). *A Connected Society: A Strategy for Tackling Loneliness – Laying the Foundations for Change*. London: DCMS, p. 54.

<sup>40</sup> Victor, C., Mansfield, L., Kay, T., Daykin, N., Lane, J., et al. (October 2018). *An Overview of Reviews: the Effectiveness of Interventions to Address Loneliness at All Stages of the Life-course*. London: What Works Centre for Wellbeing: [whatworkswellbeing.org/product/tackling-loneliness-full-review](http://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/tackling-loneliness-full-review)

<sup>41</sup> Luminare. (October 2017). *Late Opening: Arts and Older People in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Luminare, p. 5.

to overcome loneliness is common to many of the projects described in this report.

The Centre for Performance Science has also looked at the impact of the participatory arts on loneliness. Rhythm for Life, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (2010–12), facilitated creative music opportunities – including one-to-one sessions, small group lessons and creative workshops – for 98 older adults over 10 weeks, delivered by current and past students of the Royal College of Music. By studying wellbeing and interpersonal relationships and asking participants about their experience compared to non-musical learning, the team was able to establish that learning music in older adulthood could enhance social interactions both within and beyond sessions, not only providing opportunities to meet and socialise with new people but also enabling new forms of interaction with family members and friends.<sup>42</sup> The Silver Programme at Sage Gateshead, an ACE NPO, is exemplary in this regard, offering classes for older people to learn the saxophone, steel drums, mandolin and ukulele alongside singing and opera.<sup>43</sup>

People interviewed for this report identified a sense of community and common cause as a benefit of participatory arts activity, enabling the formation of sometimes-unlikely friendships. This is particularly important in communal living situations. A quality standard published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in 2016 advocates the provision of group or one-to-one creative

activities for older people on the basis that they build or maintain social participation.<sup>44</sup>

### Wellbeing

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) defines wellbeing as feeling good and functioning well.<sup>45</sup> Noting an initial lack of variety in the activities available to older people, such as befriending services and lunch clubs, the Baring Foundation identified that engagement with the arts might be a way of addressing NEF's Five Ways to Wellbeing, which are: connect; be active; take notice; keep learning; give.<sup>46</sup>

In February 2017, Age UK published an index of the factors influencing wellbeing in later life. Based on the responses of 15,000 people aged 60+, it found that participation in creative and cultural activities made the highest overall contribution to wellbeing in later life.<sup>47</sup> The following April, further analysis of the relationship between arts engagement and wellbeing was published, which showed that attendance was more common than participation and that reading, craft and photography, film or video were the most popular pursuits, followed by dance and music.<sup>48</sup>

Dance has been found to improve the wellbeing and quality of life of older people.<sup>49</sup> In 2010, Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly published a toolkit on dance for health and wellbeing in older people.<sup>50</sup> There is a growing number of elders' dance companies and older people's dance activities throughout the UK.<sup>51</sup> Returning from a study of wellbeing through dance performance in Chile, Cuba, Mexico

Research conducted by Age UK showed that participation in creative and cultural activities made the highest overall contribution to wellbeing in later life.

<sup>42</sup> Perkins, R. & Williamon, A. (2014), Learning to Make Music in Older Adulthood: a Mixed-Methods Exploration of Impacts on Wellbeing. *Psychology of Music*, 42, pp. 550-567

<sup>43</sup> The Silver Programme: [sagegateshead.com/age-groups/silver-programme](http://sagegateshead.com/age-groups/silver-programme)

<sup>44</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). (December 2016). *Mental Wellbeing and Independence for Older People: Quality Standard*.

<sup>45</sup> Aked, J., Cordon, C., Marks, N. & Thompson, S. (2008). *Five Ways to Wellbeing: A Report Presented to the Foresight Project on Communicating the Evidence Base for Improving People's Well-being*. London: New Economics Foundation.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Green, M., Iparraguirre, J., Davidson, S., Rossall, P. & Zaidi, A. (2017). *A Summary of Age UK's Index of Wellbeing in Later Life*. London: Age UK.

<sup>48</sup> Archer, L., Davidson, S., Iparraguirre, J., Kohler, M., Pursch, B., et al. (April 2018). *Creative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life*. London: Age UK.

<sup>49</sup> Connolly, M. & Redding, E. (2010). *Dancing Towards Well-being in the Third Age: Literature Review on the Impact of Dance on Health and Well-being Among Older People*. London: Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance and Costello, L. (2017). *Dance for Lifelong Wellbeing*. London: Royal Academy of Dance. See also Edwards, J. (2012). *Don't be Afraid to Dance! An Introduction to Dancing with Older People*. Nottingham: City Arts.

<sup>50</sup> Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. (2010). *Dancing for Older Peoples Health and Well-being Toolkit*. Penryn: Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

<sup>51</sup> People Dancing (November 2016). *Older People's Dance Activities – the First UK Survey*. Leicester: People Dancing.

There is increasing recognition that creative and cultural activity can have both a direct impact on a range of medical conditions and an indirect impact on health by enhancing social connectedness, wellbeing and resilience.

and the US, dance artist Jane Hackett set up the Elixir Festival at Sadler’s Wells as a celebration of older people’s dance involving more than 2,000 people.<sup>52</sup> Evaluation of the 2014 iteration of the festival found that it fostered the Five Ways to Wellbeing and ‘delivered a sustained impetus to the social, creative, emotional, intellectual, and physical wellbeing of older people’.<sup>53</sup>

In interview, Kate Duncan acknowledged the importance of wellbeing outcomes to the work of City Arts, which promotes the Five Ways to Wellbeing through creative activity.<sup>54</sup> Entelechy has worked with wellbeing measures such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale while also collecting the voices of participants to evidence increased wellbeing.<sup>55</sup>

In December 2015, NICE published guidance on independence and mental wellbeing in older people. This recommended ‘singing programmes, in particular, those involving a professionally-led community choir. Arts and crafts and other creative activities. [...] Intergenerational activities involving; for example, older people helping with reading in schools or young people providing older people with support to use new technologies’.<sup>56</sup> The impact of arts activities on wellbeing will be considered throughout this report.

### Health

There is increasing recognition that creative and cultural activity can have both a direct impact on a range of medical conditions and an indirect impact on health by enhancing social connectedness, wellbeing and resilience.

An estimated 850,000 people in the UK are living with a form of dementia, and this is expected to increase dramatically over the coming decades. Dementia is usually caused by disease of, or injury to, the brain

and affects functions such as language, perception, reasoning, mood, memory and even personality. Culturally diverse communities are failing to get involved in medical surveys and many medical conditions, including dementia, are under-diagnosed in black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. The majority of people with dementia are older adults. An estimated one-third of people with dementia are living in residential care,<sup>57</sup> and four-fifths of the 400,000 care home residents in the UK are living with some form of dementia. Because dementia is incurable, it is not classified as a health issue and is funded via social care on a means-tested basis.

Dementia does not have to be a death sentence. It can be a managed, creative, happy period. In interview, Martin Green identified that a connection with the arts provided calm and comfort to people who were agitated. Nicky Taylor at Leeds Playhouse reports that ‘Having led arts projects for people with dementia for several years it was clear to me that a creative environment helped people with dementia to thrive and communicate, contribute and in turn feel valued. Engagement with the arts provided clear, evidential and sometimes startling benefits for people living with dementia’.<sup>58</sup> Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing presents examples of arts engagement helping to maintain cognitive functioning in people with dementia and, perhaps more importantly, enhancing personhood and quality of life.

Many of the initiatives mentioned throughout this report offer access to the arts for people with dementia. Working in the moment, the focus is on ‘embodied memory’, through which people understand and appreciate creative activity without having to remember it. A three-year pilot by Arts Care and Alzheimer’s Society

<sup>52</sup> Elixir Festival: [youtu.be/itgXmbZrPJw?list=PLAC0ZT15pkuzG-qqEgAcQFH2otaEp4-2a](https://youtu.be/itgXmbZrPJw?list=PLAC0ZT15pkuzG-qqEgAcQFH2otaEp4-2a)

<sup>53</sup> Siddall, J. (2015). *Elixir Festival 12–15 September 2014: Celebrating Lifelong Creativity and the Contributions of Older Artists*. London: Sadler’s Wells, p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> Jones, I. & Jones, R. (March 2012). *The Art of Life and Movement: a Handbook for Activity Co-ordinators in Residential Homes*. Nottingham: City Arts.

<sup>55</sup> Entelechy Arts. (2017). *More Than We Ever Dreamed*. [entelechyarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Meet-Me-at-the-Albany-IMPACT.pdf](https://entelechyarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Meet-Me-at-the-Albany-IMPACT.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). (December 2015). *Older People: Independence and Mental Wellbeing*, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Department of Health. (2013). *A State of the Nation Report on Dementia Care and Support in England*. London: DH.

<sup>58</sup> Taylor, N. (May 2016). *West Yorkshire Playhouse Guide to Dementia-Friendly Performances*. Leeds: West Yorkshire Playhouse, p. 6.

in Northern Ireland takes artists into the homes of isolated people with dementia, accompanied by carers and family members, with a focus on singing and storytelling. This has required appropriate training and safeguarding for artists. Alzheimer's Society is sufficiently convinced of the benefits of the arts for dementia to continue supporting activities in this area. In September 2019, the *Journal of Dementia Care*, the Creative Dementia Arts Network (CDAN) and the National Activity Providers Association (NAPA) launched a new conference, Creative Arts and Dementia: Developing Best Practice, at the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) in Birmingham.<sup>59</sup>

Parkinson's disease is a neurological condition that worsens over time, affecting an estimated 145,000 (one in 350) people in the UK, predominantly – but not exclusively – older adults. It kills dopamine-producing cells in the brain, which can affect coordination, cognition and communication. People with Parkinson's may experience diminishing mental health, including memory loss, mood swings and psychotic episodes. In recent years, dance has been embraced as a way of addressing different stages of the disease and opening up expressive possibilities for people with Parkinson's. Dance facilitates embodied movement, which enables people to communicate their experience of living with Parkinson's.

Dance artists working with people with Parkinson's have formed partnerships with organisations such as Dance for PD in the US and the national ballet companies of England and Scotland. This development has given rise to the formation of a special interest group called the Foundation for Community Dance, hosted by the organisation People Dancing, and the creation of the Dance for Parkinson's Partnership UK (supported by the Baring

Foundation), which aims to provide everyone with Parkinson's an opportunity to take part in high-quality and varied dance activities. Dance artist Mel Brierley – who visited Parkinson's dance projects in New York and California as part of a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship – has developed a one-to-one dance practice in the homes of people with Parkinson's called Home Performance.

There are several other examples of dance helping to overcome challenges faced by older adults. Dance for falls prevention is becoming widespread and proving more popular than NHS falls prevention programmes and for a lower overall cost.<sup>60</sup> The Black Widows Dance Company – made up of women over 85 in Northern Ireland – has noted a reduction in the use of asthma inhalers. Moving Memory Dance Theatre Company for older people believes that 'moving well and exploring personal creativity keeps people happier and healthier'.<sup>61</sup>

Singing has been found to improve the health and wellbeing of older people, and Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly has also published a toolkit to aid work in this area.<sup>62</sup> Singing groups, such as those run by Plymouth Music Zone or Sing for Your Life, improve breathing, enhance wellbeing and reduce dependence on medication for people with chronic lung disease.<sup>63</sup> Many participatory arts activities help to restore and maintain mental health.

### Resilience

A 2016 Foresight report, entitled *Future of an Ageing Population*, acknowledged the importance of mental capital to healthy ageing, whereby: 'Mental capital encompasses cognitive ability, flexibility and efficiency when learning, social skills and resilience. Higher levels of mental capital can help mitigate cognitive decline

Dance facilitates embodied movement, which enables people to communicate their experience of living with Parkinson's.

<sup>59</sup> Creative Arts and Dementia: Developing Best Practice: [careinfo.org/event/creative-dementia](http://careinfo.org/event/creative-dementia)

<sup>60</sup> Dance to Health. (2017). *A Falls Prevention Programme: Evaluation of the Pilot Project*. Brize Norton: Dance to Health, and Vella-Burrows, T., Pickard, A., Wilson, L. & Clift, S. (January 2017). *Dance to Health: An Evaluation of Health, Social and Artistic Outcomes of a Dance Programme for the Prevention of Falls*. Canterbury: Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health.

<sup>61</sup> Moving Memory Dance Theatre Company: [movingmemorydance.com/health-and-well-being](http://movingmemorydance.com/health-and-well-being)

<sup>62</sup> Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. (2010). *Singing for Older Peoples Health and Well-being*. Penryn: Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

<sup>63</sup> Quinn, J., & Blandon, C. (2014). *The Power of Songs: An Evaluation of Plymouth Music Zone's 'Keep Singing, Keepsake' Project*. Plymouth: Institute of Education, University of Plymouth.



Participants to arts programmes report a sense of purpose, professionalism and responsibility that they have missed since retiring from work.

associated with old age. People with high levels of mental capital are more likely to remain independent for longer, require less support, and be better equipped to respond to change.<sup>64</sup> The report argued that mental capital could be built at any age and that learning – including leisure or interest-related learning – had a part to play in this endeavour, fortifying mental and physical health and reducing dependence.

Participants to arts programmes report a sense of purpose, professionalism and responsibility that they have missed since retiring from work. A report produced by the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester about a play devised and performed by their Elders Company notes that: ‘Members felt that talking together in depth about their stories, social issues and ideas as well as the

critical and analytical discussions held on a daily basis were of huge benefit and that this was something that is sometimes lacking in their lives. One member described it like being back at work and using parts of their brain and critical thinking that sometimes weren’t always tapped these days.’<sup>65</sup> *Tackling Loneliness in Older Age – The Role of the Arts* noted that: ‘Feeling valued, creative expression, using skills and engaging with other older people all build friendships and enhance feelings of well being which strengthens resilience in tough times.’<sup>66</sup> David Slater reported that frail participants to Entelechy programmes become more emotionally – and perhaps also physically – resilient.

<sup>64</sup> Government Office for Science. (2016). *Future of an Ageing Population*. London: Government Office for Science, p. 43.

<sup>65</sup> Barry, A. (April 2018). *Moments That Changed Our World: Evaluation and Learning Report*. Manchester: Royal Exchange Theatre.

<sup>66</sup> *Tackling Loneliness in Older Age*, op. cit., p. 5.



## Creative ageing before 2010

In the 1970s, a handful of organisations began bringing older people together with the arts. David Slater remembers the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation funding community arts while he was working at Plymouth Arts Centre, when outreach work at a residential home brought him into contact with older people as an integral part of the wider community. In 2009, the Baring Foundation observed that: ‘The arts are not considered a priority when the majority of older people’s organisations are fighting for basic rights in relation to pensions, travel subsidy and long term health care.’<sup>67</sup> Interviewed for this report a decade later, Paul Cann – former Chief Executive of Age UK Oxfordshire, who has been working in this area since the 1980s – observed that the age movement in England had been campaigning ‘vigorously and rightly for better pensions, better care in hospitals and sorting out social care’ but has never really campaigned ‘around the things that actually make life worth living’. As a result, there has been a struggle to have creative ageing regarded with equal importance to running helplines and providing adequate toilet facilities or comfort in care homes.

In older people’s organisations, the arts were initially seen to provide orientation and positivity in day centres or considered to form part of a wider community development approach. At that time, some of the creative arts work in the older people’s sector, particularly day centres, was quite unfocused and unimaginative, with little information available and little understanding of its benefits.

Cecil Houses (now Central & Cecil) was a pioneer. In 1983, a craft teacher called Roz Goodliffe convinced the Chief Executive of the value of meaningful creative activities for residents. Goodliffe set up the Arts and Education service, which initially operated across two care homes and three sheltered housing schemes. Since 1995, a Creative Arts Coordinator has been in place, managing a programme of arts events, projects and activities for older people living in care homes and sheltered accommodation. This has been extended into four residential homes and 13 sheltered schemes, with a Creative Arts Events Manager assuming responsibility for activities in the latter.

Since the 1980s, pioneering arts organisations – such as Age Exchange, Equal Arts, Green Candle Dance Company, Entelechy Arts and Magic Me – have been offering participatory arts activity to older people. In 1989, Sadler’s Wells established a Company of Elders, which continues to see older adults working with professional dance artists every week. Dance sessions provide mental stimulation through creating and memorising new choreography, potentially contributing to resilience. According to Joce Giles, who leads the programme, choreographers regard the opportunity to work with the Company of Elders as something of a ‘badge of honour’. In 1990, West Yorkshire Playhouse (now Leeds Playhouse) opened its doors to the multi-arts Heydays programme (taken as a case study on the next page).

**Image (left):  
The Whitworth’s  
handmade workshops  
for older people**

Photo courtesy of The  
Whitworth Gallery, Manchester  
©Jack Makin

<sup>67</sup> *Ageing Artfully*, op. cit., p. 17.

## CASE STUDY HEYDAYS, LEEDS PLAYHOUSE



**In March 1990, West Yorkshire Playhouse opened its doors at a new site on Quarry Hill in Leeds. People over 55 were invited to sign up for a year of creative activity known as Heydays for £5 (subsidised by Age Concern and Marks & Spencer). On the first Wednesday, a small trickle of people came in, but this quickly grew to more than 300 people.**

Each Wednesday since then, the building has been given over to Heydays, filling every corner of the building with creative enthusiasm – often at the expense of lucrative conference hires.<sup>68</sup> Supported by a programme manager and a team of professional freelance artists, members take part in dancing, creative writing, drama and visual art. An advisory group of members helps to guide the programme. The end of each term is celebrated with a showcase of activities. Poems are recited, salsas are danced and mini melodramas are performed. Heydays runs from 10.30am to 3pm and features more than 170 creative sessions each 11-week term.

In 1999, members of the Heydays drama group created the Feeling Good Theatre Company, which develops and performs work on age-related themes premiered at the Playhouse. More generally, Heydays members are given opportunities to perform on the main stage and offered discounted tickets to shows. In 2001, the Skills Generation

project was launched to share the skills of Heydays members in after-school clubs run by primary and secondary schools across Yorkshire.

The programme costs around £20,000 to run every year (not including salaries for core staff), with freelance artists being paid a sessional fee. Funding has come from such sources as Arts Council England, Leeds City Council and the Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation. Over the years, the cost of taking part in Heydays has gradually increased to £37.50 for a six-month membership and £70 for the year.

When the Playhouse was refurbished in 2018–19, Heydays decamped to a temporary building in the city centre so that activities could be continued. With bus stops nearby, members continued to make their own way there from their homes.

At the renamed Leeds Playhouse, Heydays sits within the Creative Engagement Department as part of the Older People's Programme, which includes theatre and dementia work. The Older People's Programme has an Outreach Officer dedicated to working with the Playhouse's eight community partner areas, with a view to increasing diversity, and runs a conversation café between Heydays members and refugees and asylum seekers.

<sup>68</sup> Heydays: [leedsplayhouse.org.uk/creative-engagement/older-people/heydays](https://leedsplayhouse.org.uk/creative-engagement/older-people/heydays)

Improvisation encourages people with dementia to explore their imagination. In 1993, Music for Life was founded, offering improvisation sessions with professional musicians to people with dementia and care staff; now based at Wigmore Hall, the focus is on personal expression leading to better communication and quality of life. In the same year, Spare Tyre theatre company began working with people aged 60+.

When Equal Arts started working in care settings in 1994, its co-director, Alice Thwaite, remembers that work was 'lacking in inspiration' and that there was very little interest among arts organisations to work with older people. In 1995, Creative Aging Consultant Susan Perlstein was invited from the US to host a conference on arts and older people at Sadler's Wells, which heightened interest among arts organisations. In 1996, Sandwell Third Age Arts began offering creative activities to older people in the West Midlands, particularly those with mental health needs and dementia, as well as their carers. Understanding creative engagement to be a vital part of community engagement, the charity believes that 'for some people engaging in the arts makes life worth living'.<sup>69</sup>

The founder of Age Exchange, Pam Schweitzer, pioneered the use of reminiscence with older people as the source material for verbatim theatre that gave voice to people from working class and minority ethnic backgrounds. She set up the first Reminiscence Centre in London in 1987, offered training and support to community theatre and arts practitioners and founded the International Reminiscence Network in 1993. Age Exchange has pioneered an approach that combines reminiscence with arts activities. Artists aid in the development of non-linear narratives from long-term memories, which are communicated through multiple creative forms. The quality of life of participants has been seen to improve,

and a Treasury-recommended methodology finds that these benefits outweigh the cost of delivering the project.<sup>70</sup>

Kate Organ has noted of reminiscence that: 'Too often it is seen as an end in itself though and too rarely is it an act that involves any genuine reciprocity. It has become another form of care, whereby any activity that provokes any memory is leapt upon as a sign of "success". In the act of making a meaningful work of art to share with others, the act of reminiscence can go beyond an escape to the past and become a route to a connection with the present.'<sup>71</sup> Liz Postlethwaite agrees that: 'Although there can be real richness in working in a way that focuses upon memory and history, it is important to acknowledge that trying new things and having new experiences is just as important for most people in later life. It is essential to value and celebrate the lived experience of each person that you work with, whilst also recognizing that this work should not take a solely reflective stance.'<sup>72</sup>

Equal Arts asserts that: 'While reminiscence has a role, we believe alternative approaches which focus on enjoying living in the present and exploring creativity and the imagination need to be embraced.'<sup>73</sup> With £200,000 in funding from ACE and Comic Relief, Equal Arts offers dementia-friendly arts sessions and has instigated the Creative Age Challenge week to raise awareness and funding.<sup>74</sup>

In 1998, the contemporary artist Jeremy Deller – who would go on to win the Turner Prize six years later – set up a digital recording studio in the De La Warr Pavilion at Bexhill-on-Sea and invited older adults with an interest in music to make a record using samplers and sequencers. He did this because he was 'interested in the interaction between an older generation and equipment that is essentially the preserve of the young'.<sup>75</sup> In 1999, Lost Chord began to offer interactive music, song and dance to care

Improvisation encourages people with dementia to explore their imagination.

Image (left):  
Heydays end of  
term celebrations

©David Lindsay

<sup>69</sup> Sandwell Third Age Arts: [staa.org.uk/index.html](http://staa.org.uk/index.html)

<sup>70</sup> Fujiwara, D. & Lawton, R. (2015). *Evaluation of the Reminiscence Arts and Dementia: Impact on Quality of Life (RADIQL) Programme in Six Care Homes*. London: Simetrica.

<sup>71</sup> *After You Are Two*, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>72</sup> Postlethwaite, L. (January 2019). *Treasury of Arts Activities for Older People: 50 Activities, Long and Short, for Use in Any Setting With Older People*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 7.

<sup>73</sup> Equal Arts: [equalarts.org.uk/our-work/creative-age](http://equalarts.org.uk/our-work/creative-age)

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Deller, J. (2001). *Life is to Blame for Everything: Collected Works & Projects 1992–99*. London: Salon 3, p. 55.

home residents with dementia under the tagline ‘Where words fail, music speaks’.

On the eve of the new millennium, with input from Equal Arts, Age Concern published *Arts and Older People: A Practical Introduction*. Authored by Fi Frances, this substantial handbook defined all the main terms of the debate and made a case for the arts in the lives of older people. It explained the practicalities of planning and executing arts projects for and with older people and offered routes to advice and networking.<sup>76</sup>

In 2003, Alzheimer’s Society West Berkshire piloted Singing for the Brain – group singing sessions for people with dementia and their carers that promote social interaction, peer support, engagement and active participation.<sup>77</sup> Rolled out in 2004, the service was initially evaluated across three sites. Participants reported a positive impact on their lives as well as improved confidence and communication.<sup>78</sup> In the process, it was noted that ‘some services may be acting as a surrogate for carer-specific social or peer support in some areas. This may reflect a lack of other services in the area and also highlights some of the problems that can occur when services are provided in isolation, away from a pathway or network of support. This is something that should be considered by those planning and commissioning services’.<sup>79</sup>

In 2005, Sing for Your Life began supporting the health and wellbeing of older people through participatory singing activities. In the same year, Dulwich Picture Gallery began accepting referrals of frail, lonely and depressed older people to its Good Times: Art for Older People programme, with a focus on older men.<sup>80</sup>

Throughout the remainder of the decade, work with older people in England continued to be under-developed, local and fragmented, with pockets of activity that, as we have seen, did not constitute

a field or a sector. Arti Prashar, Artistic Director and CEO of Spare Tyre theatre company, remembers arts work with older people in England being very modest, local and community-based with small, low-key projects, such as weekly workshops, aimed at family and friends, with an emphasis on socialising and an end project that was improvised and then written. Farrell Curran, Head of Cultural Partnerships at Age UK Oxfordshire, remembers that the idea that older people might enjoy or benefit from engagement with the arts and culture was regarded as ‘quirky’ rather than ‘trendy’.

Susan Langford, Director of Magic Me, recalls that, in the cultural sector, having older audiences was seen as something of a failure on the part of arts organisations because it was perceived that new audiences were not being cultivated. Funding applications had to be tailored to younger people and funds redirected ‘from an over-subscribed to an under-subscribed, under-supported group’. Over time, there was pressure to enlarge audiences, which required the up-skilling of participants (working with professional artists), discussions about payment (which was rejected) and consideration of sustainability (with appeals to trusts and foundations).

Building on research into lifelong learning, the arts and older people,<sup>81</sup> the Scottish Arts Council began strategic arts and older people activity around 2005–6, initially within the learning team, specifically through a collaboration with Scotland’s Learning Partnership (a charity promoting adult learning). Joan Parr, Interim Director of Arts and Engagement at the successor to the Scottish Arts Council, Creative Scotland, described how this work was initially ‘quite peripheral and low down in the pecking order of importance and quality’. More broadly, Director of Luminare, Anne Gallacher, described arts and older people activity in Scotland a decade ago as ‘embryonic’.

In the 2000s, work with older people in England continued to be under-developed, local and fragmented, with pockets of activity that did not constitute a field or a sector.

<sup>76</sup> *Arts and Older People: A Practical Introduction*, op. cit.

<sup>77</sup> Singing for the Brain: [alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/your-support-services/singing-for-the-brain](http://alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/your-support-services/singing-for-the-brain)

<sup>78</sup> Daniel, K. (February 2012). *Singing For The Brain: Results of an Evaluation of Three Alzheimer’s Society Services in England and Wales*. London: Alzheimer’s Society.

<sup>79</sup> Loc cit., p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> Harper, S. & Hamblin, K. (2010). *‘This is Living’ Good Times: Art for Older People at Dulwich Picture Gallery*. London: Dulwich Picture Gallery.

<sup>81</sup> Richard Gerald Associates Ltd and Scotinform Ltd. (July 2012). *Research into Lifelong Learning, the Arts and Older People*. Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council.

Almost all provision is at a county level or more local. Almost no organisations worked across a whole country and no organisation had a good representation across the UK. *Ageing Artfully, 2009*

In Northern Ireland, the beneficial impact of arts engagement upon health has been recognised since 1990 and the creation of Arts Care by the Department of Health. The value of the cultural infrastructure to older people has been acknowledged since 2005, but this is less the case in social care. Chief Executive of the Arts Council of Wales (ACW), Nick Capaldi, describes the field in Wales a decade ago as ‘patchy’ and lacking the ‘scale and profile’ that it has now.

In 2006, five of the UK’s research councils launched a £20-million decade-long collaboration called the New Dynamics of Ageing, which aimed to explore the forces driving ageing and the influences underlying them. Several of the research programmes were centred on creative approaches including visual art, music, theatre, self-portraiture, literature and design. Evaluation showed an impact on local practice and national policy.<sup>82</sup>

Announcing its entry into the world of arts and older people in September 2009, the Baring Foundation published *Ageing Artfully: Older People and Professional Participatory Arts in the UK*, written by David Cutler. This scoping report highlighted existing arts and older people activity through 120 short case studies and provided an indication of the kind of work that might be supported through grants via the arts and older people programme from the following year. Acknowledging the value of attendance at cultural events and the scant participatory opportunities offered by cultural venues, local authorities, health and social care providers and amateur organisations, the report identified just 17 organisations offering dedicated participatory arts activity to older people.

*Ageing Artfully* observed that: ‘It was notable that almost all provision is at a county level or more local. Almost no organisations worked across a whole country and no organisation had a good representation across the UK.’<sup>83</sup> An exception to this was identified as Live Music Now (founded in 1977), which had

reached 60,000 older people through its three-year Active Music, Active Minds scheme. At the same time, the report incited cultural venues to ‘reach out to day centres, residential and nursing homes’ rather than relying on audiences to come to them.<sup>84</sup>

In 1999, *Arts and Older People: A Practical Introduction* had noted a distinct lack of policy concerning older people and the arts, and it made the observation that: ‘Lack of policy means lack of planning, lack of structures, research, training and information. These gaps mean that both older people themselves and also people working in the arts with older people are often working in isolation, with little to support them.’<sup>85</sup> A decade later, *Ageing Artfully* observed that the continued lack of dedicated policy in this area led to little dedicated funding, which was later identified as crucial to the sustainability of activity in this area.<sup>86</sup> A similarly enduring deficit was noted in the field of research. Keys to developing the field were felt to be the scaling up of activity, the development of festivals, the establishment of partnerships with local authorities and health trusts, better networking, training and standards and more leadership by older people alongside coordination and sector advocacy. An attempt will be made in this report to determine the extent to which the situation has changed by capturing the development of policy, planning, structures, research, training, information and funding in each of the four nations of the UK.

<sup>82</sup> New Dynamics of Ageing: [newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/ageingresearchprojects.html](http://newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/ageingresearchprojects.html)

<sup>83</sup> *Ageing Artfully*, op cit, p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> Loc cit., p. 10

<sup>85</sup> *Arts and Older People: A Practical Introduction*, op. cit, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> *Older People and the Arts: A Mid-term Programme Review*, op cit.



# Creative ageing 2010–19

## Locations of creative ageing

In thinking about *how* the field of creative ageing has developed, it is useful to look at *where* the majority of developments have taken place. Arts and older people’s organisations offering creative activities have made use of social care and health settings, cultural and community venues and digital space. Let us take a brief look at each of these locations, drawing on a few relevant examples.

### *Social care settings*

In England alone, there are around 18,000 care homes. The social care system is widely recognised to be in crisis. Funding for social care has been depleted by a third since 2010; local authorities are driving down the fees they pay to providers, which are often unable to cope with the demands being placed on them; staff are unrecognised and unrewarded. This hardly creates a fertile environment for innovation, but David Cutler makes a powerful argument that the arts in care homes benefit not only residents but also family, friends, carers, care providers and staff and the wider community.<sup>87</sup>

There is an accumulating body of evidence suggesting that participatory arts activity in care homes also makes economic sense, reducing medication costs, improving ratings and leading to higher staff satisfaction and performance. The Creative Carers programme run by Suffolk Artlink has demonstrated a social return on investment of £3 for every £1 invested in the programme.<sup>88</sup> Age UK identifies that the growing older population has stimulated a demand for purposeful activity, which has created a market in the care home sector that has been matched by the expectations of inspectors from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

In the early days of the arts in care homes, there was a strong state-funded sector; now only six to eight per cent of care homes are run by local authorities. As the sector has been privatised, artists’ residencies have largely been precluded under the prevailing business model. Kate Gant describes how, when Creative Health CIC began working with a consortium of care homes, she was shocked by the level of competition between homes and the business-minded way in which decisions were made; early meetings consisted of roomfuls of accountants who either did not understand what was meant by the arts or did not prioritise them.

A report produced in 2011 by NAPA, the National Care Forum (NCF) and the Baring Foundation looked at the arts activities on offer in the NCF’s network of non-profit care homes. This found that 82 per cent of NCF homes offered creative activities across a range of art forms. When these activities were probed, it was found that staff members led three quarters of them and that the annual budget for activities varied between £100 and £5,500. This prompted the observation that any care home with enthusiastic staff could potentially offer arts activities at low cost, accompanied by the suggestion that these would flourish where managers made time and resources available to support a range of activities devised in response to the interests and preferences of residents. The report ended with top tips for care home managers and artists working in a care setting as well as an overview of activity providers.<sup>89</sup>

**Image (left):**  
**A Heydays member**  
**enjoying watching the**  
**drama group perform**  
**at the end-of-term**  
**celebrations**  
 ©Ant Robling

<sup>87</sup> Cutler, D. (May 2017). *There Are Challenges But the Case for Arts in Care Homes is Overwhelming*; [baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/there-are-challenges-but-the-case-for-arts-in-care-homes-is-overwhelming](http://baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/there-are-challenges-but-the-case-for-arts-in-care-homes-is-overwhelming)  
<sup>88</sup> MB Associates. (October 2013). *Make My Day: The impact of Creative Caring in Older People’s Care Homes*. MB Associates.  
<sup>89</sup> The Baring Foundation. (November 2011). *Creative Homes: How the Arts Can Contribute to Quality of Life in Residential Care*. London: The Baring Foundation.

