

Our First Three Years

Programmes, activities & achievements
(2021-2024)



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Creative Health Illustrations: © David Shrigley

Foreword

A message from our Director and Chair



This Impact Report covers the first three years of the National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH).

It sits alongside our annual reports to the Charity Commission which include our financial accounts and can be seen on the [Charity Commission website](#).

Having registered the NCCH as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in July 2020, our founding trustees, Lord Howarth of Newport, Professor Helen Chatterjee and Bill Boa, guided the organisation through to the appointment of the full board. In July 2024, Lord Howarth stood down as Chair of the NCCH and we welcomed our new Chair, Professor Martin Marshall. Lord Howarth is now the Honorary President of the organisation and continues to support the field of creative health through his work within parliament. I would like to express my deep-felt gratitude for his commitment, leadership and guidance since we first met in 2012 and for his dedication to advancing the field of creative health over more than 30 years.

As a small charity with a national role, our partnerships are crucial. We are closely aligned with the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance and the Lived Experience Network, the LENS, whose members across the country help ground our work in the everyday reality of practitioners and participants. We continue to learn about how we can best develop our work with people with lived experience. Our research partnership with UKRI, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and University College London, through the Mobilising Community Assets Research Programme, is a valuable route to developing the evidence base to the benefit of everyone involved in this complex ecosystem.

This report outlines the main strands of our work, including our Hubs, Hives and Huddles programmes and our research and policy activities, and maps them against our organisational objectives. It demonstrates the breadth of networks and partnerships we have built up over the past three years, and the progress we have made together in embedding creative health into health, social care and wider systems. It highlights our key achievements over this three-year period, and sets out how we will build on this in 2024/25.

I hope you find it useful and interesting!

Alexandra Coulter
Director NCCH

The National Centre for Creative Health is delighted to present a summary of our impact for the period from our launch in March 2021 to the end of July 2024.

Throughout this time the NCCH was chaired by my predecessor, Lord Howarth of Newport, and we are deeply grateful for the remarkable contribution he has made to the field of creative health over many years.

We are extremely grateful to our core funders, Oak Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation and to our project funders, Arts Council England, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and The Baring Foundation. We are also grateful to our NHS funders, including NHS England, NHS Gloucestershire and NHS West Yorkshire.

My heartfelt thanks go to our Board of Trustees for their selfless contribution to our work, as well as to our Advisory Group, our Creative Health Champions and our Special Interest Groups. Most importantly I want to thank our Director Alex Coulter for her leadership and passion, and our hardworking and talented staff, Alexis Butt, our General Manager; Hannah Waterson, our Research and Policy Manager; Jayne Howard, our Creative Health Associates Programme Manager; and Sarah Holmes, our Finance Officer.



This report outlines our achievements in promoting the benefits of creative health for the health and wellbeing of the population. We are proud of what we have done so far and hope you are inspired to contribute to our work.

Professor Martin Marshall CBE
Chair, NCCH



This report outlines our achievements in promoting the benefits of creative health for the health and wellbeing of the population. We are proud of what we have done so far and hope you are inspired to contribute to our work.

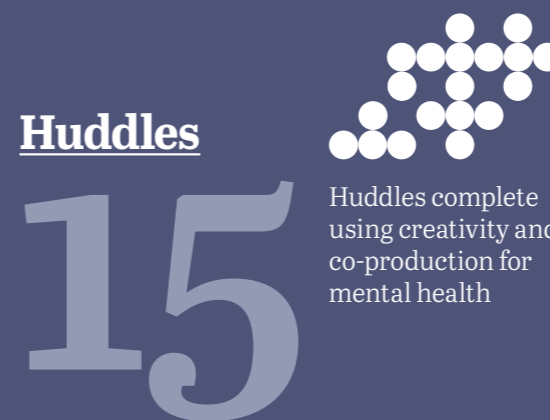
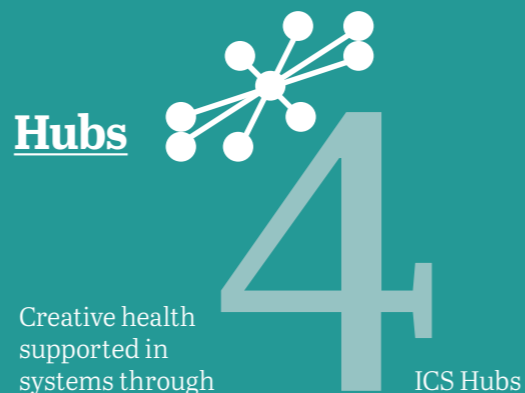
2021-2024 At a Glance

Our Key Achievements

Since our establishment in 2021, we have developed programmes and workstreams that help us in our mission to advance good practice and research, inform policy and promote collaboration, helping to foster the conditions for creative health to be integral to health, social care and wider systems.

We have built networks and special interest groups for those working with creative health and advocated for creative health through our website, social media channels and webinars and at events and conferences.

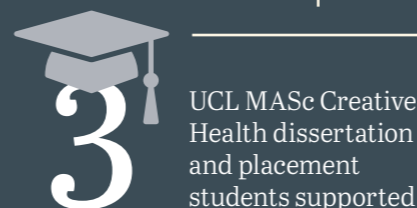
Our work with places and systems has expanded from targeted work in four Integrated Care System (ICS) Hubs to the Creative Health Associates programme, which places a dedicated creative health post in an ICS of each region of England. We have developed resources to support the implementation of creative health in practice and policy. Key outputs include the Creative Health Toolkit, developed in partnership with NHS England, which supports systems to incorporate creative health and the Creative Health Review, which sets out how creative health can help policymakers to address pressing policy challenges.



Advocating for Creativity for Healthy Lives



Advancing Good Practice

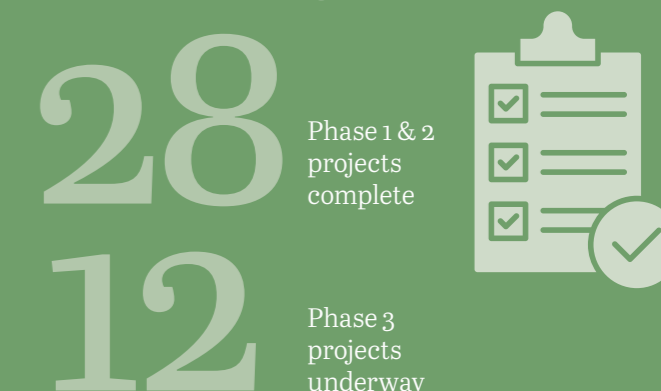


Informing Policy



 Review sent to all relevant government departments

Research – Mobilising Community Assets research programme



About Us

Our Vision – Creativity for Healthy Lives

The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH) was established in 2021 in response to a recommendation in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts Health and Wellbeing report 'Creative Health', published in 2017. This called for the establishment of a strategic centre for creative health at national level. Read more about the history of creative health here: <https://ncch.org.uk/blog/creative-health-development-a-blog-by-our-ncch-director>.

Our mission is:



To advance good practice and research, inform policy and promote collaboration, helping to foster the conditions for creative health to be integral to health, social care and wider systems.

What is Creative Health?

We define creative health as creative activities and approaches that benefit our health and wellbeing. Activities can include visual and performing arts, crafts, film, literature, cooking and creative activities in nature such as gardening. Approaches include creative and innovative ways to approach health and care services, co-production, education and workforce development.

Creative health can be applied in homes, communities, cultural institutions, heritage sites and healthcare settings.

Creative health contributes to the prevention of ill health, promotion of healthy behaviours, management of long-term conditions and treatment and recovery across the life course.

Our Target Audiences

Our key audiences are leaders in Integrated Care Systems and their constituent healthcare providers and local authorities who can embed creative health into their service provision. We also work with primary care, social prescribing link workers and other health networks to promote creative health.

We advocate with national and regional policymakers, research councils and funders to foster the conditions for creative health to be embedded in systems and work with academics and researchers to ensure our approach is rooted in evidence.

We produce resources that are relevant to creative health and other creative and cultural providers, the wider voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, and people with lived experience of creative health to help them to make the case for creative health with their own networks.

Working Collaboratively

We work closely with other organisations to achieve our goals. We have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance, the membership organisation for creative health, and the Lived Experience Network, a network of people who have experienced the benefits of creative health in their own lives and ensure that voices of lived experience remain at the centre of the movement.

