



## Creative health in dementia pathways

The number of people diagnosed with dementia in the UK is expected to rise from almost 1m to 1.6m by 2040.<sup>1</sup> The total cost of dementia care in the UK is £34.7bn and is expected to triple by 2040.<sup>2</sup>

There is a very strong body of evidence detailing the benefits of creative health for people living with dementia and in preventing cognitive decline. Including creative health in dementia pathways therefore has a vital role to play in reducing demand on services and building a sustainable health and social care system.

### Examples of evidence

- Community-based participatory arts activities provide benefits for people living with dementia<sup>3</sup>
- The verbal fluency of dementia patients is improved via music therapy. Anxiety, depression, and apathy are also significantly reduced<sup>4</sup>
- Having a hobby, reading books, dancing and other creative activities such as painting, sewing or playing music have been linked to increased intellectual functioning, reduced cognitive decline, and lowered incidence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease over periods of up to 20 years<sup>5</sup>
- £149 million is saved every year because of how movement and dance reduce the risk of developing dementia<sup>6</sup>

### Creative health in practice

Manchester Camerata has been delivering its award-winning Music in Mind programme for people living with dementia and their carers since 2012. It works in residential care homes and community hubs to provide people living with dementia with the opportunity to engage in meaningful activity and explore their creativity.

The programme has been developed with music therapists and specialist musicians from the orchestra. In weekly sessions, people living with dementia and their carers are invited to explore different ways of interacting with music and musical instruments.

The sessions have been found to help people to express themselves, communicate with others, reduce frustration and enable new connections to be made.

In order to spread and scale the programme, a franchise model has been established. Care home staff, or volunteers and carers can be trained as music champions who can implement the programme using pre-recorded backing music. The music champions are supported by professional musicians and music therapists, with access to a range of online tools and materials to help them sustain their own sessions and groups.



For the full story of this initiative see page 77 of the Creative Health Review [ncch.org.uk/creative-health-review](https://ncch.org.uk/creative-health-review)

## Where next?

The NCCH has worked in partnership with NHS England to develop a **Creative Health Toolkit**. It includes examples of how creative health can be used in dementia pathways:

- [Across the Life Course](#)

Practical strategies for introducing creative health in specific health pathways

- [Implementing creative health in specific health pathways](#)

## The National Centre for Creative Health

NCCH supports health and care sector professionals in organisations and systems to achieve the benefits of creative health approaches for patients and service users.

We publish a monthly newsletter especially created for professionals working across health and care. Please do [subscribe here](#) and/or share with colleagues working across Primary Care, Provider Trusts, ICBs, Public Health, Social Care and across the NHS, so they can access the latest news for creative health!

--- END OF DOWNLOAD ---

i

---

## References

<sup>1</sup> Alzheimer's Society (2019) What are the costs of dementia care in the UK? Available from: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-scale-impact-numbers>

<sup>2</sup> Alzheimer's Society (2019) What are the costs of dementia care in the UK? Available from: <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/policy-and-influencing/dementia-scale-impact-numbers>

<sup>3</sup> Ward MC et al. (2021) 'The benefits of community-based participatory arts activities for people living with dementia: a thematic scoping review', Arts & Health, 13(3), pp. 213–239. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2020.1781217>

<sup>4</sup> Lam HL, Li WTV, Laher I, Wong RY. Effects of Music Therapy on Patients with Dementia—A Systematic Review. Geriatrics. 2020 September. 25;5(4):62. DOI: 10.3390/geriatrics5040062 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32992767/>

<sup>5</sup> Bone JK & Fancourt D. (2022) Arts Culture & the Brain: A literature review and new epidemiological analyses. Arts Council England. Available from: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/arts-culture-brain>

<sup>6</sup> Boardman R, Balfour A, Farmer C, Hopkins S, Stamp K. Social Value of Movement and Dance. Sport + Recreation Alliance; 2023 February. Available from: <https://sramedia.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/f393c7e4-5096-499a-9723-60824b6629ac.pdf>