In 2013, Skills for Care, the strategic body for workforce development in adult social care in England, issued a briefing paper entitled *What do we know about the role of arts in the delivery of social care?*. This drew on an evidence review and mapping of activity in care homes by Consilium Research and Consultancy. The evidence review ‘found benefits for social care staff through challenging preconceptions on the abilities and talents of people with a range of conditions or needs. For some staff and/or organisations the use of arts can act as a catalyst for change in workforce culture, which in itself can serve to deliver longer-term improvements to the quality of care and experiences of those within the social care system’.<sup>90</sup> The activity mapping discerned 432 projects and activities, most of which were low profile.

The briefing paper reported that ‘when delivered effectively, interventions were able to facilitate social interaction as well as enabling participants to pursue creative interests’. With little information exchange happening across the sector, it recommended a coordinated approach ‘to raise awareness amongst the social care sector of the contribution that quality art activities can make in supporting better health and social care outcomes. Crucially this approach needs to be sufficiently tailored to increase the profile of using arts in the delivery of social care at a policy, strategic and operational level’. A need was also identified ‘to raise awareness amongst service users and families of service users in order to increase the demand for and expectation that art activities will form an integral component of care packages’.<sup>91</sup> In the process, the briefing highlighted the importance of involving care staff in the delivery and evaluation of creative projects.

NAPA has identified that organisers in care homes have minimal budgets to spend on activities. As a result, establishing creative work within the care sector has often relied on securing external funding

from trusts, foundations, local authorities and the NHS. In 2013, the Baring Foundation entered into a £1 million three-year partnership with ACE, which ‘aimed to build creative and organisational capacity and secure long term support from senior care home managers to create a sustainable platform for the future’.<sup>92</sup> Four programmes outside London were selected to receive £250,000 in funding over three years.

In interview, Rebecca Blackman from ACE described these projects as ‘challenging’, and the project evaluation discerned a clash of cultures:

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Arts organisations and care homes do not have easily compatible cultures. Their structures, economics, employment practices and professional languages do not make for easy collaboration. [...] The care home environment is one that demands a specialist approach to individual needs, safeguarding, age-related illness (particularly dementia) and comfort. Experience of creative practice is not always a priority and the informal, improvisational and/or iterative approach of the artist can be viewed as disruptive or complex. Arts organisations, even those with experience of working in other institutional environments (schools, colleges, prisons), can easily underestimate the challenges of working in a care home environment. Collaborating organisations with very different operating cultures need time to build mutual and shared confidence and an understanding of each other’s working methods.<sup>93</sup>

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In addition to cultural impediments, limitations to the structural fabric of some care homes – such as the lack of large enough spaces for group activities – was found to militate against arts activity. This prompted the suggestion that guidance about the provision of suitable space might prove useful to the care sector.

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Establishing creative work within the care sector has often relied on securing external funding from trusts, foundations, local authorities and the NHS.

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<sup>90</sup> Consilium. (April 2013). *What Do We Know About the Role of Arts in the Delivery of Social Care?* Leeds: Skills for Care, p. 3.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Dix, A., Gregory, T. & Harris, J. (April 2018). *Each Breath is Valuable: An Evaluation of an Arts in Care Homes Programme*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 4.

<sup>93</sup> *Loc cit.*, p. 19.

Arts in Care Homes projects focused on building links between the cultural and care sectors, stimulating demand for creative activity within the care system and enhancing staff and artists' training and development. It was claimed that 'never before have so many care staff been trained in arts practice through a single programme'.<sup>94</sup> In the process, concerns about the residents' ability to participate were assuaged as 'residents engaged in activities in ways never thought possible'.<sup>95</sup>

Evaluation of the programme found that it 'had a profound impact at both organisational and individual levels. There are now artists, activity co-ordinators and care workers who have the skills to work confidently in the care home setting. Care home groups have benefitted for the first time from a sustained programme of work that demonstrates how exceptional creative activity can achieve cultural change across the organisation'.<sup>96</sup> A University of Nottingham study of Imagine, which formed part of the programme, calculated a social return on investment of £1.63 for every £1 of expenditure'.<sup>97</sup>

In May 2015, A Choir in Every Care Home was launched as a Baring-funded collaboration between Live Music Now, Sound Sense and the Sidney De Haan Research Centre and involving a range of partners including the CQC, Care England and Alzheimer's Society. Executive Director of Live Music Now, Evan Dawson, described how 'art and music are about connecting humans beyond the constraints of language', which is a very immediate process for artists working in an intimate setting such as a care home. A substantial research study found that embedded, staff-led music programmes in care homes could yield tremendous benefits for residents and their carers.<sup>98</sup> This led to the

recommendation that 'regular participatory music programmes be considered essential for all UK care homes'.<sup>99</sup> Through the work of Live Music Now – which places small ensembles in care homes to play live music and stimulate participatory performances – MHA and the Orders of St John Care Trust are both fully committed to the use of music in their care homes.

Around the country, albeit in a fragmented way, singing groups are working in the care sector. To take just one example, Sound Resource in Oxford maintains a voluntary Peer Chorus that leads sing-alongs in the Orders of St John care homes. Outcomes include increased staff motivation, retention and development, alongside reduction in the side effects of anti-psychotic drugs for residents.<sup>100</sup>

City of London Sinfonia (CLS) has developed a participatory way of working with music in care homes that responds to the needs of their partner, Jewish Care, which has identified the alleviation of isolation as a priority. CLS commissioned a freelance musician to lead a programme of four-day residencies in care homes involving five or six other orchestral players per residency. Music is used in group and individual settings to stimulate and mediate conversation and reach the most isolated residents.

The ExtraCare Charitable Trust is connected to retirement villages of the same name that integrate homes with health, care and leisure facilities. Recognising the benefits of enriched lives,<sup>101</sup> ExtraCare has been working with City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra to open up a creative space that mediates musical interactions between players and residents. Silver Lining, run by Sage Gateshead, takes music into care homes and day centres. An analysis has found that, for every £1 invested, a

Outcomes include increased staff motivation, retention and development, alongside reduction in the side effects of anti-psychotic drugs for residents.

<sup>94</sup> Loc cit., p. 21.

<sup>95</sup> Loc cit., p. 28.

<sup>96</sup> Loc cit., p. 4.

<sup>97</sup> Bosco, A. & Schneider, J. (2016). *The Social Value of the Arts for Care Home Residents in England: A Social Return on Investment (SROI) Analysis of the Imagine Study*. Nottingham: University of Nottingham.

<sup>98</sup> A Choir in Every Care Home: [achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/resources/the-live-music-in-care-report](http://achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/resources/the-live-music-in-care-report)

<sup>99</sup> Tapson, C., Noble, D., Daykin, N. & Walters, D. (November 2018). *Live Music in Care: The Impact of Music Interventions for People Living and Working in Care Home Settings*. Winchester: University of Winchester, p. 10.

<sup>100</sup> Deane, K. (2016). *A Choir in Every Care Home: Case Studies of Singing in Care Homes*. Working Paper 8a: [achoirineverycarehome.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/wp8a-case-studies-of-singingv3.pdf](http://achoirineverycarehome.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/wp8a-case-studies-of-singingv3.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> Holland, C., Garner, I., O'Donnell, J. & Gwyther, H. (March 2019). *Integrated Homes, Care and Support: Measurable Outcomes for Healthy Ageing*. Coventry: The ExtraCare Charitable Trust.

social value in the range of £1.49 to £2.04 is created.<sup>102</sup>

During 2016, Magic Me was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) and the Wakefield and Tetley Trust to run a series of artists' residencies in care homes operated by Anchor, the largest non-profit care provider in England, with support from Anchor's Legacy Fund. The project aimed to demonstrate the excellence of artistic work in care homes in a bid to inspire future high-quality work in this area. Residencies gave rise to a range of highly engaging, often immersive, work, such as the creation by Punchdrunk Enrichment of a village square complete with grass, hedgerows, a post box, a pub, a florist and a public noticeboard. Over subsequent weeks, the narrative of Greenhive Green was developed, with residents as members of a committee that would react to local developments. A newsletter was produced by staff, and a Twitter account communicated village news to the outside world. The main finding from the project as a whole was that perceptions of the abilities and attitudes of care home residents shifted significantly. New ways of communicating were found, and new ideas for transforming environments were stimulated. A report on the project provided an insight into the practical steps necessary, and the challenges faced, in staging care home residencies.<sup>103</sup>

Carnival and circus have increasingly found their way into the lives of older people, via organisations such as Brouhaha International in Liverpool<sup>104</sup> and Streetwise Community Circus in Belfast.<sup>105</sup> Upswing circus company articulates the motivations for this powerfully: 'Our vision is a better world, shaped by great art, forged by the fearless imagination of circus. Our mission

is to create multi-disciplinary performance that celebrates the circus art form; excavates its emotional depths and physical possibilities; and engages diverse artists, participants and new audiences in its creation and enjoyment'.<sup>106</sup> As part of the 2017 UK City of Culture, Magic Me and Anchor invited Upswing to deliver multi-sensory circus experiences in six care homes in Hull.<sup>107</sup>

It has been observed that: 'A consortium that covers a smaller footprint is likely to have a much higher level of shared interest and local sector intelligence, which in turn are likely to lead to longer-term projects and collaboration on joint funding bids.'<sup>108</sup> Working with the care sector as part of the Imagine consortium, City Arts has overcome the challenges of restrictive business models, competing priorities, staff constraints and conflicting agendas and language. The organisation has had to prove itself over time, by improving the wellbeing of residents and keeping people well and more actively engaged, which has led to raised morale, increased staff confidence and better social dynamics.<sup>109</sup> While the relationship between artists and care home residents might not be as close as that between care workers and residents, the quality of the process and the artwork speaks for itself. As part of the Imagine project, researchers at the University of Nottingham isolated the ingredients that influence the facilitation of high-quality arts programmes in care home settings as: environmental factors, identifying and responding to needs, facilitating relationships and building confidence.<sup>110</sup>

Other initiatives in care homes have been centred on creative writing and spoken word. The Courtyard Centre for the Arts

Residencies gave rise to a range of highly engaging, often immersive, work. New ways of communicating were found, and new ideas for transforming environments were stimulated.

<sup>102</sup> Hegarty, S. (July 2012). *Forecast of Social Return on Investment of Silver Lining at The Sage Gateshead (September 2011 to March 2012)*. Gateshead: The Sage Gateshead.

<sup>103</sup> Begault, M., Hodson, K. & Langford, S. (2017). *Magic Me's Artists Residencies in Care Homes*. London: Magic Me.

<sup>104</sup> Brouhaha International: [brouhaha.uk.com](http://brouhaha.uk.com)

<sup>105</sup> Streetwise Community Circus: [sccni.co.uk](http://sccni.co.uk)

<sup>106</sup> Upswing. (May 2018). *Homemade Circus Handbook*. London: Upswing, p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> See: [upswing.org.uk/portfolio/circus-older-people/](http://upswing.org.uk/portfolio/circus-older-people/)

<sup>108</sup> *Each Breath is Valuable*, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>109</sup> Broome, E. (July/August 2018). Imagine Arts: How the Arts Can Transform Care Homes. *The Journal of Dementia Care*. 26, 4.

<sup>110</sup> Broome, E., Denning, T. & Schneider, J. (2017). Facilitating Imagine Arts in Residential Care Homes: the Artists' Perspectives. *Arts & Health*. 11, 1, pp. 54-66.

‘Creativity and innovation are key ingredients in outstanding care homes, and regular singing and live music activities can help care homes positively address all five key questions our inspectors ask of care homes.’  
**Andrea Sutcliffe,**  
**CQC**

in Hereford has developed a toolkit for making poems in dementia care settings.<sup>111</sup> The Reader secured £850,000 of Big Lottery funding to facilitate the shared reading of stories and poems in care homes and beyond.<sup>112</sup>

Ladder to the Moon works with live actors in care homes to stage photo shoots with residents as film icons.<sup>113</sup> Make it Better CIC offers individual arts sessions in care settings,<sup>114</sup> and Women & Theatre in Birmingham has been funded by the Baring Foundation to develop stand-up comedy in care homes.<sup>115</sup> In May 2016, the CQC published a five-year strategy highlighting the importance of person-centred care.<sup>116</sup> CQC’s Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care, Andrea Sutcliffe, pointed to the role of the arts in enabling people to live full and meaningful lives. She identified the best care homes as being ‘flexible and responsive to people’s individual needs and preferences, finding creative ways to enable people to live a full life’.<sup>117</sup> More recently, she has said that: ‘Creativity and innovation are key ingredients in outstanding care homes, and regular singing and live music activities can help care homes positively address all five key questions our inspectors ask of care homes.’<sup>118</sup> Also in 2016, the NCF organised a conference called *Celebrating the Arts in Care Homes*.<sup>119</sup> This was based on the premise that access to the arts could help to overcome loneliness, isolation, fear and uncertainty while maintaining identity and wellbeing. Addressed by Sutcliffe, the conference provided a platform for some of the main organisations leading on creative activity in the care sector.

In advance of the 2018 National Care Home Open Day, NAPA’s Executive Director, Sylvie Silver, secured funding from Comic Relief ‘to encourage mutually respectful and caring relationships between residents and care staff by sharing a common interest in singing and choral singing in particular and to boost morale in the staff members and well-being in the residents’.<sup>120</sup> NAPA used around £20,000 to establish choirs in six care homes owned by Fremantle Trust and Greensleeves Care, which had been rated ‘good’ by the CQC, and placed an emphasis on the provision of activities. Six professional singing facilitators were appointed and trained to deliver 72 fortnightly singing sessions over six months. Staff buddies were encouraged to take part in sessions and to contribute to feedback. David Cutler has observed that: ‘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.’<sup>121</sup> Care Home Choir Buddies made several links with local community groups, and the project culminated in live performances to an audience of other residents, staff, family and friends.<sup>122</sup> The majority (68 per cent) of participants experienced an uplift in their mood as a result of the singing sessions, and positive comments were made by both residents and staff. The 2019 Care Home Open Day took the theme of creative care, with Martin Green championing the ‘therapeutic benefits of art for all those in need of care or those

111 The Courtyard. (2015). *The Best Words, in the Best Order: a Toolkit for Making Poems in Dementia Care Settings*. Hereford: The Courtyard.

112 The Reader’s Shared Reading Programme: [thereader.org.uk/shared-reading-expands-nationwide-thanks-national-lottery-funding](http://thereader.org.uk/shared-reading-expands-nationwide-thanks-national-lottery-funding)

113 Ladder to the Moon: [rchcarehomes.co.uk/maidstone-care-centre/ladder-to-the-moon-a-movie-icon-photography-activity](http://rchcarehomes.co.uk/maidstone-care-centre/ladder-to-the-moon-a-movie-icon-photography-activity)

114 Make it Better CIC: [mitber.com/arts-projects](http://mitber.com/arts-projects)

115 Women & Theatre: [womenandtheatre.co.uk/project/community-comedy-past](http://womenandtheatre.co.uk/project/community-comedy-past)

116 Care Quality Commission. (2016). *Shaping the Future CQC’s Strategy for 2016 to 2021*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Care Quality Commission.

117 Sutcliffe, A. (2016). *The Art of Being Outstanding*. London: Care Quality Commission.

118 Sutcliffe, A. quoted in: [livemusicnow.org.uk/lmn-news/title/A-Choir-in-Every-Care-Home-a-new-music-resource-for-care-homes-and-musicians/item/69548](http://livemusicnow.org.uk/lmn-news/title/A-Choir-in-Every-Care-Home-a-new-music-resource-for-care-homes-and-musicians/item/69548)

119 National Care Forum. (May 2016). *Celebrating the Arts in Care Homes: A Showcase of Best Practice*.

120 National Activity Providers Association. (2018). *Care Home Choir Buddies: Connecting with Communities*, p. 3: [napa.activities.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/napa\\_choir-project-1.pdf](http://napa.activities.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/napa_choir-project-1.pdf)

121 For case study, see Cutler, D. (August 2017). *The Role of Local Authorities in Creative Ageing: Second Edition With New Case Studies From Councils Across the UK*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 11.

122 Care Home Choir Buddies: [youtu.be/CjMX\\_p3Mhug](https://youtu.be/CjMX_p3Mhug)

providing care'.<sup>123</sup> This event demonstrated a continued interest in and appetite for arts activities in care homes.

NAPA's commitment to promoting person-centred meaningful arts activities in care homes has extended into training for care staff. Declaring 2019 the Year of the Arts, NAPA took practical use of the arts as the theme of its annual conference, with learning objectives aiming to:

- Explore different art forms and resources
- Understand how to use art forms with a range of individuals
- Understand the benefits of non-verbal techniques, and their benefit, particularly with those living with dementia
- Understand the effect and importance of music.<sup>124</sup>



Declaring 2019 the Year of the Arts, the National Activity Providers Association took practical use of the arts as the theme of its annual conference.

**Images:**

*Left*  
**Flourishing Lives at Tate Exchange**  
 ©Flourishing Lives

*Right*  
**Forever Young Parkour for Seniors with West Coast Parkour and Flourishing Lives**  
 ©Flourishing Lives

<sup>123</sup> Care Home Open Day 2019: careengland.org.uk/news/care-home-open-day-2019-creative-care

<sup>124</sup> National Activity Providers Association Annual Conference 2019: napa-activities.co.uk/annual-conference-london-16th-july-2019

## CASE STUDY FLOURISHING LIVES AT CLAREMONT PROJECT, LONDON



**The Claremont Project is committed to providing high-quality daytime services to people aged 55+ with a focus on those who are isolated and marginalised. Since 2005, older people have been involved in co-producing ambitious activities, including a wide range of creative pursuits. The Claremont Project is part of the Age Action Alliance, with its CEO, Lucien Paul Stanfield, chairing the Creative Arts and Older People group.**

In 2011, Claremont developed the Flourishing Lives programme to support the daycare sector in improving the quality of activities on offer, which secured funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This involved a thorough exploration of older people's needs and desires, identification of best practice models and the testing of new approaches, orientated towards meeting the Five Ways to Wellbeing.<sup>125</sup>

In 2016, the City Bridge Trust agreed a three-year grant of £148,200 to enable Claremont to extend this approach. This enabled the creation of a 'London-wide coalition of organisations taking a creative, relational approach to supporting richer, more independent lives for older people'.<sup>126</sup> Coalition members range from museums and galleries to community arts centres. Engaging older people and the staff and volunteers that work alongside them,

Flourishing Lives connects people working in day centres, community outreach organisations, leisure and the arts. The extended network includes Alzheimer's Society, the Campaign to End Loneliness, the Department of Health, NAPA and SCIE.

A charter has been drawn up in a bid to ensure that older people are valued and empowered within our society. This is based on building respectful relationships that highlight the individuality of older people. It encourages ongoing awareness of how work with older people is undertaken; it seeks to realise the potential of older people and to maximise the choice of activities available while ensuring quality standards.

In July 2019, the City Bridge Trust made an additional grant of £98,800 to support two more years of a full-time Project Coordinator, plus running costs.

<sup>125</sup> Oliver, A. & Kelly, G. (2012). *Flourishing Lives*. London: The Claremont Project.

<sup>126</sup> Flourishing Lives: [flourishinglives.org](http://flourishinglives.org)

A Baring Foundation report on arts in care homes noted that: ‘the work of artists in care homes should be considered a necessity not a luxury – an essential element of a person-centred care home culture that has the wellbeing of every resident at its heart. If the growing army of older people with significant care needs are to have a meaningful place in society, their imaginative, creative and playful potential must be recognised, resourced and celebrated.’<sup>127</sup> For 2019, NAPA is running a one-year Arts in Care Homes project, funded by the Baring Foundation and the Rayne Foundation. An Arts in Care voucher scheme has been launched to allow relatives to contribute to an arts fund.

Alison Teader, Creative Arts Coordinator at Central & Cecil from 1995 to 2018, who is running the Arts in Care Homes project, identifies that the current challenge is no longer ‘to prove the value of the arts in care settings and demonstrate how they can contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents and staff. Now the goal seems to be to embed daily person-centred arts activities [...] into care homes, to build community links by involving local art galleries, museums, schools, churches and arts organisations and to make the care home the centre of the local community’.<sup>128</sup>

The first National Day of Arts in Care Homes took place on 24 September 2019, and it is hoped that this will become an annual event. The Baring Foundation has funded an award for the arts in care homes delivered by the NCF. Creative projects also intersect with the social care system in people’s homes and through day centres, which will be referred to in this report. In times of austerity, public services are being adversely affected. Day centres are stretched to breaking point and, according to the Flourishing Lives team, being ‘liquidated’ in some London boroughs.

### *Cultural venues*

A study on ageing in the public realm, conducted by Cubitt in London, considered museums to play a vital part alongside the surrounding networks of streets and open spaces.<sup>129</sup> The National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing (now part of the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance) advocated a role for museums and heritage venues in improving the health, wellbeing and social connectedness of older adults.<sup>130</sup> Many museums and galleries have embraced a role in the lives of older people.

Not So Grim Up North was a research programme involving University College London (UCL), The Whitworth, Manchester Museum and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums in collaboration with NHS and third-sector organisations, funded through ACE’s research grant programme. It explored the impact of museum and gallery activities on the wellbeing of people with dementia, stroke survivors and mental health service users. Older people with moderate to severe dementia took part in object-handling activities at an inpatient dementia service on Tyneside and demonstrated heightened engagement with objects as the study progressed.<sup>131</sup>

With funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (2012–13), the British Museum established Age Collective, in partnership with Glasgow Museums, Manchester Museum and National Museums Northern Ireland, to explore how museums could better tailor their work to older audiences.<sup>132</sup> This involved listening to the voices of older people, sharing good practice, developing interdisciplinary partnerships and formulating a shared action plan. With funding from the Baring Foundation, this was extended to include National Museums Liverpool and National Museums Wales, as well as researchers and health, social care and voluntary sector professionals,

Many museums and galleries have embraced a role in the lives of older people.

<sup>127</sup> *Each Breath is Valuable*, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>128</sup> Submission to the author, 8 July 2019.

<sup>129</sup> Cubitt. (2016). *Ageing in Public: Creative Practice in Ageing and the Public Realm From Across the UK*. London: Cubitt.

<sup>130</sup> See, for example, Desmarais, S., Bedford, L. & Chatterjee, H.J., (2018). *Museums as Spaces for Wellbeing: A Second Report from the National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing*. National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing.

<sup>131</sup> Chatterjee, H., Thomson, L. & Morse, N. (2018). *Not So Grim Up North: Investigating the Health and Wellbeing Impacts of Museum and Gallery Activities for People Living With Dementia, Stroke Survivors, and Mental Health Service-users*: [healthandculture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/W615-Not-so-grim-up-North-Spreads\\_single-spreads-web.pdf](http://healthandculture.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/W615-Not-so-grim-up-North-Spreads_single-spreads-web.pdf)

<sup>132</sup> Age Collective: [britishmuseum.org/about\\_us/community\\_collaborations/partnerships/age\\_collective.aspx](http://britishmuseum.org/about_us/community_collaborations/partnerships/age_collective.aspx)

Work is being done with the Age Friendly Culture Network to ensure that arts venues and community spaces are welcoming to older people.

to become the Age Friendly Museums Network.<sup>133</sup> The network, which attracted around 500 members, asked museums to consider their age-friendliness, offered workshops and training and promoted leadership in the field of creative ageing.

In interview, Director of Manchester Museum, Esmé Ward, explained that it had taken time to nurture a ‘comfort in uncertainty’. She relayed the story of a bench that had been placed in the gallery to provide a vantage point on a particular artwork; an older couple turned the bench around to face the garden outside and sat down holding hands. This kind of re-purposing might have been discouraged during the earlier life of the institution, but it has now been embraced. Work is being done with the Age Friendly Culture Network to ensure that arts venues and community spaces are welcoming to older people and that the public appreciates older people can be, and deserve to be, engaged in the arts.

In the autumn of 2013, Entelechy Arts was supported by Lewisham Council’s Community Directorate to launch Meet Me at the Albany, an all-day arts club for the over-60s that runs over 50 weeks a year at the Albany arts centre in Deptford.<sup>134</sup> At a symposium dedicated to discussing how cultural and community venues could become central in the lives of older people, Entelechy Director, David Slater, detailed how the Meet Me programme was ‘designed to be responsive to the creative and social needs of isolated and vulnerable older people’ and identified the importance of an embedded and sustained approach.<sup>135</sup> At the same event, 81-year-old Florence described how she rediscovered her early love of theatre after a bereavement: ‘Now I’ve got a new life. I’ve met new people. I enjoy it so much. It is something I should have done

years and years ago. [...] And I seem to have got into the part. Not just the lines, I’ve put my whole self into the person I’m playing. I’ve made a persona. That’s enough for me. I’ve done what I wanted to do when I was sixteen’.<sup>136</sup>

Between 2014 and 2017, researchers at UCL and Canterbury Christ Church University were funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to run a museums-on-prescription project. Inviting older people at risk of social isolation into museums in London and Kent to take part in a range of activities such as talks, behind-the-scenes tours and object handling sessions, the project demonstrated significant increases in participants’ wellbeing. The final report for the project provides useful guidance for museums setting up similar activities.<sup>137</sup>

Dulwich Picture Gallery offers three programmes specifically aimed at older audiences.<sup>138</sup> Ageing Well combines visits to the gallery with guided sensory sessions and creative workshops for those at risk of social isolation. The bi-monthly Creative Arts Café combines visits to the gallery with artist-led workshops to combat social isolation. Create and Connect supports people with dementia and their carers in a range of creative activities.

Audience development manager at Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery, Jeremy Kimmel, observes that museums ‘tap into our curiosity, a quality so primal that it’s one of the last things to be affected by dementia’.<sup>139</sup> Between 2007 and 2014, the Department of Education at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA) developed Meet Me at MoMA, which encouraged people with dementia and their carers to explore the museum collection. By 2017, a reported 88 museums in the UK were running similar programmes.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Age Friendly Museums Network: [agefriendlymuseums.wordpress.com/about](http://agefriendlymuseums.wordpress.com/about)

<sup>134</sup> For case study, see *The Role of Local Authorities in Creative Ageing*, op. cit.

<sup>135</sup> Meet Me at the Albany. (December 2014). *Older People, Isolation and Civic Engagement Symposium Report*. London: Entelechy Arts and the Albany, p. 6.

<sup>136</sup> Loc cit., p. 7.

<sup>137</sup> Veall, D., et al. (2017). *Museums on Prescription: A Guide to Working with Older People*. Swindon: Arts and Humanities Research Council: [ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/museums-on-prescription](http://ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/museums-on-prescription)

<sup>138</sup> Dulwich Picture Gallery: [dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/learning/older-people](http://dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/learning/older-people)

<sup>139</sup> Museums Association. (2017). *Museums Change Lives*: [museumsassociation.org/download?id=1218885](http://museumsassociation.org/download?id=1218885)

<sup>140</sup> Thwaite, A. (June 2017). *Growing the Creative Ageing Movement: International lessons for the UK*. London: The Baring Foundation.

Older people derive value from an involvement in theatre and drama.<sup>141</sup> Theatres across the country have been leading the way in creative ageing, in traditional theatres, ‘working men’s clubs, village halls, schools and outdoor spaces of all kinds’.<sup>142</sup> In 2015, with support from the Rayne Foundation and the Beaverbrooks Charitable Trust, the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester set up an Elders Company ‘for everyone over 60 who wants to feel connected, develop performance skills and make boundary-pushing theatre’.<sup>143</sup> Every July, a new cohort of members is selected to work together until the following September. Regular workshop sessions cover writing, theatrical techniques and exercises,<sup>144</sup> giving rise to frequent (sometimes intergenerational) public performances.<sup>145</sup> In 2018, the Elders Company premiered a new touring play called *Moments that Changed Our World*, which moved beyond members’ personal experiences to find stories that speak to the world today, functioning as a social history of women’s and gay liberation and immigration.<sup>146</sup>

Under the heading Elders Investigate, members of the company have been working with writer Sarah Butler to explore the relationship between ageing and culture. Workshops have given rise to new poems about ageing, freedom and discrimination, and rich description conveys the diversity and camaraderie of the group.<sup>147</sup> While developing a body of practice that celebrates the imagination of older people, evaluation shows the Royal Exchange’s elders activity to be meeting its desired outcomes of improving health and wellbeing, social networks and community/cultural

engagement. Interestingly, evaluation also shows that the value of the work is primarily individual and social rather than economic, with box office receipts precluding the company from performing in the main house.<sup>148</sup> In 2017, the Baring Foundation supported the formation of a network of older people’s theatre companies. At the time of writing, this has 29 members.

In 2016, Kate Organ authored a report outlining the multifarious ways in which older people were engaging with performance and theatre from play-reading groups to elders’ companies. The report compared the approaches of professional and amateur theatre and documented the benefits to performers, noting a ‘strong link between the activity and their sense of well-being and zest for life’.<sup>149</sup> This resulted in the first national symposium for older people’s theatrical work, staged at the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

A similar development is discernible in older people’s dance. Joce Giles described how there has been a movement from ‘a few isolated programmes to very quickly being part of the mainstream offer from dance companies’. He attributed this in part to the opening of new building-based dance organisations around the country that regard work with older adults as integral to their programming.

In 2014, West Yorkshire Playhouse began to pioneer dementia-friendly performances, which were toured to other theatres in the UK. Two years later, the Playhouse published a guide to dementia-friendly performances. This detailed the benefits that might accrue to dementia-friendly venues and identified a need for simple structural modifications, for a dedicated staff member

Older people derive value from an involvement in theatre and drama. Theatres across the country have been leading the way in creative ageing.

<sup>141</sup> Rickett, M. & Bernard, M. (2015). *Ageing, Drama and Creativity: a Critical Review*. Swindon: Arts and Humanities Research Council.

<sup>142</sup> Organ, K. (March 2016). *A New Form of Theatre: Older People’s Involvement in Theatre and Drama*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 1.

<sup>143</sup> Royal Exchange Theatre. (2016). *Elders Company, Year One Evaluation Output*, supplied to the author.

<sup>144</sup> Elders Company at Royal Exchange Theatre: royalexchange.co.uk/the-elders

<sup>145</sup> Intergenerational Work at Royal Exchange Theatre: royalexchange.co.uk/intergenerational

<sup>146</sup> See *Moments that Changed Our World*: royalexchange.co.uk/moments-that-changed-our-world and the film made about this project: vimeo.com/273323587.

<sup>147</sup> Royal Exchange Theatre. (2017). *Elders Company, Year Two Evaluation Output*, supplied to the author.

<sup>148</sup> Royal Exchange Theatre. (2018). *Third-year Report to the Rayne Foundation*, supplied to the author.

<sup>149</sup> *A New Form of Theatre*, op. cit., p. 4.

**Image (right):**  
Bury Culture Champions taking part in The Golden Years Caravan project  
©Greater Manchester Culture Champions/Len Grant

## CASE STUDY GREATER MANCHESTER: AN AGE-FRIENDLY CITY REGION



**Defying the national trend, Manchester is becoming ever younger; expertise, energy and wealth are leaving the city when people end their professional lives. Among those older people remaining in the urban centre, there are disproportionately high levels of pensioner poverty, loneliness, ill health and disability and the second lowest male life expectancy in England. Paul McGarry – Strategic Lead for Greater Manchester Ageing Hub and Age-Friendly Manchester – identified culture as an important part of reversing this trend.**

In 2003, a partnership between older residents, the NHS, the voluntary sector and the local authority called Valuing Older People (VOP) was set up within the Public Health Unit of Manchester City Council to ‘build on the positive elements of Manchester life and ensure that the needs of older citizens, particularly the most disadvantaged, are central to the work of all service providers’.<sup>150</sup> In 2007, the cultural arm of this initiative was established, offering creative taster sessions to older residents, particularly in the more deprived parts of the city. The Age-friendly Cities and Communities initiative from the World Health Organization

(WHO) promotes positive quality of life for older people. In 2009, Manchester became the UK’s first age-friendly city. In the same year, the VOP team launched Manchester’s Ageing Strategy for 2010–20, which intended to make the city a great place to grow older. This included the ambition to ‘increase older people’s participation in cultural and learning activities’, and it had a section dedicated to realising the benefits of arts engagement to physical and mental health, social connectedness and community cohesion.<sup>151</sup>

The challenge Manchester has set itself has been to ‘rewrite the story of old age (from a narrative of loss or deficit to one of aspiration and growth)’.<sup>152</sup> This has involved older people as active citizens shaping the kind of city in which they want to live. The VOP team became known as Age-Friendly Manchester and forged links across sectors including housing, transport, public health, social care, research and culture.

The cultural strand of the age-friendly programme has been overseen by Manchester Museum and The Whitworth art gallery. The Baring Foundation funded a post that brought cultural organisations together to think about their role in

<sup>150</sup> Manchester City Council. (2009). *Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older 2020–30 – Summary*. Manchester: Manchester City Council, p. 5.