We are a key partner on the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities research programme, working closely with the research team at University College London.



Our Workstreams, Objectives and Theory of Change

Since the launch of NCCH in 2021 we have established several programmes of work helping us to move towards our vision of creativity for healthy lives.

These programmes fall into three workstreams – Hubs (our work with places and systems to integrate creative health into health and social care systems), Hives (our cross-sectoral partnership work) and Huddles (smaller-scale pilot projects using creativity to facilitate co-production in mental health). We have further identified six key objectives in line with our mission.

Our reporting for 2021-2024 has outlined the activities we have carried out in our first three years and measured our progress towards our key objectives.

Our Theory of Change sets out how these activities link to our longer-term goals and our mission to foster the conditions for creative health to be integral to health, social care and wider systems.

Hubs

Our work with systems and places



Hives

Partnerships and collaborations



Huddles

Co-production and creativity



Facilitating Integrated Approaches across Health and Social Care

Promoting Collaboration and Partnership and Developing Co-production

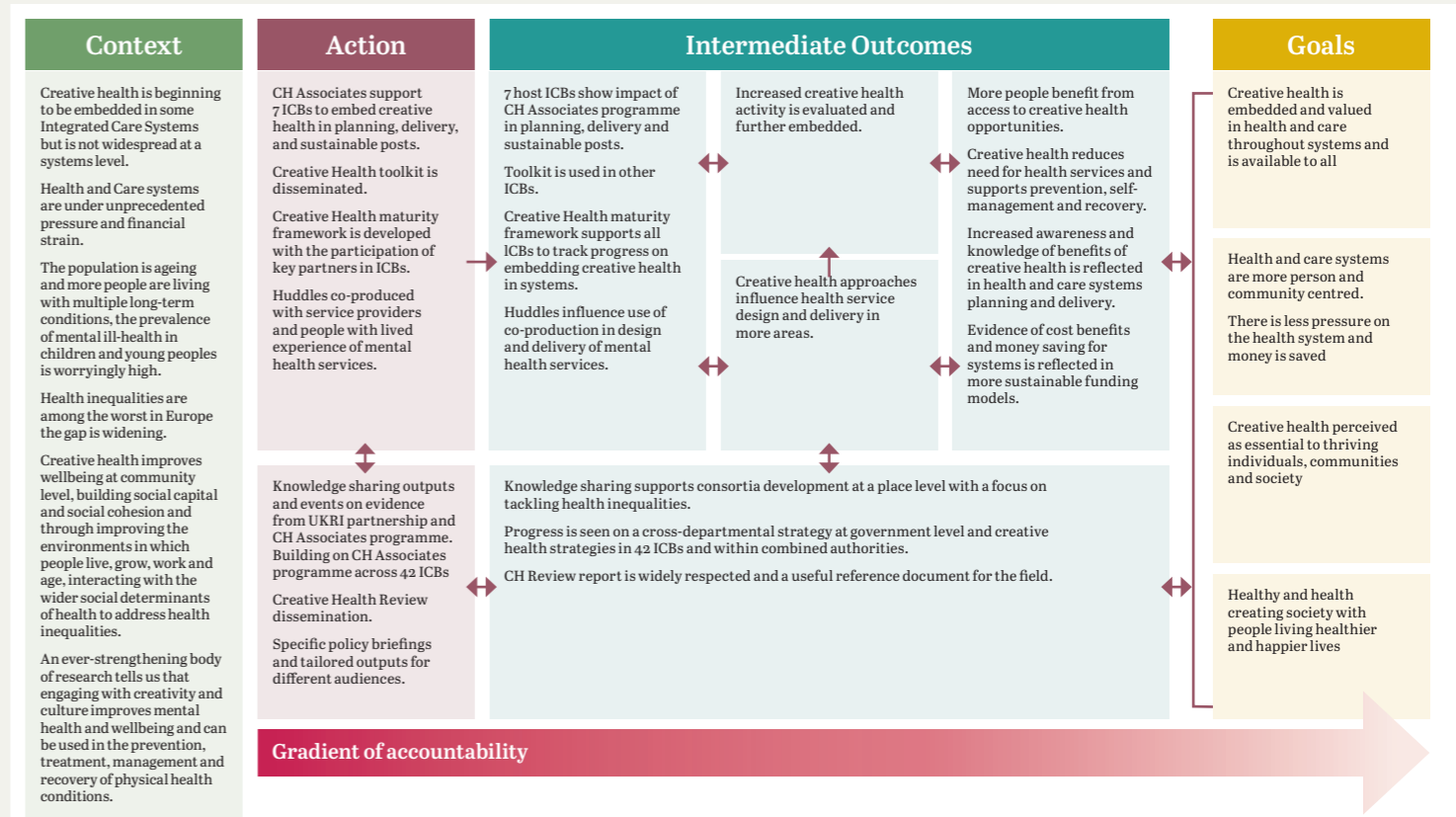
Advancing Good Practice (including Lived Experience)

Advocating for the Value of Creativity for Healthy Lives

Informing Policy

Influencing and Disseminating Research

NCCH Theory of Change



Our Programmes

We work to create the conditions for creative health to thrive through several programmes that allow us to reach into health systems across the county.

Explore our interactive map online to find out more about where we work: <https://ncch.org.uk/ncch-programmes-map>



SING YOUR SONG

● **Creative Health Associates Programme**

With the support of Arts Council England, seven Creative Health Associates are hosted by Integrated Care Boards, one in each NHS region.

■ **Creative Health Hubs**

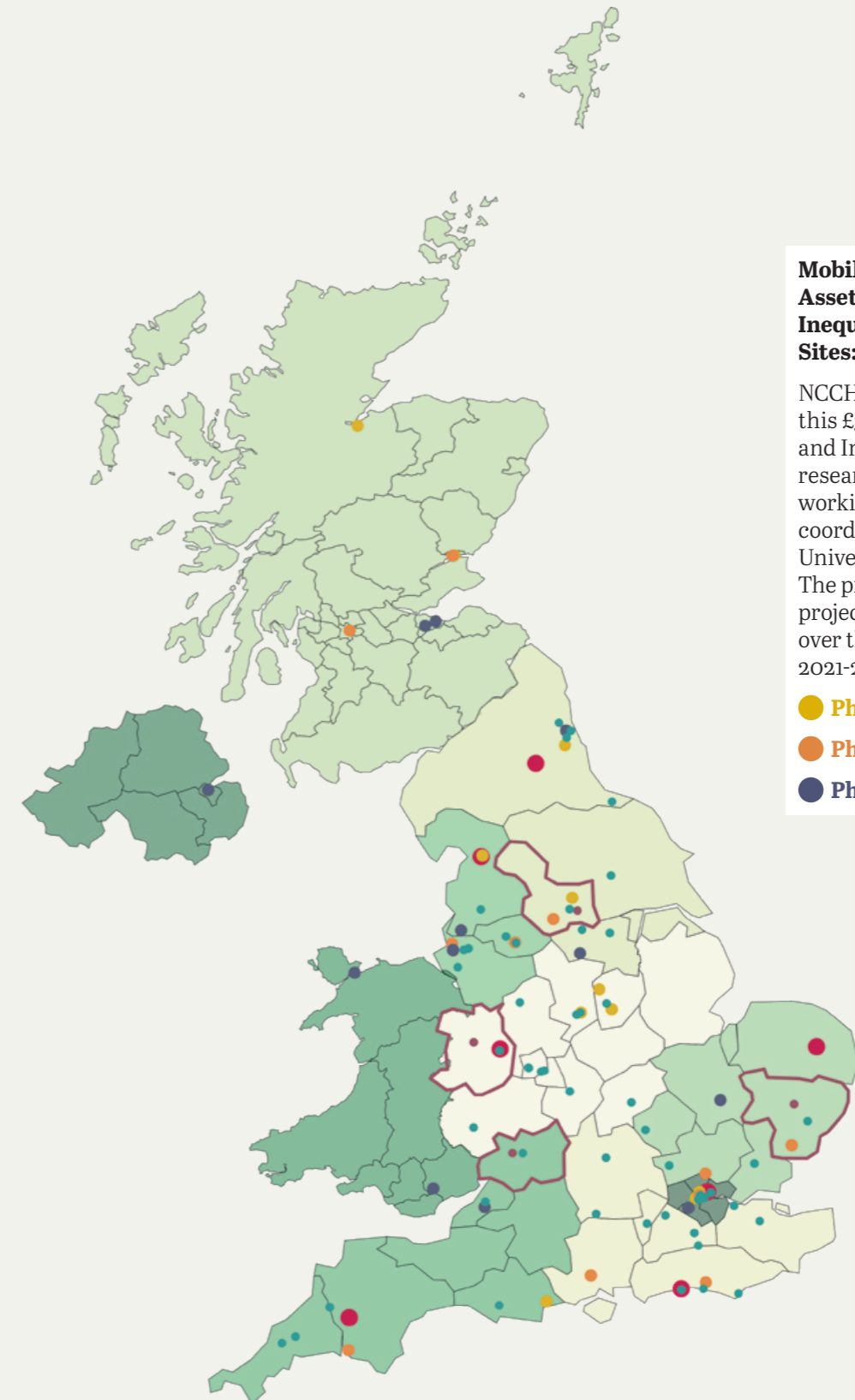
Supported by NHS England, researchers were embedded in four Integrated Care Systems to explore models for integrating creative health.

