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**The Baring
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Creative Health Leads in Health and Care Systems Programme - Invitation to Apply

Creative Health Lead roles in health and care systems will provide a strategic advantage in achieving the objectives set out in England's 10 Year Health Plan, including the development of a more sustainable, inclusive, and person-centred NHS. They will contribute to addressing the wider determinants of health and through partnership working can support socioeconomic development across systems. Health and care organisations are invited to apply for the *Creative Health Leads Programme*, which supports the integration of creative health the wider system.

The programme offers:

- A two-year salary subsidy for a Creative Health Lead (NHS Band 7 level)
- A structured learning and development programme
- Evaluation and national dissemination of learning and impact

We anticipate between 25–30 posts will be supported across England over the next three years, with initial funding available for up to five posts and the expectation that funding for further posts will be available in Spring 2026.

The programme is designed to be flexible and responsive to local needs. While there are core expectations, the role's focus and employment arrangements can be adapted, and we encourage early discussion with us about your local context.

Application deadlines:

- First round: 30 January 2026
- Second round: 6 March 2026
(Further rounds are expected in 2026/27; expressions of interest are welcome at any time.)

For more details and how to apply, read on below.

Information sessions:

We will be holding two online information sessions where you will also have the opportunity to ask questions:

- Wednesday 10th December 2025, 12.30 - 1.30 – book [here](#)
- Tuesday 13th January 2026, 4.30 - 5.30 - book [here](#)

Note: there is no need to attend both sessions as the information shared will be the same at each. FAQs will also be posted on our website after the events.

Individual meetings:

We encourage interested organisations to contact us for more detailed discussion about their particular contexts. Email jayne@ncch.org.uk to arrange.

Introduction

The National Centre for Creative Health is a charity, launched in March 2021, with a mission to advance good practice and research, inform policy and promote collaboration, helping foster the conditions for creative health to be integral to health and social care and wider systems.

There is strong evidence that engaging in creative activities and cultural experiences can make a real difference to our health and wellbeing. Creative health supports prevention, promotes healthy behaviours, helps manage long-term conditions, and aids treatment and recovery throughout life. Activities include community wellbeing groups, creative social prescribing, targeted programmes for specific health issues like respiratory disease, dementia, or mental health, and direct clinical interventions.

Creative health is increasingly recognised as a driver of better care and better value in health and care systems. Integrating creative health into prevention, public and population health strategies, management of long-term conditions, treatment and recovery pathways contributes to:

- Reduced incidence of preventable illness
- Improved wellbeing of patients and service users
- Reduced demand on services

Further information on the benefits of creative health can be found [here](#).

Creative Health Leads in Systems

Building on the success and learning from the [Creative Health Associates](#) programme 2023-2025, The Baring Foundation and Arts Council England, are supporting an expanded national programme, Creative Health Leads in Systems. It will strengthen the integration of creative health approaches across health and care systems, supporting population health priorities, prevention, and wellbeing. An Advisory Group will provide strategic guidance and ensure alignment with national health and care priorities.

Quote from the previous programme:

"Our Creative Health Associate raised awareness of the value of creativity to improve health and wellbeing and by doing so influenced senior leaders and programmes such as maternity, mental health and women's health" Jo-anne Alner, Director of Population Health and Inequalities, Sussex ICB.

Programme Purpose

To embed Creative Health Leads in health and care systems across England, enabling strategic and operational integration of creative health into population health improvement, clinical pathways, and neighbourhood-level care.

We anticipate that Creative Health Leads will:

- Embed creative health in local and system-wide plans and strategies.
- Identify budgets for creative health programmes.
- Enable delivery of creative health activity across priority areas, e.g.
 - Major conditions pathways
 - Mental health and wellbeing
 - Children and young people's health
 - Prevention and neighbourhood health

What the Programme Offers

- Salary subsidy for a Creative Health Lead post in a health and care system:
 - £25,000 in Year 1 (c. 50% of entry point of NHS Band 7 salary for 4 days/week, including on-costs)
 - £15,000 in Year 2 (c. 30% of entry point of NHS Band 7 salary for 4 days/week, including on-costs)
- Strategic support from NCCH
- Structured learning programme for postholders
- Development programme for systems, including testing of a Creative Health Maturity Framework
- Evaluation to capture learning and evidence system impact
- National dissemination

Role Design and Flexibility

Creative Health Lead roles will be bespoke to each system, based on a core job description (included in this information pack) and adapted to local context.