<sup>151</sup> Manchester City Council. (2009). *Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older 2020–30*. Manchester: Manchester City Council, p. 20.

<sup>152</sup> Ward, E. (2015). The Bigger Picture: Age Friendly Culture in the Age Friendly City. In Watts, E, *A Handbook for Cultural Engagement with Older Men*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 64.



relation to ageing. Esme Ward, now Director of Manchester Museum, describes how more than 40 ‘cultural organisations across the city, including museums, orchestras, theatres and participatory arts organisations, come together to develop the age friendly cultural offer and explore new cross-sector partnerships, funding and ways of working, particularly how to reach vulnerable older people and those who participate least in cultural activity (including older men)’.<sup>153</sup>

One of the flagship age-friendly cultural programmes has been Culture Champions, a large-scale volunteer ambassador scheme for older people within Manchester’s communities. More than 150 Culture Champions advocate, lead and programme cultural activities for their peers and communities. The age-friendly strategy identifies that ‘they participate, promote and advise arts organisations, as well as organising their own events and festivals. They are an alliance of the willing – committed, creative engaged individuals who believe participating in culture enriches lives. Many of them have links to other volunteering organisations and are active within their communities’.<sup>154</sup> Consistent with this way of working, graduates of the Elders Company at the Royal Exchange Theatre are eligible to become Elders Champions, leading workshops, attending conferences and broadcasting on Vintage FM as part of community radio station All FM.<sup>155</sup>

Within the wider city region of Greater Manchester, the number of over 65s is expected to increase by 44 per cent



and over 85s by 81 per cent by 2028.<sup>156</sup> Since devolution and the creation of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), culture has remained central to the city region’s age-friendly plans, with cultural organisations forming an integral part of the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub.

In 2018, Greater Manchester was named the first age-friendly city region by the WHO. In the same year, funding was secured from the Great Place Scheme – run in England by ACE and the Heritage Lottery Fund – for a project called Stronger Together. Alongside Manchester Museum, Ambition for Ageing and GMCA, this has seen the expansion of the Culture Champions programme into six districts in Greater Manchester. The programme is hosted by a number of different organisations, ranging from cultural venues such as the Royal Exchange to social housing providers such as Bolton at Home. Although each programme is unique and reflects the local cultural landscape and needs of older people, they all ensure a common thread of developing and delivering age-friendly cultural activity led by older people. A centre for age-friendly culture is in the process of being established in Greater Manchester, which will be the first of its kind in the world.

<sup>153</sup> Loc cit., pp. 63–64.

<sup>154</sup> Greater Manchester Combined Authority. (September 2018). *Greater Manchester Age-Friendly Strategy*. Manchester: Greater Manchester Combined Authority, p. 23.

<sup>155</sup> Elders Champions: royalexchange.co.uk/elders-champions

<sup>156</sup> New Economy. (2015). *Ageing – Developing a Greater Manchester Response*: [neweconomymanchester.com/blog/ageing-developing-a-greater-manchester-response](http://neweconomymanchester.com/blog/ageing-developing-a-greater-manchester-response)

Creative ageing work is being extended into heritage settings. This has been found to have a positive impact on individual wellbeing.

to lead on this work, for wider training to be made available and for paid consultations with people with dementia to be undertaken. The guide noted sensitively that:

People with dementia have different levels of understanding and insight into their condition. Some people happily opt in to events targeted at people with dementia, while others prefer not to attend something that is labelled, or would rather not be repeatedly reminded of it once they have chosen to participate. It is important to note that coming to the theatre is a normalising experience for people with dementia: we should not be constantly referring to dementia during their visit – while they are at the theatre they are simply our audience members.<sup>157</sup>

When it came to selecting shows, the guide advised that these should take account of the frame of reference of people with dementia in relation to content, resist overly complex narratives, consider integrating a musical element and avoid infantilising audiences. Essentially, ‘a dementia friendly performance should be the same show experienced by every other audience on any other day of the run, with a few slight adaptations. It should be created in partnership with the show’s creative and technical team, and should not feel compromised artistically or technically’.<sup>158</sup> Experience showed this to involve moderating sound, lighting and publicity material and inviting people with dementia to dress rehearsals and meet and greets.

In 2015, Alzheimer’s Society published a guide helping arts venues to become more welcoming to people with dementia and their carers. The case for this was argued on moral, health, artistic and economic grounds. The guide is centred on talking to people with dementia and their carers, as

well as staff and organisations in the wider community, to establish and meet need.<sup>159</sup>

It has been observed that: ‘There is huge potential for delivering multi-sensory, multi art form approaches to support the quality of life for people living with dementia in care homes.’<sup>160</sup> Spare Tyre works alongside people in the advanced stages of dementia who may have low mobility and verbal skills. The company has developed dedicated, multi-sensory interactive shows for people with dementia. Similarly, City Arts works in a multi-disciplinary, multi-sensory way with smell, taste and touch.<sup>161</sup> Shows might involve such challenges as fluctuating light conditions and allergies and swallowing in taste-based work. Arti Prashar detailed that health and safety had been a ‘massive hurdle to overcome’ in this kind of work. For her, safeguarding needed to be preserved without destroying the essence of what it means to be creative.

Creative ageing work is being extended into heritage settings. Between 2013 and 2014, the Historic Royal Palaces piloted the Sensory Palaces programme for people with early dementia and their carers. This was evaluated in 2015 and established as a regular programme in 2016.<sup>162</sup> With a focus on the here and now, the programme stimulates the senses through visits to the fragrant gardens or to the chocolate kitchens at Hampton Court. The programme has been found to have a positive impact on individual wellbeing.<sup>163</sup>

### Community venues

As the list at the back of this report shows, there are innumerable older people’s arts projects taking place in the community. Added to this, the University of the Third Age, which operates in many towns and regions, offers opportunities for lifelong learning and creative activities. Voluntary Arts champions creative ageing by promoting festivals and workshops and by

#### Images (left):

Top left  
Age-friendly Social Eating partnership project between Manchester Museum, Culture Champions and local housing provider Southway Housing Trust

©Manchester Museum

Top right

Broadcast training for Culture Champions delivered by local radio station All FM which resulted in Culture Champions having a regular show, Vintage FM, on the radio station

©The Whitworth Art Gallery

<sup>157</sup> *West Yorkshire Playhouse Guide to Dementia-Friendly Performances*, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>158</sup> Loc cit., p. 18.

<sup>159</sup> Allen, P., Brown, A., Camic, P.M., Cutler, D., Harvey, L., et al. (November 2015).

*Becoming a Dementia-friendly Arts Venue: A Practical Guide*. London: Alzheimer’s Society.

<sup>160</sup> *Growing the Creative Ageing Movement*, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> For a discussion of some of the challenges posed by this approach, see Duncan, K. & Wheeler, J. (2014). *Creativity in Care: Evaluation Report*. Nottingham: City Arts.

<sup>162</sup> Sensory Palaces: [hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/whats-on/sensory-palaces/#gs.svcf2n](http://hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/whats-on/sensory-palaces/#gs.svcf2n)

<sup>163</sup> Sensory Palaces evaluation: [hrp.org.uk/media/2110/sensory-palaces-programme-evaluation-full-report-2018.pdf](http://hrp.org.uk/media/2110/sensory-palaces-programme-evaluation-full-report-2018.pdf)

maintaining a register of umbrella bodies offering arts activities in the community.<sup>164</sup>

Knowledge Manager at Alzheimer's Society, Gemma Jolly, identified that the role of local operations staff at Alzheimer's Society was to 'have good connections in the community and to signpost people to a range of activities and opportunities which may be beneficial for them, which includes arts-based interventions'. Alzheimer's Society has pioneered Singing for the Brain, which covers 30 locations nationwide. Age UK's Age of Creativity network is enhancing recognition of the value of creative ageing.

Considered part of the cultural infrastructure for funding purposes, libraries are at the heart of our communities. For a decade until 2013, Magic Me worked at the Women's Library in London. Over this period, older women met up with pupils from the Mulberry School for Girls after school and during the Easter holidays. With funding from a range of sources, including the school, ACE and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, women and girls developed an annual creative project centred on the library's collection.<sup>165</sup>

Live Music Now coordinates monthly group singing sessions in community venues, typically village halls or libraries, under the heading of Songs and Scones.<sup>166</sup> Volunteer-led Silver Song Clubs take place in a range of day centres and community venues in several English regions, with songs chosen from a specially published book. As well as coordinating activity in care homes, Creative Writes offers creative writing workshops in community centres and poetry readings at day centres and memory cafes.<sup>167</sup> Cubitt has developed a network of studios in housing associations and community venues, offering

reduced rates to artists willing to give some time to creative projects with older local residents.<sup>168</sup> Glasgow Senior Citizens Orchestra consists of around 50 players spanning a range of ages and abilities. Boogie in the Bar offers a community disco in venues across Scotland for older people, their family, friends and carers.<sup>169</sup> Initiatives like Staying Out in Stockton-on-Tees offer creative activities to people over 65 who have been discharged from hospital and are at risk of social isolation.

Festivals tend to span communities. There are now several national festivals dedicated to older people's arts, such as Gwanwyn [Spring] in Wales (running since 2006), the Here and Now Older People's Arts Festival in Northern Ireland (founded in 2012) and Luminare in Scotland (founded in 2012 and taken as a case study on p. 57). Since 2014, the Live Age Festival in Staffordshire has celebrated creative ageing.<sup>170</sup> Following on from the London-wide Capital Age Festival,<sup>171</sup> the Mayor of London awarded £216,000 to the Borough of Lewisham to stage the inaugural Festival of Creative Ageing in September–October 2019.<sup>172</sup> There are also many instances of older people being integrated into broader cultural festivals, from Manchester International Festival to UK City of Culture.<sup>173</sup>

Work with older people has not been confined to the 'traditional' arts. Crafts have long had a place in the lives of older people and have increasingly been included within definitions of the arts. The Cubitt study on ageing in the public realm uncovered a wealth of ways in which older people were making their voices heard through writing, singing, design and broadcasting. The study was intended as a catalyst through which older people could shape their environments

Libraries are at the heart of our communities. Festivals tend to span communities.

<sup>164</sup> Voluntary Arts: [voluntaryarts.org](http://voluntaryarts.org)

<sup>165</sup> Mayo, S. & McAviney, C. (2013). *Wild Wild Women: Ten Years of Intergenerational Arts Practice at The Women's Library led by Magic Me in Collaboration with Mulberry School for Girls and Local, Older Women*. London: Magic Me.

<sup>166</sup> Songs and Scones: [livemusicnow.org.uk/lmn-news/title/Live-Music-Now-celebrates-5-years-of-Songs-and-Scones-across-the-UK/item/68800](http://livemusicnow.org.uk/lmn-news/title/Live-Music-Now-celebrates-5-years-of-Songs-and-Scones-across-the-UK/item/68800)

<sup>167</sup> Creative Writes: [creativewrites.co.uk/community](http://creativewrites.co.uk/community)

<sup>168</sup> Cubitt Artists in Community Studios: [cubittartists.org.uk/category/education/elders-and-community/community-studios/artists-in-community-studios](http://cubittartists.org.uk/category/education/elders-and-community/community-studios/artists-in-community-studios)

<sup>169</sup> Boogie in the Bar: [boogieinthebar.co.uk](http://boogieinthebar.co.uk)

<sup>170</sup> Live Age Festival: [liveagefestival.co.uk](http://liveagefestival.co.uk)

<sup>171</sup> Capital Age Festival: [capitalagefestival.org.uk](http://capitalagefestival.org.uk)

<sup>172</sup> Festival of Creative Ageing: [lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/events/festival-of-creative-ageing](http://lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/events/festival-of-creative-ageing)

<sup>173</sup> See, for example, the work with older people undertaken as part of Hull City of Culture in 2017: [hull2017.co.uk/discover/article/celebrating-hulls-older-people-2017](http://hull2017.co.uk/discover/article/celebrating-hulls-older-people-2017)

Crafts have long had a place in the lives of older people and have increasingly been included within definitions of the arts. Age-friendly film is becoming increasingly popular.

in creative ways. Manchester’s multicultural community radio station, All FM, has trained older people to make their own programmes.<sup>174</sup> Silver Comedy focused on interactive comedy with older people.<sup>175</sup>

Age-friendly film is becoming increasingly popular. The 2017 Luminate Film Festival screened a series of short films exploring life in older age at the Byre Theatre in St Andrews.<sup>176</sup> In 2018, the Queen’s Film Theatre in Belfast worked with three over-60s community groups to create film posters and trailers based on participants’ memories of the films they had watched over the previous 50 years.<sup>177</sup> With an 80-seat mobile cinema at its disposal, Screen Memories Scotland aims to ‘recreate a sense of community and belonging using cinema memories’.<sup>178</sup> The Picturehouse chain offers monthly reduced-price dementia-friendly screenings in 16 of its cinemas in England and Edinburgh to people with dementia and their carers; the lights are left on low, and hot drinks and biscuits are served before the film begins.<sup>179</sup> The Strand Arts Centre in East Belfast runs Silver Screenings, weekly reduced-price screenings for seniors with free tea and coffee.<sup>180</sup> In association with Age UK Wigan, Leigh Film Society runs an Afternoon Classic Cinema Club for a mature audience.<sup>181</sup>

### Hospitals

François Matarasso has described eloquently how: ‘The scientific knowledge of the medical profession might cure us or at least help us make the most of the changed conditions of our remaining life. But science is not enough. We are not machines, in for repair. We are people and how we think and feel matters, in itself and because it

influences how we respond to treatment.’<sup>182</sup> Matarasso went on to articulate a space for art as a realm of reason, experimentation, knowledge, communication and emotion, wholly compatible with the maintenance of professional standards, which might be most needed when we are ill, vulnerable or away from home.

Nowadays almost every hospital has some kind of artistic component. Creative Scotland works with all 14 health boards north of the border. In Northern Ireland, Arts Care works through 10 committees across five health and social care trusts – comprising healthcare staff, service users, agency and service representatives and sometimes family members – that outline areas of need to which they would like the organisation to respond.

There are several examples of arts activities being orientated towards older patients. Paintings in Hospitals runs an older people’s programme.<sup>183</sup> Art in Hospital in Scotland delivers a visual arts programme in areas including Medicine for Older People.<sup>184</sup> Patients are placed at the centre of their work, with professional artists working with older people to facilitate their creative expression. Alongside dedicated art spaces enabling participatory practice in hospitals, the organisation mounts easels and lights on people’s beds to enable recumbent creative activity.

Elevate, an ongoing arts-based programme for older people run by ArtCare, the arts in health service at Salisbury District Hospital, has been found to increase wellbeing.<sup>185</sup> Patients experience physical, cognitive, social and emotional benefits. Staff recognise the positive impact of the programme on patients and engage with patients on a more

<sup>174</sup> All FM: [allfm.org](http://allfm.org)

<sup>175</sup> Silver Comedy: [youtube.com/watch?v=HxVGGZQ6b80-](https://youtube.com/watch?v=HxVGGZQ6b80-)

<sup>176</sup> Byre Theatre’s series of short films exploring older age: [byretheatre.com/events/luminate-film-festival-short-encounters-12](http://byretheatre.com/events/luminate-film-festival-short-encounters-12)

<sup>177</sup> Queen’s Film Theatre older artists’ film project: [artscouncil-ni.org/news/queens-film-theatre-showcases-arts-older-people-film-project](http://artscouncil-ni.org/news/queens-film-theatre-showcases-arts-older-people-film-project)

<sup>178</sup> Screen Memories Scotland: [screenmemories.org.uk](http://screenmemories.org.uk)

<sup>179</sup> Picturehouse’s dementia-friendly screenings: [spotlight.picturehouses.com/news/dementia-friendly-screenings](http://spotlight.picturehouses.com/news/dementia-friendly-screenings)

<sup>180</sup> Silver Screenings: [strandartscentre.com/silver-screenings](http://strandartscentre.com/silver-screenings)

<sup>181</sup> Afternoon Classic Cinema Club: [leighfilmsociety.com/classic.php](http://leighfilmsociety.com/classic.php)

<sup>182</sup> Matarasso, F. (March 2016). *Both Sides of the Coin: the Distinctive Value of Art in Health Care*: [baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/both-sides-of-the-coin-the-distinctive-value-of-art-in-health-care](http://baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/both-sides-of-the-coin-the-distinctive-value-of-art-in-health-care)

<sup>183</sup> Paintings in Hospitals: [paintingsinhospitals.org.uk](http://paintingsinhospitals.org.uk)

<sup>184</sup> Art in Hospital: [artinhospital.com](http://artinhospital.com)

<sup>185</sup> Elevate: [artcare.salisbury.nhs.uk/elevate.htm](http://artcare.salisbury.nhs.uk/elevate.htm)

personal level. Artists perceive the positive impact of their work on patients and staff.<sup>186</sup>

In the summer of 2015, Vital Arts ran a series of group and bedside dance sessions for patients on two Older Adult Rehabilitative wards at Mile End Hospital. A team from the Dance Science department at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance gathered feedback showing that sessions positively impacted participants' treatment, increased their self-esteem, increased motor coordination and aided relaxation.<sup>187</sup>

At any given time, patients with dementia occupy a quarter of acute hospital beds. People with dementia tend to have longer hospital stays than those without. Engagement with the arts, particularly music, has been shown to have a beneficial effect on patients with dementia.<sup>188</sup> Between July 2015 and January 2016, Arts & Health South West led a programme called Music for a While with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the University of Winchester. A professional viola player offered activities – including singing and music-making – for three hours a week to patients, carers and staff in the acute elderly care services of three hospital trusts in the South West of England.<sup>189</sup> Evaluation showed that the musical activities reduced hospital stays, patient falls, the prescription of anti-psychotic drugs and staff absences. Sessions were found to improve patients' mood and levels of happiness.<sup>190</sup>

### Digital space

A survey conducted by Age UK in 2013 found that only 17 per cent of care homes provided internet access to residents.<sup>191</sup> Five years later, Age UK's Digital Inclusion

Evidence Review found that 4.2 million people aged 65+ had no access to the online world.<sup>192</sup> This is creating a generational digital divide that is only partly being overcome by formal courses aimed at improving digital literacy.

The arts have been identified as a gateway to the digital realm that can introduce technology into the lives of older people in an engaging way.<sup>193</sup> In this endeavour, it has been anticipated that the digital arts might be successful in 'engaging older people with current developments in artistic practice, and challenging stereotypes about digital art as an exclusively "young" form'.<sup>194</sup>

As recently as 2015, Joe Randall observed that 'the potential for using creative technology to improve the quality and quantity of older people's access to the arts is greater than ever. Nevertheless, despite these good prospects, there are still relatively few examples of participatory arts practitioners making use of creative technologies while working with older people. This field in 2015 is under-resourced and under-developed, therefore its potential remains under-exploited'.<sup>195</sup> The relative accessibility of digital technology combined with the easy replicability of software amplifies the scale at which such projects can operate. Randall placed the onus on artists working in this area to share good practice and make a case for the value of their work.

Digital technology can enter into the lives of older people either as a tool that makes cultural artefacts available or as a medium that enables creative production. An example of technology as a tool is provided by Engage & Create, which has licensed a package that takes care home residents on a virtual tour of artworks that stimulate

At any given time, patients with dementia occupy a quarter of acute hospital beds. Engagement with the arts, particularly music, has been shown to have a beneficial effect on patients with dementia.

<sup>186</sup> Preti, C. & Boyce-Tillman, J. (2015). *Elevate: Using the Arts to Uplift People in Hospital*. Salisbury: ArtCare.

<sup>187</sup> Middleton, J. (2015). *Vital Arts: a Service Evaluation of a 6-week Vital Dance Programme at Mile End Hospital*. London: Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.

<sup>188</sup> Daykin, N., Walters, D., Ball, K., Henry, A., Parry, B., et al. (2016). *Arts and Dementia – Using Participatory Music Making to Improve Acute Dementia Care in Hospital Environments: An Exploratory Study*. Winchester: University of Winchester.

<sup>189</sup> Music for a While: [bsolve.com/projects/music-for-a-while](http://bsolve.com/projects/music-for-a-while)

<sup>190</sup> *Arts and Dementia – Using Participatory Music Making to Improve Acute Dementia Care in Hospital Environments*, op. cit.

<sup>191</sup> Age UK call for better internet access in care homes: [ageuk.org.uk/latest-news/archive/call-for-better-internet-access-in-care-homes](http://ageuk.org.uk/latest-news/archive/call-for-better-internet-access-in-care-homes)

<sup>192</sup> Davidson, S. (November 2018). *Digital Inclusion Evidence Review*. London: Age UK.

<sup>193</sup> Randall, J. (September 2012). *Digital Arts and Older People: What is Distinctive About Working With Older People Using Creative Technology?* London: The Baring Foundation.

<sup>194</sup> Randall, J. (October 2015). *Technically Older: an Update on Digital Arts and Creative Ageing*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 4.

<sup>195</sup> Loc cit., p. 30.

The arts have been identified as a gateway to the digital realm that can introduce technology into the lives of older people in an engaging way.

discussion.<sup>196</sup> An example of technology being used as a medium is provided by Central & Cecil, working with a non-profit arts organisation called Salmagundi to encourage care home residents to make self-portraits using tablets and stop-frame animation for a project called The Person Within. An exhibition of the images was held at The Menier Gallery in London during the 2015 Dementia Awareness Week.<sup>197</sup> iPad engAGE enables people with dementia in care homes in the North East of England to create two-dimensional images and three-dimensional renderings of objects using apps appropriate to their dementia stage.<sup>198</sup> Alive's iPals offers an intergenerational version of this in the South West, enabling the production of digital collages as a collaboration between a school and care home.<sup>199</sup> Translating the digital into the physical, the Digital Makers collective at FabLab in Belfast provides older people with access to digital technology such as laser cutting and 3D printing in a community setting.<sup>200</sup>

The Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT) has established a creative and digital programme for older adults known as Digital Ambassadors. In collaboration with the University of Liverpool's Department of Physics, the Digital Ambassadors have been learning about particle and nuclear physics to gain a better understanding of digital artworks and help mediate them to their peers.<sup>201</sup>

Between December 2016 and October 2018, the Baring Foundation partnered with the Nominet Trust (now the Social Tech Trust) on the Digital Arts & Creative Ageing programme. Two-year grants of up to £100,000 were offered to five projects

that used digital technology as a tool and a medium. As part of this programme, Armchair Gallery – an app developed by City Arts in Nottingham – provided access to seven of the UK's main collections (including that of Dulwich Picture Gallery) and enabled care home residents to interact with existing artworks and design new ones.<sup>202</sup> Evaluation of the programme debunked myths about the relationship between digital arts and older people and provided a few pointers to bear in mind when planning activities.<sup>203</sup> As work in the field of digital creativity for older people has evolved, artists report that care staff feel more comfortable using digital technology with residents.<sup>204</sup>

Music Memory Box combines collage and meaningful objects with music for people with dementia.<sup>205</sup> Evocative music is uploaded to a USB stick, and sensors are attached to the corresponding objects. When an object is chosen from the box, the music attached to that object is played. Chloe Meineck, who pioneered the box, raised more than £27,000 through crowdfunding to bring the project to life.<sup>206</sup>

Playlist for Life (funded from various sources including the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, Alzheimer's Society and Life Changes Trust) and My Life Films (funded from various sources including the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, National Lottery and City Bridge Trust) use technology to tell the stories of people with dementia through music and film respectively, enabling families and carers to interact in innovative ways.<sup>207</sup>

Just as technology is aiding in the management of dementia, digital arts might help to overcome isolation and

<sup>196</sup> Engage & Create's virtual package for care homes: [dementiapartnerships.com/project/engage-create](http://dementiapartnerships.com/project/engage-create)

<sup>197</sup> Chapman, B. & Flynn, Z. (November/December 2015). The Person Within: Exploring Identity Through Visual Art. *The Journal of Dementia Care*, 23, 6.

<sup>198</sup> iPad engAGE: [we-engage.blogspot.com](http://we-engage.blogspot.com)

<sup>199</sup> Alive's iPals: [aliveactivities.org/projects/ipals](http://aliveactivities.org/projects/ipals)

<sup>200</sup> See: [baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/fablab-belfast-brings-digital-techniques-tea-and-community-to-older-residents](http://baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/fablab-belfast-brings-digital-techniques-tea-and-community-to-older-residents)

<sup>201</sup> Digital Ambassadors at FACT: [fact.co.uk/news/2019/01/does-time-travel-exist-and-will-solar-power-save-our-planet](http://fact.co.uk/news/2019/01/does-time-travel-exist-and-will-solar-power-save-our-planet)

<sup>202</sup> Armchair Gallery: [imaginearts.org.uk/programme/armchair-gallery](http://imaginearts.org.uk/programme/armchair-gallery)

<sup>203</sup> Blood, I., Easterbrook L. & Robinson, M. (May 2019). *'Quite an Adventure': Some Lessons From Digital Arts Projects With Older People*. London: The Baring Foundation.

<sup>204</sup> *Technically Older*, op. cit.

<sup>205</sup> Music Memory Box: [studiomeineck.com/music-memory-box](http://studiomeineck.com/music-memory-box)

<sup>206</sup> Music Memory Box crowdfunding: [kickstarter.com/projects/studiomeineck/music-memory-box-new-tech-for-people-living-with-d](http://kickstarter.com/projects/studiomeineck/music-memory-box-new-tech-for-people-living-with-d)

<sup>207</sup> Playlist for Life: [playlistforlife.org.uk](http://playlistforlife.org.uk); My Life Films: [mylifefilms.org](http://mylifefilms.org)

loneliness. The Government's strategy for tackling loneliness sets out an ambition to 'maximise the power of digital tools to connect people, particularly concentrating on digital inclusion for older and disabled adults, and addressing loneliness'.<sup>208</sup> Screen-based activity could broaden the creative offer available to older people rather than replicating the passive and often solitary experience of watching television. The Imagine programme has seen concerts being live streamed into care homes.<sup>209</sup> With an injection of resources, this approach could be extended into the homes of isolated older people. Similarly, digital apps that cultivate a sense of community online could be a valuable tool in overcoming loneliness.



As work in the field of digital creativity for older people has evolved, artists report that care staff feel more comfortable using digital technology with residents.

**Images:**

*Top left*

**Moving Memory Dance Theatre Company's intergenerational project, Love Grows**

©Cal Banville-Winter

*Bottom left*

**Listening and collecting stories of love between the generations at Moving Memory**

©Vicki Oliver

*Top right*

**Moving Memory's Beyond the Marigolds, performed as part of the BEEE Creative Dance Re:Ignite Festival**

©Simon Richardson

<sup>208</sup> Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. (October 2018). *A Connected Society: A Strategy for Tackling Loneliness – Laying the Foundations for Change*. London: DCMS, p. 36

<sup>209</sup> Imagine live streaming: [imaginearts.org.uk/programme/live-streaming](http://imaginearts.org.uk/programme/live-streaming)

## CASE STUDY MOVEMENT-BASED DIGITAL ARTS



**To overcome the challenges older people faced during movement-based workshops held in residential care homes and daycare centres in Kent, Moving Memory Dance Theatre Company developed Digital Doris in partnership with Butch Auntie.<sup>210</sup> Projecting digital images of a dancer, Doris encourages creative movement by older adults with long-term health conditions, disabilities and mental health problems in care, community and cultural settings. Interweaving sound and image, participants create a virtual space in which they can move. Associate Artist and core company performer, Jayne Thompson, describes how Doris ‘transforms the space into an immersive, potentially interactive and visually stimulating environment which is both creatively and physically liberating for participants’.<sup>211</sup> Doris supports warm-up activities, improvisation and choreographic composition while enabling learning and feedback.**

With funding from Medway Council, Moving Memory refined the content of Doris and developed a training programme.

SCIE has identified Digital Doris as a preventative resource which ‘helps to create an atmosphere and the right environment to help participants relax and unleash their creativity’.<sup>212</sup>

Funding from the Digital Arts and Creative Ageing programme allowed Moving Memory to introduce Doris to groups around the country. Evaluation by Ian Farr at the University of Kent’s School of Sports and Exercise Sciences found that participants’ wellbeing increased along with perceptions of their physical ability, while the workshops built social cohesion and proved popular with those taking part.<sup>213</sup>

Scottish Charity of the Year 2019, Drake Music Scotland, has developed creative music projects using Soundbeam, ‘an award-winning “touch free” device which uses sensor technology to translate body movement into music and sound’.<sup>214</sup> This enables people with limited movements to control sounds and express themselves through music. Soundbeam Director, Adrian Price, describes the technology as an ‘accessible musical instrument that anybody can

<sup>210</sup> Digital Doris: [movingmemorydance.com/digital-resources](http://movingmemorydance.com/digital-resources)

<sup>211</sup> About Digital Doris: [youtube.com/watch?v=2lzAK0gMxk8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lzAK0gMxk8)

<sup>212</sup> Social Care Institute for Excellence on Digital Doris: [scie.org.uk/prevention/research-practice/getdetailedresultbyid?id=id=10f00000TDC2LAAX](https://scie.org.uk/prevention/research-practice/getdetailedresultbyid?id=id=10f00000TDC2LAAX)

<sup>213</sup> Farr, I. (April 2018). *Digital Doris – Dance-theatre Workshop Evaluation*: [movingmemorydance.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Digital-Doris-Impact-in-workshops\\_Ian\\_Farr.pdf](http://movingmemorydance.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Digital-Doris-Impact-in-workshops_Ian_Farr.pdf)

<sup>214</sup> Soundbeam: [soundbeam.co.uk](http://soundbeam.co.uk)



play'.<sup>215</sup> It works through a system of sensors and switches. Ultrasonic sensors measure distance and translate this into a flexible range of musical notes that can be adjusted to any scale; switches can trigger single notes, a sequence of notes, chords, backing tracks and percussion. A wide range of sampled sounds can be triggered, from a variety of instruments to animal noises. In the latest version, Soundbeam 6, sounds can be accompanied by video.

Between May and October 2012, Drake Music Scotland was funded by West Lothian Challenge Fund to deliver inclusive music sessions using Soundbeam and other music technology in 18 care homes in West Lothian under the heading of Rhythm for Life. This resulted in 284 project sessions for 272 participants.<sup>216</sup> The project evaluation identified positive impacts on participants' wellbeing, coordination and confidence.<sup>217</sup> It also established a music resource pack and music technology resource to support further activity.



<sup>215</sup> About Soundbeam: [youtube.com/watch?v=ptkluj\\_1EIQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptkluj_1EIQ)

<sup>216</sup> Rhythm for Life: [drakemusicscotland.org/rhythm-for-life](https://drakemusicscotland.org/rhythm-for-life)

<sup>217</sup> Drake Music Scotland, Care Homes Feedback Analysis, supplied to the author.

It has been a challenge for the sector to create work that recognises and values people's skills and experiences and is interesting and inspiring without being belittling.

## Development of arts and older people activity

### *A flying start*

In the first year of Baring Foundation funding, three-year grants for core costs were given to 10 long-standing arts and older people organisations, including Equal Arts, Entelechy Arts and Green Candle Dance Company, and a new post was created in Greater Manchester to convene a consortium of cultural organisations with a commitment to creative ageing. This was complemented by one-off grants to organisations making new activities and resources available and testing new ideas. In this way, activity was both secured and extended. High demand led to a decision to 'combine smaller more targeted open grants rounds with more strategic grants, usually by invitation, along with partnerships with the UK's four Arts Councils'.<sup>218</sup> In 2011, this gave way to small grants designed to 'support exemplary approaches to the involvement of older people in the arts'.<sup>219</sup> In 2012, the focus shifted on to partnerships between arts organisations and care homes connected to the wider community. In 2014, artists over 70 were commissioned to work on the theme of ageing under the name Late Style.

### *Combatting ageism*

In 1999, *Arts and Older People: A Practical Introduction* described some of the forms and consequences of ageism as follows:

It may mean perceiving older people as incompetent victims rather than as experienced and wise adults whose experience and wisdom may need seeking out, revealing and strengthening. Ageism may take the form of patronising behaviour – acting in a superior way towards an older person. [...] Ageism may mean making an older person's choices for them when they could enjoy making their own choices.

In the arts, it may mean assuming that older people coming to a daycare centre would not be able to make films or electronic music. It may mean assuming that older people with knitting skills would not be interested in extending those skills creatively with a wool artist. It may mean doing a painting or a tapestry for them because you think they are slow.<sup>220</sup>

Fourteen years later, Kate Organ wrote that: 'The "needs" of the older person are frequently defined by other people and they may have presumed that the act of being creative isn't in itself a need.'<sup>221</sup> In 2019, Yemisi Turner-Blake at PHF identified in interview that community 'gatekeepers' sometimes placed a limit on the possibilities for the arts, which he described as a 'barrier of perception'. At the same time, Anne Gallacher regretted that artists and arts organisations keen to develop this work sometimes had a narrow view of the kind of activity older people might be interested in and benefit from or a patronising approach to older people's creativity that might make programmes seem tokenistic.