● **Creative Health Huddles**

Interdisciplinary learning activities for small groups to explore co-production with creativity and lived experience at the heart, supported by The Baring Foundation.

● **Creative Health Champions**

A network of senior, board-level leaders from Integrated Care Boards, local authorities, NHS trusts and other health providers.



Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities Project Sites:

NCCH is a partner on this £30m UK Research and Innovation-funded research programme, working closely with the coordinating team at University College London. The programme funds projects across the UK over three phases from 2021-2027

- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3



Hubs

Our work with systems and places

A key objective as we work towards our mission to create the conditions for creative health to be embedded in health, social care and wider systems is to work with systems and places to understand how creative health can be better integrated and to share this learning across systems.

Integrated Care System (ICS) Hubs (2021-2023)

Our place-based work began with four Integrated Care System Creative Health Hubs:

- Gloucestershire
- Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
- Suffolk and North East Essex
- West Yorkshire

This work, supported by NHS England, aimed to explore models for integrating creative health through researchers embedded in the systems. It has been cited in West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board Joint Forward Plan and led to further investment in creative health research, whilst Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board has also made a long-term commitment to creative health. The research from this programme informs the Creative Health Toolkit.

The Creative Health Toolkit – Supporting systems to work with their communities and to develop their approach to creative health strategies

Building on the work in the four ICS Hubs, a Creative Health Toolkit was developed in partnership with NHS England Personalised Care Team. The aim of the toolkit is to embed the benefits of creativity in all health and social care systems, from ICS planning to delivery by grassroots organisations. It will support commissioners, link workers and the voluntary community social enterprise sector to work collaboratively and deliver better health outcomes for communities and individuals.

Since its launch in January 2024 the toolkit:

- has been introduced at 7 regional webinars for ICS and NHS audiences, attended by 294 people
- has been viewed over 15,000 times

The Creative Health Toolkit is available at <https://creativehealthtoolkit.org.uk/>

Watch a video introduction to the toolkit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnocvYr_b7w

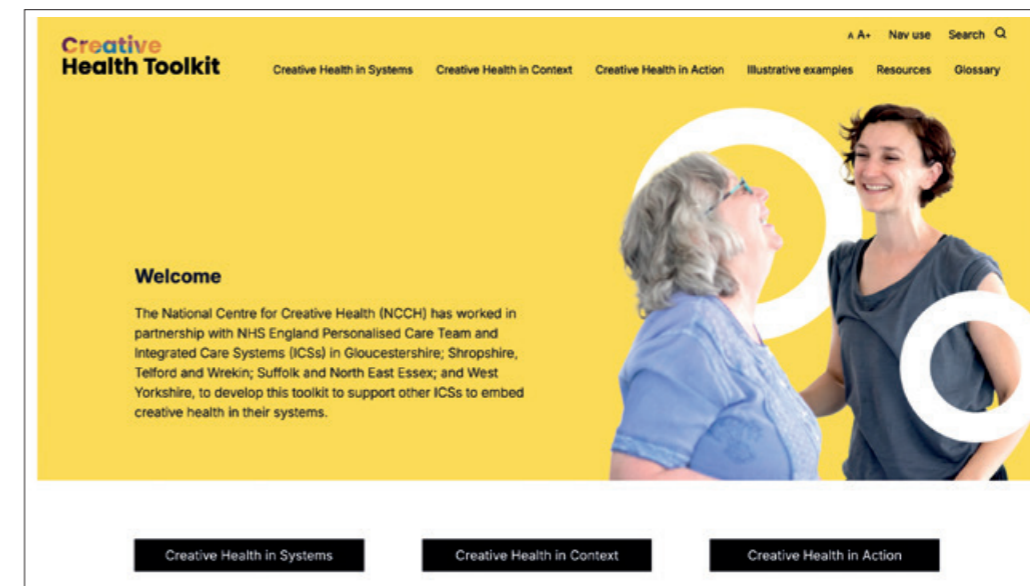


The Creative Health Toolkit is an excellent starting point for anyone looking to develop a creative health response. The creation of a Creatively Healthy Communities Framework for Northumberland is a prime example of how the advice on Creative Health in Systems has the potential to shape a robust response to the challenges faced by the health and social care system.”

Michael Cunliffe, Creative Health Strategic Manager, Northumberland County Council & North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Next Steps

The toolkit is designed as an iterative tool, to which systems can contribute their own illustrative examples. Our aim is for more ICSs to make use of the toolkit, facilitating more creative health activity and further embedding creative health into systems.





Creative Health Champions Network

Creative Health Champions are senior, board-level leaders from Integrated Care Boards, local authorities, NHS trusts and other health providers. They are an important network for supporting the delivery of our partnership work with NHS England and ICSs to embed creative health at a systems, place and neighbourhood level.

The network has grown over the past three years to include 80 Champions, based in 31 of 42 ICSs. The Champions Network meets three times a year and NCCH has hosted 10 champions meetings to date.

“

If you believe in the importance of the wider determinants of health and people needing control over their health and wellbeing, creative health is a no-brainer. As a Champion, in my role as Chief Medical Officer of our ICB I can convene senior and influential leaders across Health and Care, Greater London Authority and local authorities to connect, advocate for and enable creative health to meet the needs of our communities.”

Dr Paul Gilluley, Chief Medical Officer, NHS North East London

Update from Dr Jane Povey, Creative Health Champions Chair

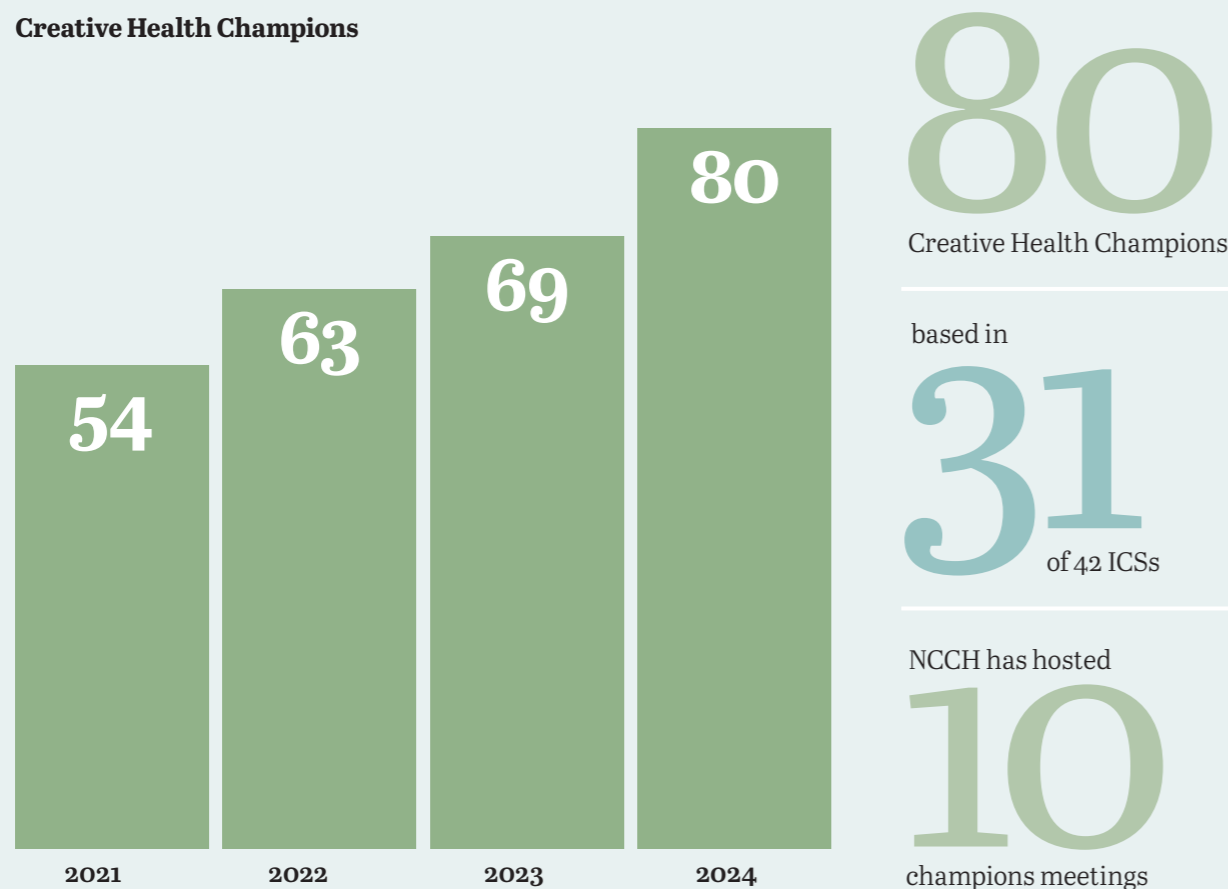
“Our Champions network has been going from strength to strength, connecting, inspiring and enabling members in their endeavours to embed creative health in health and care settings and communities across the country.

