



Creative Health in the Dudley Constituency

Local Health Priorities, as set by the Health and Wellbeing Board:

Goal 1: Children Are Ready for School by the Age of Four

- In 2021/22, **1,415 Dudley children** were not school ready at age five. This will impact on their future educational attainment and life chances, including **life expectancy**.
- Things that help to improve school readiness include **parents having good mental health**, parents **speaking to their baby and reading with their child**, being **physically active**, evidence based **parenting support programmes** and access to **high-quality early education**.
- The [First 1,001 days](#) provide a critical opportunity to build the foundations of **emotional wellbeing, communication, resilience and adaptability**.

Goal 2: Fewer People Die from Circulatory Disease

- Circulatory disease is the **biggest cause of early deaths in Dudley** and the borough has, for many years, had a **consistently higher death rate** from circulatory disease compared to England.
- It is the **largest contributor to the life expectancy gap** between the richest and poorest parts of Dudley, fuelling health inequalities.
- Some people have been **less active** and have gained weight. For families struggling with the **cost of living, stress, poor mental health**, and the **inability to buy healthier foods**, will also increase their circulatory disease risks.
- The goal is to **increase detection** and ensure **better management** of high blood pressure and to make it **easier to access services to support people** and families to adopt a healthier lifestyle, including **mental health support**

Goal 3: More Women are Screened for Breast Cancer

- While women in Dudley currently have similar rates of new diagnoses of breast cancer and death compared to the West Midlands and England averages, the **drop in breast screening coverage** may result in more Dudley women

experiencing **more serious disease** and **avoidable deaths** from breast cancer in the coming years.

- As well as **personal suffering** from more serious breast cancer disease and **early death**, there are also **wider impacts on women's families**.
- One goal is to **identify additional locations** for the breast screening van in communities with lower uptake.

Examples of Creative Health Provisions, from Elsewhere, that are Evidenced to Benefit these Priorities:

Goal 1: Children Are Ready for School by the Age of Four

- [Melodies for Mums](#) is a group **singing programme**, led by *Breathe*, which is for new mothers and their babies looking to **boost emotional and mental wellbeing**. It featured in the pioneering [SHAPER](#) review - a £2.6 million research programme funded by Wellcome that assessed the effectiveness and implementation of three Creative Health provisions. The review evidenced **significant impacts of parental mental health and child development**.
- In Birmingham City Council's [Public Health commissioning of community-centred arts, culture and health, 2021-2022](#), pregnancy was one of the 5 features. Pregnancy projects looked at a series of **participatory style skills-based workshops** to engage, educate and empower participants around pregnancy in areas such as **eating and cooking healthily**.. This led to **improved health literacy/ health behaviours, improved mental health, improved confidence to discuss health at home**, and increased skills. These changes are vital in the first 1,001 days of a child's life.

Goal 2: Fewer People Die from Circulatory Disease

- People who dance have a **46% lower risk of cardiovascular death** (1). Moreover, **£157 million is saved annually**, thanks to how **movement and dance** reduce the risk of developing **Type 2 diabetes** (2). Type 2 diabetes has been linked to significantly increased risk of CVD.
- Conversely, longitudinal data shows 'those with **low social and cultural participation** have an **increased risk of coronary heart disease**' (3, 4).
- *The British Heart Foundation* encourages blood pressure checks in unconventional spaces, to aid **hypertension case finding** (5). Community/ arts centres are great locations for this.

- Dance therapy **reduces the systolic/diastolic pressure** of people with high blood pressure ([6](#)).

Goal 3: More Women are Screened for Breast Cancer

- [The Big Breast](#) is an **art installation** by *Goodbye Breasts!* Which catalyses conversations about breast health in a colourful, playful and interactive way. It demonstrates the place of arts installations in improving **health literacy** and **health-promoting behaviours**, such as breast screenings.
- [Move Dance Feel](#) is an organisation offering **dance classes** to women who have cancer or are supporting a loved one who has it. 96% of participants say that the classes **improve their mood**, 89% believe it keeps them **better connected to others**, 88% say it **enables better health management**, and 46% showed a clinically meaningful **improvement in levels of fatigue**.

Creative Health Providers in Dudley:

- [Creative Health CIC](#)
- [Creative Black Country](#)
- [Brierley Hill Cultural Consortium](#)
- [CoLab Dudley](#)

Creative Health Advocates in the Black Country:

- **Ananta Dave**, the Chief Medical Officer at Black Country ICB, is particularly interested in how creativity can have a benefit to mental health and wellbeing.
- **Olivia Horgan**, Health Inequalities Strategy and Delivery Manager at Black Country ICB, is hoping to integrate Creative Health approaches into the health inequalities agenda.
- There are a range of Arts Managers/ Coordinators in the hospitals across the region, including **Elinor Cole** at Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust Charity and **Amy Cambell** at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.
- **Nadia Inglis**, Director of Public Health in Walsall, is one of NCCH's [Creative Health Champions](#) who helped to make the Midlands the leaders in Creative Public Health over the last year.
- **One Walsall Cultural Compact** will be instrumental in embedding Creative Health into the community.

Recommended Actions for Dudley:

- 1) **Advocate for Creative Health provisions, like songwriting, to be offered to new mothers** - particularly those at risk of postnatal depression or those from disadvantaged backgrounds - to heighten the quality of life offered to babies and their families during the first 1,001 days of their life.
- 2) **Advocate for the use of dance classes to reduce risk of cardiovascular diseases across the population.** These may be offered directly in the community or via social prescribing. Dance locations should also be considered potential hubs for blood pressure checks, offering a less clinical experience that promotes positive health behaviours.
- 3) **Advocate for the use of artistic installations as a mechanism for increasing breast cancer screening take-up.** Creative Health may also have a place in supporting the mental wellbeing of those with cancer and their loved ones during difficult times.

Other Opportunities

- 1) MP's can join the new **All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Creative Health**, which will launch on 26th November 2024. At its first meeting, the APPG will elect the Officers, and set the agenda for the year ahead.
- 2) Creative Health is an opportunity that can have national impacts. Using the strengths and priorities of the local context, it would be great to hear more MP's **advocating for Creative Health within parliament** to ensure developments are being made and understood across the systems.
- 3) **Site visits to local Creative Health practitioners**, and accompanying press releases, can be a great way of improving public awareness of Creative Health opportunities near them. This is encouraged wherever possible.

To find out more about the evidence on Creative Health and our cross governmental recommendations, visit: <https://ncch.org.uk/creative-health-review>

References

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