Posts may be based in:

- Integrated Care Boards (ICBs)
- Multi-neighbourhood providers
- NHS Provider organisations
- Neighbourhood or multi-neighbourhood teams
- Public Health teams
- Integrated Health Organisations (IHOs) – operational from 2027
- Other organisations that have formal partnership arrangements with the NHS

Context varies across systems, and flexibility will be essential in how roles are structured and embedded. The following examples, developed from stakeholder consultations, illustrate some possible options. These are not prescriptive, but demonstrate different approaches reflecting local context and priorities. We are keen to discuss any other options with you.

Scenario One – Joint Post Across NHS and Local Authority

The Creative Health Lead sits within an ICB or Public Health team in a local authority but is jointly appointed by the NHS and one or more local authorities.

- Operates at place level, working across health, social care, and VCFSE sectors.
- Focus areas might include children's health, mental health, frailty, and complex needs.
- Demonstrates integration and shared ownership across statutory and community systems.

Scenario Two – Neighbourhood-Level Integration

The Creative Health Lead works within an Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT)—potentially spanning two or three INTs—employed by a local authority, health organisation, or VCFSE partner.

- Focus on embedding creative health in neighbourhood delivery models.
- Supports the spread and adoption of practice across INTs and ICB clusters.
- Priority given to first-phase INT implementation sites to facilitate national learning with NHS England.

Scenario Three – Strategic Integration within the ICB

The Creative Health Lead is based within the ICB with a focus on integrating creative health into clinical pathways (e.g. secondary falls prevention, mental health recovery, respiratory conditions).

- Strong emphasis on health inequalities.
- Role may have broader system responsibilities but with at least 60% focus on creative health.
- Could be filled by redeployment as part of ICB restructure

Scenario Four – NHS Provider or Provider Collaborative

In some systems, the role may sit within an NHS provider or Provider Collaborative, with a collaborating provider acting as employer. This would most likely be in community providers where the expectation is that they assume more ICB responsibilities over time, especially in partnership development and reducing health inequalities.

We would expect to see close working relationships with social care services, especially if key areas of focus include vulnerable children and young people, addressing frailty, supporting individuals with complex needs, and providing care for those who are high-intensity service users.

Criteria for assessment of applications

Priority will be given to systems that can demonstrate:

- Match funding from NHS or Public Health budgets
- NHS or Public Health employment of postholder
- NHS hosting and management support for postholder if not employed by NHS organisation
- Delivery budget for creative health activity
- Commitment to a post beyond 2 years
- Focus on health inequalities and areas of deprivation
- Integration with social care
- Infrastructure to support the role e.g. a Partnership Group, Committee or Sub-Group that they report to

Essential Commitments

- Match funding for the post for 2 years
Note: match funding cannot be provided from arts or culture budgets
- Post to be on an employment, not freelance, contract. The post could be offered on a secondment basis.
- NHS honorary contract/email if not employed by NHS
- Partnership support - applications must be supported by multiple partner organisations, not just the employing or funding body to ensure cross-sector buy-in and sustainability.

- Support for postholder's participation in NCCH learning community
- Engagement from others across the partnership in a system development programme (strategy workshops, Maturity Framework testing)

For more information you can attend one of our online information sessions where you will also have the opportunity to ask questions:

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Individual meetings:

We encourage interested organisations to contact us for more detailed discussion about their particular contexts.

To arrange a discussion or for any further information contact the Programme Manager, Jayne Howard via email: jayne@ncch.org.uk

Application process and timetable

Interested organisations are strongly encouraged to discuss their application with NCCH as early as possible.

Date	
w/c 1 December 2205	Open to applications Opportunity for discussion with NCCH
w/c 8 December 2025	Information webinar: 10 December, 12.30 – 1.30
From 8 December 2025 – 23 January 2026	Opportunity for discussion with NCCH
w/c 12 January 2026	Information webinar: 13 January, 4.30 – 5.30
w/c 26 January 2026	Closing date for first round: Friday 30th January 2026
w/c 2 February 2026	Shortlisting first round of applications
w/c 16 February 2026	Interviews – 17 February 2025
From 2 February – 27 February 2026	Opportunity for discussion with NCCH
w/c 2 March 2026	Closing date for second round: Friday 6th March 2026
w/c 9 March 2026	Shortlisting second round of applications
w/c 22 March 2026	Final selection of second round applicants

Application form – [here](#)

Expressions of interest are invited at any time – please use [this form](#).

Creative Health Lead - Health & Social Care System

Draft Job Description

Note: this can be adapted for the format that is used in each context.