Recognising the ever-changing landscape in which we operate, we continue to recruit Champions with the aim of including senior and influential leaders from all parts of every ICS. Local authority leadership, including public health, social care and those working at place are core to understanding how creative health can address

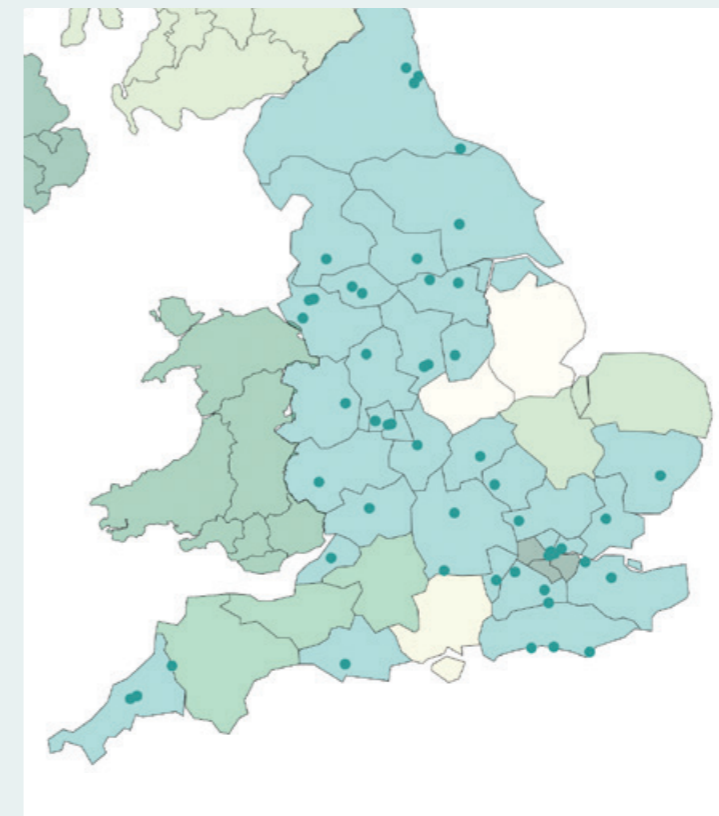
the needs of local populations and tackle health inequalities. Champions from Integrated Care Boards and health and care providers are exploring opportunities for creative health in services e.g. Social Prescribing, Mental Health, Children’s Services and Major Conditions Strategies, using the principles of Personalised Care.

Champions connect, share ideas, and celebrate what is working well, thereby offering mutual support to enable us to continue to advocate for creative health with a confident, collective voice.”

Creative Health Champions



Creative Health Champions in 31 ICSs



Next Steps

Champions are exploring how they can collectively contribute to what they feel are priority areas:

- Workforce Wellbeing
- Strategy Development
- Supporting the next phase of the Creative Health Associates programme, achieving the vision of each ICS having a network of Champions and a creative health lead



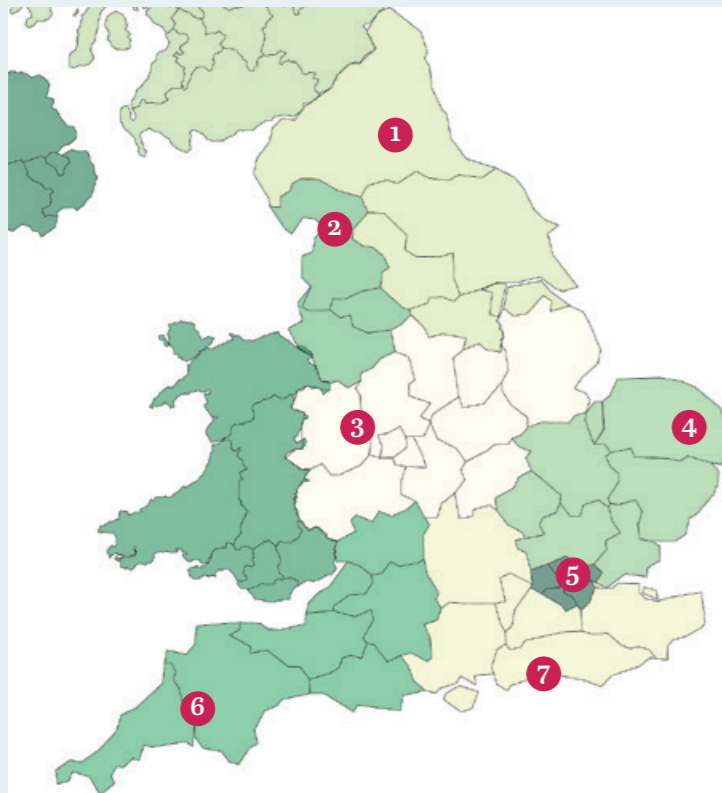
Creative Health Associates Programme

With the support of Arts Council England, we are delivering the Creative Health Associates Programme with seven Creative Health Associates hosted by an Integrated Care Board (ICB) in each NHS region. The programme will foster links between the culture and health and social care sectors and will support ICBs to embed creative health into planning and delivery.

“*Our CHA 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

Creative Health Associates hosted by seven ICBs



- 1 North East & Yorkshire Region – North East & North Cumbria ICB
- 2 North West Region – Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB
- 3 Midlands Region – Shropshire Telford & Wrekin ICB
- 4 East of England Region – North Norfolk & Waveney ICB
- 5 London Region – North East London ICB
- 6 South West Region – Devon ICB
- 7 South East Region – Sussex ICB

Creative Health Associates programme aims (2023-2025):

- Improved understanding about potential cultural sector contribution at neighbourhood, place and systems level within health and social care
- A range of signposting and learning opportunities to improve cultural sector understanding and engagement in health and wellbeing activity
- Mapping of key providers, provisions, networks, delivery partners and decision-makers across each region
- Sharing intelligence and knowledge and facilitating the development of relationships between cultural and health professionals and organisations
- Collation of useful and usable datasets to inform local planning and support meaningful, well-targeted delivery
- Support in embedding social prescribing across the cultural sector
- Develop a Creative Health Maturity Framework for use in place-based working with ICSs

“*The CHA role has been pivotal in driving forward the conversation on creative health and pushing this important agenda forward, resulting in a burgeoning partnership between the ICB, local authority, the voluntary, faith and community sector and the creative health sector.*”

Ellie Hobart, Deputy Director Health Inclusion and Improvement, North East London ICB

A progress report from Jayne Howard, Creative Health Associates Programme Manager

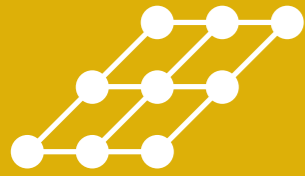
“The focus for the work of the Creative Health Associates over this period was on building relationships with key individuals and teams within health and social care systems (For example, Chief Medical Officers of ICBs, Directors of Public Health, Primary Care Network Leads etc.) and introducing them to creative health and its potential to have a positive impact on their priorities.