Kate Gant observed that it has been a challenge for the sector to create work that recognises and values people's skills and experiences and is interesting and inspiring without being belittling. Turner-Blake identified that 'one of the shifts has been around a greater ambition for what older people can do within creativity and the arts, moving away from just occupying time to creative production or building collectives and having more energetic outcomes'. It has been noted, for example, that one of the keys to Luminare's success 'is the way it has frequently challenged stereotypes about what sort of art older people might be interested in'.<sup>222</sup> This has given rise to a wide variety of music being featured in the festival, from rock to hip hop, and experimental art forms such as aerial dance.

#### Images (left):

Top left

The Moving Memory outreach team worked alongside the Re:Ignite on Tour company, creating Together for the Re:Ignite Festival

©Simon Richardson

Middle left

The Playground composition from Beyond the Marigolds

©Simon Richardson

Bottom left

Moving Memory at b0ing! International Family Festival in Canterbury

©Cathy Westbrook

<sup>218</sup> *Getting On – Arts and Older People*, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.* See *After You Are Two* for details.

<sup>220</sup> *Arts and Older People: A Practical Introduction*, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>221</sup> *After You Are Two*, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>222</sup> Eaton-Lewis, A. (October 2017). *Late Opening: Arts and Older People in Scotland*. Edinburgh: Luminare, p. 25.

The more negative people's perceptions of ageing are, the more susceptible they are to negative health impacts as they age.<sup>223</sup> Participants to the Arts and Older People Programme in Northern Ireland insisted that, within society, the 'prevailing images of older people were heavily skewed towards the ageist stereotype of frail, vulnerable and lonely. These images, they argued, served to create self-imposed limitations around physical activity and a negative self-image generally'.<sup>224</sup> By contrast, artistic expression might 'challenge stereotypes and assumptions, revealing the glorious complexities of getting through life. Older people's perspectives, as they create new works of art, bring a wealth of possibilities of subjects, forms and contexts that can enrich the cultural offer for very many people'.<sup>225</sup> The New Dynamics of Ageing research programme observed that 'arts-based projects are contributing towards longer term change in public attitudes in relation to ageing and older people through the powerful mechanisms of drama and images that challenge ageist assumptions'.<sup>226</sup> A project within this programme called Look at Me! revelled in joyous self-representations of women and ageing.<sup>227</sup>

Kate Organ has argued that: 'There are no limits to the kind of art or art form that might be appropriate at any age or stage of life. The quality of the materials, the equipment, the relationships, the space, the time and the imagination, will maximise the purposefulness and effectiveness of those choices.' At the same time, activities need to be age-appropriate:

It presumes too much to expect adults to return readily to that pre-school state of playfulness. Activities that are

reminiscent of playschool – sing alongs, waving parachutes, visiting clowns, making pictures out of pasta are not associated with a sense of agency in the world. For adults fearing the loss of their dignity, uncertain with strangers, lacking a sense of autonomy, child-like activities can feel very uncomfortable, patronising and plain weird. They can be awkward and uncomfortable reminders of our diminished status and threatened dignity.<sup>228</sup>

In short, 'choice needs to be at the heart of participatory arts processes'.<sup>229</sup> Head of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion at Creative Scotland, Milica Milosevic, noted that practice must be person-centred, with older people at the core and as the starting point. It would seem that 'the golden rule in creative ageing, as in any participative work, is for artists and arts organisations to be flexible, responsive and person-centred in their practice'.<sup>230</sup> The wealth of knowledge of group members can be drawn upon to shape activities in a flexible way.

### *A rapid evolution*

Many respondents to this study spoke about how rapidly the field has evolved in recent years. Recognition of both arts therapies and participatory arts has continued to grow, with the arts being seen as integral to work with older people rather than simply 'nice to do'. Andrew Barry, who runs the Elders Company at Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, noted that understanding of the power of the arts has increased within care homes, daycare facilities and hospitals even over the past two years. Where programmes have been established, Joce Giles described demand as 'phenomenal'. This is especially impressive when we consider that funding

The more negative people's perceptions of ageing are, the more susceptible they are to negative health impacts as they age.

<sup>223</sup> Robertson, D. (January 2016). *Research Brief: How Negative Attitudes Towards Aging Affect Health in Later Life*: tilda.tcd.ie/publications/research-briefs/pdf/2016\_Research%20Brief\_Ageing%20Perceptions.pdf

<sup>224</sup> Arts Council of Northern Ireland. (March 2016). *Not So Cut Off: Alleviating Isolation and Loneliness in Older People Through the Arts*. Belfast: ACNI, p. 42.

<sup>225</sup> *After You Are Two*, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>226</sup> Anon. (August 2015). *Evaluating the Impact of the New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme – Final Report*: esrc.ukri.org/files/research/research-and-impact-evaluation/evaluating-the-impact-of-the-new-dynamics-of-ageing-research-programme-final-report

<sup>227</sup> Warren, L. (January 2012). *Representing Self-Representing Ageing: Look at Me! Images of Women and Ageing*, New Dynamics of Ageing Research Programme: newdynamics.group.shef.ac.uk/assets/files/NDA%20Findings\_10.pdf

<sup>228</sup> *After You Are Two*, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>229</sup> *After You Are Two*, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>230</sup> Cutler, D. (November 2017). *Towards the End: The Baring Foundation's Arts and Older People Programme 2010-2017*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 8.

Recognition of both arts therapies and participatory arts has continued to grow, with the arts being seen as integral to work with older people rather than simply 'nice to do'.

for libraries, museums and art galleries has been reduced by £400 million over the period 2010–18.<sup>231</sup> Austerity and the resulting cuts to local authority budgets have had a severe impact on social care and public health. Despite dire financial straits, the Campaign to End Loneliness has been astonished by the good things happening in communities. David Cutler likened this to trying to travel up an escalator that was going down.

Over time, there has been a shift towards more sustained work, building relationships with people through extended residencies rather than one-off projects. As an example, Arts Care's Here and Now Older People's Arts Festival began as a six-week extravaganza, with a substantial part of the programme being delivered into older people's services. This has been extended into a six-month community-wide project, culminating in a six-week showcase of artwork. According to Arts Care CEO, Jenny Elliott, this 'gives older and vulnerable people the time to really enjoy the process of making rather than rushing them through in the process of reflecting'.

### *The arts and dementia*

A decade ago, the arts were comparatively well recognised in work with dementias. Over the period covered by this study, there has been a steady growth in the understanding of the role of creativity in addressing the emotional and behavioural difficulties associated with dementias and of creativity as a tool through which people with a form of dementia can both access and express emotions. There has also been enhanced recognition of the value of being 'in the moment' and the primacy of the creative process over any end product.

In 2019, arts and dementia practice had a major boost with the BBC's two-part documentary, *Our Dementia Choir*. The actor Vicky McClure, whose grandmother had enjoyed singing until her

death with dementia, brought together a group of people with dementia to sing at Nottingham's Royal Concert Hall. As part of the programme, a research team led by Professor Sebastian Crutch from UCL found that participants' stress levels went down as their wellbeing went up. This led to the suggestion that there is a special ingredient to being in a choir that makes people with dementia feel well, happy and optimistic. As a result of her experience, McClure concluded that: 'We know there's no medication that's going to help anybody. We have to find other ways of making people happy, of giving them moments of peace. Music, to me, seems like it's becoming a massive part of people living with dementia.'

Research confirms the value of singing for people in care, particularly those with dementia from mild to advanced stages.<sup>232</sup> A Choir in Every Care Home has published resources for care homes and musicians aimed at making singing endemic in residential care. The Baring Foundation is working with the Life Changes Trust, Luminate, Age Scotland, Scottish Care and Making Music to establish a dementia-inclusive choir network across Scotland.<sup>233</sup>

Music for Dementia 2020 works on the basis that: 'Music is a powerful connector and has the ability to bring people together in the here and now. It can enliven, stimulate and enable people living with dementia to express themselves creatively through musical engagement.'<sup>234</sup> The campaign seeks widespread recognition by the end of the decade that music is a necessity for people with dementia and that provision should be made accordingly.

### *Older people as artists and leaders*

Recognition is increasingly being made of the category of artists who are discovering or rediscovering their creativity in older age. Esmé Ward spoke about the 'most extraordinary' and 'under-researched' moment at which people, who might have

<sup>231</sup> Curran, F. & Kohler, M. (May 2019). *Creative and Cultural Participation in Later Life: Inspiration Pack for Partnerships Between Age and Cultural Sectors*. London: Age UK.

<sup>232</sup> Cliff, S., Gilbert, R. & Vella-Burrows, T. (June 2016). *A Choir in Every Care Home: A Review of Research on the Value of Singing for Older People*. Working paper 6. London: The Baring Foundation.

<sup>233</sup> Scotland's dementia-inclusive choir network: [lifechangestrust.org.uk/news/news-funding-hits-all-right-notes-scotland-wide-dementia-friendly-choir-network](http://lifechangestrust.org.uk/news/news-funding-hits-all-right-notes-scotland-wide-dementia-friendly-choir-network)

<sup>234</sup> Music for Dementia 2020: [musicfordementia2020.com/2018/09/25/about-us](http://musicfordementia2020.com/2018/09/25/about-us)

described themselves as a mother or a worker, start to define themselves as artists. People who might have been professional artists and changed careers, had families or been in prison are coming back to their practice, and wider work in the arts, in older age. In the relatively young field of dance, there is an increasing prevalence of dancers on stage who are over 40 or even over 60, with greater recognition that longevity is to be celebrated. Work by older artists forms part of the thinking at ACE, including professional artists who are continuing their practice as they age. At the same time, it is acknowledged that the motor skills of older people as artists are not always as refined as they once were and need to adapt. The Baring Foundation's 2014 open programme, *Late Style*, solicited applications from artists over the age of 70 for commissions on the theme of ageing.

Another area in which progress is being made is the emphasis placed on leadership by older people and their core involvement in devising and designing programmes. This is especially evident in the Culture Champions programme in Greater Manchester. ACE encourages the involvement of older people on the boards of cultural organisations and recognises that more could be done to enable participants in shaping activities.

### *Life after creative participation*

Attention is now being paid to life after participation in particular programmes. So, for example, Spare Tyre facilitates the formation of independent groups. The Elders Company at the Royal Exchange Theatre encourages the initiation of work beyond the programme.<sup>235</sup> In 2017, SilverSage – artists who initially met at Spare Tyre on a weekly basis – formed themselves into a group and devised a show on assisted dying.<sup>236</sup> The Company of Elders at Sadler's Wells has also been helping people to move beyond the programme. With some of the original members approaching their 90s, it has been necessary to look at whether weekly dancing is still an appropriate activity and

what might replace it. This is particularly difficult when participants associate leaving the company with death and implies a duty of care for members of staff. After a difficult conversation, a five-year limit is being implemented as part of a rolling programme, and an alumni programme is being set up.

### **National activity**

As policy for arts and older people has been devolved to each of the four nations of the UK, it makes sense to consider this discrete activity here.

#### *Northern Ireland*

Between 2007 and 2017, the pension-age population in Northern Ireland rose by a quarter to 303,000, while the number of residents aged 85+ increased by a third to 37,000. These trends are expected to continue in the coming decades; projections published in 2017 suggested that the population aged 85+ will reach 48,000 by 2026 and 73,000 by 2036.<sup>237</sup>

At the same time, the amount of people living alone in Northern Ireland is increasing, particularly in the over-65s and in men. Research conducted by Help the Aged in 2007 found that 16 per cent of older people in Northern Ireland did not leave their house more than once a week and 7 per cent of older people never left their homes, with 21 per cent of people aged 65+ feeling often, or always, lonely. Mortality rates are higher among people living alone, and social isolation and loneliness have been identified as major public health issues.

People who might have been professional artists and changed careers, had families or been in prison are coming back to their practice, and wider work in the arts, in older age.

<sup>235</sup> Royal Exchange Theatre, *On Top of the World*: royalexchange.co.uk/on-top-of-the-world

<sup>236</sup> SilverSage, *The Promise*: sparetyre.org/whats-on/projects/the-promise-a-new-piece-about-assisted-dying

<sup>237</sup> Northern Ireland Assembly. (2017). *Demographic Profile of Northern Ireland*: assemblyresearchmatters.org/2019/02/07/a-demographic-profile-of-northern-ireland-in-2017

**Image (right):**  
**Sylvia Dow's Threads**  
**in 2016**

©Marc Marnie

## CASE STUDY OLDER ARTIST: SYLVIA DOW



**Sylvia Dow spent her professional life as a drama teacher, arts consultant, Head of Drama at Bo'ness Academy, Education Officer for the MacRobert Arts Centre in Stirling and Head of Education for the Scottish Arts Council. Retiring from formal employment, she began to pay attention to the creative ideas that had been gestating while she worked and undertook a Masters in Playwriting at the University of Glasgow.**

Village Pub Theatre in Edinburgh encourages new writing from a diverse community of emerging playwrights, and it was here that Dow honed her practice through readings of short plays. While studying at the University of Glasgow, Selma Dimitrijevic, a theatre-maker and director from Newcastle-based Greyscale Theatre Company, spotted Dow's work. In 2012, Dow's first full-length play, *A Beginning, a Middle and an End*, a 'metaphor for the stages of life', was staged by Greyscale and toured Scotland, including the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh and the Tron Theatre in Glasgow. It was marketed as being by a new playwright aged 73, and it was described as 'an auspicious, if tardy, debut'.<sup>238</sup> In the same year, *Where is Otto* premiered at the Visibility Festival in Turkey.

In 2013, Dow developed *Threads*, a play 'which combines songs, steps and stories to weave together a multi-stranded history of knitting'.<sup>239</sup> The play was directed by Muriel Romanes, premiered at Luminare and toured the Scottish Borders in 2015. In 2013, Dow was selected to take part in the Traverse 50 initiative, part of a celebration of Traverse Theatre's 50th anniversary. This saw 50 playwrights being offered workshops, networking events, access to the theatre for a year and the opportunity to have their work performed. As a result of this, in 2014 Dow was commissioned by the Traverse to produce a breakfast play for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe programme called *Blinded by the Light*. This was followed by *It's Only Words*, which was performed at Oran Mor in Glasgow later the same year.

In 2018, Dow developed *Stuff*, 'about the hoarding of memories, emotions and things', which was again directed by Romanes and staged at the Traverse after touring Scotland.<sup>240</sup>

Liberated by being able to call herself a writer, Dow addresses universal themes from the vantage point of older age. Having experienced significant societal change, she notes that: 'Humankind operates in a cycle of optimism and despair, not dissimilar to a plant which pulls itself down in winter and rebuilds during the summer months. We're always looking for new beginnings to things, even when we're at our worst.'<sup>241</sup> Acknowledging the wealth of ideas that exists within the growing older population, Dow recommends that people later in life tell the stories that are bursting out of them, drafting and re-drafting until they are just right. For her, 'age has nothing to do with wanting to be the best you can be'.<sup>242</sup>

<sup>238</sup> Fisher, M. (10 September 2012). *A Beginning, a Middle and an End* – Review. *The Guardian*.

<sup>239</sup> Sylvia Dow: [stellarquines.com/tag/sylvia-dow](http://stellarquines.com/tag/sylvia-dow)

<sup>240</sup> *Stuff*: [facebook.com/events/traverse-theatre/stuff-a-new-play-by-sylvia-dow/2096625933991695](https://facebook.com/events/traverse-theatre/stuff-a-new-play-by-sylvia-dow/2096625933991695)

<sup>241</sup> Hall, R. (29 September 2012). Sylvia Dow on Making Her Playwriting Debut at 73. *Exeunt Magazine*.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*.

In 2017–18, 36,000 pensioners in Northern Ireland (12 per cent) were living in relative poverty.<sup>243</sup> As in the rest of the UK, poverty, poor health and lack of transport can contribute to social exclusion. This is compounded by educational and social segregation, which tends to limit social circles.<sup>244</sup>

In 2005, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister published a strategy for older people entitled *Ageing in an Inclusive Society*. Contemplating the contribution of culture to fulfilling lives in older age, the strategy recognised that: ‘Access to libraries, museums, arts venues, sporting and leisure facilities are vital to the quality of older people’s lives. It is important to encourage a co-ordinated approach to the development of their use, whilst taking into account the specific obstacles that older people experience.’<sup>245</sup> At that time, National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland was providing reminiscence and intergenerational work alongside activities that included arts-based workshops.

In 2008, an Older People’s Advocate was appointed by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. In 2011, the role of Commissioner for Older People was established by the Northern Ireland Assembly following extensive lobbying by older people. More recently, the draft *Programme for Government 2016–21* assumed a role for the Executive in ‘increasing quality of life by supporting culture, the arts, and facilities for recreation’.<sup>246</sup> The programme also included increased participation in culture in its list of desired national indicators on the basis of health, wellbeing, educational and economic benefits. The Executive’s *Active Ageing Strategy* for the same period included the provision

that older people should have access to the cultural resources of society, but it made no recognition of the value of arts participation.<sup>247</sup>

Respondents to this study attributed little appetite for the arts to the (currently suspended) Northern Ireland Assembly. The majority of ministers were described as reluctant to take on board compelling arts and health evidence, and arts budgets were perceived to be the first cut in health boards. Corporate plans for 2011–15 published by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) – which has a remit to promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion – made only passing reference to older people.<sup>248</sup> In 2014, it was established that 48 per cent of over-65s had not attended an arts event in the preceding year and 80 per cent of over-65s had not participated in arts activities in the last year.<sup>249</sup>

Beyond Stormont, Arts Council Northern Ireland (ACNI) has been active in the field of creative ageing. ACNI’s five-year strategy for 2007–12 pledged to ‘explore and develop opportunities for older people to engage with the arts’.<sup>250</sup> This was followed, in 2010, by a three-year *Arts and Older People Strategy*, which recognised the diversity of older people and advocated an inclusive approach. Lorraine Calderwood, ADO Programmes Officer at ACNI, remembers that, at that time, there were a few small projects bringing together arts and older people and a few organisations testing out what would work and what would not. Six strategic themes were drawn up to guide future work: isolation and loneliness; social inclusion; poverty; health; strengthening the voice of older people; and developing life-long learning opportunities. Against the first four themes was a plan to ‘establish a three year

The draft *Programme for Government 2016–21* included increased participation in culture in its list of desired national indicators on the basis of health, wellbeing, educational and economic benefits.

<sup>243</sup> Department for Communities. (2019). *Households Below Average Income – Northern Ireland*: communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/households-below-average-income-northern-ireland-2017182017/18

<sup>244</sup> Wallace Consulting. (May 2015). *Evaluation of the Arts and Older People Programme: Interim Report*. Portadown: Wallace Consulting.

<sup>245</sup> Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister. (2005). *Ageing in an Inclusive Society*. Belfast: OFMDFM.

<sup>246</sup> Northern Ireland Executive. (2016). *Draft Programme for Government Framework 2016–21*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Executive, p. 39.

<sup>247</sup> Northern Ireland Executive. (2016). *Active Ageing Strategy 2016–21*. Belfast: Northern Ireland Executive.

<sup>248</sup> Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. (2012). *Corporate Plan and Balanced Scorecard 2011–15*. Belfast: DCAL.

<sup>249</sup> Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. (2014). NI Omnibus Survey: nisra.gov.uk/statistics/northern-ireland-omnibus-survey

<sup>250</sup> Arts Council of Northern Ireland. n.d. *Creative Connections: A Five-year Plan for Developing the Arts 2007–2012*. Belfast: ACNI, p. 20.

A memorandum of understanding has been signed between arts organisations and care homes that protects artists.

Arts and Older People programme dedicated to funding work with older people'.<sup>251</sup> The ensuing programme is taken as a case study on the next page. ACNI's five-year strategy for 2013–18 reiterated a commitment to 'increase the number of funded projects aimed at older people'.<sup>252</sup>

Since 2012, Arts Care has run Here and Now Older People's Arts Festival, an annual festival across Northern Ireland, together with the Public Health Agency. The festival seeks to enhance the wellbeing and quality of life of people over the age of 60 through participation in a variety of arts including dance, music, drama, visual art, digital art, puppetry, poetry, filmmaking and photography. Arts Care's advisory committees have prompted a focus on people living with dementia, Parkinson's disease and respiratory conditions and those at risk of frailty. Working in association with more than 75 agencies, the festival has fostered new links between participants and healthcare staff and among neighbours in rural areas.

Around 15,000 older people are living in care across the North of Ireland, but little definable arts activity has historically

happened in nursing and residential care. ACNI currently prioritises work with carers. Funding allows for preparation time in advance of projects, and a memorandum of understanding has been signed between arts organisations and care homes that protects artists in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that carers are in workshops alongside them.

Belfast is part of the age-friendly city network. In South Eastern Belfast Trust, the response of service users and staff to Arts Care's artists prompted the formation of a group of activity workers at ward level. This was extended into a network across Northern Ireland that now works closely with artists.

To compensate for the mismatch between governmental commitment to realising the benefits of arts engagement and the excellent work being done on the ground, ACNI and Arts Care are lobbying for a representative body for arts and health work in Northern Ireland, akin to the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance in England, which would also take a lead on arts work with older people.



**Image:**  
The Meet Me at the Albany programme, run by Entelechy Arts  
Photo courtesy of Entelechy Arts

<sup>251</sup> Arts Council of Northern Ireland. (July 2010). *Arts and Older People Strategy: Final Version*. Belfast: ACNI, pp. 35–43.

<sup>252</sup> Arts Council of Northern Ireland. (2014). *Ambitions for the Arts: A Five Year Strategic Plan for the Arts in Northern Ireland 2013–2018*. Belfast: ACNI, p. 14.

## CASE STUDY ACNI'S ARTS & OLDER PEOPLE PROGRAMME



**The Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) felt it was important to take a specific look at older people, because they are often forgotten, and decided to ring-fence funding to minimise competition. In 2009, ACNI worked with the Atlantic Philanthropies to launch a three-year Arts & Older People Programme (AOPP) with a focus on social inclusion. Through this programme, ACNI became the first of the UK's arts councils to focus on the arts and older people. This pilot phase culminated in a week-long festival called Celebration of Age, which showcased much of the work that had been commissioned under the AOPP umbrella.**

AOPP was re-launched for 2013–16 with funding from ACNI, the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the Baring Foundation. A fifth of the six strategic themes from the *Arts and Older People Strategy* – ‘strengthening the voice of older people’ – was added to its remit.<sup>253</sup> The programme had three strands – an open grants programme, an annual festival and training for care workers and artists. Grants of between £10,000 and £30,000 were offered (capped at the lower level in the

final year), with a requirement of 10 per cent match funding. Applications were encouraged for projects that targeted men and involved older people in their development and delivery. Projects were led by more than 160 artist-facilitators, spread across the North of Ireland and delivered through cross-sector collaboration. Professional development was offered to artists leading projects, and annual Arts and Age festivals in Belfast showcased the results of the programme.

ACNI commissioned an external organisation to evaluate the first two phases of AOPP as they were happening.<sup>254</sup> This showed that 42 per cent of projects took place in disadvantaged areas and 23 per cent of participants lived in those areas. Eighty-six per cent of projects operated on a cross-community basis. Thirteen per cent of participants were living in sheltered housing or residential care, and 72 per cent of participants were living with dementia or long-term health conditions. The health and wellbeing of participants improved significantly, and 82 per cent of participants built good friendships.<sup>255</sup>

To complement formal evaluation of the second phase, a public health specialist and a photographer compiled six AOPP case studies that reflected a diversity of artistic approaches.<sup>256</sup> The case studies captured the joy of people taking up painting or dancing, stilt walking or juggling, building a pizza oven and baking in it. They also demonstrated the role of the arts in bringing people together in a relaxed environment, with one participating artist noticing that: ‘The lovely thing about arts is that it takes away the pressure to talk. The conversations flow and they don’t and they flow with little breaks and it’s not awkward because there’s something to do, because you have a purpose together.’<sup>257</sup> Individual and group interviews showed that the ways in which arts participation helped to overcome isolation and loneliness corresponded closely with the Five Ways to Wellbeing – connect, be active, keep learning, give, take notice – with the addition of a sixth way: be creative.

The programme has rolled on since the second phase. By 2018, £1.8 million had been invested in more than 117 projects involving 21,500 ‘older citizens in arts activities, from crafts to circus skills’.<sup>258</sup> Funding beyond 2019 is in the process of being secured.

<sup>253</sup> *Evaluation of the Arts and Older People Programme: Interim Report*, op. cit.

<sup>254</sup> Wallace Consulting. (January 2017). *Evaluation of the Arts and Older People Programme: Final Report*. Portadown: Wallace Consulting.

<sup>255</sup> Arts Council of Northern Ireland. (March 2018). *The State of Play: Arts & Older People Programme*. Belfast: ACNI.

<sup>256</sup> Lynch, U. & Alexander, J. (April 2016). *Not So Cut Off: Case Study Evidence to Illustrate the Impact of the Arts and Older People's Programme in Alleviating Isolation and Loneliness*. Belfast: ACNI.

<sup>257</sup> *Not So Cut Off: Alleviating Isolation and Loneliness in Older People Through The Arts*, op. cit., p. 36.

<sup>258</sup> Arts Council of Northern Ireland. (June 2018). *Ambitions for the Arts: A Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Arts in Northern Ireland, 2013–18 – Summary of Achievements*. Belfast: ACNI, p. 7.

Value is understood on multiple levels, including improving mental and physical health and wellbeing, overcoming social isolation and humanising the care environment.

### Scotland

The Scottish population is ageing rapidly. Between 1998 and 2018, the number of people aged between 65 and 74 increased by 28 per cent and those aged over 75 increased by 31 per cent, largely as a result of positive net migration.<sup>259</sup> This trend is expected to continue, with the former age group predicted to increase by 17 per cent and the latter by 71 per cent by 2041 as the baby boomers enter older age.<sup>260</sup> By contrast, the number of people in younger age groups is either decreasing or increasing by a much smaller margin.

Scotland has a high proportion of people living with disabilities or long-term health conditions, with 56 per cent of people over 75 reporting a limiting long-term condition.<sup>261</sup> There has been a steady and significant increase in the number of adults reporting depression and anxiety, and mental wellbeing correlates with deprivation.<sup>262</sup>

The Scottish Household Survey shows that attendance at cultural events decreases as people age, as does participation in creative activity (especially when reading is excluded).<sup>263</sup> But changing demographics and artistic demand have precipitated creative approaches to ageing. *Late Opening: Arts and Older People in Scotland*, published in October 2017, provides case studies of some of the most prominent arts and older people activity to have taken place north of the border over the past decade.<sup>264</sup>

In 2012, Creative Scotland embarked upon a collaboration with the Baring Foundation to establish Luminare, which is taken as a case study on page 57. Since then, the creative ageing agenda has advanced considerably. A relatively small field of operation has been identified as an advantage, making it possible to bring partners from different fields – such as the

arts, health and education – together with artists who understand the complexity of work in this field.

One of the internal challenges that has been addressed is what Milica Milosevic identified as the ‘artificial conflict’ between quality and engagement – a ‘polarised perspective which should be irrelevant by now’. One of the external challenges that has been tackled is the ability of partners to participate in and support this type of activity within the community, sheltered accommodation or care homes. Other challenges have been the ability to raise non-arts funding and to develop the skillset necessary for this type of interdisciplinary work.

Milosevic considers that the ‘argument around the value of art and cultural activity in older age has been more or less won’. Value is understood on multiple levels, including improving mental and physical health and wellbeing, overcoming social isolation and humanising the care environment, not only for residents but also for care workers and managers. Spanning art forms, work with older people currently sits within Creative Scotland’s equality agenda as part of an obligation to address ageing and disability. This strand of activity is likely to become firmly embedded in the core of its work.

The National Performance Framework for Scotland, published in March 2016, included outcome measures for both culture (including attendance at and participation in cultural activity) and health (including healthy life expectancy).<sup>265</sup> In the draft Culture Strategy for Scotland, it was said that this ‘important development signifies that Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Government recognise the potential and importance of culture as an intrinsic part

<sup>259</sup> National Records of Scotland. (2018). *Mid-year Population Estimates Scotland, 2018*: nrsotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/nrs-visual/mid-18-pop-est/mid-year-pop-est-18-info.pdf

<sup>260</sup> National Records of Scotland. (2016). *Projected Population of Scotland (2016-based)*: nrsotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/nrs-visual/prog-pop-16/pop-proj-2016-scot-nat-pop-pro-info.pdf

<sup>261</sup> Scottish Government. (2017). *Scottish Health Survey 2017*: gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2017-volume-1-main-report

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>263</sup> Scottish Government. (2017). *Scottish Household Survey 2017*: gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2017-scottish-household-survey. This shows that 77 per cent of people aged 60 to 74 attended cultural events (including cinema) while 63 per cent of people over 75 did the same. For cultural participation (excluding reading), the figures are 51 and 39 per cent respectively.

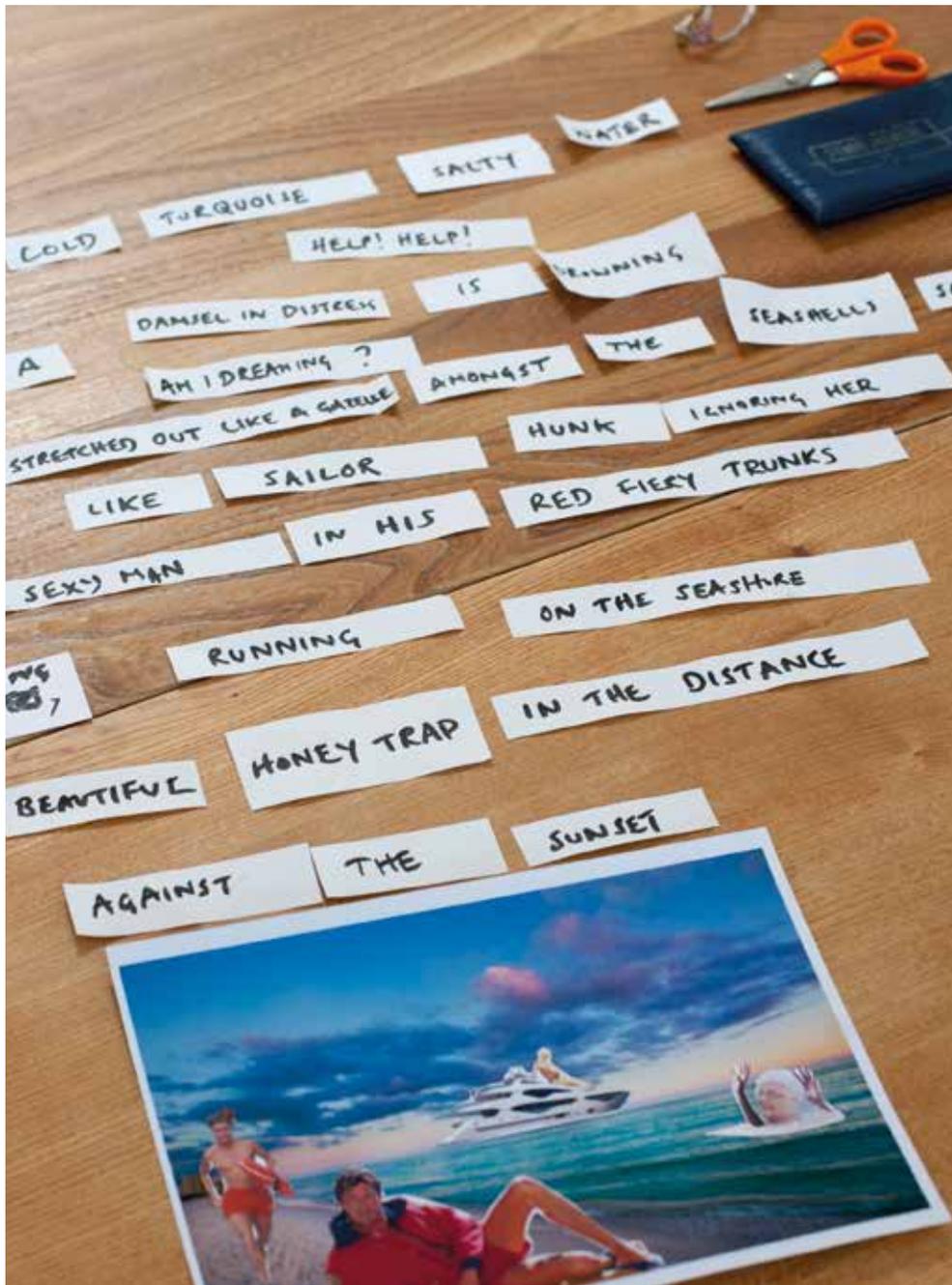
<sup>264</sup> *Late Opening*, op. cit.