Nature of contract

- Part-time: 0.8 wte (4 days / 30 hours a week)
- Salary: NHS Band 7 (or equivalent)
- Minimum fixed term for 2 years

Note: We are open to discussion about the nature of the contract in order to respond to local context.

This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic and inspirational individual to take on the role of Creative Health Lead within the XXXX health and care system.

This role, which is supported by Arts Council England and The Baring Foundation, is part of the National Centre for Creative Health's *Creative Health Leads Programme*, which supports the integration of creative health across health and care systems. Creative Health Lead roles in health and care systems will provide a strategic advantage in achieving the objectives set out in England's 10 Year Health Plan and will contribute to addressing the wider determinants of health and through partnership working can support socioeconomic development across systems.

You will be an imaginative and self-motivated individual with a passionate belief in the power of culture and creativity to benefit the lives of individuals and communities. You will have an excellent understanding of your local health and/or cultural 'ecosystem' and be in a position to build on existing relationships and take an 'asset-based' approach to further developments.

Aims of the role

- Development of a model for effective connections between health, social care and cultural sector
- Improved understanding about potential cultural sector contribution at a neighbourhood, place and system level within health and social care with a focus on health inequalities
- Improved knowledge of existing creative health provision and a mechanism for this to be regularly updated
- System plans and strategies feature creative health pathways and options
- Funding is identified to support sustainable creative health programmes within the health and social care system
- Expansion of creative health within social prescribing programmes
- Expansion of creative health within specific priority areas e.g. major conditions pathways, neighbourhood plans

Specific responsibilities

- *Opportunity to add in specific priorities for the local context here*
- Provide strategic leadership and specialist advice and guidance on creative health to stakeholders *(to be defined for each context)*
- *Maintain/work with/develop* a sustainable cross-sector network model to enable effective and regular communication between health, social care and the cultural sector – *depending on what is already in place*
- Facilitate the development of creative health strategies and programmes within your system through, for example, providing guidance to creative health providers, health and care commissioners or facilitating co-design of programmes
- Map existing provision and delivery partners and ensure information and connections are supported between cultural practitioners and health professionals
- Identify key stakeholders in your system to raise awareness of the value of creative health and identify opportunities for collaboration
- Collate useful and useable data sets identifying your system's priorities and supporting the cultural sector to understand and use data in planning, delivery and evaluation
- Share knowledge and learning more widely in a wide variety of formats and in collaboration with networks and systems
- Work with colleagues to identify funding streams and resources to enable the expansion of creative health programmes and partnerships to support system priorities
- Work with colleagues delivering social prescribing to expand the role of cultural social prescribing
- Collate and present evidence and research on the benefits of creative health
- Link with relevant partner organisations at local, regional and national level including, but not limited to, the National Centre for Creative Health; Arts Council England; Mayoral Creative Health Network; National Academy for Social Prescribing; Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance.
- Engage in the community of practice programme being coordinated by NCCH for Creative Health Leads within health and care systems
- Contribute to the development of a Creative Health Maturity Framework for systems
- Contribute to the iterative evaluation of the Creative Health Leads programme, using systems thinking to improve the effectiveness of the programme
- *Any budgetary responsibilities*

Principles underpinning the role

- You will use the principles of the Creative Health Quality Framework to guide your work.
- Co-design and co-production
- Foregrounding the voices of people with lived experience

Person specification

Essential knowledge, skills, experience, qualities
Knowledge of wider health and social policy context including the priorities of the 10 Year Health Plan
Understanding of health inequalities and determinants of health
Knowledge of creative health research, policy or practice
Experience in developing partnerships and cross-sector working
Demonstrable personal integrity, cultural awareness and commitment to diversity
Self-motivation and ability to work independently
Good relationship management with a wide range of partners
Facilitation skills with professional groups, including chairing meetings
Facilitating community participation and engagement of people with less heard voices
Project management skills and experience
Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal
Presentation skills including online presentations
Influencing and negotiating skills
Familiarity with and ability to use office IT systems e.g. Word, Excel, Powerpoint etc.
Tenacity, resilience and fortitude

Desirable knowledge, skills, experience, qualities
Relevant degree or similar qualification
Knowledge and experience of co-production with a range of stakeholders
Creativity and imagination
Knowledge and experience of using data both quantitative and qualitative
Evaluation and monitoring skills
Experience of budget setting and/or monitoring financial spend

Other requirements – as required by the specific role/context

Issues such as place of work, travel expected etc.