We have also hosted webinars and events aimed at improving the knowledge and understanding of creative health within the health and care system and inputting into training and professional development of both creative and health practitioners. We have established a Creative Health forum on the Future NHS Collaborative Platform, to share resources and information, showcase creative health programmes and provide a space for NHS colleagues to discuss creative health. By July 2024 there were 105 workspace members and it had 505 views in the period from April to June 2024.

The next stage of the programme will concentrate on consolidating this progress and supporting creative health in systems through the development of Creative Health Strategies, inclusion of creative health in existing health strategies and the establishment of creative health committees and networks.”

Next Steps

Creative Health Associates are in post until Spring 2025, and an independent evaluation will highlight the successes and key learning from the programme. We hope a second phase of the programme will embed creative health posts in more ICSs.



HIVES

Partnerships and Collaboration

We have built a strong network of cross-sectoral relationships. Central to this is a Memorandum of Understanding with the Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA) and Lived Experience Network (LENs) and a research partnership with the University College London (UCL) Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities programme.

Our collaborative approach has resulted in several joint events and webinars, helping us to bring creative health to a wider audience. We join CHWA and London Arts and Health annually for Creativity and Wellbeing Week. Other highlights include:

2022

- All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing and NCCH Webinar ‘Young People, Co-production, Creativity and Mental Health Services’
- The Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan Call for Evidence – Public information session with CHWA and LENs
- NCCH x RCOT – Royal College of Occupational Therapists x National Centre for Creative Health Webinar

2023

- Global Consultation on Arts Practice and Ethics of Care – with World Health Organisation, New York University and Jameel Arts and Health Lab
- Royal Society for Public Health and Faculty of Public Health joint seminar series on Creative Health
- Mental Health networking event with The Baring Foundation leading to further work with the National Arts In Hospitals Network

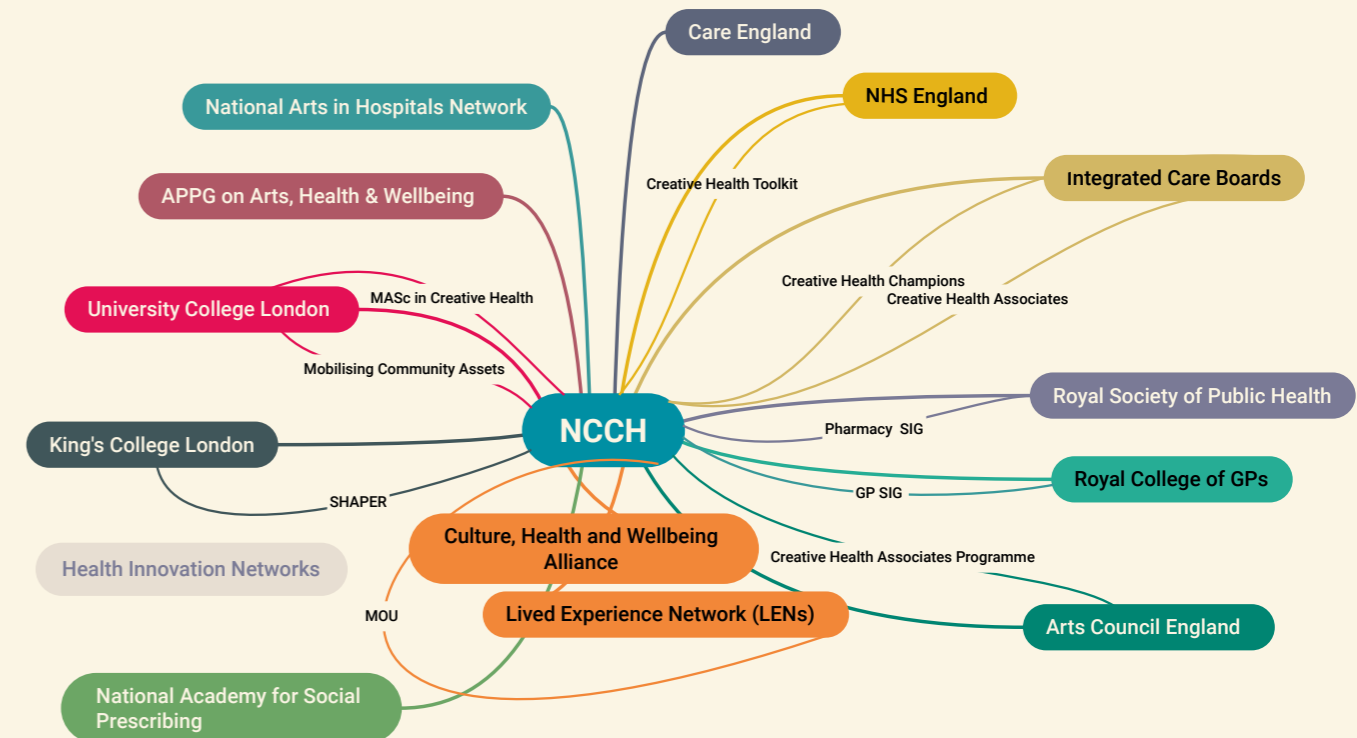
2024

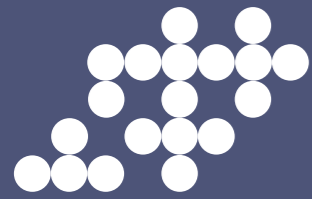
- SHAPER (King’s College London) – Collaborating to scale & implement established arts and health programmes

Next Steps

We will continue to develop new relationships and joint initiatives with organisations with similar aims, including think tanks and research organisations.

NCCH Partnerships





Huddles

Co-production and Creativity

Developing Co-production

NCCH was awarded funding from The Baring Foundation to pilot a programme of Huddles across the UK, focusing on co-production using creativity in healthcare settings with a particular focus on mental health.

Creative Health Huddles are interdisciplinary learning activities for small groups to explore co-production, with creativity and lived experience at the heart.

15 huddles have been completed:

- Gloucestershire
- South West Yorkshire
- Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin
- East Suffolk and North Essex
- Liverpool x2
- Tees Valley
- Birmingham
- Chelmsford
- Blackburn with Darwen
- Black Country
- Derby
- Leicester and Nottingham
- Torbay
- Devon

Find out more about our huddles here: <https://ncch.org.uk/huddles>



Left: Visual illustration of 'A Heart Shaped Place' event in Gloucestershire by Sharon Harvey

Example Huddle: Peri-natal mental health services at South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

In Spring 2023, the NCCH worked with South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to co-produce more efficient referral routes to external projects and activities through the delivery of two sessions bringing together health visitors, peer support workers, health professionals, creative practitioners, and people with lived experience.

“

The Huddle sessions offered a non-judgemental space for staff, peer workers and artists and musicians to come together and discuss the current referral processes from perinatal mental health services to external arts activities... The sessions helped participants build relationships with one another and healthcare staff discussed the idea that now they had met the musicians and artists involved in some of the external projects, they could refer directly to them...The Huddle encouraged staff at the Trust to think about more long-term drop-in style creative engagement which might better fit patient needs”

South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust



Next Steps

Summary reports are being completed for each huddle. A new co-production programme for 2024-2025 will focus on young people's mental health. In preparation, two young researchers with lived experience will work with us to investigate the challenges and successes of the current programme and co-produce the next phase.

Left: South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Huddle

*Today we gather, huddled inside
To share something only company
can provide.*

*Pass the fabric, the willow, the pen
Pick up the materials and only then
Can we truly begin.*

*Busy hands can open mouths
Which opens hearts
Which lets us start
To work out how to heal,
Which steps to take as we reveal
What we need; with words and tone
And expression, working not alone
But together.*

What's important is we're here to talk....

But what do we talk about?