<sup>265</sup> Scottish Government. (2016). *National Performance Framework*: nationalperformance.gov.scot

Image (left):  
Shake Rattle and Roll  
at the Oh Yeah Music  
Centre in Belfast

©Simon Graham/Harrison  
Photography

of Scotland's wellbeing and that other policy areas should give consideration to it'.<sup>266</sup> The final cultural strategy, to be published during 2019, is expected to focus on socially engaged practice and grassroots arts, which signals quite a shift away from what Joan Parr describes as more 'exclusive' conceptions of the arts towards a 'much more holistic way of delivering public services', with aspirations for culture to sit alongside health, social care and justice.



Spanning art forms, work with older people currently sits within Creative Scotland's equality agenda as part of an obligation to address ageing and disability.

**Images:**

*Left*

**Word collages at cARTrefu**

©cARTrefu, Age Cymru

*Right*

**Burl & Purl Club Nite during the Luminare Festival 2016, in partnership with Craigshill Good Neighbour Network, Livingston**

©Tiu Makkonen

<sup>266</sup> Scottish Government. (June 2018). *A Culture Strategy for Scotland: Draft for Consultation*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

## CASE STUDY LUMINATE: SCOTLAND'S CREATIVE AGEING ORGANISATION



**Bealtaine Festival in Ireland (founded in 1995) inspired the inception of Luminare as a collaboration between the Baring Foundation and Creative Scotland established in 2012. Luminare began as a nationwide annual festival, combining commissioned and curated work with projects initiated by artists and organisations. It grew from an initial 105 distinct projects and 321 related events attended by an estimated 79,706 people.**

Creative Scotland's contribution of £550,000 for 2012–18 was complemented by Baring Foundation grants of £75,000 to cover core costs in 2014 and 2015, tapering to £50,000 in 2016 and £30,000 in 2018 and 2019.

Age Scotland was invited to become the third partner, and Luminare set up camp in its offices. One of the initial challenges was centred on setting up a new arts organisation within a non-arts charity. For the first two years, a strategy group and dozens of project organisers worked with Luminare to deliver the festival. In 2014, Luminare became a charity with a board of trustees.

Creative Scotland commissioned BOP Consulting to evaluate the first three years of the festival. This evaluation noted the organisation's 'overall vision that older people should have the right to high quality arts and creative

activities, wherever they live and in whatever circumstances' and detailed specific objectives to:

- Develop an inspiring and ambitious annual programme that supports and profiles people's creative lives as they age
- Increase the number of older people involved in arts and creative opportunities
- Widen participation of older people, across communities and backgrounds, in arts and creative opportunities
- Improve how older people share and co-create arts and creative opportunities available to them
- Increase understanding of the value and importance of creative opportunities to older people in the care system, including older people with dementia
- Provide more opportunities for older artists and a better understanding of how best to support older artists.<sup>267</sup>

Taking growth of the sector as one of the main outcome measures, the evaluation found that Luminare had acted as a catalyst for increasing the programming of attendance-based and participatory arts activity for older people. The final report concluded that: 'Luminare has established itself as an innovative and ground-breaking national arts festival for, and with, older people. The concept has been universally praised in the festival feedback and has gained interest from partners and international organisations looking to develop similar work in other countries.'<sup>268</sup> In 2017, the festival became biennial, and Luminare became an 'organisation that supports and advocates for the development of work with, for and by older people all year round'.<sup>269</sup> Luminare has secured a further £300,000 for 2018–21 from the Regular Funding programme at Creative Scotland.

<sup>267</sup> BOP Consulting. (October 2014). *Evaluation of Luminare: Years One and Two Interim report*. Edinburgh: Creative Scotland, p. 5.

<sup>268</sup> BOP Consulting. (June 2015). *Evaluation of Luminare 2012–2014: Final Report*. Edinburgh: Creative Scotland.

<sup>269</sup> Luminare: [luminareScotland.org](http://luminareScotland.org)

## Wales

Wales is ageing steadily. Between 2001 and 2018, the proportion of the population aged between 65 and 74 increased from 9.1 to 11.5 per cent while the number of people aged over 75 increased from 8.3 to 9.3 per cent.<sup>270</sup> In 2003, the Welsh Government published its first 10-year *Strategy for Older People in Wales*. Updated for 2013–23, this recognised the diversity of older people and their shared need to participate in society and to retain a sense of purpose and autonomy.<sup>271</sup>

The Older People's Commissioners Act, passed at Westminster in 2004, established commissioners for England and Wales with a remit to protect and further the rights of older people.<sup>272</sup> In Wales, this appointment led to the formation of expert advisory groups and the establishment of the Ageing Well in Wales programme, which is committed to making Wales a good place in which to grow older.<sup>273</sup> The focus of this activity is on creating age-friendly and dementia-supportive communities, reducing isolation and loneliness and ensuring that older people in Wales have the maximum possible opportunity for participation and learning.<sup>274</sup> *The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013–23* includes 'opportunities to participate in arts and creative activities' as a key component of learning.<sup>275</sup>

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 compelled public bodies to advance the 'economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales'.<sup>276</sup> This gave rise to seven wellbeing goals in pursuit of a resilient, healthier Wales with cohesive communities and a thriving culture.<sup>277</sup> The Welsh Government has made funding towards this activity available since 2007. In 2017, in recognition of the positive relationship between wellbeing and creative activity, Arts Council of Wales

(ACW) signed a three-year memorandum of understanding with the Welsh NHS Confederation,<sup>278</sup> which is seeing arts coordinators being appointed by health boards and may lead to more funding from health sources.

As an organisation committed to encouraging the widest possible engagement with the arts, ACW recognises the different stages of people's lives. ACW has been working to support older people accessing the arts. A significant step was the establishment in 2006 of the month-long annual Gwanwyn festival, supported by ACW and the Welsh Government.

ACW has been working with Age Cymru (established 2013–14) to overcome some of the challenges facing older people. ACW also invites lottery funding applications for: 'Projects that increase arts opportunities for groups at risk of poor mental wellbeing, particularly among older people and people living in disadvantaged communities'.<sup>279</sup>

Several of the projects and organisations featured in the ACW report *Arts and Health in Wales* cater specifically to older people, among them cARTrefu, which is taken as a case study on page 60.<sup>280</sup> To this list might be added the work of Bethan Ryland with Caerphilly Arts Development; Arts Care Gofal Celf working in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire; Striking Attitudes professional dance group; and the work of Leslie Herman Jones (Advantages of Age) with the Ffabulous and Fflamboyant Bus Tour, which formed part of Gwanwyn Festival in 2018.

As in other parts of the UK, it remains a struggle for organisations to sustain themselves. cARTrefu Project Coordinator, Kelly Barr, noted that smaller organisations in Wales sometimes lack the resources and capacity to be recognised for the

Arts Council of Wales has been working to support older people accessing the arts. A significant step was the establishment in 2006 of the month-long annual Gwanwyn festival.

**270** StatsWales. (June 2019). *Age Distribution of Population by Gender and Year*: statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Distributions/agedistributionofpopulation-by-gender-year

**271** Welsh Government. (2013). *The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013–23*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

**272** The Older People's Commissioners Act 2004: publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/200304/cmbills/034/2004034.pdf

**273** Ageing Well in Wales: ageingwellinwales.com

**274** Ageing Well in Wales. (2004). *Ageing Well in Wales 2014–19*. Cardiff: Ageing Well in Wales.

**275** *The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013–23*, op. cit., p. 10.

**276** Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted

**277** Welsh Government. *Well-being of Wales*: gov.wales/well-being-wales

**278** Arts Council of Wales. (2017). *Recognising the Value That Creative Arts Can Bring to Health and Wellbeing in Wales*: arts.wales/news-jobs-opportunities/recognising-value-creative-arts-can-bring-health-and-wellbeing-wales

**279** Arts Council of Wales. (January 2018). *Arts and Health in Wales: A Mapping Study of Current Activity*. Cardiff: ACW, p. 81

**280** Ibid.

impact of their activities. Age Cymru offers small grants to enable organisations to bring communities together and gather evidence of positive impact. Capaldi also pointed to the familiar challenge of resources – ‘stretching the public pound as far as possible’ – outweighing any kind of attitudinal barrier. ACW recognises its role in ‘pump priming’ exemplary projects

to demonstrate the benefits of certain approaches. The hope is that benefits are demonstrated so compellingly that host organisations, such as care homes, will see the value of investing in continued activity to such an extent that it would be unthinkable for activity to stop because there would be an outcry.

Smaller organisations in Wales sometimes lack the resources and capacity to be recognised for the impact of their activities.



**Image:**  
A visit by HRH The Prince of Wales to residents involved in the cARTrefu Arts in Care Homes programme in Neath  
Photo courtesy of cARTrefu, Age Cymru, ©Patrick Olnier

## CASE STUDY AGE CYMRU: cARTrefu [RESIDE]



**In 2014, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales published a review of quality of life in the care homes of Wales, which recognised the value of the arts as a form of meaningful occupation.<sup>281</sup> The following April, Age Cymru began delivering cARTrefu, jointly funded by ACW and the Baring Foundation. This was initially envisaged as a two-year project (2015–17), run through the Gwanwyn programme, which aimed to improve the wellbeing of care home residents through the participatory arts. Based on a model developed at the Courtyard Centre for the Arts, 16 artists were recruited from the performing arts, music, visual arts and writing sectors, and each received one-to-one mentoring from a professional practitioner in their discipline. The 16 artists typically delivered two-hour participatory sessions once a week for a period of eight weeks. This cycle was repeated eight times in 122 care homes, reaching 1,543 residents and making cARTrefu the largest project of its kind in Europe.**

In the initial stages of cARTrefu, some persuasion was required to convince care homes of the value of arts activity, but, by and large, Nick Capaldi at ACW found them to be 'pushing at an open door'. In 2017, the project was

re-launched with 12 new artists working in care homes over 12 weeks. The project has generated an activity pack, available free to all care homes in Wales, containing 20 simple suggestions for creative activities.<sup>282</sup>

Evaluation of cARTrefu, conducted by researchers from the Dementia Services Development Centre at Bangor University, found a high level of enjoyment in activities, a statistically significant improvement in the wellbeing of resident participants and wider impacts such as increased socialising and the refinement of motor skills. Among staff participants, there was a 'statistically significant improvement in attitudes towards residents, especially those living with dementia' as well as greater confidence in leading creative sessions and seeking out cultural opportunities beyond the care home.<sup>283</sup> Artist practitioners also demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in their attitudes towards residents while developing both personally and artistically. The Project Coordinator at Age Cymru noted that residents' families found new ways of communicating with each other, mediated by creative work.

There is a feeling that the success of projects like cARTrefu needs to be extended into Social Care Wales so that care homes across Wales – privately owned, local authority, large and small – provide similar levels of creative engagement. Routes are being sought to make cARTrefu sustainable beyond its restricted legacy, perhaps through the work of Care Inspectorate Wales as a way of increasing care standards. Health and social care in Wales are more integrated than in England. Age Cymru has suggested that a memorandum of understanding with social care – equivalent to that which exists for health – would be useful to enable closer working between the arts and social care.

<sup>281</sup> The Older People's Commissioner for Wales. (November 2014). *A Place to Call Home? A Review into the Quality of Life and Care of Older People Living in Care Homes in Wales*. Cardiff: Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

<sup>282</sup> cARTrefu activity pack: [ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/arts-and-creativity/cartrefu](http://ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/arts-and-creativity/cartrefu)

<sup>283</sup> Algar-Skaife, K., Caulfield, M. & Woods, B. (2017). *cARTrefu: Creating Artists in Residents. A National Arts in Care Homes Participatory and Mentoring Programme*. Evaluation Report 2015-2017. Bangor: Bangor University, p. 10.

Despite experiencing similar demographic shifts to the other nations of the UK, England lacks a national governmental ageing strategy.

### England

In 1997, around one in every six people in England was aged 65 years or over. Two decades later, this had increased to one in every five people. This trend is set to continue as the baby boomers reach their 70s and 80s.<sup>284</sup> By 2050, the proportion of people aged 65+ is projected to reach around one in four. Despite experiencing similar demographic shifts to the other nations of the UK, England lacks a national governmental ageing strategy.

In a 2018 strategy document, *Transforming Later Lives*, the Centre for Ageing Better outlined a need for healthy ageing and connected communities, the latter of which it was envisaged would rely on ‘removing barriers to participation and creating opportunities for people to do the things they enjoy and matter to them’.<sup>285</sup> While the second part of this formulation might include participatory arts activities for older people, the connection needs to be made much more explicit.

In 2009, the Department for Work and Pensions issued the report *Building a Society for All Ages*, which began to contemplate ways in which later life and communities might be improved but omitted consideration of the arts.<sup>286</sup> Despite the lack of a governmental strategy for creative ageing at national level, the Local Government Association recognises that the ‘arts can have a positive impact on the physical and mental well-being of older people, including those living with dementia’, and that the arts have a part to play in ‘connecting isolated and lonely older people with the wider community, including different generations’.<sup>287</sup>

ACE has funded creative ageing through Grants for the Arts, its National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) and the involvement of older people on the boards of cultural organisations, yet we have seen that audiences for publicly funded cultural and

creative activities tend to drop off at the age of 74.

The Arts in Care Homes programme (discussed in the section on social care settings) prompted a discussion within ACE about the development of arts for older people and gave rise to a programme called Celebrating Age, a four-year collaboration with the Baring Foundation (2017–21).<sup>288</sup> This £3-million funding programme supports cultural organisations either to make their venues more welcoming to older people or to take cultural and creative activities into the community so that older people can engage more easily. Funded projects have ranged from the provision of weekly artist-led sessions in independent living schemes in Lewisham to a temporary extension into Brighton and Hastings of The Posh Club (see Duckie case study on page 66).

Interim evaluation of Celebrating Age showed that 12 per cent of people participating in activities had not engaged with the arts in the preceding year and that this figure was much higher in certain venues (71 per cent at Artcore Derby). A significant number of participants were in the 75 to 85 age group, and around half were experiencing some level of disability. Funding enabled new organisational partnerships to be established, and projects enabled new human relationships to be formed.<sup>289</sup>

As with Age Scotland and Age Cymru, a major partnership between the Baring Foundation and the older people’s sector, via Age UK, provided a nexus for creative ageing activity in England, which is taken as a case study on the next page.

Image (left): Many cARTrefu artists and participants enjoy working with clay  
©cARTrefu, Age Cymru

<sup>284</sup> Office for National Statistics. (August 2019). *Overview of the UK Population: August 2019*: ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/august2019#the-uks-population-is-ageing

<sup>285</sup> Centre for Ageing Better. (2018). *Transforming Later Lives – Strategy, 2018*. London: Centre for Ageing Better, p. 12.

<sup>286</sup> HM Government. (July 2009). *Building a Society for All Ages*. London: HM Government.

<sup>287</sup> Local Government Association. (2015). *Ageing: The Silver Lining – the Opportunities and Challenges of an Ageing Society for Local Government*. London: Local Government Association.

<sup>288</sup> Celebrating Age: [artscouncil.org.uk/funding/celebrating-age](http://artscouncil.org.uk/funding/celebrating-age)

<sup>289</sup> Imogen Blood and Associates. (August 2018). *Celebrating Age National Evaluation: Interim Report*, supplied to the author.

## CASE STUDY AGE UK: AGE OF CREATIVITY



**The national charity Age UK supports older people to ‘love later life’. With more than 130 local partners delivering grassroots support across England, it is well placed to lead on creative ageing. Age UK Oxfordshire specialises in delivering creative and cultural activities locally, recognising the ‘huge impact’ of the arts on participants, staff, carers and the wider community.**

In 2011, Age UK Oxfordshire secured funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Baring Foundation to establish and maintain a website promoting the arts for older people. The Age of Creativity website has attracted a diverse international membership of more than ‘1,000 professionals who all believe that creativity and culture supports older people to experience better health, wellbeing and quality of life’.<sup>290</sup> This online platform provides a portal for sharing information about forthcoming events and opportunities. It also points to evidence showing the intrinsic benefits to older people of engaging with the arts and the extrinsic benefits of supporting services, health and care.

Paul Cann described how creative ageing has become central to work in Oxfordshire but is yet to be integrated into the ‘bloodstream’ of Age UK throughout England. While offering a forum for sharing good practice, he observed,

Age of Creativity has become a ‘mechanism for the encouragement of Age UK in England to integrate the arts and older people more into what they do’. Farrell Curran saw the 2017 *Index of Wellbeing in Later Life* as a golden opportunity to develop the integration of the arts across the wider network, both nationally and locally. In 2017, the Baring Foundation invested a further £30,000 for Age UK Oxfordshire to embed cultural participation in the English partners of Age UK.

Also in 2017, an annual Age of Creativity festival was launched, inspired by Bealtaine, Gwanwyn and Luminare.<sup>291</sup> The festival ‘celebrates older people as creative audiences, participants, volunteers and artists across England’.<sup>292</sup> The 2019 festival took place throughout the month of May, beginning with a headline conference in Manchester that asked rhetorically: what if we lived in a truly age-friendly world, you could be an emerging artist at any age and artists became activists against ageism?

Age UK has published further reports on the role of creative and cultural participation, advocating greater access to engagement for older people, as well as the need to work in partnership with the cultural sector. In May 2019, the charity published guidance to inspire collaborations between older people’s organisations and the cultural sector.<sup>293</sup> Rather than encouraging local Age UKs to set up as arts providers, the guidance recognised that cross-sector partnerships can support high-quality cultural activities for older people who experience complex barriers to traditional arts provision. The guidance explained the benefits of working together, anticipated some of the potential impediments to cross-sector collaboration and introduced some of the likely partners in overcoming these impediments. Interested delivery partners across the country are encouraged to join the Age UK Creative and Cultural Network.

<sup>290</sup> Age of Creativity: [ageofcreativity.co.uk/about](http://ageofcreativity.co.uk/about)

<sup>291</sup> Age of Creativity festival: [voluntaryarts.org/age-of-creativity](http://voluntaryarts.org/age-of-creativity)

<sup>292</sup> Age of Creativity festival: [ageofcreativity.co.uk/festival/get\\_involved](http://ageofcreativity.co.uk/festival/get_involved)

<sup>293</sup> *Creative and Cultural Participation in Later Life*, op. cit.

### Diversifying across cultures and generations

Over time, the field has become more varied and better differentiated. Differentiation has been between arts therapies and the participatory arts, between elements of the infrastructure beyond care homes, between art forms and the skills artists need to work in the field and between the different needs and interests of older people, with a move away from thinking of older people as a homogenous group. Flourishing Lives has been facilitating conversations between arts organisations and different communities to identify and address any blind spots.

People become more varied as they age rather than less so, which needs to be embraced and celebrated. If we define older people as 50+, this represents half of life. Liz Postlethwaite captures the diversity of the older generation well when she writes that:

Whether we define older people as being 50 and upwards, or something older, the age range can be 30, 40 or even 50 years! This is long enough to encompass several different generations and an almost infinite range of interests and experiences. Even if you choose to focus upon the more vulnerable or isolated, for example people living with dementia, or those who are living in financial hardship, the only assumption you can make is that there will be something unique and different about every single group and individual that you work with.<sup>294</sup>

Elaborating on this point, Morag Deyes, artistic director of Dance Base and founder of the PRIME dance company for people over 60, has noted that:

[...] we're at a fascinating turning point. The doors of perception were kicked open quite widely during the 1960s and 70s and a lot of people haven't closed those doors – this particular generation of older people, who are in their 60s and 70s now, have a completely different mindset from the decade before that, and there's a creativity in that sense of freedom. Even

more fascinating is how it will progress in the next ten to 15 years, when the ageing population will not be from the permissive 1960s generation but from the punk era. What kind of art and creativity will come out of that?<sup>295</sup>

Along similar lines, Rebecca Blackman identified that people needed to see themselves reflected in work for audiences, and Kelly Barr compelled arts organisations to recognise the diversity of interests that goes beyond war poetry and Vera Lynn and includes The Beatles and second-wave feminism.

At the same time, there is widespread agreement that, despite huge demand, this work has been reaching a narrow demographic in terms of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality. Janet Morrison argued that the field needs to acknowledge that it must cater to the diversity of the ageing population rather than assuming that 'everyone is white, middle class and heterosexual'.

When it comes to ethnicity and gender, the demographics of work with the arts and older people are striking. All the participants of more than 1,500 cARTrefu sessions who reported their ethnicity did so as White British/White Other; 79 per cent were female. In much the same way, participants of the first round of Celebrating Age tended to be white British (89 per cent) and female (71 per cent).

Conversations with participants in Yorkshire suggested that the preponderance of women in creative groups might be explained by women living longer than men and engaging with activities after they have been widowed or in preparation for an enriched longer life. Husbands occasionally attended activities with their wives, in one case urged by their children who observed that their father – a retired chef – needed a creative outlet. One bereaved gentleman gleefully described the roomful of creative women as a 'world of opportunity'.

Various initiatives aim to engage older men. HenPower – which received £993,500 of funding through the Big Lottery Silver

Despite huge demand, this work has been reaching a narrow demographic in terms of gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality.

Image (left):  
The Creative Journeys  
programme from  
Orchestras Live in Essex  
©Paul Starr

<sup>294</sup> *Treasury of Arts Activities for Older People*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>295</sup> Deyes, M. Quoted in *Late Opening*, op. cit., p. 5.

Dreams Fund – encourages the application of older men to the practical tasks involved in hen keeping.<sup>296</sup> ACNI prioritises funding for projects addressing older men. Green Candle Dance Company runs Older Men Moving, weekly dance workshops targeted at Somali and Bengali men aged between 50 and 95. The programme aims to reduce falls while improving fitness, emotional wellbeing, social connectedness and mental capacity. It also aims to raise participants' knowledge and awareness of each other's cultures and improve self-esteem.<sup>297</sup>

Challenging stereotypes is one of the metrics against which activity at Royal Exchange Theatre is assessed. Liz, a retired nurse and member of the Elders Company described how she has been:

[...] giving other people the opportunity to meet a middle-aged African woman who does not fit into their stereotype of a middle-aged African woman. It's given us the opportunity to meet, to share ideas, to break barriers, to clear some perceptions and stereotypes. It doesn't matter if you're black, white, green, yellow, whatever, or from Hulme, or Hale Barns, or Stockport, or Bury, we all come here with a single purpose: to mix with different people; to learn about different groups of people; we're all interested in theatre, and there's a bit of the kid in all of us. It's good for our emotional wellbeing to be able to come to a safe place and let it all hang out.<sup>298</sup>

The Malcolm X Elders Forum in Bristol has used improvisation to tell the story of participants' early life in Jamaica, their decision to come to England and their experiences after they arrived.<sup>299</sup> Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Interwoven Histories project run by Pavilion in Leeds engaged Caribbean and

Asian women who worked in the textile industry.<sup>300</sup> Responding to the shocking statistic that between a quarter and a half of Greater Manchester's Chinese community has reported loneliness, the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art coordinated a series of workshops centred on creative language usage to overcome social exclusion.<sup>301</sup> Spare Tyre has commissioned a cumulative trilogy of theatre pieces developed by people living with dementia from South Asian communities. The final part of the trilogy, *Love Unspoken*, will be staged at Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, in October 2019.<sup>302</sup>

A post at Manchester Museum, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, ACE and Greater Manchester Ageing Hub, is overseeing the Big Lottery-funded Ambition for Ageing neighbourhood-based co-commissioning project across Greater Manchester, led by older people, as part of a wider Great Places programme. This has made seed funding available for the development of an international centre for age-friendly culture, based at the museum, which will lead on policy and practice for engaging BAME communities. As part of its recession from the field, the Baring Foundation will publish a series of case studies on diversity.

Alongside growing African and Asian communities, Creative Scotland has identified a growing older LGBT community, which has raised questions of personal safety and prompted intersectional working. Out in the City is a social initiative for LGBT people over 50 in Greater Manchester, run under the auspices of Age UK.<sup>303</sup> The group meets twice weekly for visits to cultural venues from art galleries to pubs. One member credits the group with saving his life after a painful break-up. Luminate has a strand of work by older

People become more varied as they age rather than less so, which needs to be embraced and celebrated.

<sup>296</sup> HenPower: [equalarts.org.uk/our-work/henpower](http://equalarts.org.uk/our-work/henpower)

<sup>297</sup> See case study in Long Live Arts. (April 2016). *Long Live Arts Manifesto: Feel the Arts*. Amsterdam: Long Live Arts, p. 38.

<sup>298</sup> Royal Exchange Theatre. (2017). *Elders' Stories: Ageing and Cultural Engagement: Year Two Output*: [royalexchange.co.uk/1033-stories-from-the-elders-ageing-a-cultural-engagement/file](http://royalexchange.co.uk/1033-stories-from-the-elders-ageing-a-cultural-engagement/file), p. 10.

<sup>299</sup> Malcolm X Elders Forum: [wellaware.org.uk/activities/malcolm-x-elders-forum](http://wellaware.org.uk/activities/malcolm-x-elders-forum)

<sup>300</sup> Interwoven Histories: [interwoven-histories.co.uk](http://interwoven-histories.co.uk)

<sup>301</sup> Dunbar, Z. (15 May 2019). *Exploring Social Isolation Through Art in the Older Chinese Community*: [baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/bridging-the-gap-exploring-social-isolation-through-art-in-the-older-manchester-chinese-community](http://baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/bridging-the-gap-exploring-social-isolation-through-art-in-the-older-manchester-chinese-community)

<sup>302</sup> Love Unspoken: [sparetyre.org/whats-on/projects/love-unspoken](http://sparetyre.org/whats-on/projects/love-unspoken)

<sup>303</sup> See case study in Watts, E. (2015). *A Handbook for Cultural Engagement with Older Men*. Manchester: The Whitworth, p. 24.

One way in which these limitations have been overcome is through intergenerational and family-based work.

LGBT people, which included a cabaret in 2017.<sup>304</sup> Duckie (taken as a case study on the next page) organised *Queers and Old Dears*, which brought people in their 70s and 80s together with young LGBT people to enjoy a live cabaret.<sup>305</sup> The *Posh Club* reflects its surrounding neighbourhoods, with a diverse LGBT community in Brighton and 70 per cent BAME members in Hackney.

It has been argued that: ‘separating generations from generations on such a scale is proving disastrous for all parties. This acceptance of mass positive discrimination towards the young is in danger of disguising a casual and widespread gerontophobia.’<sup>306</sup> Kate Organ has observed perceptively that:

There are self-evident reasons not to segregate old from young, not to segregate people with dementia from those without it, not to categorise people by any limiting labels. Pragmatically speaking, though, limiting assumptions about older people do exist and can be challenged by acts of solidarity and self-determined expression. If there is choice involved, the camaraderie of being in a group of peers going through similar stages of life can be enjoyable, liberating and empowering. But being ghetto-ised and assumed to be the same, enjoy the same and want the same is as frightening and annoying in old age as it is at any other stage of life.<sup>307</sup>

One way in which these limitations have been overcome is through intergenerational and family-based work.

In the field of intergenerational arts, *Magic Me* is exemplary.<sup>308</sup> In 2012 alone, the organisation coordinated three high-profile projects. *Where the Heart Is* brought pupils from *Mulberry School for Girls* together

with older women from East London to produce an audio-visual tour of the local streets as part of the London International Festival of Theatre. *View from the Top* involved 120 children and older people in the creation of an audio-visual work that offered passengers of the 205 bus an alternative perspective on their surroundings. *Weekend at Wilton’s* saw Duckie working with teenagers and older (60+) people. Funded by the Baring Foundation, this project brought three groups of 20 together on a weekly basis for six months to learn photography, singing, dance, puppetry and music. Over two nights and one afternoon, cabaret-style performances were staged in the historic *Wilton’s Music Hall* on the theme of glamour.<sup>309</sup>

Residents of sheltered housing in Kilburn worked with students from the Royal College of Art to prepare a performance for the Royal Albert Hall.<sup>310</sup> *Scottish Opera’s Spinning Songs* builds on the growing awareness of the benefits of older people interacting with children; weekly workshops bring pre-school, primary and elderly citizens together to develop their musical and expressive skills, generating original songs grounded in the local community.<sup>311</sup> *Hear and Now*, coordinated by the *Philharmonia Orchestra* and *Orchestras Live in Bedford*, brings youth and older people’s orchestras together to create new music. As part of *Celebrating Age*, *City Arts* is coordinating *Words of Wisdom*, which unites older and younger people in care, cultural and community settings through their shared love of writers.<sup>312</sup>

In 2017, in a bid to overcome social isolation, a nursery school was opened in a care home in London, organising singing and dancing for the very oldest and youngest

<sup>304</sup> Luminare’s LGBT cabaret: [luminatescotland.org/news/film-lgbt-cabaret](http://luminatescotland.org/news/film-lgbt-cabaret)

<sup>305</sup> *Queers and Old Dears*: [duckie.co.uk/events/queers-old-dears](http://duckie.co.uk/events/queers-old-dears)

<sup>306</sup> *After You Are Two*, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>307</sup> Loc cit., p. 9.

<sup>308</sup> Gilfoy, K. & McAvinchey, C. (2009). *Our Generations: Report on a Three year Programme of Intergenerational Arts Projects in Tower Hamlets, East London April 2006–June 2009*. London: Magic Me.

<sup>309</sup> Mayo, S., McAvinchey, C. & O’Dair, C. (2012). *Research Into the Art and the Craft of Intergenerational Work*. London: Magic Me.

<sup>310</sup> See video here: [youtu.be/bP7orLbwvBg](http://youtu.be/bP7orLbwvBg)

<sup>311</sup> *Spinning Songs*: [scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/spinning-songs](http://scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/spinning-songs)

<sup>312</sup> *Words of Wisdom*: [city-arts.org.uk/city-arts-awarded-97000-celebrate-age-nottingham](http://city-arts.org.uk/city-arts-awarded-97000-celebrate-age-nottingham)

## CASE STUDY DUCKIE, LONDON & SOUTH EAST ENGLAND



**Duckie is a London-based group made up of 'lowbrow live art hawkers, homo-social honky-tonkers and clubrunners for disadvantaged, but dynamically developing authentic British subcultures'.<sup>313</sup> With a long history within the queer scene, the group has worked with older people across abilities, generations, cultures and classes.**

The Posh Club is a weekly three-hour 1940s-style afternoon tea cabaret for people over 60, which began in Crawley and was expanded to Hackney and Elephant and Castle. Village halls and community centres are dressed for the occasion; sandwiches and cakes are served on vintage china by black-tie waiters. Overcoming the class bias of participatory arts activities, The Posh Club is 'targeted specifically at working class folk who love a good day out, a bit of a knees up, some socialising and access to innovative popular show business'.<sup>314</sup> Described as a 'weekly social and showbiz event for swanky senior citizens, elegant elders and glamorous golden girls', guests attend in all their finery and are treated to an array of singers, dancers, comedians and magicians,

accompanied by an in-house pianist.<sup>315</sup> The Posh Club has its own newsletter,<sup>316</sup> and Duckie has produced a guide for producing a pop-up Posh Club in 10 easy steps.<sup>317</sup>

For 2018, with funding from Celebrating Age, The Posh Club was extended to the Sussex coast. Many community partners were involved in identifying and supporting guests to attend. A choreographer/visual artist was commissioned to work with attendees of the London clubs and devised a dance piece, *The Big Sexy Show*, which was performed by six dancers aged between 54 and 67 at all five clubs.<sup>318</sup> The Posh Club Dance Club (PCDC), Duckie's weekly over-60s participatory dance project, is being extended from Hackney into Crawley and Hastings.<sup>319</sup>

In the autumn of 2016, Duckie took part in Magic Me's Artists Residencies in Care Homes Programme at Waterside Care Home in Peckham. Working with 26 residents (aged 69 to 95) with disabilities and dementia, the group created a weekly cabaret named after the Palace of Varieties in Denmark Hill (1899–1956). Every Thursday for 10 weeks, making days, sometimes involving local school children, generated decorations to transform a drab, under-used room in the home. An observer noticed that, when individual works were collaged, 'there was always a sense of surprise seeing what they had helped to create, and how their individual efforts came together collectively. There is a sense of accomplishment and community'.<sup>320</sup> The following day, parties were held at the home, with themes taken from chats with residents. Against a backdrop of music and film projections, guests were entertained by performers including a fire eater, opera singer, raconteur and flapper girls. Shows followed a structured format, opening with Frank Sinatra's version of *Let's Face the Music and Dance* and closing with a calming poem. Residents, family members, staff and performers rubbed shoulders, everyone was encouraged to take part in sing-alongs and the artwork on Waterside's walls has remained as a permanent reminder to keep the Palace of Varieties spirit alive.

