



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Newly published report shares key insights from the Creative Health Associates (CHA) programme**

*Programme funded by Arts Council England with match-funding from The Baring Foundation  
Delivered by the National Centre for Creative Health*

The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCCH) has been working to embed creative health approaches across the UK's health and care systems. A newly published report shares key insights from the Creative Health Associates (CHA) programme which ran from July 2023 to the end of March 2025. It draws on findings from the external evaluation and the final report to Arts Council England, offering a clear picture of how creative health roles are shaping practice, policy, and partnerships.

The role of the Creative Health Associates Programme was to work within Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and across Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to identify the opportunities to embed creative health in the wider health and care system. The Programme was delivered by seven Creative Health Associates hosted by ICBs, one in each NHS region in England. They were supported by a Creative Health Programme Manager through peer support and leadership development.

The external evaluation of the CHA programme provides insights into its effectiveness using a mixed method, systems-thinking approach. This included in-depth interviews with the core team, focus groups, a stakeholder survey, and workshops.

*"The CHA's presence has raised awareness about the importance of creative approaches in improving health and wellbeing, influencing both organisational culture and individual mindsets"* - **Quote from stakeholder evaluation workshop**

Findings demonstrate that having Creative Health leads in health and care systems is a strategic asset in delivering the 10 Year Health Plan for England and its ambitions for a more sustainable, inclusive and person-centred NHS.

*"Health and care systems are in a continuous state of flux and the external evaluation of the Associates programme provides evidence of how Creative Health leads can contribute to positive systems innovation viewed through a systems thinking lens. They can support a creative health approach to systems change which embraces uncertainty and fluidity, using creativity and the imagination to envisage more inclusive, person-centred and co-created public services"* - **NCCCH Director, Alex Coulter**

**[Download the Overview Report on the Creative Health Associates Programme >>](#)**

Full in-depth report on the [activities, outputs and outcomes of the programme >>](#)

Full in-depth [external evaluation report >>](#)

Executive [summary >>](#) & Key findings [summary >>](#)

**NCCH is very grateful to the CHA Programme funders, Arts Council England, and to The Baring Foundation for match funding through the Huddles Programme.**

**Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England, said:**

*"This pioneering scheme has shown the power of putting creative health at the heart of our National Health Service. Through their work, the creative health advocates have increased the chance for people to take part in creative and cultural activities, built stronger community connections, and shaped the future of health and care services, helping people across England to lead better lives."*

**David Cutler, Director, The Baring Foundation, said:**

*"This programme has been important in demonstrating the value of Creative Health lead roles within health and care systems and progressing our particular interest at The Baring Foundation of creative mental health"*

### **Associates Team and Participating Integrated Care Boards\* (ICBs)**

*\*ICBs are statutory bodies within Integrated Care Systems (ICSs)*

NCCH is grateful to its seven Associates and the ICBs that hosted them:

- Olivia Dean - East of England CHA hosted by [NHS Norfolk & Waveney ICB](#)
- Constance Rosewarne - London CHA hosted by [NHS North East London ICB](#)
- Jane Hearst - Midlands hosted by [NHS Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB](#)
- Alice Thwaite - North East & Yorkshire CHA hosted by [NHS North East & North Cumbria ICB](#)
- Elaine Ryan- McNeill - North West CHA hosted by [NHS Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB](#)
- Esther Watts - South East CHA hosted by [NHS Sussex ICB](#)
- Penny Calvert - South West CHA hosted by [NHS Devon ICB](#)

**- ENDS -**

### **Note to Editors:**

For further information contact: Jayne Howard, NCCH Programme Manager:

[jayne@ncch.org.uk](mailto:jayne@ncch.org.uk)

Social Media Assets for this Media Release can be found [here](#)

### **What is Creative Health?**

Creative health involves creative approaches and activities that prevent ill-health and promote health and wellbeing. It aids the management of long-term conditions, treatments, and recovery across the life course. It can help strengthen social cohesion and reduce health inequalities. Activities can include visual and performing arts, crafts, film, literature, cooking and creative activities in nature, such as gardening.

**The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH)** aims to advance good practice and research, inform policy and promote collaboration, helping to foster the conditions for creative health to be integral to health and social care and wider systems. It was set up in

response to Recommendation 1 in the APPG AHW report: Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing and became a registered charity in 2020. More information is available on the National Centre for Creative Health at <https://ncch.org.uk/>

### **About Arts Council England**

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Their vision, set out in the strategy *Let's Create*, is that by 2030, they want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. Between 2023 and 2026, the Arts Council will have invested over £467 million of public money from Government, alongside an estimated £250 million each year from The National Lottery, to help ensure that people in every part of the country have access to culture and creativity in the places where they live. Until Autumn 2025, The National Lottery is celebrating its 30th anniversary of supporting good causes in the United Kingdom: since the first draw was held in 1994, it has raised £49 billion and awarded more than 690,000 individual grants. Visit the [Arts Council's website](#) to learn more about their work.

### **About The Baring Foundation**

The Baring Foundation is an independent foundation which protects and advances human rights and promotes inclusion. They believe in the role of a strong, independent civil society nationally and internationally. They use their 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. <https://baringfoundation.org.uk/>



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