*Generic, yet specific
We don't dive into the horrific
The trauma, but it's referenced
Enough to see that our defences
Are lower.
There are periods of silence and still
That words don't need to fill —
There is closeness to the quiet, settled.
Sometimes we need noise, other time we
need the kettle
To be the only buzz
Because
We can say everything in the nothing.*

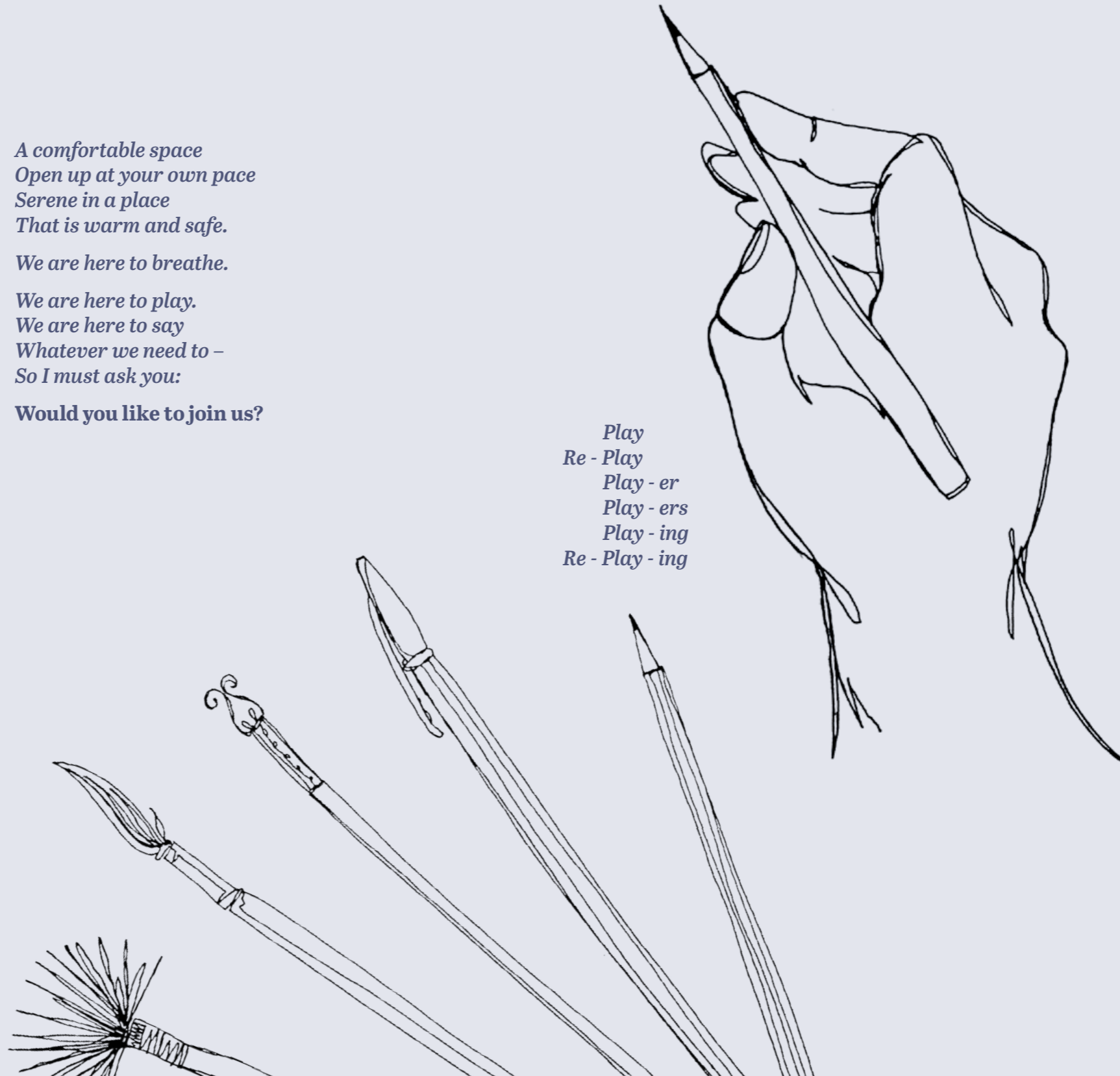
*A comfortable space
Open up at your own pace
Serene in a place
That is warm and safe.*

We are here to breathe.

*We are here to play.
We are here to say
Whatever we need to –
So I must ask you:*

Would you like to join us?

*Play
Re - Play
Play - er
Play - ers
Play - ing
Re - Play - ing*



Tees Valley Huddle

Working with the South Tees Health & Wellbeing Network, Tees Valley Arts were commissioned to deliver a creative programme to bring together those working in the mental health system, the voluntary and community sector frontline staff, creative facilitators and those with lived experience to make and share together.

The artist Lizzie Lovejoy reflected on the sessions and created a zine 'Portrait of a Wellness Worker' from which these images and poetry are taken.

Download the zine here:
<https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/page/Portrait-of-a-Wellness-Worker-Creative-Huddle-Zine-Final-Version.pdf>



Advancing Good Practice

At NCCH we want to ensure that good practice is embedded across a range of healthcare professions and in the cultural and Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector.

“

Meeting up with my tribe, a group with shared values, energy and direction”

GP SIG Annual Study Day feedback

“

The RCGP Creative Health SIG offers a space for GPs and primary care clinicians to connect, explore and inspire each other to embrace creativity for understanding the human and social justice dimensions of healthcare. This includes creative enquiry to re-humanise patients through person-centred thinking or creative health approaches to re-humanise ourselves enabling movement towards human flourishing.”

Louise Younie (GP SIG Chair), GP and Professor of Medical Education at Queen Mary University of London

Special Interest Groups

Our special interest groups provide a space for peer support and knowledge exchange for professional groups of healthcare professionals.

GP Special Interest Group

Supported by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), our GP SIG was established in 2021 to inspire and support GPs who have a special interest in creativity, and who advocate for creative health within General Practice. As of 2024, it has over 50 members.

The SIG provides a regular newsletter and hosts quarterly meetings as well as an Annual Study Day.

International Arts in Pharmacy Special Interest Group

The International Arts in Pharmacy Special Interest Group, established in 2023, is for pharmacy and other practitioners, educators, researchers, students, patients and carers interested in embedding creative thinking into pharmacy in the UK and globally. It already hosts 67 members and provides regular newsletters and meetings.

Training and Workforce Development

NCCH supports the UCL MAsc in Creative Health, a masters-level degree, addressing growing national and international interest in creative health. NCCH provides:

- Support for induction and teaching
- Student placements
- Hosting dissertation students
- Promotion of the course

Student dissertations

2022

“An investigation into how appropriate funding models can help build sustainable partnerships between business, communities and health organisations”
– Katherine Liddell

2023

“Exploring Occupational Therapist Engagement in Creative Health Practice”
– Sorcha Dunne