<sup>313</sup> Duckie: [duckie.co.uk/about](http://duckie.co.uk/about)

<sup>314</sup> Casson, S. (31 May 2017). *The Posh Club – Progressive Working Class Entertainment for Elegant Elders*: [baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/the-posh-club-progressive-working-class-entertainment-for-senior-citizens](http://baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/the-posh-club-progressive-working-class-entertainment-for-senior-citizens)

<sup>315</sup> The Posh Club: [duckie.co.uk/events/the-posh-club](http://duckie.co.uk/events/the-posh-club)

<sup>316</sup> The Posh Paper: [duckie.co.uk/media/images/The%20Posh%20Club/The%20Posh%20Paper.pdf](http://duckie.co.uk/media/images/The%20Posh%20Club/The%20Posh%20Paper.pdf)

<sup>317</sup> *Treasury of Arts Activities for Older People*, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>318</sup> The Big Sexy Show: [theposhclub.co.uk/projects/celebrating-age](http://theposhclub.co.uk/projects/celebrating-age)

<sup>319</sup> Posh Club Dance Club: [duckie.co.uk/events/posh-club-dance-club](http://duckie.co.uk/events/posh-club-dance-club)

<sup>320</sup> *Magic Me's Artists Residencies in Care Homes*, op. cit., p. 43.

Reaching older people who might not already be engaged with the arts has been identified as a persistent challenge across the UK.

in society. In the same year, Channel 4 began screening a documentary called *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds*, which created a nursery for 10 four-year-old children alongside 11 residents of a retirement village on the outskirts of Bristol. After six weeks of playing, walking, drawing and reading with the children, the majority of older residents experienced an improved mood and mobility and increased resilience.<sup>321</sup> Harriet Lowe has found that, in Germany, this approach extends beyond the co-location of nursing homes and nurseries into adjacent co-habitation across the generations and the sharing of community services within 'multigenerational houses'.<sup>322</sup>

### Barriers to participation

Reaching older people who might not already be engaged with the arts has been identified as a persistent challenge across the UK. It will be remembered that the Centre for Ageing Better's report, *Transforming Later Lives*, advocated 'Removing barriers to participation'. There can be barriers to older people taking part in creative activity on both the supply and the demand side.

On the supply side, a lack of time and money prevails. Artists often report a lack of spare capacity or funding to involve themselves in projects, and arts organisations sometimes find identifying artists with the right skills challenging. Experience shows that some artists are very keen to work with older people and others are less so. Artists have occasionally queried the instrumental use of the arts to meet social purposes.

Within care homes, staff shortages militate against older people getting involved in creative activities. People with mid- to late-stage dementia who needed support leaving homes were described by Alice Thwaite as 'literally a prisoner'. Even with work inside care homes, there are often too few staff to enable residents to be brought to the place within the home where the activity is being conducted. One way of overcoming

this barrier has been to involve not only professional artists but also community groups (such as schools), dispersed around the care home, which makes people less isolated. Another way has been for residents to encourage each other to take part, which suggests a need for cultural champions in care homes.

Building on the *Index of Wellbeing in Later Life*, Age UK's 2018 report, *Creative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life*, presented the findings of follow-up analysis of data from more than 13,000 older people. This revealed cultural attendance to be more common than creative participation. It also showed that engagement was more likely in those with better wellbeing and beneficial even in older people with low wellbeing. The report identified six barriers to participation: access to transport, health (mental or physical), caring responsibilities, social networks, location (urban/rural) and income.<sup>323</sup>

NICE has published guidance on community engagement to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities,<sup>324</sup> which contains many useful tips for overcoming barriers to participation in community settings.

Exploring barriers to cultural attendance, ACE conducted a poll of people aged 65+. While the majority of older people surveyed acknowledged the benefits of the arts and culture to their happiness (76 per cent), quality of life (69 per cent), health (60 per cent) and social connectedness (57 per cent), almost half said that they took part less than they had done in their earlier adulthood. The three factors identified to improve attendance were accessible venues, information about transport links and having someone to go with.<sup>325</sup> As a result, ACE acknowledges transport and the timing of activities, particularly in rural areas, as barriers to participation.

When it comes to transport, Age UK reports that: 'Subsidies for bus services have

<sup>321</sup> *Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds*: [channel4.com/programmes/old-peoples-home-for-4-year-olds/on-demand/64374-001](http://channel4.com/programmes/old-peoples-home-for-4-year-olds/on-demand/64374-001)

<sup>322</sup> Lowe, H. (November 2017). *Creative Ageing in Germany: A View From North Rhine-Westphalia*. London: The Baring Foundation.

<sup>323</sup> *Creative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life*, op. cit.

<sup>324</sup> National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). (March 2016). *Community Engagement: Improving Health and Wellbeing and Reducing Health Inequalities*: [nice.org.uk/guidance/ng44](http://nice.org.uk/guidance/ng44)

<sup>325</sup> ACE older people's poll: [comresglobal.com/polls/arts-council-england-older-people-poll](http://comresglobal.com/polls/arts-council-england-older-people-poll)

been cut by £182m in England over the years 2010–2018, resulting in nearly 3,500 services being reduced, altered or withdrawn.<sup>326</sup> Luminate identifies transport as a barrier to participation, especially but not exclusively in rural areas, and conducts advocacy with community transport bodies. Taxis and escorts have been used by Magic Me, and dial-a-ride by Entelechy. To overcome the barrier of timing, Arts Derbyshire has initiated a series of dementia-friendly matinee film screenings. In Manchester, issues of transport and safety are being overcome by taking activity out of arts venues and into the community, working with housing associations and community radio stations.

Age UK encourages creative and cultural organisations to think about:

- 1 Communication: How do people know about it?
- 2 Accessibility: How do people get to it?
- 3 Offer: Do people really want it?
- 4 Sustainability: Will it remain available?<sup>327</sup>

In Wales, it is acknowledged that there are large numbers of people sitting at home feeling isolated and disconnected, and there is an awareness on the part of ACW that they are only seeing a small fraction of individuals being tempted out of their homes to engage with culture and creativity. Being part of a network with the Older People's Commissioner helps ACW to publicise opportunities for creative ageing.

Age Cymru consultations have shown fear – of the outside world, of young people – to be a barrier to participation. *The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013–23* acknowledges the disparity between younger and older people particularly 'in regard to public transport and access to cultural or recreational facilities'.<sup>328</sup> The strategy aims to secure a situation in which 'older people can access affordable and appropriate transport which assists them to play a full part in family, social and community life'.<sup>329</sup> Age Cymru continues to lobby the Welsh

Government with evidence that transport remains a barrier to navigating the rural geography of Wales and increases people's isolation. Solutions are being sought, such as making public transport safer and more regular and reliable, providing community transport and timing activities to happen during daylight hours.

ACNI's *Research into the actual and perceived barriers to publicly funded arts in Northern Ireland* found that barriers to participation had less to do with age than with socio-economic and education factors and a history of participation. Physical barriers included a lack of appropriate transport and facilities, and psychological barriers included a lack of timely and appropriate information combined with a perception of the arts as elitist.<sup>330</sup> A conversation about dedicated transport is beginning as health trusts are increasingly unable to provide this.

PHF identified isolation and poverty as barriers to participation. Cost was thought of as a barrier to not only setting up activities but also taking part in them. Older people are seen as affluent, but this is not true of the majority. In many quarters, the arts are regarded as a luxury when balanced against other priorities competing for limited funding.

Social poverty is also a factor, and arts organisations might not be perceived as accessible. Respondents to this study spoke about the confidence needed to take part in activities. People generally stop being creative as they reach their teenage years if they think they are not good at it. Janet Morrison felt that disappointment and discouragement need to be managed if people are pushed to be creative in later life.

Gender remains a barrier to participation, with older men – who can be at high risk of isolation – tending to regard socially orientated activities as not for them. Research conducted in Manchester found the main perceptual barriers to men engaging with the arts were social isolation

Physical barriers included a lack of appropriate transport and facilities, and psychological barriers included a lack of timely and appropriate information combined with a perception of the arts as elitist.

<sup>326</sup> *Creative and Cultural Participation in Later Life*, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>327</sup> Loc cit., p. 10.

<sup>328</sup> *The Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013–23*, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>329</sup> Loc cit., p. 13.

<sup>330</sup> Arts Council of Northern Ireland. (July 2005). *Research into the Actual and Perceived Barriers to Publicly Funded Arts in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: ACNI.

## CASE STUDY RURAL ARTS, NORTH YORKSHIRE



**In North Yorkshire, 34 per cent of the population is over 65 – double the national average. In March 2017, with funding from Celebrating Age, Rural Arts in Thirsk began a two-year action research project called Art on Your Doorstep.<sup>331</sup> A series of arts events and workshops was coordinated at The Courthouse, which provides the organisation’s headquarters, and in various community locations within a 10-mile radius. The programme was aimed at people over 75 living in isolated or rural communities. A range of health and social care partners, including GPs, health visitors and social workers, referred people to take part in creative activities.**

Twenty-four age-friendly music and theatre performances were staged, with accompanying dance, singing and storytelling workshops and art cafés offering drawing, painting, pottery and printmaking. Thirsk Community Care provided free transport to those who needed it. In return, Rural Arts arranged for musicians to lead a sing-along on the fortnightly shopping bus.

Thirsk Community Care and the local Living Well team helped to identify people over 75 who could not leave their homes and people approaching this age who were suffering multiple disadvantage. Professional artists were taken into 24 people’s homes to offer one-to-one creative sessions, ranging from poetry and memoir writing to drawing, painting and photography.

Art on Your Doorstep culminated in a final exhibition of artwork at The Courthouse in February 2019. Some recipients of artists’ home visits, who had been identified

as housebound, made their way to The Courthouse, which was taken as evidence of a ‘clear and real life impact on the older people we worked with’.<sup>332</sup>

Evaluation showed that the proximity of activities was a major drive in increasing attendance, with a significant proportion of participants (41 per cent) venturing to activities on their own. A far greater impact from participating in creative activities than from watching a performance was reported. The oldest participant, Norman (aged 96), described feeling happier, more appreciated and more involved in village life.<sup>333</sup>

Funding from the National Lottery Community Fund has been secured to take this work forward for a further 15 months under the banner of Heart and Craft.<sup>334</sup> Monthly workshops are being offered at The Courthouse at Thirsk as well as in Sessay, Kilburn, Stillington, Ampleforth, Topcliffe and Asenby, Hushwaite and Borrowby village halls. This time, workshops are being aimed at the over 50s. Some have a modest cost attached to cover teas and coffees. There is a palpable sense of joy in the workshops, and participants speak very highly of the opportunity this presents to engage in group creative activity outside their own homes.

Around 40 per cent of the workshops are overseen by an Arts Development Officer employed by Rural Arts; the remaining workshops are covered by freelance professional artists. Assistants, often hailing from the local area, are sometimes involved, depending on the size of groups. The quality of activities is important, and a range of media are used from ceramics to glass. Participants are increasingly asked to select the activities they would like to undertake. Groups tend to rally round to help members with access needs. The monthly sessions are being complemented by three intergenerational workshops and two community exhibitions.

North Yorkshire County Council runs a programme called Primetime, which funds older people to stay active through sport. Something similar might be attempted in relation to the arts and crafts. Rural Arts plans to pioneer the use of Moodbeam wearable technology so that participants can measure their mood and evaluate impact.<sup>335</sup> As a charity, Rural Arts hopes it might no longer be needed to stage workshops in the future because local communities will take ownership of activities.

<sup>331</sup> Art on Your Doorstep: [ruralarts.org/art-doorstep](http://ruralarts.org/art-doorstep)

<sup>332</sup> Rural Arts. (April 2019). *Art on Your Doorstep: Celebrating Age Final Project Report*. Thirsk: Rural Arts.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

<sup>334</sup> Heart and Craft: [ruralarts.org/heart-and-craft](http://ruralarts.org/heart-and-craft)

<sup>335</sup> Moodbeam: [moodbeam.co.uk](http://moodbeam.co.uk)

and a lack of confidence, combined with a sense that arts activities were elitist and a high level of education was needed to enjoy them.<sup>336</sup> Added to this, gender stereotypes held in the minds of some older men prevented them from getting involved in creative group activities they felt to be feminised or a sign of neediness. This study found that the best way of recruiting older men to creative activity was through word of mouth via friends, family, programme participants or trusted community leaders and organisations. However, this fails to reach the most isolated older men, who it was felt might best be approached through service providers including local authorities and health and care services.

Once recruited, men liked an informal atmosphere that enabled socialising, with refreshments and transport provided. When it came to the type of activities that might prove popular, the majority of men consulted expressed a preference for practically orientated activities, such as carving, while a vocal minority sought activities that promoted creativity such as dance, drama and music. In both cases, a clear goal and sense of purpose and achievement were felt to be necessary, as were regularity (a weekly half-day) and sustainability. A pilot project at the Burrell Collection in Glasgow, Burrell for Blokes, offered practical workshops from wood carving to pottery.

Manchester's work is looked to by organisations such as City Arts, which is moving towards community engagement and advocates word of mouth and building trust as effective ways of increasing participation. Entelechy Arts is expanding its remit throughout the Borough of Lewisham into activities such as the Meet Me Choir,<sup>337</sup> Meet Me on the Move, Meet Me at the Movies and dementia-friendly film clubs targeted according to need.<sup>338</sup> This has cost implications, with activities in the community sometimes twice the cost of local authority daycare activities; at Entelechy, it is expected that this will be overcome through a combination of adult social care funding, social prescribing and

volunteer-led activities without falling into the Big Society model.

In *Ageing Artfully*, it was noted how arts organisations that attracted older audiences to visit them were often failing to reach out to frailer older people. Outreach work that draws on people already embedded in communities overcomes a perceived weakness on the part of larger venues that rely on people coming to them. Sadler's Wells has identified a need for an outreach programme that works through grassroots partnerships at a local level, ensuring that the content of work on offer is relevant to a broader section of society. Luminare is looking at adult learning, initially working with music-based organisations before widening out to other art forms.

In interviews, access, particularly disability access, was repeatedly identified as a barrier to participation. Widening access forms part of the strategic focus of some organisations, with older people's programmes dovetailing with wider engagement work, such as Local Exchange at the Royal Exchange Theatre. Luminare has begun conversations with a befriending organisation about taking arts activities to individuals in their own homes by providing simple creative tools. Rural Arts, which carried out this kind of activity as part of Art on Your Doorstep, regrets its loss.

Elders Investigate has explored the barriers preventing people from attending cultural activities. This has given rise to *A Manifesto* by Sarah Butler, which neatly summarises the ways in which barriers to participation could be overcome:

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The best way of recruiting older men to creative activity is through word of mouth via friends, family, programme participants or trusted community leaders and organisations. However, this fails to reach the most isolated older men.

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<sup>336</sup> A Handbook for Cultural Engagement with Older Men, op. cit.

<sup>337</sup> The Meet Me Choir: [thealbany.org.uk/shows/the-meet-me-choir](http://thealbany.org.uk/shows/the-meet-me-choir)

<sup>338</sup> Meet Me at the Movies: [entelechyarts.org/projects/meet-me-at-the-movies](http://entelechyarts.org/projects/meet-me-at-the-movies)

We want toilets on trains  
 We want a meeting point, a talking table, a friendly face, a buddy  
 We want cheaper tickets  
 We want better seats  
 We want safer pavements  
 We want more matinees  
 We want the theatre to come to us once in a while  
 We want respect  
 We want confidence  
 We want a bit of help  
 We want a theatre bus (with a toilet on board!)<sup>339</sup>

### Skills and knowledge (artists)

There might have been an assumption in the past that artists who had experience of working with children and young people could transfer these skills to work with older people without any additional training. But it is now acknowledged that artists need particular skills and knowledge when working with older people, especially those experiencing visual or hearing impairments or challenges to their communication skills, mobility or dexterity. Several respondents identified a need for training and professional development for artists working in this very particular field, which would ideally combine study with practical experience. Artists recognise that working with older people is a specialism in its own right and seek out specialist training and mentoring, either within or beyond participatory programmes. Training confers not only expertise, confidence and enthusiasm but also transferable skills between young and old.

In 2013, the Baring Foundation published a review of exemplary practice, which recognised the unique role of artists in sharing their skills and knowledge in participatory contexts.<sup>340</sup> The *Creative Health* report provides an overview of undergraduate and postgraduate arts training in medical schools that promotes the use of

creative approaches in health settings. The same report also offers a glimpse of the ways in which certain professional arts courses train students to work in health, care and community settings. Training of artists is also offered via modules for intergenerational work at Goldsmiths and Queen Mary University of London.

In North-Rhine Westphalia, Germany, there exists a unique training centre for cultural gerontology. In the UK, there is no dedicated degree-level course for people working creatively with older people in care homes, and there is no standardised accreditation body for participatory arts training. NAPA is working with an academic partner to fill the latter gap. Farrell Curran at Age UK observed that clearer graduate training and career pathways would be useful. Entelechy Arts described pathways through which artists at the beginning of their careers are being supported to work in care homes and volunteers are being nurtured to support artists.

During the course of the Care Home Choir Buddies programme, NAPA suggested that: ‘It would be useful for arts facilitators going into care homes in order to run activities and projects to have basic training to help them work with older people and get staff on board.’<sup>341</sup> In July 2018, a brisk study was conducted of training for arts in care homes that had been delivered in person over the preceding two years. It also took account of the toolkits that had been created over the preceding five years. This found that ‘65 providers were identified, running training which was aimed at artists (46 per cent), health/care providers (46 per cent), volunteers (26 per cent), students (11 per cent) and arts venues, activity coordinators & friends/family (15 per cent). Training varied in length, with the most popular courses being one day’.<sup>342</sup> The most readily available form of training was through toolkits, with 37 available from 26 providers, the majority of which shared good practice and tips on how to replicate it. As an example, Live Music Now has developed

Artists recognise that working with older people is a specialism in its own right and seek out specialist training and mentoring.

<sup>339</sup> Butler, S. (2017). Quoted in *Elders Investigate: A Year-long Investigation into the Relationship Between Ageing and Culture by The Royal Exchange Elders Company*: royalexchange.co.uk/1032-elders-investigate-review-of-year-2/file

<sup>340</sup> *After You Are Two*, op. cit.

<sup>341</sup> *Care Home Choir Buddies: Connecting with Communities*, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>342</sup> *Arts in Care Homes*, op. cit., p. 4.

a toolkit aimed at practitioners conducting singing sessions in care homes.<sup>343</sup>

Founded in 1979 to facilitate innovation in British South Asian dance, Akademi offers training and professional development to dance artists working in health, care and community settings. Following safeguarding training and a DBS check, dance artists (preferably with previous experience of leading sessions) are offered one- or two-day training packages.<sup>344</sup> Green Candle Dance Company offers an accredited six-month diploma course called Leading Dance for Older People, which provides dance artists with a grounding in work with older people in a variety of settings and has the option of additional Parkinson's-specific units.<sup>345</sup> Flourishing Lives offers accredited training in relational practice with clinical supervision to arts and health practitioners; it is intended that the evidence base arising from this pilot will extend beyond the members of the consortium.

An integral part of City of London Sinfonia's approach is the training of orchestral players to work with vulnerable people or those with additional needs. A team of 15 players has been established, the members of which have been familiarised with the staff at Jewish Care. Artists leading residencies in care homes support players as they develop confidence and skills. The aim is that players will eventually be able to lead residencies themselves. Music for Life also has a firm commitment to developing musicians working in this field. Around 20 professional musicians at a given time receive regular training and professional development with a focus not only on the musical aspects of their work but also on its dementia-specific nature and their own pastoral care. Through a reflexive process, musicians observe other projects and take part in feedback sessions.

Magic Me has developed a pool of artists and offers continuing professional development.<sup>346</sup> City Arts in Nottingham

continues to cultivate a pool of trained artists on which it can draw, and the organisation up-skills artists, care staff and activity coordinators alongside each other. Arts Care inducts every artist into every project and up-skills artists on a regular basis, which helps with safeguarding.

The Arts Access and Participation funding strand, launched by PHF in 2014, is open to organisations working with people with the least access to cultural opportunities as audiences or participants. PHF's long history of supporting artists' development, specifically in the context of participation and engagement, has given rise to actively supporting organisations that train artists to improve their practice to support their own needs and those of the communities with which they work. In this way, PHF funds training that has a benefit to participants beyond the artists undergoing it.

Five years into Luminare's history, it was recognised that the quality of work and training for artists and care staff was not yet in place. A 2018 study showed that, while 97 per cent of Scottish care homes were offering some form of participatory creative activity, the proportion of work being led by professional artists was low.<sup>347</sup> A dearth of appropriately trained artists, particularly in remote parts of Scotland, pointed to a need for greater confidence and skills. As a result, Luminare now engages in professional development work. The organisation has partnered with the Baring Foundation, Creative Scotland and the Care Inspectorate on a two-year nationwide project to further upskill a cohort of artists with experience in this area.

Arts 4 Dementia has developed a one-day early-stage dementia awareness training workshop for arts organisations. Delivered in conjunction with Dementia Pathfinders, this aims to increase the skills and confidence of arts facilitators working creatively with people in the early stages of dementia, helping to make organisations more

Five years into Luminare's history, it was recognised that the quality of work and training for artists and care staff was not yet in place.

<sup>343</sup> Singing in care homes toolkit: [achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/toolkit-for-singers/overview](http://achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/toolkit-for-singers/overview)

<sup>344</sup> Akademi training and CPD: [akademi.co.uk/learning-and-participation/training](http://akademi.co.uk/learning-and-participation/training)

<sup>345</sup> Leading Dance with Older People: [greencandleandance.com/2018/05/11/diploma-in-leading-dance-for-older-people-registration-now-open](http://greencandleandance.com/2018/05/11/diploma-in-leading-dance-for-older-people-registration-now-open)

<sup>346</sup> Stirling, J. & Langford, S. (2007). *Report on a Programme of Continuing Professional Development and Good Practice: For Artists and Others Running Intergenerational Arts Activities January 2004–December 2006*. London: Magic Me.

<sup>347</sup> Ruthless Research. (November 2018). *Final Report for Luminare: Mapping of Creative Activities in Scottish Care Settings 2018*. Edinburgh: Luminare.

Age UK has identified a need for better coordination and support of artists on the ground through networking, shadowing and mentoring.

inclusive. In Northern Ireland, Community Arts Partnership developed a good practice guide for artists and activity coordinators working with dementia.<sup>348</sup>

The Age of Creativity website (taken as a case study on England on page 62) signposts training available via CDAN, Arts 4 Dementia, Parkinson's UK and beyond specific health conditions. Through the website, Age UK has identified a need for better coordination and support of artists on the ground through networking, shadowing and mentoring. The rapid mapping of training provision noted that:

At its best mentoring can have a significant impact on the quality of activities. By its nature, training through mentoring provides trainees with a chance to develop their skills from an experienced practitioner, in a person-centred way. Mentors facilitate this development in line with the artists' skills and experience. A successful mentoring relationship will allow the mentee to learn more than just arts-based techniques, as mentors will be able to share their industry-specific experience and strategies for combatting tricky situations.<sup>349</sup>

Dance for Parkinson's Partnership UK has established a mentoring scheme for emerging dance artists. Organisations such as Spare Tyre offer mentoring and master classes to artists. Live Music Now offers extensive training and professional development to all its musicians. This begins with an induction programme and continues into mentored performances and ongoing support. The organisation trains between 320 and 350 artists who stay with them for five to six years, increasing the supply of professionally trained musicians working in the field. The organisation has a duty of care to the musicians, and the training process is overseen by mentors who take responsibility for musicians exposed to emotionally demanding experiences. There is more demand than can be met by the organisation at present.

Training works best when artists have time to refresh their practice and devise new concepts. Celebrating Age, which encouraged consortium working, factored in several months of planning time. Planning time has continued into other Creative Health CIC projects and has been accepted within the organisation's Grants for the Arts applications.

There is an awareness at Creative Scotland of the rewarding nature of participatory work for artists developing close relationships with older people, enabling them to give something back to the community and to take inspiration for their practice through storytelling and reflection. Evan Dawson reported that musicians at Live Music Now often cited participatory work as one of the most important aspects of their lives, affecting the way they understood themselves and their art. Susan Langford relayed that artists who have their own practice as well as being experts in participatory work say that their own work is enriched by working with older people, thinking on their feet and responding to a range of stimuli, 'refreshing their creativity and their spirit'. David Slater noted that artists had 'been really articulate about how it has nourished their practice'. Janet Morrison referred to the recognition that it is not just young people who have something interesting and dynamic to say and that the artists can 'extract the wisdom' from older people. Andrew Barry mentioned the impact on him as an artist of the life stories and stage presence of older people participating in the Company of Elders, which has been both exciting and surprising.

David Slater spoke about the challenge of 'taking care' of artists, participants and volunteers in touch with loss of independence and death. At Entelechy, this is being addressed through large and small organisations working together and by building a hybrid team including an occupational therapist, physiotherapist and specialists in end-of-life care from the local hospice, supported by a dedicated volunteer

<sup>348</sup> Goddard, J. (January 2014). *Community Arts and Dementia: An Evaluative Research Survey of CAP Community Arts Projects and Dementia*. Belfast: Community Arts Partnership.

<sup>349</sup> *Arts in Care Homes*, op. cit., p. 18.

coordinator and the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations.

Jenny Elliott felt artists to be at high risk because of the charged environments in which they work, dealing with vulnerable people and death. At Arts Care, artists never deliver work more than three days a week so they do not become overwhelmed or fatigued. Artists work with an arts therapist to use personal creativity in the safe space of a dedicated art studio to explore challenges, pressures or stresses and find reflection and resolve. If there is need for further counselling, Arts Care approaches the health trusts with which it has a close working relationship. ACNI has also found it important for artists to discuss the implications of working with older people and the support they might need.

### Skills and knowledge (non-artists)

As attention has turned to making creative ageing more sustainable, consideration has increasingly been given to embedding creative work in the older people's sector and the wider community. In this endeavour, the capacity of non-artists involved in the field has been identified as a challenge.

NAPA has developed recognised qualifications for care staff, with an Award at Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) Level 2 and a Certificate at QCF Level 3, and the Association offers training to gain these qualifications. This has necessitated the development of a cohort of markers and assessors to evaluate work. NAPA and Green Candle Dance Company also offer a two-day introductory course called *Moving into Maturity*, designed for staff using dance in care settings.<sup>350</sup> *Flourishing Lives* offers a one-day professional development course on relational practice to people working in the public and voluntary sector.

Several grants from the Baring Foundation have funded the training of care staff as well as potentially longer-lasting professional

development for managers.<sup>351</sup> Live Music Now has encouraged care workers to work alongside professional musicians, enabling them to deliver activities in the absence of musicians. The organisation has also produced a comprehensive toolkit for care homes wishing to offer musical activities.<sup>352</sup> Entelechy Arts is supporting domiciliary care workers to learn the chorus of a commissioned work so they can sing with the people they are supporting. Spare Tyre offers training workshops to (paid and unpaid) carers. There is recognition from ACE that strides have been made in embedding skills in care staff.

In November 2017, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) launched a digital resource with funding from the Baring Foundation. Offering how-to guides and best practice examples for 11 different art forms, the resource aims 'to increase the confidence and skills of care home staff in engaging residents in the arts'.<sup>353</sup> This is underpinned by the conviction that the arts make life more enjoyable and improve the wellbeing of residents and staff while also relating to two of CQC's key lines of enquiry by showing that homes are caring and responsive.

In the 2018 Scottish report mentioned in the previous section, care staff reported a lack of funds and training as key obstacles to the development of work.<sup>354</sup> Luminare's training will be extended into care homes across Scotland, in a bid to ensure that care staff and management have the expertise necessary to host and deliver arts programmes. The Care Inspectorate has partnered with Luminare to develop a resource to enable care staff to offer creative activities.<sup>355</sup>

As part of NAPA's 2019 Arts in Care Homes project, a user-friendly website has been set up as a resource for care staff, activities coordinators, artists, relatives and volunteers wishing to set up arts activities

Care staff reported a lack of funds and training as key obstacles to the development of work.

<sup>350</sup> *Moving into Maturity*: [greencandleandance.com/2016/02/19/moving-into-maturity](http://greencandleandance.com/2016/02/19/moving-into-maturity)

<sup>351</sup> *Older People and the Arts: A Mid-term Programme Review*, op. cit.

<sup>352</sup> Music in care homes toolkit: [achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/toolkit-for-care-homes/overview](http://achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com/toolkit-for-care-homes/overview)

<sup>353</sup> Social Care Institute for Excellence. n.d. *Arts in Care Homes: Inspiring Care Home Residents to be Creative*: [scie.org.uk/person-centred-care/arts-in-care-homes](http://scie.org.uk/person-centred-care/arts-in-care-homes)

<sup>354</sup> *Final report for Luminare: Mapping of Creative Activities in Scottish Care Settings 2018*, op. cit.

<sup>355</sup> Resource for creative activities in Scottish care homes: [hub.careinspectorate.com/how-we-support-improvement/care-inspectorate-programmes-and-publications/arts-in-care](http://hub.careinspectorate.com/how-we-support-improvement/care-inspectorate-programmes-and-publications/arts-in-care)

Networking opportunities, in person and online, have been established for people working in creative ageing.

in care homes.<sup>356</sup> The website includes practical toolkits, research, how-to guides and information on different art forms as well as a route for finding artists to facilitate activities.

As part of the Created Out of Mind project, a free four-week course on Dementia and the Arts was developed, looking at perceptions of dementia and the value of living in the moment.<sup>357</sup> National Museums Liverpool has developed House of Memories, a training programme that helps carers and health and social care providers to offer creative experiences to people with dementia. The Creative Carers programme, run by Birmingham Museums Trust since January 2016, offers adult carers the opportunity to take part in creative activity as respite from their caring responsibilities.<sup>358</sup> Music for Life works with care staff to enhance their understanding of the emotional needs of people with dementia. A trained dementia facilitator helps to deliver planning and analysis sessions in close discussion with care staff. Follow-up training can be tailored to the specific needs of the care setting.

There exist many useful guides for people seeking to be creative carers. Age and Opportunity – the Irish national agency working to challenge negative attitudes to ageing and older people and to promote greater participation by older people in society – pioneered resources to aid creative ageing.<sup>359</sup> The Baring Foundation's *Treasury of Arts Activities for Older People* contains 50 activities of different lengths to be used in any context.<sup>360</sup> The team responsible for 64 Million Artists has developed a method for enhancing creative wellbeing called Do Think Share, which involves undertaking

a creative challenge, thinking about how it feels and sharing the experience with others.<sup>361</sup> The conviction that older people enjoy challenging themselves led Upswing to create a handbook of circus skills – from scarf juggling to feather balancing – for care homes and day centres.<sup>362</sup> Commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council Arts Service, City Arts has developed a handbook for activity coordinators in residential homes.<sup>363</sup> Collective Encounters has published a guide for care home managers commissioning arts work for and with people with dementia and compiled a pocket guide of arts activities for carers of people with dementia.<sup>364</sup>

### Networking

Networking opportunities, in person and online, have been established for people working in creative ageing. As the field began to grow, development of a shared language was identified as a significant challenge. The Baring Foundation supported two conferences in Manchester and one in Dublin. By July 2012, it could be reported that 'arts organisations working with older people are more aware of each other than they were'.<sup>365</sup>

In 2017, ACW ran a national conference on creative ageing at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, with cARTrefu at its centre. We have seen that the Age of Creativity website provides a nexus for the sharing of information about projects, training opportunities and evidence.

Strategic work with other funders – including trusts and foundations, non-arts charities and older people's organisations such as Age Scotland – followed, bringing

<sup>356</sup> NAPA's Arts in Care Homes: [artsincarehomes.org.uk](http://artsincarehomes.org.uk)

<sup>357</sup> Created Out of Mind Dementia and the Arts course: [createdoutofmind.org/dementia-arts-online-course](http://createdoutofmind.org/dementia-arts-online-course)

<sup>358</sup> Creative Carers: [forwardcarers.org.uk/creative-carers-programme](http://forwardcarers.org.uk/creative-carers-programme)

<sup>359</sup> See, for example, Age & Opportunity. (2006). *Guidelines for Working with Older People in the Arts: A Resource for Bealtaine Organisers and Others Involved in the Arts and Older People*. Dublin: Age & Opportunity, and O'Morain, P. & Leahy, A. (2007). *Creative Exchanges: Using the Arts to Transform the Experience of Residents and Staff in Care Centres for Older People* Age & Opportunity's Arts in Care Settings Programme. Dublin: Age & Opportunity.

<sup>360</sup> *Treasury of Arts Activities for Older People*, op. cit.

<sup>361</sup> Do Think Share: [dothinkshare.com](http://dothinkshare.com)

<sup>362</sup> *Homemade Circus Handbook*, op. cit.

<sup>363</sup> *The Art of Life and Movement*, op. cit.

<sup>364</sup> See Collective Encounters. (2013). *Arts and Dementia: Bringing Professional Arts Practice into Care Settings*. Liverpool: Collective Encounters and Hayes, K. & Redvers-Rowe, A. (2016). *Arts and Dementia: Pocket Guide for Carers*. Liverpool: Collective Encounters.

<sup>365</sup> *Older People and the Arts: A Mid-term Programme Review*, op. cit.

arts organisations together with older people's organisations. Roundtable discussions, conferences, symposia and publications ensued. This has helped to create coherence between a wide range of practices, which has aided knowledge transfer and fostered innovation.

