



Creative health in practice in integrated care systems

Creative health is already embedded in the work of integrated care systems (ICSs) across the country. They demonstrate that when ICSs work in partnership with grassroots providers at a neighbourhood level they can deliver the vital shifts from hospital to community and from sickness to prevention.

Examples of evidence

- A social prescribing programme commissioned by the NHS to improve wellbeing and reduce hospital admissions for people living with a long-term condition in deprived areas of Newcastle reported improvements in wellbeing for 86% of participants over the first six years and a 27% reduction in secondary care costs per patient¹
- A creative health programme commissioned by East Suffolk and North East Essex NHS Foundation Trust helped participants with health challenges including Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue and those recovering from cancer, surgery and chronic illness²
- Creative research methods helped South East London ICB's population health team understand the barriers to accessing maternity and neonatal services for migrant women – and co-design solutions³

Creative health in practice

To support Gloucestershire ICB's action plan to reduce inappropriate prescribing of high-strength painkillers, patients can be referred to the Living Well with Chronic Pain creative programme, which is run by Artlift.

Sessions were co-produced with researchers, pain management specialists, NHS Gloucestershire ICB chronic pain managers and people with lived experience of chronic pain as part of NHS Gloucestershire's Test and Learn Programme. Programmes include activities such as crafting, music, painting, creative writing, dance and puppet making. Patients can self-refer or be referred by any professional working with people with chronic pain.

In 2022-23, 96% of participants in the programme reported a statistically meaningful improvement in general wellbeing. There was an average 16% increase in ability to self-manage pain. Over two years, 37% reported a decrease in GP attendance.

The programme is commissioned by the ICB via the Gloucestershire Creative Health Consortium, which brings together several long-standing creative health providers, including Artlift, to offer a range of creative health programmes for diverse target populations. The NHS has invested in the establishment and running of the consortium, and benefits from the simplification of commissioning creative health.

For the full story of this initiative see page 27 of the 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**. The Creative Health Toolkit supports ICSs to embed creative health. It is the result of work by NCCH, NHS England and Gloucestershire, West Yorkshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Systems to explore models for integrating creative health at a systems level.

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

1 Case, T. (2021) Ways to Wellness: The First Six Years - Approach, Findings and Learning. Available

from: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/64665b7558ac0f2d36bb200d/t/657f10c66dc53a2353611d00/1702826187824/WtW+the+First+Six+Years+Full+Report.pdf>

2 Cohere Arts. Creative Space. Available from: <https://coherearts.org/creativespace/>

3 National Centre for Creative Health. Creative Health Toolkit: Example of: Understanding barriers to accessing maternity services for migrant women. Available from: <https://creativehealthtoolkit.org.uk/illustrative-examples/example-of-understanding-barriers-to-accessing-maternity-services-for-migrant-women>