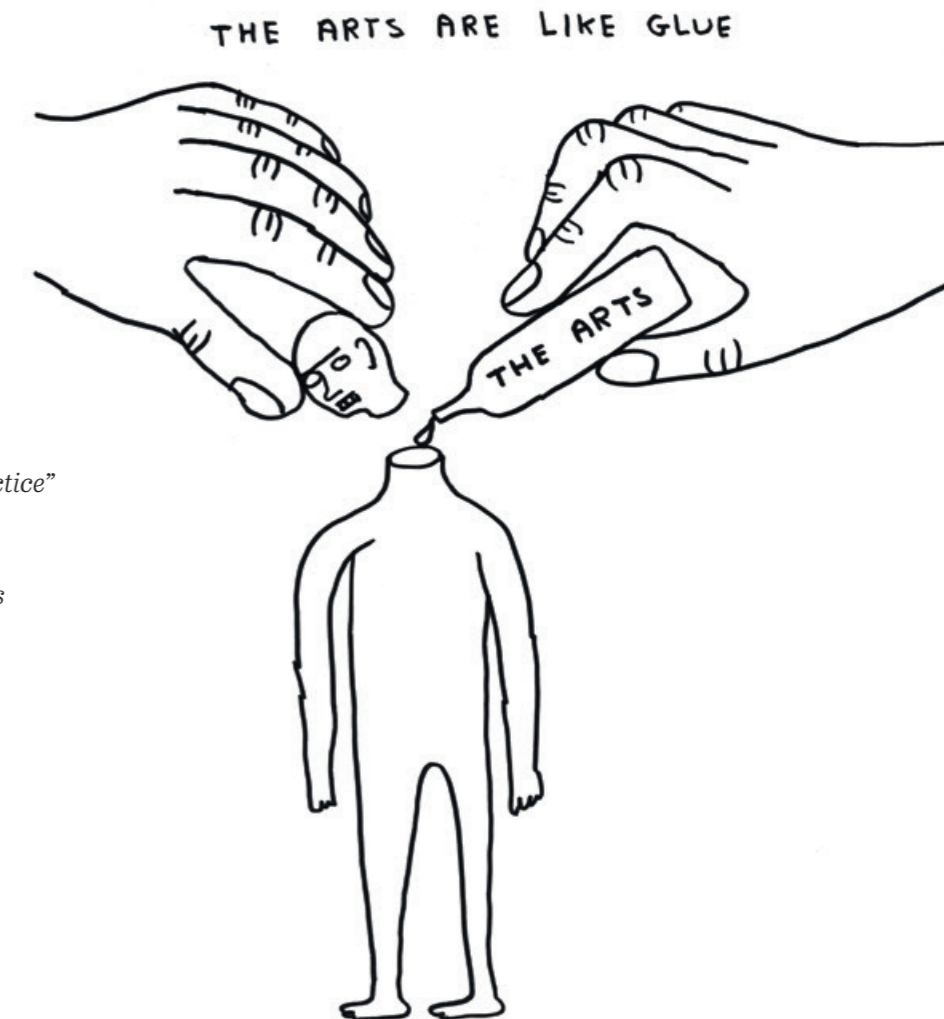
2024

“What are the Barriers and Enablers for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion within the Creative Health Sector?”
– Buse Kamber

“

Doing the dissertation was the first major piece of research I had done. I found it exciting and illuminating to do and am now trying to implement the recommendations”

Katherine Liddell, MAsc dissertation student



Embedding Lived Experience

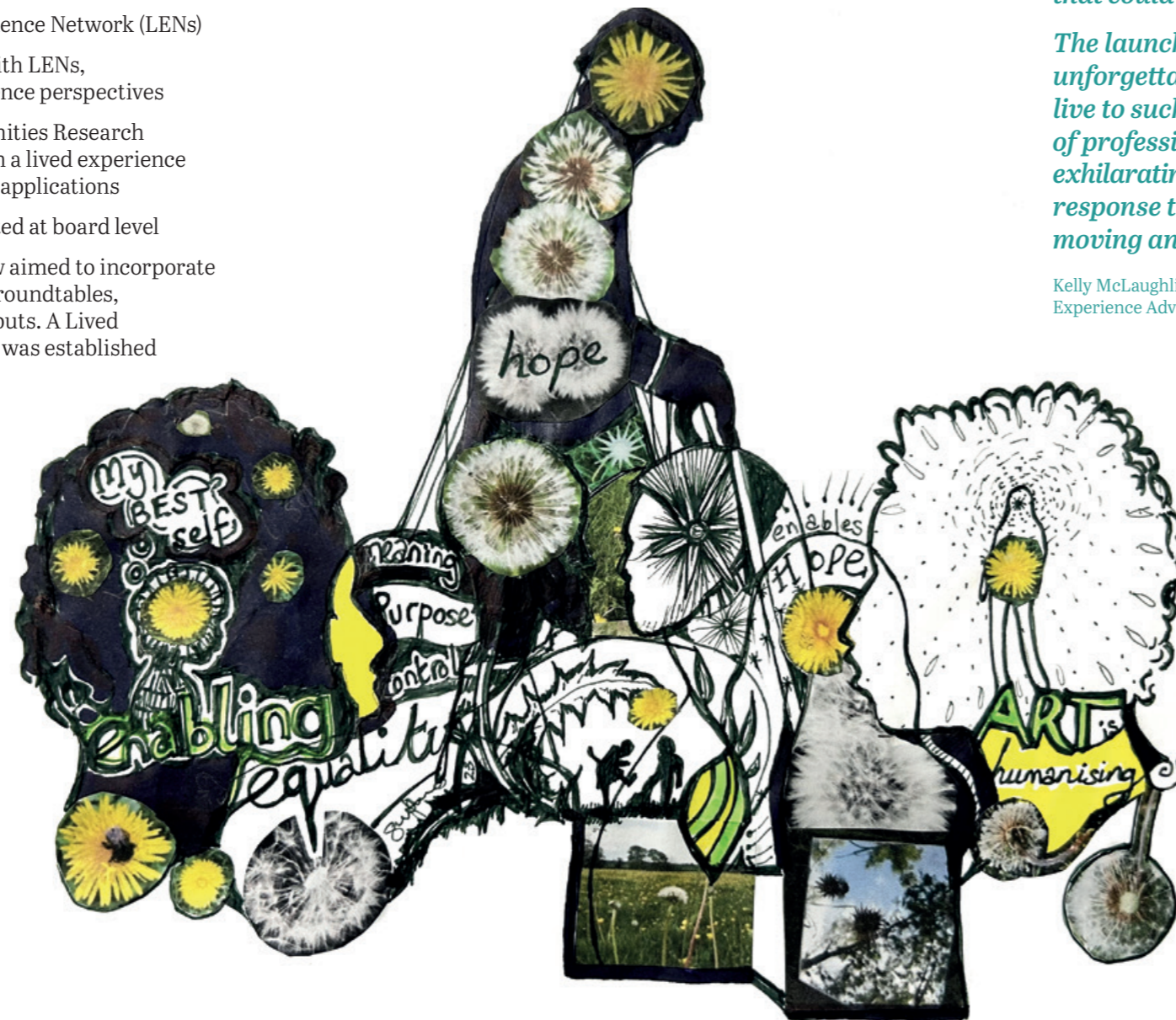
NCCH is committed to ensuring the voices of lived experience are represented across all our programmes and that our outputs are co-produced with those whose lives they will impact. In addition to the Huddles programme, which focuses on co-production with people with lived experience, some of the ways we have worked to achieve this include:

- Development of payment processes and policies for lived experience contribution
- MOU with the Lived Experience Network (LENs)
- Joint policy submissions with LENs, incorporating lived experience perspectives
- Work with Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to establish a lived experience review process for funding applications
- Lived experience represented at board level
- The Creative Health Review aimed to incorporate lived experience across its roundtables, recommendations and outputs. A Lived Experience Advisory Panel was established to inform the process.

Creative Health Review – Lived Experience Advisory Panel Creative Responses

As part of the Creative Health Review the NCCH commissioned a range of artists with their own lived experience to respond creatively to each of the Review's roundtable themes.

Explore all the creative responses on our website <https://ncch.org.uk/health-inequalities-creative-response>



“

I was deeply honoured to be invited to participate in the Creative Health Review. This wasn't just about the important work itself, but it signified that my voice was being heard and that I was surrounded by others who shared the same desire for positive change. It felt incredibly empowering to contribute to something that could truly make a difference.

The launch of the report was an unforgettable experience. Speaking live to such a distinguished audience of professionals was both surreal and exhilarating. The overwhelmingly positive response to my poem was incredibly moving and deeply appreciated.”

Kelly McLaughlin, Creative Health Review Lived Experience Advisory Panel member

Left: Mental Health Through the Life Course by Sue Flowers

Right: Kelly McLaughlin (Through My Eyes Photography) – Health Inequalities



Advocating for the Value of Creativity for Healthy Lives

Our long-term aim is that creativity is perceived as essential to thriving individuals, communities and society, and that everyone has access to creative and cultural activity to improve their health and wellbeing.

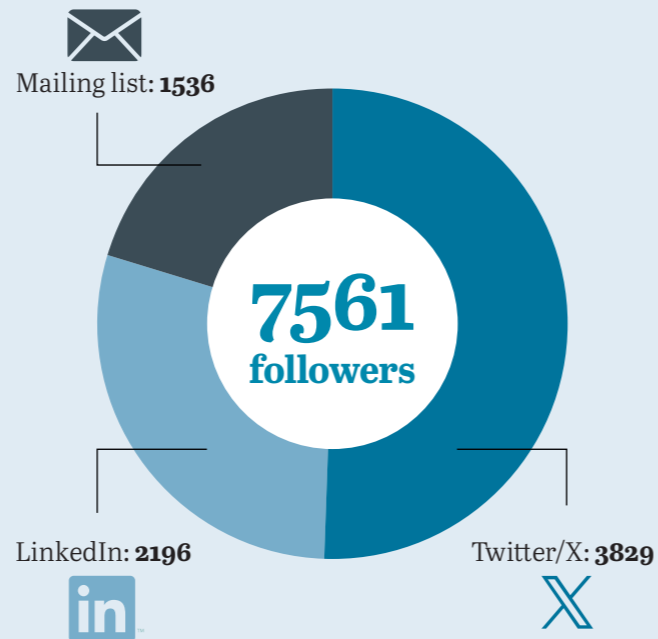
As well as our targeted work in systems and places and with policymakers, we create and share materials and information that are useful to creative health practitioners, healthcare professionals and the wider public to promote the benefits of creative health.