Kate Duncan observed that the Baring Foundation had created opportunities to discuss work with other organisations as part of a national network that would not otherwise have been there. Networking across organisations and art forms has provided an opportunity for people working in the field across the country to, as David Slater described it, 'hold each other in their peripheral vision'. The bringing-together of funders, arts organisations, older people's organisations and policy- and decision-makers by the Baring Foundation has created an important legacy and helped to ensure that this will be a continuing process.

The Happy Older People network, coordinated by National Museums Liverpool, brings together stakeholders in the sector, including older people; artists; health and social care providers; and community and voluntary groups. Quarterly meetings of forum members encourage knowledge sharing and the development of new ways of working. Small grant funding is available to projects seeking to overcome barriers to participation.<sup>366</sup>

Over the period 2010–14, the Baring Foundation worked with Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (WCMT) to fund 47 fellowships as part of a programme called Creative Ageing. This explored the premise that the arts could have a beneficial effect on the lives of older people, including those with dementia. Janet Morrison asserted that this had created a 'cohort of practitioners who could share knowledge and practice and were part of a field'. Alice Thwaite described how the funding of these bursaries for arts and older people enabled international connections and put the UK

on the map.<sup>367</sup> The legacy of the Foundation's international networking activities lives on in the British Council's Arts for Ageing Society programme.<sup>368</sup>

Reflecting on the past decade of activity, David Cutler observed that, through a variety of national and international opportunities, the field has become better understood and networked. This has allowed the sharing of good practice and fostered greater international recognition of the excellent work being led by arts organisations in the UK. Respondents were unanimous that this field-building work needs to continue.

In February 2020, the MAC in Birmingham will produce a conference, jointly funded by ACE and the Baring Foundation. This will bring the sector together, showcase the excellent work taking place and discuss its future development.

### Research and evaluation

In 2009, it was observed of creative ageing that there was 'very little published academic [...] literature on this topic'.<sup>369</sup> In 2011, an extensive review of academic and grey literature on older people's participatory arts yielded 31 studies, just over half of which originated in the UK. Reported impacts were almost universally positive and ranged from improvements in mobility and cognitive functioning to enhanced wellbeing and more positive attitudes toward ageing. This led to the conclusion that 'There is a growing evidence base which verifies the positive impact participative arts can have on the health and wellbeing of older people'.<sup>370</sup> While more evidence was solicited, a note of caution was sounded that this should emphasise artistic and individual value rather than being subsumed by clinical metrics. Further evidence reviews followed, including a report on the health and wellbeing benefits of dance for older people, commissioned by BUPA from the Centre

Through a variety of national and international opportunities, the field has become better understood and networked.

<sup>366</sup> Happy Older People: [happyolderpeople.com](http://happyolderpeople.com)

<sup>367</sup> *Growing the Creative Ageing Movement*, op. cit.

<sup>368</sup> Arts for Ageing Society: [britishcouncil.jp/en/programmes/arts/ageing-society](http://britishcouncil.jp/en/programmes/arts/ageing-society)

<sup>369</sup> *Ageing Artfully*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>370</sup> Mental Health Foundation. (September 2011). *An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People*. London: The Baring Foundation, p. 2.

**‘A growing body of evidence demonstrates the personal and societal benefits for older people participating in the arts.’ Arts Council of Northern Ireland, 2018**

for Policy on Ageing,<sup>371</sup> and a review of art therapies and dementia care.<sup>372</sup>

Between 2010 and 2013, the Medical Research Council funded a project called Ageing Creatively, which looked at the relationship between creative interventions and wellbeing in later life. The Connected Communities programme, funded by the AHRC, permitted a range of research into community creativity.

Towards the end of 2012, the AHRC initiated the Cultural Value Project, which sought to identify the various components of cultural value. The final report, published in 2016, contained a chapter entitled Health, Ageing and Wellbeing. This synthesised recent research and highlighted the need to balance quantitative and qualitative research in the arts for older people. The team at the Centre for Performance Science has also identified a need for ‘better understanding of how arts activities and venues can facilitate social connectedness among older adults’.<sup>373</sup>

Between 2013 and 2017, the AHRC Communities, Cultures, Health and Wellbeing fund supported a £1.5-million programme, Dementia and Imagination, which explored the role of the creative arts in enriching the lives of people with dementia. Research conducted under this umbrella at Arts for Health in Manchester found that 37 per cent of 271 people with dementia had never engaged with the arts. Researchers at the What Works Centre for Wellbeing have conducted reviews of literature analysing the relationship between music, singing and wellbeing in adults with dementia,<sup>374</sup> which highlighted the value of listening to music,<sup>375</sup> exemplified by projects such as Playlist for Life.

In 2015, Alzheimer’s Society funded the Association for Dementia Studies at the University of Worcester and the Centre for Dementia at the University of Nottingham to set up the TAnDem doctoral training

centre, which is gathering evidence of the benefits of arts to people with dementia.

Research network volunteers – carers, people with dementia and people with an interest in the field – have a say on the research proposals that are funded

Another milestone in arts and dementia research was the establishment of the Created Out of Mind project group, led by Professor Crutch, in the Wellcome Hub (2016–18).<sup>376</sup> This brought together experts from medicine, science and the arts to shape perceptions of dementia through experimentation, challenging the common assumption that dementia only affects memory. In 2017, this gave rise to the first international arts and dementia conference, at the Royal Society for Public Health in London, and a special arts-themed issue of *Dementia* journal in August 2018.

The *Creative Health* report, published in July 2017, compiled extensive evidence of arts engagement enhancing the lives of older adults. By March 2018, it could be said that:

A growing body of evidence demonstrates the personal and societal benefits for older people participating in the arts, including:

- Improved memory recall, alertness, concentration and emotional wellbeing, which can delay the onset of dementia and slow its progression, eg music and singing.
- Increased range of physical movement, which can improve motor skills, flexibility and fitness levels, eg dance and circus skills.
- Enhanced communication skills, which can improve relationships with family and service providers, eg drama and poetry.
- Improved social interaction, which can lead to volunteering or joining new groups and help to reduce loneliness and isolation, eg crafts.

<sup>371</sup> The Centre for Policy on Ageing. (2011). *Keep Dancing: The Health and Well-being Benefits of Dance for Older People*. London: BUPA.

<sup>372</sup> Beard, R.L. (2012). Art Therapies and Dementia Care: A Systematic Review. *Dementia*, 11 (5), pp. 633–656.

<sup>373</sup> Correspondence between the author and Dr Ula Tymoszuk, Research Associate at the Centre for Performance Science, 26 June 2019.

<sup>374</sup> Victor, C., Daykin, N., Mansfield, L., Payne, A., Grigsby Duffy, L., et al. (2016). *Music, Singing and Wellbeing for Adults Living with Dementia*. London: What Works Centre for Wellbeing.

<sup>375</sup> Caine, J. (2013). *Is Music the Best Medicine? Using Prescribed Music to Enhance Quality of Life for People with Dementia and Their Carer*. Scotland: CRFR/Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS).

<sup>376</sup> Created Out of Mind: createdoutofmind.org

- Stronger links to the community, which can enhance sense of pride, purpose and belonging, eg. storytelling.
- Increased self-confidence, creativity and motivation, which can lead to positive changes in routine, even alleviating anxiety and diminishing the need for medication eg. creative writing and visual arts.<sup>377</sup>

This suggests an impressive evidence base on which future research and evaluation can build.



The sector has witnessed significant growth, and greater recognition of the existence and benefits of creative ageing has stimulated massive demand.

**Image:**  
Participants at the Spinning Yarns event at the Crescent Arts Centre organised as part of the Arts and Age Festival 2016, Arts Council Northern Ireland

Photo courtesy of Arts Council Northern Ireland

<sup>377</sup> *The State of Play*, op. cit., p. 5.

## Immediate reflections

**A** *geing Artfully* identified just 17 organisations offering dedicated participatory arts activity to older people and observed that the vast majority of activity was local. As the list at the back of this report indicates, dedicated creative ageing organisations are still outnumbered by organisations offering arts activities to older people as part of their wider programme, but the prominence of this work has undoubtedly increased. Facilitated by Baring Foundation investment, the past decade has witnessed what David Slater described as a ‘step change’ in the field of arts and older people, with an experimental period of ‘grafting’ to see what ‘takes’ and what does not.

As the sections on Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England show, the past decade has witnessed significant development of nationwide activity based on increasing opportunity, showcasing success and sharing skills and knowledge. Greater Manchester, the crucible of the arts and health movement, has adopted a pioneering approach to creative ageing across the city region, which has been included as a case study on page 37. More broadly, activity remains local, centred on villages, towns and cities. A glance at the list of active programmes at the back of this report reveals the fragmented nature of activity throughout the UK and suggests the need for a concerted effort to even up provision.

Much of the work described in this report has contributed to the development of a dedicated arts and older people sector, abetted by champions like Vicky McClure. The sector has witnessed significant growth, and greater recognition of the existence and benefits of creative ageing has stimulated massive demand. Work has become more sustained, and older artists now regularly feature in galleries and on stage. Ageist stereotypes are beginning to break down, in part through the positive impressions of ageing generated through creative activities.

In 2009, keys to developing the field were identified as the scaling up of activity, the development of festivals, the establishment of partnerships with local authorities and health trusts, better networking, training and standards and more leadership by older people alongside coordination and sector advocacy. Significant investment from such sources as trusts and foundations, arts councils, Big Lottery, Comic Relief and the Mayor of London’s office has enabled the scaling up of activity. Creative ageing festivals have achieved national prominence. Many arts organisations have formed partnerships with local authorities and social care providers – less so health trusts – and several arts organisations have made successful attempts to ‘reach out to day centres, residential and nursing homes’.<sup>378</sup>

In the process of developing the field, it has been necessary for artists and care workers to build their expertise and develop their practice. Through the involvement of further and higher education institutions, NAPA and arts organisations, training for artists and care professionals has received a boost, and attention is being paid to accreditation and standards. With support from NAPA and SCIE, the older people’s sector now benefits from high-quality resources to inspire and guide creative ageing activities. Opportunities have also been created for networking and information sharing.

The diversity of older people’s interests is increasingly being recognised, heightened by the involvement of older people in the planning and delivery of activities. Champions in the arts and older people’s sectors have been vocal in advocating the value of creative activity in older age. Research councils, What Works Centres, Age UK, Alzheimer’s Society and Wellcome have enhanced research in the field, generating tools that can be used for sector advocacy.

Among respondents to this study, there was universal praise for the work of the Baring Foundation in bringing together resources and advocating for the field of arts and older people. It was observed that the work of the Foundation has given creative ageing parity with other fields – a transformation that would not have happened without its support. By working strategically, the Foundation’s influence has exceeded its financial contribution.

The Foundation was perceived by Arti Prashar as a funder that ‘genuinely cared and understood’, nurturing relationships with other funders to give this work status. Kate Duncan described the Foundation as ‘not just a funder’, noting that it had contributed ‘a level of expertise’ to the field. Embracing a whole range of arts activity for older people, this has advanced the creative ageing agenda, making arts organisations aware that they need to respond to an older population. The sustained commitment and long-term view of the Baring Foundation was described as having been ‘fundamental’ to keeping this agenda alive.

In interview, David Cutler reflected that creative ageing had become part of the core business of the arts sector. Arts and older

people work is better known by the general public, and funders appreciate the value of work in this area, with all four arts councils committing to work with older people. Older people’s organisations are lagging behind, partly because this sector is so vast and diverse and partly because it lacks national leadership. This is particularly the case in England, where the lack of policy on creative ageing is part of a broader societal failure.

Over the past decade, the expectation that arts and care organisations bring professional artists together with older people has become tangibly more mainstream. This has been precipitated by a growing older population and by pioneering small arts organisations managing to convince mainstream arts organisation of the importance of this work. It is possible to say, as David Cutler has done, that: ‘the passion of the few has expanded to the many. It is becoming the norm for arts organisations to ask themselves how they are working with older people, not unusual or faddish. This represents significant progress which needs to be maintained and extended.’<sup>379</sup> Several challenges lie ahead.

Arts and older people work is better known by the general public, and funders appreciate the value of work in this area, with all four arts councils committing to work with older people.



Image:  
A participant at  
Age Cymru’s cARTrefu

<sup>379</sup> *Towards the End*, op. cit. p. 25.

## Unfinished business

**T**he next stage in this work has been identified as normalising the role of the arts in the lives of older people. Throughout this study, a sense was expressed that an even greater choice of creative ageing activities could be made available throughout the UK. Creative Scotland identified that this will require continued focus on the field. More attention will need to be given by funders, politicians and policy makers to the excellent work that is already happening, combined with political pressure, which might come from the field and from organisations representing the arts nationally.

### The arts sector

Rebecca Blackman at ACE noted that greater recognition of the value of creativity needed to be embedded in the thinking of everyone working in the arts, with programming being reflective of the whole population. Cultural spaces need to be friendly to people of all ages. Better recognition is needed that small changes within cultural venues – such as dementia training for staff and thinking about the timing of activities – can widen access to the arts and creativity.

Creative thought needs to be given to the type of work that should be carried out, and work could be much more integrated into programming, such as elders' programmes being on the main stage. This might fit within the education policy of cultural organisations, as part of a lifelong learning strategy aimed at the common good, or it might move beyond learning engagement teams and into the core remit for organisations.

A concern was expressed among smaller organisations that have had arts and older people as their *raison d'être* that larger organisations are successful at attracting money and entering the field without necessarily having the expertise. Greater recognition needs to be made of the capacities of small organisations 'at the coal face' catering to a significant number of people and negotiating with multiple partners.

The work of Flourishing Lives is motivated by a desire to develop human relationships, but the capacity of its members has sometimes precluded networking. When a request was made for the organisation to set up a series of visits between organisations in the arts and health communities, including frontline care workers across the 32 London boroughs, it proved difficult for people to commit to attending events. It seems clear that this will only be resolved by increasing the capacity of those involved in developing the field.

As greater attention is paid to the process of participation, more could be done to enable participants to devise and design activities. As is the case with Manchester's Culture Champions, funding needs to be made available by institutions and the conditions created for older people to lead and disseminate work.

### Artist development

As understanding of the positive impact of the arts in the lives of older people increases, the arts sector must consider how the demand for creative ageing activities will be met. Artists have to be trained and supported to deliver this work, and they need quality materials and resources so they can take their creative processes to a higher level. Training and networking will need constantly replenishing.

Artists working in the field are almost invariably self-employed; their hourly rates are not commensurate with their professional work, and there is little compensation for preparatory work. Artists struggle to afford to live in London, which makes hourly-paid work less appealing as it fails to take account of traveling time. These factors will need to be addressed by organisations drawing up budgets for creative ageing activity, and there are positive signs that funders are prepared to consider additional costs. PHF pointed to the pitfalls of artists working within a gig economy. Organisations such as Live Music Now and Arts Care believe artists working in the field should be paid a proper professional fee. There is a worry that

entrants to the field might undercut these ethics on the pretext of efficiency.

Having juggled participatory work with occasional teaching and having no pensions, artists working in the field are going to enter their old age quite poor. This will limit their practice as older artists and needs to be addressed. For Age UK, there remains work to be done within ACE to overcome the expectation that emerging artists will necessarily be young. Older adults coming (back) to the arts would benefit from accreditation and greater recognition of the arts as a valid pursuit or a path back into work.

Jenny Elliott expressed concern about the ‘lack of professional infrastructure for our artists’. Arts Care would like to see a structure that provides employee rights and enables career progression and a pension without artists becoming health professionals. Taken together with the vulnerability of artists working in emotionally charged environments, this points to a need for a support organisation for artists working with older people.

### The older people's sector

In the older people's movement, Paul Cann identified that ‘the challenge of getting creative arts taken seriously as a central policy issue is still in front of us – it's still huge’. Despite inroads having been made, a shift in priorities is still needed in the leading age organisations.

Gemma Jolly at Alzheimer's Society suggested approaching older people's organisations that are already active in the community and asking them to consider arts activities. In this endeavour, older people who have benefited from the arts will be the best advocates. Older people's organisations, including those working with isolation and loneliness, need to take up this work more progressively to offer access to what Janet Morrison called ‘meaningful, engaging, absorbing, mindful activity that's joyful and fun’. The quality of artistic engagement and activities will be crucial

in giving voice to the individuality of older people.

Alice Thwaite identified that there remain ‘systemic issues’ in the private care home sector. This will require a systemic solution, which may begin with the long-promised Green Paper on social care or via the National Care Service being proposed by the Labour Party.<sup>380</sup> The memorandum of understanding between arts councils and social care that has been established in Northern Ireland and is being mooted in Wales might be looked to by England and Scotland.

In any future social care policy, the support of staff will need to be addressed, along with inclusion of the arts in the training of care workers. When new care services are planned, artists could be involved in the co-production of spaces, as happens with schools and hospitals. Any rethinking of social care will need to factor in the capacity of older people to learn, grow and develop.

Evaluation of the Arts in Care Homes programme published in 2018 reported that: ‘Whilst high-level policy-driven thinking is necessary in the longer term, care homes need practical strategies to engage with arts organisations (and vice versa). Resources, skills and experience are all relevant in this context, and these need to be accessible at the individual care home level.’<sup>381</sup> The care and arts sectors need to engage with each other in a more meaningful way, which could be achieved by creating demand within social care that goes beyond hairdressing to include the arts. As we have seen, with SCIE offering guidance on various craft pursuits, activities in care settings do not need to be highbrow.

The Arts in Care Homes report also noted that: ‘large care home groups with thousands of staff and residents and hundreds of properties still largely see the arts as a minority interest or optional luxury. Where there are champions, budgetary constraints often restrict opportunities for well-resourced high quality arts and these

Despite inroads having been made, a shift in priorities is still needed in the leading age organisations.

<sup>380</sup> For a discussion of the funding implications of social care reform, see Quilter-Pinner, H., Snelling, C., Kaye, A. & Jopling, K. (November 2017). *Saving Social Care: A Fair Funding Settlement for the Future*. London: Institute for Public Policy Research, and Bottery, S., Varrow, M., Thorlby, R. & Wellings, D. (May 2018). *A Fork in the Road: Next Steps For Social Care Funding Reform*. London: The Health Foundation.

<sup>381</sup> *Each Breath is Valuable*, op. cit., p. 51.

still need to be funded by outside sources.<sup>382</sup> Care England, which represents the for-profit care home sector, concurred that the two significant challenges needing to be overcome are scepticism about the benefits of the arts and reluctance to spend money. These twin challenges have been addressed, to some extent, via advocacy and resource allocation. The former has involved making the case not only in terms of benefits to residents but also in terms of differentiation, commercial advantage and improved ratings. Rebecca Blackman at ACE suggested that demand for creative activity could be built before people entered residential care, and a requirement for high-quality arts activity in care homes could be made more explicit in the CQC's guidance.

Work still needs to be done to convince people in the management structures of frontline care facilities of the benefits of arts engagement or, in cases where there is senior management buy-in, through greater involvement from people delivering services. It was felt that the care sector needed to work out how to start and continue these conversations, with influential advocates drawing on their networks.

### Health

Stronger links between the arts and health were felt by some respondents to be beneficial. Social prescribing offers a route for this, with public demand dictating provision, but the bridges have yet to be built; capacity on the arts side and signposting are not yet in place. Independent Age is piloting a new service called Reconnections, which aims to highlight social prescribing activities in the community including the arts. There might be scope for a dynamic map of creative ageing activities, with agencies like clinical commissioning groups and local authorities involved.

Where we know that creative work delivers health and wellbeing benefits, some respondents identified scope for (public) health funding, with a greater focus being placed on health and wellbeing outcomes than artistic ones. Rebecca Blackman at ACE, for example, felt there was potential

to have arts and older people work much more embedded in health. Jenny Elliott felt that greater recognition of the value of professional practice to achieving high-quality health outcomes would be helpful. This brings its own challenges in terms of language and evaluation.

At the same time, a fear was articulated that the arts as a human right might be lost in more instrumental agendas. David Slater railed against the idea of thinking about singing or dancing for health, in order to qualify for funding, at the expense of singing or dancing for the joy of it. Similarly, it was felt that disease- or condition-specific activities might segregate people who would prefer not to be stigmatised. Jenny Elliott would like to see 'greater understanding of the true value of the arts for the sake of the arts which then cascades down into the housing, health and wellbeing of older people'. Instead of being seen as an 'intervention' or something that replaces occupational therapy or an activity worker, this would entail what Elliott called 'the right of every older person to have access to the arts and self expression', which becomes more crucial the older people get. Cordelia Wyche at Flourishing Lives argued that art and creativity needed to be recognised for its 'excellence and impressiveness' without being prescriptive or 'simpering'.

### The community

Ageism remains an issue in wider society, and older age is still more feared than celebrated. Culture can be a tool for challenging this negative perception. We need much more positive language around ageing. The invisibility of older people in public life needs to be addressed, with the contribution and value of older people to society being acknowledged, whether through unpaid care, work in the community or civil society and economic spending.

Esmé Ward identified a 'big, lovely yawning gap' between rhetoric and reality. She elaborated that the images of Manchester that greet visitors to the city are still centred on the young; the physical infrastructure of the city is not yet fit for purpose; funding structures are still tied to

Ageism remains an issue in wider society, and older age is still more feared than celebrated. Culture can be a tool for challenging this negative perception.

<sup>382</sup> Loc cit., p. 48.

a very narrow understanding of diversity, and some of the decisions around programming and opening hours militate against older people. There is a need to shift not only the narrative but also the structural decisions being made.<sup>383</sup>

Farrell Curran found ample scope within age-friendly agendas to ensure that community spaces and cultural venues are accessible to the very youngest and oldest in society, whereby the same progress we have seen at the younger end of the age scale could be reflected at the older end. In a London context, Flourishing Lives team members suggested that attention could be paid to simple changes in ageing-better cities, from extending the length of time pedestrian crossings stay green to providing transport and nurturing community champions.

Another useful step would be to familiarise people with the facilities in their community. As comedy, disco dancing, film and circus skills prove popular with older people in various parts of the country, the contribution of the private sector – including commercial music venues, cinemas, bars and clubs – needs to be acknowledged.

Questions were raised about the ideal size of creative groups and whether it might be beneficial to have more one-on-one sessions. There are still significant taboos around diagnosis within certain communities, and conditions will continue to be managed behind closed doors, which points to a need to take more activities into the home. Jenny Elliott advised it is intense work for artists going into people's homes and bedrooms and dealing with a sense of loss, which reinforces the need for artistic support. One-to-one sessions in the home also have significant cost and time implications as relationships are built up with referral partners. Carers could be more empowered to initiate creative activity, with Alzheimer's Society providing literature which, without being prescriptive, highlights the importance to people with dementia of remaining involved and active.

David Slater made the case that the arts have meaning and value in everyone's lives,

which prompts a shift towards making art ordinary. In the future, it is to be hoped that older people will be fully aware of, and involved in, participatory activities in their communities, making a specific focus on creative ageing redundant. But, for as long as this work is neglected, we will need to continue labelling creative ageing activity to keep the agenda alive and avoid invisibility.

## Diversity

We have seen that creative ageing work has been reaching a narrow demographic. Elders' groups and companies across the UK are not particularly diverse, which points to a pressing need to reach what Joce Giles called a 'wider ethnic mix of older adults which just can't be ignored'. People from non-white communities might not have a language for, or interest in, the arts. Arti Prashar rightly argued that: 'We will be doing this society and the ageing population a bit of a disservice if we don't start thinking about it.' She also noted that this type of work needs 'serious development' in terms of cultural diversity. This will require an extensive effort to reach out to people from diverse communities and explain why creative approaches to ageing might be useful.

Policy needs to reflect not only the benefits of the arts but also the need for inclusivity and diversity. David Cutler articulated the hope that creative ageing 2.0 would pay more attention to diversity and encourage greater participation by minority communities in response to changing demographics. In a similar vein, work will be needed to secure the participation of men in creative ageing activities.

## Research and evaluation

Notwithstanding the growing evidence base, respondents to this study articulated a belief that research and evaluation could be enhanced to better evidence the value of creative ageing and that this evidence could be used to further advocate for work in the field. For Martin Green, greater clarity about evidence and messaging 'will help to get people's minds open, and, if people's

There are still significant taboos around diagnosis within certain communities, and conditions will continue to be managed behind closed doors, which points to a need to take more activities into the home.

<sup>383</sup> See Parkinson, J., Hunter, W. & Barac, M. (October 2013). *Silver Linings: The Active Third Age and the City*. London: Royal Institute for British Architects.

Policy needs to reflect not only the benefits of the arts but also the need for inclusivity and diversity.

minds are open, you can bring even the most radical or different or avant-garde type of art activity to everyone’.

ACE identified a need for objective, tangible evidence – beyond qualitative evidence from the cultural field – which would be persuasive to NICE. ACW would also appreciate good-quality, independent research demonstrating the value of work in this area. Rebecca Blackman made the suggestion that research could be undertaken around the older person as artist and whether participants to programmes already had creativity and culture as part of their lives.

Janet Morrison sought greater access to evidence of the preventative value and longer-term impacts of activities. Gemma Jolly noted that more evidence of the value of creativity ‘in the moment’ for people with dementia would help to advance work in this area. David Cutler asked for the relationship between older age and disability to be better understood as it is clear that disability is one of the main reasons that older people stop accessing culture.

Some of the demands for further research were practically orientated. Flourishing Lives would like arts organisations to have better access to universities to evaluate activities. Alison Holdom at Esmée Fairbairn Foundation argued that better understanding of the ingredients of successful work – the particular conditions, the funding structure and the training required for artists – would be useful, alongside examples of best practice. She also identified that greater clarity was needed around the evidence required to secure funding from different sources and sought evidence that was so robust it would satisfy all potential funders.

Two respondents argued for a drawing-together of research from gerontology and other fields of ageing. Esmé Ward gave the example of the Coffee, Cake and Culture programme (organised at The Whitworth in collaboration with Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing) being challenged by a nutritionist who commended the programme and its social aims but questioned the wisdom of offering coffee and cake to older people with

dementia rather than perhaps offering a hot meal.

Thinking about the legacy of this work, Paul Cann has been lobbying the British Society of Gerontology (BSG) to make creative ageing much more central, pushing for a symposium at the BSG’s annual conference and thinking about setting up a special interest group. This would help to overcome the siloes between gerontology and arts, health and wellbeing.

### Sustainability

Of the 17 organisations identified as offering dedicated arts activity to older people in *Ageing Artfully*, From Here to Maturity and Semitones have disappeared without trace. Others, such as First Taste, have been integrated into older people’s services via Age UK.

After the first five years of the Baring Foundation’s activity in this area, it was anticipated that: ‘At some point the Baring Foundation will leave the field of arts and older people and turn our resources and attention elsewhere. Our objective will be that this work should by then be more sustainable. The key to this is that it needs to be valued in the way it deserves by major funders and by all cultural institutions and agencies.’<sup>384</sup> Now that we have reached the point at which the Foundation is leaving the field, David Cutler identified that the greatest remaining challenge is sustainability.

The manifest fear throughout this study was that the Foundation stepping away from the field might lead to a decline in this kind of work at a time when it needs continued investment and recognition. Now that work with older adults is embedded in the programmes of many arts organisations, Joice Giles outlined a pressing need to enable activities to continue on the basis that it would be a ‘real tragedy if people were only doing things when there’s project funding available’.

The Foundation’s commitment to being open and flexible and focusing on what Susan Langford called ‘the hell of it agenda’ has been vital. Milica Milosevic at Creative Scotland observed that other funding bodies could learn from this open approach.

<sup>384</sup> *Getting On – Arts and Older People*, op. cit., p. 10.

ACE's draft strategy for 2020–30 notes that 'many creative practitioners and leaders of cultural organisations report a retreat from innovation, risk-taking and sustained talent development'.<sup>385</sup> Arti Prashar noted that risk-taking – which has involved providing individual participatory experiences rather than mass entertainment – has been difficult to 'sell'. Finding partners that understand this kind of work has relied on explaining the role of the artist in seeing and responding to the world.

Funders are required that are willing to take risks without stifling innovation through excessive bureaucracy. Prashar described how the balance had shifted in recent years from 40 per cent administration, 60 per cent practice to 70 per cent administration, 30 per cent practice. Funding needs to enable flexibility and responsiveness without having to develop a concrete practice model or start a new social movement. It was predicted that this would require a bit of nerve-holding, and David Slater spoke about the 'right to roam', with ambiguity enabling unusual collaborations between organisations predicated on recognition, skill and trust.

Partnerships with all four UK arts councils has been one of the strengths of the Baring Foundation's involvement in the field, magnifying its impact, and a way needs to be found to sustain that commitment. As the field has developed, there is more awareness of the importance of supporting this work among funders, not only in the arts but also in trusts and foundations and older people's organisations. Funders need to continue regarding this work as a priority. Between 2016 and 2018, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation saw the number of applications being received for work with older people almost halve, which implies a significant fall in the amount being spent in this area. The foundation is conducting a strategy review, which is expected to shed more light on its future priorities.

One of the greatest frustrations expressed by interviewees based in England was that ACE did not explicitly identify older people as a priority group. It was suggested

repeatedly that ACE should set an obligation for NPOs to work with older adults, akin to that which exists for children and young people. Alice Thwaite of Equal Arts would like to see ACE setting work with older people, including those in care settings, as a priority area, which would put the onus on NPOs to conduct proper community work. Joce Giles at Sadler's Wells felt that NPOs needed a way of reporting on this kind of work and having it evaluated by relationship managers with a remit in this area. Damian Hebron and Karen Taylor have argued for an older people's equivalent of 'Every Child Matters'.<sup>386</sup>

Farrell Curran identified an ongoing need for policy, strategic vision and aspiration within ACE. ACE acknowledged that, in light of demographic shifts, the arts and older people could be higher in their priorities. While the research underpinning this report was being conducted, ACE's 2020–30 strategy was out for consultation, and Rebecca Blackman confessed to being surprised that older people had not featured more often in responses from the public and partners.

It can take years, if not decades, to develop successful projects. City Arts has found focused work over time to be very effective, working with a cohort to build communication and confidence. Organisations of all sizes would benefit from more sustained funding to enable work to develop over time and allow longitudinal evidence to be gathered. This will require long-term thinking on the part of funders.

David Cutler identified a need for a concerted effort to develop new funding models. At Entelechy, the crisis precipitated by austerity has provided an opportunity for conversations to happen between arts organisations, local authorities and health and social care providers. More broadly, funding remains a challenge that has yet to be overcome, particularly in light of shrinking local government budgets. Farrell Curran identified a need for better education of a broader range of funders about the value of this work if it is to feel less niche.

Funders are required that are willing to take risks without stifling innovation through excessive bureaucracy.

<sup>385</sup> Arts Council England. (Summer 2019). *Shaping the Next Ten Years: Draft Strategy for Consultation*. London: ACE, p. 4.

<sup>386</sup> Hebron, D. & Taylor, K. (September 2012). *A New Age: An Examination of the Changing State of Health Funding for Arts Activity with, by and for Older People in England*. London: London Arts in Health Forum.

## Strategic development

Kate Duncan's observation that this was an 'exciting time' for the field was tempered by a concern about the momentum and infrastructure necessary to keep this work going. She spoke of the need to maintain the 'energy and drive to continue what has been achieved'.

As part of the Foundation's mid-term review, François Matarasso observed that: 'While there are a surprising number of arts organisations active in the field, there is no national presence or coordination. Baring has come to fill the gap and grantees warmly welcomed its engagement. There is a hunger not just for networking, but also for a body that can speak authoritatively at a national level, supported by good resources and endorsed by those working in the field.'<sup>387</sup> The hunger for a national advocate remains, heightened by the recession of the Baring Foundation from the field.

Coordination has improved through national-level initiatives and the creation of the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance. Sector support organisations that could help to drive the agenda in each nation of the UK – providing a focal point for practice and research and preventing wisdom from being lost – were felt to be very useful. *Ageing Artfully* described the National Centre for Creative Aging in the US as just such a 'model of coordination and sector development'.<sup>388</sup> In interview, Paul Cann suggested that the Centre for Ageing Better – which he described as a 'well-resourced, authoritative forum for knowledge about practice to come together and be shared' – might be persuaded to 'own' this body of work. Luminare is recognised as the national body for Scotland, but the field still lacks a dedicated body in each nation. With the involvement of ACE, the Baring Foundation issued an open tender to provide a sector support body for creative ageing for England for £250,000 over three years, and Manchester Museum has been offered the contract.

A need was identified for a strategic framework that allowed for more joined-up thinking, leadership and the setting

of priorities. More generally, a desire was expressed for more collaborative working, more cooperation than competition, the mixing of sectors and the bringing-together of expertise from different fields.

Arts Care identified that relationships that have been built up over 27 years are beginning to be lost as people retire; this necessitates some succession planning. The Encore Fellowships programme in the United States encourages retired CEOs to work with start-ups. There is scope for retired museum directors and people working in other sectors to mentor future leaders in the field of creative ageing.

If the field is to age creatively, it seems clear that continued strategic development will be needed. The arts and older people's sectors need to enhance their communication with each other and with other related sectors.

Ensuring all older people have access to creative activities will require sustained consideration of access within cultural venues, increased outreach work and more one-to-one sessions being coordinated in people's homes. A concerted effort will be needed to stimulate demand for creative ageing activities in diverse communities. This will require dedicated education and advocacy programmes to overcome any vestigial psychological barriers.

England urgently needs a policy on ageing that acknowledges the benefits of creativity. Such a policy cannot operate in isolation and must draw on, and feed into, related policy fields. Social care policy needs to factor creativity into its thinking. Planning policy should strive to make all communities age-friendly. Transport policy must address the vital importance of regular and affordable public transport to overcoming social isolation and loneliness.

Lack of policy for creative ageing has historically meant a lack of funding. We have reached the point at which greater resources need to be made available by our national governments to enable older people to participate in the arts.

A need was identified for a strategic framework that allowed for more joined-up thinking, leadership and the setting of priorities.

<sup>387</sup> *Older People and the Arts: A Mid-term Programme Review*, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>388</sup> *Ageing Artfully*, op. cit., p. 2.



**Image:**  
**Ticky Picky Boom Boom,**  
**performed by Malcolm X**  
**Theatre Company and**  
**Acta Community Theatre**  
©Graham Burke

# Appendix

## Older people's arts programmes in the UK

### ENGLAND

#### 50+ Contemporary Dance Sheffield

*Dance*

lucyhaighton.com/over-50s-contemporary-dance-class

#### Active Armchairs; Social Dance Company | The Right Step Dance Company

*Dance*

therightstepdc.co.uk/organisations/adults

#### Ages and Stages | New Vic Theatre

*Combined arts*

newvictheatre.org.uk/education-and-community/education/for-adults

#### Ageing Well | Age UK Manchester

*Craft, visual arts*

ageuk.org.uk/manchester/our-services/ageing-well

#### Ageing Well; Creative Arts Café; Create and Connect | Dulwich Picture Gallery

*Visual arts*

dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/learning/older-people

#### Afternoon Classic Cinema Club | Leigh Film Society

*Film*

leighfilmsociety.com/classic.php

#### Afternoon Coffee Club; Royal Albert Hall Songbook; Dementia-Friendly Screenings | Royal Albert Hall

*Combined arts*

royalalberthall.com/tickets/series/community-and-adults

#### Afternoon Dance | Square Chapel Arts Centre

*Dance*

squarechapel.co.uk/whats-on/afternoon-dance-sep-dec

#### Age Friendly | Manchester Art Gallery

*Visual arts*

manchesterartgallery.org/learn/adults/age-friendly

#### Alive

*Combined arts*

aliveactivities.org/alive/en/activity-sessions/activity-sessions

#### Artbeat | Octagon Theatre Bolton

*Theatre*

octagonbolton.co.uk/get-involved/adults/artbeat

#### Arts 4 Dementia

*Combined arts*

arts4dementia.org.uk

#### Arts for Health Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

*Combined arts*

artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk/directory/arts-health-cornwall-and-isles-scilly

#### Arts for Life | Claremont Project

*Combined arts*

claremont-project.org/portfolio-items/artsforlife

#### Arts in Care Homes

*Combined arts*

artsincarehomes.org.uk

#### Art in Mind | The Lightbox

*Visual arts*

thelightbox.org.uk/art-in-mind-community

#### Arts Gymnasium | Belgrade Theatre

*Theatre*

belgrade.co.uk/take-part/arts-gymnasium

#### Art Lady

*Visual arts*

eturnerlee.com/art-sessions

#### Arts Together

*Combined arts*

artstogether.co.uk

#### Ben Uri Arts and Dementia Institute | Ben Uri Gallery and Museum

*Visual arts*

benuri.org.uk/ben-uri-arts-and-dementia-institute

#### Best Foot Forward; Silver Dancers; Stepping Out | Dance in Devon

*Dance*

danceindevon.org.uk/projects

#### (B)old Projects | Southbank Centre

*Dance, poetry*

southbankcentre.co.uk/about/get-involved/arts-wellbeing

#### Books with Friends | Stratford Literary Festival

*Literature*

stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk/article/books-with-friends

#### Borderland Voices

*Combined arts*

borderlandvoices.org.uk

#### Brighton People's Theatre

*Theatre*

brightonpeoples theatre.org

#### Brouhaha International

*Performance*

brouhaha.uk.com

#### BSO Participate | Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

*Music*

bsolive.com/participate

#### Bus Pass Project | The Performance Ensemble

*Combined arts*

theperformanceensemble.com

#### C&C

*Combined arts*

ccht.org.uk/arts-events-welcome

#### Camerata in the Community | Manchester Camerata

*Music, visual arts*

cameratacommunity.co.uk

#### Capital Age Festival

*Combined arts*

capitalagefestival.org.uk

#### Care Home Choir Buddies

*Music*

youtu.be/GjMX\_p3Mhug

**Celebrating Age; Breathing Space | Hoot Creative Arts***Combined arts*[hootcreativearts.co.uk](http://hootcreativearts.co.uk)**Circus for Health | OldSkool England***Dance*[oldskoolarts.co.uk/circus-for-health](http://oldskoolarts.co.uk/circus-for-health)**Coffee, Cake and Culture | The Whitworth and The University of Manchester***Visual arts*[whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/whats-on/events/coffeecakeandculture](http://whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/whats-on/events/coffeecakeandculture)**Collective Encounters***Combined arts*[collective-encounters.org.uk](http://collective-encounters.org.uk)**Company of Others Ensemble | Company of Others***Dance*[companyofothers.org.uk/company-of-others-ensemble](http://companyofothers.org.uk/company-of-others-ensemble)**Concerts in Care Homes | English Symphony Orchestra***Music*[eso.co.uk/community/concerts-in-care-homes](http://eso.co.uk/community/concerts-in-care-homes)**Connaught Opera***Music*[connaughtopera.com](http://connaughtopera.com)**Connecting Through Clay***Visual arts*[lissalinn.co.uk](http://lissalinn.co.uk)**The Connection Space Community Interest Company***Dance*[facebook.com/connectionspacecic](http://facebook.com/connectionspacecic)**Company of Elders | Sadler's Wells***Dance*[sadlerswells.com/learning/learning-performing/company-of-elders](http://sadlerswells.com/learning/learning-performing/company-of-elders)**Community Comedy Clubs | Women & Theatre***Performance*[womenandtheatre.co.uk/project/community-comedy-past](http://womenandtheatre.co.uk/project/community-comedy-past)**Cotgrave and District U3A***Visual arts*[cotgraveu3a.weebly.com](http://cotgraveu3a.weebly.com)**Creative Ageing | The Courtyard***Combined arts*[courtyard.org.uk/creative-ageing](http://courtyard.org.uk/creative-ageing)**Creative Carers Programme | Forward Carers***Combined arts*[forwardcarers.org.uk/creative-carers-programme](http://forwardcarers.org.uk/creative-carers-programme)**Create Community | Pie Factory Music***Combined arts*[piefactorymusic.com/events/event/4220/?occurrence](http://piefactorymusic.com/events/event/4220/?occurrence)**Creative Elders Programme; Bubble's Creative Hubbles; The Rotherhithe Shed | London Bubble***Combined arts*[londonbubble.org.uk/parent\\_project/creative-elders-programme](http://londonbubble.org.uk/parent_project/creative-elders-programme)**Creative Health***Visual arts*[creativehealthcic.co.uk/older-people](http://creativehealthcic.co.uk/older-people)**Creative Learning & Community Partnerships | Sunderland Empire***Dance, music*[atgtickets.com/venues/sunderland-empire/creative-learning](http://atgtickets.com/venues/sunderland-empire/creative-learning)**Creative Minds***Craft, visual arts*[creativeminds.art](http://creativeminds.art)**Creative Writes***Writing*[creativewrites.co.uk/community](http://creativewrites.co.uk/community)**Creative Writing for Carers | Manchester Museum & The University of Manchester***Literature, poetry*[events.manchester.ac.uk/event/event:i83-jp0z1ob5-2saquu/creative-writing-for-carers](http://events.manchester.ac.uk/event/event:i83-jp0z1ob5-2saquu/creative-writing-for-carers)**Cubitt Artists in Community Studios***Visual arts*[cubittartists.org.uk/category/education/elders-and-community/community-studios/artists-in-community-studios](http://cubittartists.org.uk/category/education/elders-and-community/community-studios/artists-in-community-studios)**Culture Club | Cornerstone Arts Centre***Combined arts*[cornerstone-arts.org/whats/culture-club](http://cornerstone-arts.org/whats/culture-club)**Curiosity Gafe | Dry Water Arts Centre***Combined arts*[drywaterarts.uk/curiosity](http://drywaterarts.uk/curiosity)**Curve***Theatre*[curveonline.co.uk](http://curveonline.co.uk)**Dacorun Community Dance***Dance*[facebook.com/DacorunCommunityDance](http://facebook.com/DacorunCommunityDance)**Dance Six-0***Dance*[dancesix0.com](http://dancesix0.com)**Dance to Health; Dance On; In Mature Company | Yorkshire Dance***Dance*[yorkshiredance.com/project](http://yorkshiredance.com/project)**Dance Well | Akademi***Dance*[akademi.co.uk/learning-and-participation/dance-well](http://akademi.co.uk/learning-and-participation/dance-well)**Dawlish Dancers***Dance*[facebook.com/dawlishdancers](http://facebook.com/dawlishdancers)**Dementia-Friendly Screenings | Picturehouse***Film*[spotlight.picturehouses.com/news/dementia-friendly-screenings](http://spotlight.picturehouses.com/news/dementia-friendly-screenings)**Digital Ambassadors; Young At Art | FACT Liverpool***Combined arts*[fact.co.uk/learning/adults](http://fact.co.uk/learning/adults)**Elderberries | Scotswood Garden***Craft, gardening*[scotswoodgarden.org.uk/projects/elderberries](http://scotswoodgarden.org.uk/projects/elderberries)**Elders Company | Theatre by the Lake***Theatre*[theatrebythelake.com/participate/elderscompany](http://theatrebythelake.com/participate/elderscompany)**Elders Masterclasses | RADA***Performance*[rada.ac.uk/schools-outreach-access/elders-company-and-masterclasses](http://rada.ac.uk/schools-outreach-access/elders-company-and-masterclasses)**Elders Company | Royal Exchange Theatre***Theatre*[royalexchange.co.uk/elders](http://royalexchange.co.uk/elders)**Elevate | ArtCare Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust***Combined arts*[artcare.salisbury.nhs.uk/elevate](http://artcare.salisbury.nhs.uk/elevate)**Encore | Nottingham Playhouse***Combined arts*[nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/participation/older-people](http://nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/participation/older-people)

**EngAGE | Plymouth Music Zone**

*Music*

[plymouthmusiczone.org.uk/engage-forum-for-older-people](http://plymouthmusiczone.org.uk/engage-forum-for-older-people)

**Entelechy Arts**

*Combined arts*

[entelechyarts.org](http://entelechyarts.org)

**Equal Arts**

*Combined arts*

[equalarts.org.uk](http://equalarts.org.uk)

**Exploring Theatre | York Theatre Royal**

*Theatre*

[yorktheatroyal.co.uk/be-part-of-it/adults/workshops-masterclasses/#over-65s-masterclasses](http://yorktheatroyal.co.uk/be-part-of-it/adults/workshops-masterclasses/#over-65s-masterclasses)

**Fabrica**

*Combined arts*

[fabrica.org.uk](http://fabrica.org.uk)

**Festival of Creative Ageing**

*Combined arts*

[lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/events/festival-of-creative-ageing](http://lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/events/festival-of-creative-ageing)

**First Taste | Age UK Derby & Derbyshire**

*Combined arts*

[ageuk.org.uk/derbyandderbyshire/our-services/first-taste](http://ageuk.org.uk/derbyandderbyshire/our-services/first-taste)

**FolkActive Dances; Moving in the Moment | FolkActive**

*Dance, music*

[folkactive.org.uk/wellbeing](http://folkactive.org.uk/wellbeing)

**Going Along Without a Body**

*Reminiscence*

[benjaminaowen.com/going-along-without-a-body](http://benjaminaowen.com/going-along-without-a-body)

**Going for a Song | Attic Theatre Company**

*Combined arts*

[attictheatrecompany.com/whatson/55s-singing-group](http://attictheatrecompany.com/whatson/55s-singing-group)

**Grand Gestures Dance Collective (GGDC)**

*Dance*

[grandgesturesdance.uk](http://grandgesturesdance.uk)

**Hallé**

*Music*

[halle.co.uk/education/community-projects/work-with-older-people](http://halle.co.uk/education/community-projects/work-with-older-people)

**Happy Older People (HOP)**

*Combined arts*

[happyolderpeople.com](http://happyolderpeople.com)

**HAUNTS | New Perspectives**

*Theatre*

[newperspectives.co.uk/?idno=1321](http://newperspectives.co.uk/?idno=1321)

**Headingley Enterprise & Arts Centre (HEART)**

*Combined arts*

[heartcentre.org.uk](http://heartcentre.org.uk)

**Hear and Now | Philharmonia Orchestra**

*Music*

[philharmonia.co.uk/education/communities\\_and\\_family/hear\\_and\\_now](http://philharmonia.co.uk/education/communities_and_family/hear_and_now)

**Heart and Craft | Rural Arts**

*Craft, visual arts*

[ruralarts.org/heart-and-craft](http://ruralarts.org/heart-and-craft)

**Helix Arts**

*Combined arts*

[helixarts.com](http://helixarts.com)

**Hera (Healing, Expressive and Recovery Arts) | Brighton Health and Wellbeing Centre**

*Combined arts*

[brightonhealthandwellbeingcentre.co.uk/healing-arts/hera](http://brightonhealthandwellbeingcentre.co.uk/healing-arts/hera)

**Heydays; Creative Cultures; Dementia-Friendly Theatre; Every Third Minute; Peer Support Cultural Partnership; Our Time; Conversation Café; It's For You | Leeds Playhouse**

*Combined arts*

[leedsplayhouse.org.uk/creative-engagement/older-people](http://leedsplayhouse.org.uk/creative-engagement/older-people)

**#HOMEinspires | HOME**

*Combined arts*

[homemcr.org](http://homemcr.org)

**The Ignite Programme | Engage & Create**

*Visual arts*

[engageandcreate.com/ignite-programme](http://engageandcreate.com/ignite-programme)

**Imagine; Armchair Gallery | City Arts Nottingham**

*Combined arts*

[city-arts.org.uk](http://city-arts.org.uk)

**Imogen Taylor Noble | Community Clay**

*Visual arts*

[facebook.com/events/whitstable-museum/community-clay/1931699640269683](https://facebook.com/events/whitstable-museum/community-clay/1931699640269683)

**In2Cultures**

*Music, visual arts*

[in2cultures.com](http://in2cultures.com)

**Inspired Not Tired; Older People Arts Network (OPAN) | Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance**

*Dance, music*

[trinitylaban.ac.uk/take-part/for-adults/inspired-not-tired](http://trinitylaban.ac.uk/take-part/for-adults/inspired-not-tired)

**Intergenerational Music Making**

*Music*

[imm-music.com](http://imm-music.com)

**Interwoven Histories**

*Combined arts*

[interwovenhistories.co.uk](http://interwovenhistories.co.uk)

**Ladder to the Moon | RCH Care Homes**

*Visual arts*

[rchcarehomes.co.uk/maidstone-care-centre/ladder-to-the-moon-a-movie-icon-photography-activity](http://rchcarehomes.co.uk/maidstone-care-centre/ladder-to-the-moon-a-movie-icon-photography-activity)

**Limelight | Theatre Royal**

*Theatre*

[theatroyal.co.uk/taking-part/over-55s](http://theatroyal.co.uk/taking-part/over-55s)

**Live Age Festival | New Vic Theatre**

*Combined arts*

[liveagefestival.co.uk](http://liveagefestival.co.uk)

**Living Memories | London Mozart Players**

*Music*

[londonmozartplayers.com/about-education/community](http://londonmozartplayers.com/about-education/community)

**Lost Chord**

*Dance, music*

[lost-chord.co.uk](http://lost-chord.co.uk)

**Magic Me**

*Combined arts*

[magicme.co.uk](http://magicme.co.uk)

**Make it Better CIC**

*Craft, visual arts*

[mitber.com](http://mitber.com)

**Making Memories | Gallery Oldham**

*Combined arts*

[galleryoldham.org.uk/learning/making-memories](http://galleryoldham.org.uk/learning/making-memories)

**Malcolm X Elders Forum | Well Aware**

*Combined arts*

[wellaware.org.uk/activities/malcolm-x-elders-forum](http://wellaware.org.uk/activities/malcolm-x-elders-forum)

**Masbro Elders Project | The Masbro Centre**

*Visual arts*

[upg.org.uk/elders-project](http://upg.org.uk/elders-project)

**Matinée**

*Film*

[matineederbyshire.org.uk](http://matineederbyshire.org.uk)

**Meaningful Music | Mindsong**

*Music*  
mindsong.org.uk

**The Memory Box Project | The Wessex Heritage Trust**

*Reminiscence*  
wessexheritagetrust.org/projects-1

**In Mind | Royal Academy**

*Visual arts*  
royalacademy.org.uk/events/tag/inmind

**Leap of Faith | East London Dance**

*Dance*  
eastlondondance.org/classes/leap-of-faith

**The Mill Arts Centre**

*Combined arts*  
themillartscentre.co.uk

**Mind Music | Northern Chamber Orchestra**

*Music*  
ncorch.co.uk/mind-music

**Mind, Body, Sing!; Get Into It!; CFT Buddies | Chichester Festival Theatre**

*Combined arts*  
cft.org.uk/take-part/community

**Mind The Gap | Wiltshire Creative**

*Combined arts*  
wiltshirecreative.co.uk/take-part/community-projects

**Moments and Memories | Oxford City Council**

*Dance, music*  
oxford.gov.uk/info/20206/learning\_and\_outreach/782/museum\_reminiscence\_service

**Moving Memory Dance Theatre Company**

*Dance, performance*  
movingmemorydance.com

**Music4Wellbeing**

*Combined arts*  
music4wellbeing.org.uk

**Music Cares | Orchestra of the Swan**

*Music*  
orchestraoftheswan.org/music-cares

**Music for Dementia 2020**

*Music*  
musicfordementia2020.com/2018/09/25/about-us

**Music for Life | Wigmore Hall**

*Music*  
wigmore-hall.org.uk/learning/music-for-life

**Music for Wellbeing**

*Music*  
musicforwellbeingblog.wordpress.com

**Music Memory Box**

*Reminiscence*  
studiomeineck.com/music-memory-box

**Musical Moments**

*Music*  
musical-moments.co.uk

**Musicians on Call | Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment**

*Music*  
oae.co.uk/education/special-needs

**My Life Films**

*Film*  
mylifefilms.org

**New Tricks | soundLINGS**

*Music*  
soundlings.org/project/new-tricks

**Older Adults at Newham University Hospital | London Symphony Orchestra**

*Music*  
lso.co.uk/lso-discovery/community/hospital-visits.html

**Older & Dancing | Green Candle Dance Company**

*Dance*  
greencandle.com/participation/older

**Older Men's Drama Project**

*Combined arts*  
facebook.com/Older-Mens-Drama-Project-561409551042751

**Over 60s Contemporary | The Place**

*Dance*  
theplace.org.uk/whats-on/over-60s-contemporary-open-level

**The Platinum Programme | Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums**

*Combined arts*  
twmuseums.org.uk/the-platinum-programme

**Queers & Old Dears; The Posh Club | Duckie**

*Performance*  
duckie.co.uk/events

**Raise Your Voice | Glyndebourne**

*Combined arts*  
glyndebourne.com/educations/raise-your-voice

**Recycling Youth | Advice Support Knowledge Information**

*Dance*  
aski.org.uk/projects/dance-project-for-over-65s

**Reminiscence Arts Caring Together | Age Exchange**

*Combined arts*  
age-exchange.org.uk/who-we-are/what-is-remembrance-arts

**Reminiscence | Banbury Museum**

*Combined arts*  
banburymuseum.org/remembrance

**Rétrospectif Dance Company; Dance for Parkinson's | The Point Eastleigh**

*Dance*  
thepointeastleigh.co.uk/participate/dance-and-wellbeing-classes

**Room to Room Music | City of London Sinfonia**

*Music*  
cityoflondonsinfonia.co.uk/wellbeing/wellbeing-projects

**Sandwell Third Age Arts**

*Visual arts*  
staa.org.uk

**Sensory Palaces | Historic Royal Palaces**

*Performance*  
hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/whats-on/sensory-palaces/#gs.svcf2n

**Silver Programme | Sage Gateshead**

*Music*  
sagegateshead.com/age-groups/silver-programme

**Silver Stories | University of Brighton**

*Digital arts*  
arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/silver-stories

**Silver Sunday | Wallace Collection**

*Dance, music, visual arts*  
wallacecollection.org/learning/community

**Sing to Beat Parkinson's | Canterbury Cantata Trust**

*Music*  
singtobeat.co.uk

**Skippko**

*Visual arts*  
skippko.org.uk

**Snape Maltings**

*Music*  
snapemaltings.co.uk/music/community

**Soapbox | Tate Britain**

*Visual arts*

tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/talk/soapbox

**Songs and Scones | The Sixteen**

*Music*

thesixteen.com

**Southwark Playhouse Elders Company**

*Theatre*

southwarkplayhouse.co.uk/get-involved/elders-company

**Southwell U3A**

*Combined arts*

southwellu3a.com

**The Space Between Us Programme | Chickenshed**

*Performance*

chickenshed.org.uk/space-between-us-project

**START Over 50 | START**

*Visual arts*

startinspiringminds.org.uk/our-projects/start-over-50

**Stepping Out | Pavilions Teignmouth**

*Dance*

pavilionsteignmouth.org.uk/events/teignmouth-players-stepping-out

**The Silver Song Music Box | Sing For Your Life**

*Music*

singforyourlife.org.uk/the-silver-song-music-box

**Still Lively**

*Visual arts*

stilllively.com

**The Storybox Project | Small Things Creative Projects**

*Combined arts*

smallthings.org.uk

**Strokestra | Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

*Music*

rpo.co.uk/rpo-resound/strokestra

**Suffolk Artlink**

*Combined arts*

suffolkartlink.org.uk

**Suitcase Stories; Love Music! | Arts Uplift**

*Music*

artsuplift.co.uk

**Three Score Dance**

*Dance*

threescoredance.co.uk

**Together | Spare Tyre**

*Visual arts*

sparetyre.org/whats-on/projects/together-arts-for-older-people-in-haringey

**Together in Sound | Saffron Hall and Anglia Ruskin University**

*Music*

saffronhall.com/togetherinsound

**Turtle Song | Turtle Key Arts**

*Music*

turtlekeyarts.org.uk/turtle-song

**Upswing**

*Combined arts*

upswing.org.uk/portfolio/circus-older-people

**Waiting...; All Ages Walker; Fish & The Yesterday Song | Skimstone Arts**

*Music, performance*

skimstone.org.uk/olderpeople

**Walsall Senior Citizens Orchestra**

*Music*

walsall-snr-citizens-orch.co.uk

**The Wardrobe Project | ViSiBLE**

*Theatre*

visible.org.uk/2018/02/09/the-wardrobe-project-can-i-still-wear-this

**We engAGE**

*Combined arts*

we-engage.blogspot.com

**The Welcome Project | South East Dance**

*Dance*

southeastdance.org.uk/what-we-do/the-welcome-project-1

**Where the Arts Belong | Bluecoat and Belong**

*Combined arts*

belong.org.uk/bluecoat

**Winter Warmer | Liverpool Philharmonic**

*Performance*

liverpoolphil.com/whats-on/all-shows/winter-warmer/3361

**Wishing Well | Rhythmix**

*Music*

wishingwellmusic.org.uk

**Working with Dementia | Salmagundi Films**

*Digital arts, film*

salmagundifilms.co.uk/Working-with-Dementia

**Wychavon Taking Part | Wychavon District Council**

*Craft, visual arts*

wychavon.gov.uk/events-training-and-workshops

**Zest | Bright Shadow**

*Combined arts*

brightshadow.org.uk/zest-workshops/zest-community-groups

**ENGLAND & SCOTLAND**

**Resonate | Good Vibration**

*Music*

good-vibrations.org.uk

**ENGLAND & WALES**

**Dance for Parkinson's; ENBEldersCo; Dancing East | English National Ballet**

*Dance*

ballet.org.uk/get-involved

**Dance to Health | Aesop**

*Dance*

dancetohealth.org

**Goldies**

*Music*

golden-oldies.org.uk

**ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES**

**Creative Mojo**

*Craft, visual arts*

creativemojo.co.uk

**ENGLAND, WALES & NORTHERN IRELAND**

**A Choir in Every Care Home | Live Music Now**

*Music*

achoirineverycarehome.wordpress.com

**Art & Older People | Paintings in Hospitals**

*Visual arts*

paintingsinhospitals.org.uk/in-focus-older-people

**Singing for the Brain | Alzheimer's Society**

*Music*

alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/your-support-services/singing-for-the-brain

**NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Arts and Older People Programme | Arts Council of Northern Ireland**

*Combined arts*

artscouncil-ni.org/the-arts/participatory-arts1/arts-and-older-people

**Dementia-Friendly Screenings | Queen's Film Theatre***Film*

queensfilmtheatre.com/Whats-On/Dementia-Friendly

**Digital Makers | FabLab***Craft, visual arts*

ashtoncentre.com/fablab-digital-makers

**East Antrim U3A***Combined arts*

eau3a.org.uk

**Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership***Combined arts*

meaap.co.uk

**Move to the Music | Ulster Orchestra***Music*

ulsterorchestra.org.uk/learning-community-engagement/community-engagement

**Silver Screenings | Strand Arts Centre***Film*

strandartscentre.com/silver-screenings

**Streetwise Community Circus***Theatre*

sccni.co.uk

**U3A Foyle***Craft, visual arts*

u3afoyle.com

**SCOTLAND****Art in Hospital***Visual arts*

artinhospital.com

**Boogie in the Bar***Dance*

boogieinthebar.co.uk

**Cianalas | An Lanntair***Combined arts*

lanntair.com/education/education-projects

**Common Wheel***Music*

commonwheel.org.uk

**The Craft Café | Impact Arts***Visual arts*

impactarts.co.uk/gallery/craft-cafe

**Dementia-Friendly Performances | Capital Theatres***Combined arts*

capitaltheatres.com/take-part/dementia-friendly-work

**Dolphin Arts Project | An Talla Solais Gallery***Visual arts*

antallasolais.org/dolphin-arts-project

**Eskdalemuir Expressive Arts***Combined arts*

eskdalemuirexpressivearts.btck.co.uk

**Gie it Laldy! | Centrestage***Combined arts*

lifechangestrust.org.uk/projects/centrestage-communities-and-theatre-project-gie-it-laldy

**Glasgow Senior Citizens Orchestra***Music*

gsco.org.uk

**Heart for Art Project | Crossreach***Craft, visual arts*

crossreach.org.uk/find-service/care-older-people/getting-creative-with-dementia

**Hearts & Minds | Elderflowers***Combined arts*

heartsminds.org.uk/elderflowers

**Hospitalfield***Combined arts*

hospitalfield.org.uk

**Luminate***Combined arts*

luminatescotland.org

**Luminate Film Festival; Pilates for Seniors | Byre Theatre***Film*

byretheatre.com/whats-on

**Memory Spinners; Spinning Songs | Scottish Opera***Combined arts*

scottishopera.org.uk/join-in

**The Portal Seniors Film Club | Plantation Productions***Film*

plantation.org.uk/project/the-portal-seniors-film-club

**PRIME | Dancebase***Dance*

dancebase.co.uk/professional/prime-106

**ReConnect | Scottish Chamber Orchestra***Music*

sco.org.uk/creative-learning/current-projects/1358-reconnect

**Reminiscence | Scottish National Portrait Gallery***Reminiscence, visual arts*

nationalgalleries.org/visit/groups-tours-workshops/community-access-groups/reminiscence

**Scottish Ballet Elders Company; Regenerate; Time to Dance; Dance for Parkinson's Scotland | Scottish Ballet***Dance*

scottishballet.co.uk/join-in

**Screen Machine | Regional Screen Scotland***Film*

regionalscreenscotland.org/screen-machine

**Screen Memories Scotland***Film*

screenmemories.org.uk

**Symphony, Soup and a Sandwich | Royal Scottish National Orchestra***Music*

rsno.org.uk/lunch

**Wigtown Book Festival***Combined arts*

wigtownbookfestival.com

**Wolf Pack | Barrowland Ballet***Dance*

barrowlandballet.co.uk/participate/intergenerational-company

**WALES****Arts From The Armchair; Company55 | Theatr Clwyd***Performance*

theatrclwyd.com

**Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales***Visual arts*

museumwales.ac.uk

**Care Home Creative Arts Project | Denbighshire County Council***Combined arts*

twitter.com/celf\_dcc\_arts

**Community House***Visual arts*

etonrdch.org/v2

**Côr Hamdden Mathias; Atgofion ar Gân [Music Memories] | Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias***Music*

cgwm.org.uk

**CWTCH**

*Music*

[paulinedown.com/blog](http://paulinedown.com/blog)

**Dementia-Friendly Screenings | Chapter**

*Film*

[filmhubwales.org/dementia-friendly-screenings-chapter](http://filmhubwales.org/dementia-friendly-screenings-chapter)

**Forget-me-not Chorus**

*Music*

[forgetmenotchorus.com](http://forgetmenotchorus.com)

**Gilfach Over 50s Dance | Pili Pala Arts Wales**

*Dance*

[pilipalaartswales.wixsite.com/pilipalaartswales](http://pilipalaartswales.wixsite.com/pilipalaartswales)

**Have-a-go Shakespeare | Shakespeare Link**

*Performance*

[shakespearelink.org.uk/haveago-times-1](http://shakespearelink.org.uk/haveago-times-1)

**Head4Arts**

*Combined arts*

[head4arts.org.uk](http://head4arts.org.uk)

**Hightown Community Resource Centre**

*Craft, visual arts*

[facebook.com/hightowncrc](https://facebook.com/hightowncrc)

**Literature Wales**

*Literature*

[literaturewales.org](http://literaturewales.org)

**Lost in Art | Denbighshire County Council**

*Visual arts*

[forthearts.org.uk/denbighshire-county-council-lost-art](http://forthearts.org.uk/denbighshire-county-council-lost-art)

**Motion Control Dance**

*Dance*

[motioncontroldance.com](http://motioncontroldance.com)

**Page to Stage**

*Performance*

[pagetostage.co.uk](http://pagetostage.co.uk)

**People Speak Up**

*Combined arts*

[peoplespeakup.co.uk](http://peoplespeakup.co.uk)

**Re-Live**

*Theatre*

[re-live.org.uk](http://re-live.org.uk)

**Reading Friends**

*Literature*

[readingfriends.org.uk](http://readingfriends.org.uk)

**Rubicon Dance**

*Dance*

[rubicondance.co.uk](http://rubicondance.co.uk)

**Senior Moment(um) programme | Impelo**

*Dance*

[impelo.org.uk](http://impelo.org.uk)

**Strictly Parkinson's Dancing**

*Dance*

[localsupport.parkinsons.org.uk/opportunity/53736](http://localsupport.parkinsons.org.uk/opportunity/53736)

**Striking Attitudes**

*Dance*

[strikingattitudes.com](http://strikingattitudes.com)

**Touch Trust**

*Dance, performance*

[touchtrust.co.uk](http://touchtrust.co.uk)

**Washday Memories | Oriel Myrddin Gallery**

*Visual arts*

[orielmyrddingallery.co.uk](http://orielmyrddingallery.co.uk)

**UK-WIDE**

**Dance for Parkinson's Partnership UK; Leading Dance with Older People | People Dancing**

*Dance*

[communitydance.org.uk/developing-practice](http://communitydance.org.uk/developing-practice)

**Do Think Share**

*Combined arts*

[dothinkshare.com](http://dothinkshare.com)

**House of Memories | National Museums Liverpool**

*Reminiscence*

[houseofmemories.co.uk](http://houseofmemories.co.uk)

**Natural Voice Network**

*Music*

[naturalvoice.net](http://naturalvoice.net)

**Playlist for Life**

*Music*

[playlistforlife.org.uk](http://playlistforlife.org.uk)

**Sharing Joy | Vamos Theatre**

*Touring theatre*

[vamos theatre.co.uk/shows/show/sharing-joy](http://vamos theatre.co.uk/shows/show/sharing-joy)



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# The Baring Foundation

**#KingsCulturalCommunity**

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