Our communications channels include our regular newsletters and blog posts, a growing social media following and attendance at events and conferences, raising awareness of creative health with a wider audience.

Communications

Through our social media and communications we reach a broad range of audiences.

- Our website receives an average 2000 views per month
- An average 22K per month see our posts on Twitter/X
- We have sent 27 newsletters to our networks (an average of 9 per year) and published 77 blogs and news items on our website



Our website receives an average

2000

views per month

An average

22K

per month see our posts on Twitter/X

We have sent

27

newsletters to our networks (an average of 9 per year) and published

77

blogs and news items on our website

Events and Conferences

We have presented at over 40 events and conferences both in the UK and internationally. Highlights include:

- Research Centre for Arts and Wellbeing launch, Edge Hill University (2023)
- Healthy Happy Places Webinar: Arts and creative placemaking, North East and North Cumbria AHSN (2023)
- BMJ/Institute for Healthcare Improvement International Forum on Quality and Safety in Healthcare (2024)
- Health Equity Network Monthly Webinar (2024) (leading to the development of a creative health working group)
- International Social Prescribing Conference, London (2024)

over

40

events and conferences

Informing Policy

NCCH works to inform policymakers at national and regional level about creative health, and how it can support them to address key policy areas. This includes our work supporting the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, producing briefings and responses to consultations, and representing creative health in decision-making forums.

Key themes

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Health Inequalities
- Social Care
- End of Life Care and Bereavement
- Creativity Health in the Education System
- Workforce Wellbeing and Development
- Cost-effectiveness, Evidencing Value for Money and Funding Models
- Leadership and Strategy – Embedding Creative Health in Integrated Care Systems

The Creative Health Review

In 2023-2024 our policy work focused on the Creative Health Review. The Review identifies current policy challenges and sets out how creative health can help to address them, summarising the evidence and examples of good practice, and exploring the issues in detail through a series of thematic public roundtable sessions.

The report ‘Creative Health Review – How Policy Can Embrace Creative Health’ was published in December 2023 and makes recommendations to government for a cross-departmental strategy on creative health.

“*Evidence shows that cultural and creative activities are good for mental and physical health. To reduce health inequalities, then, we need to create the conditions for the benefits of cultural and creative activities to be spread to all members of society*”

Professor Sir Michael Marmot

Commissioners

We were supported by a panel of expert commissioners who helped to inform our thinking and shape our recommendations.

Lord Alan Howarth of Newport CBE (Commission Chair)

Tracy Brabin

Madeleine Bunting

Tracey Crouch CBE

Dame Caroline Dinanage DBE

Monty Don OBE

Professor Ilorá Finlay, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

Dr Darren Henley CBE

Professor Sir Michael Marmot

Professor Martin Marshall CBE

Baroness Estelle Morris of Yardley

James Sanderson

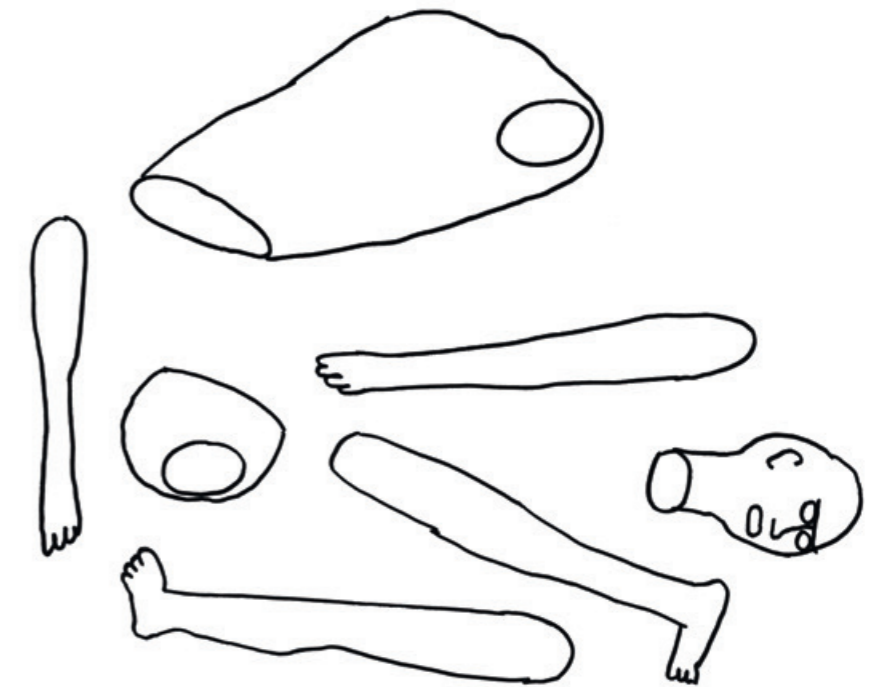
Rob Webster CBE

Alice Wiseman

Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey OBE

Key messages

- Creative health is fundamental to a healthy and prosperous society, and its benefits should be available and accessible to all.
- Creative health should form an integral part of a 21st-century health and social care system – one that is holistic, person-centred, and which focuses on reducing inequalities and supporting people to live well for longer.
- Creating the conditions for creative health to flourish requires a joined-up, whole-system approach incorporating health systems, local authorities, schools, and the cultural and VCSE sectors.



THE ARTS CAN RECONSTRUCT YOU

The Creative Health Review Informing Policy

The report has been sent to ministers and chief scientific officers of all relevant governmental departments as well as combined authority leaders. Responses were received from:

- Department for Education
- Ministry of Justice
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Read the Creative Health Review:
<https://nchc.org.uk/creative-health-review>

See a bitesize video summary of the Review:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8r7eRvMoVpw>



“

In response to the recently released national Creative Health Review, where the Mayor, Tracy Brabin and Rob Webster, CEO Lead for West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership were included as commissioners, West Yorkshire plans to build on the achievements of the Creative New Deal....The region will become a 'Creative Health System', which will drive forward a new focus on improving people's lives through creative initiatives designed to make people feel happier and become healthier.”

West Yorkshire HCP press release

Impact example: West Yorkshire – A Creative Health System

Led by two Creative Health Review commissioners, Rob Webster (CEO of West Yorkshire ICB) and Tracy Brabin (Mayor of West Yorkshire) West Yorkshire will put into practice the recommendations from the Review to establish a whole system approach to creative health across the region.

This builds on a long history of support for creative health, as well as work undertaken as an NCCH ICS Hub to explore the scalability of creative health within a system, and a Phase 2 Mobilising Community Assets project 'Creating Change' exploring how creative health can reach communities to address health inequalities.

The Creative Health Review in numbers

15

expert commissioners

10

commissioner meetings

760

views on YouTube

9

Lived Experience Advisory Panel Members

3

Lived Experience Advisory panel meetings

Report launch event attended online by

539

with

600

subsequent online views

65

submissions to a call for evidence

8

public roundtables featuring

79

panellists and attended by

1364

guests

Report viewed

12,908

times online

Next Steps

Advocacy will continue with a focus on the new government and combined authorities. Bespoke briefings will be produced for wider stakeholders, including ICS and healthcare leaders. Our longer-term aim is for the Review to become a widely respected and useful reference document for the field.

Representing creative health in policy discussions

NCCH in Parliament

In 2022, NCCH Chair Lord Howarth of Newport advocated for creative health during parliamentary debates around the introduction of the Health and Care Act (2022).

NCCH was further represented in policy discussions including:

- All-Party Parliamentary Group on Nature and Health – Roundtable on Nature and Health in the House of Commons
- Department of Culture, Media and Sport Culture and Heritage Capital Workshops

Consultations and Briefings

In addition to our work linked to the Creative Health Review, we have produced consultation responses and evidence summaries responding to government calls for evidence, often working with our colleagues at Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance and LENS. For example:

- Department of Health and Social Care – Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan Call for Evidence (2022)
- Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Inquiry – Reimagining where we live: Cultural placemaking and the Levelling Up Agenda (2022)
- Department of Health and Social Care – Hewitt Review Call for Evidence – An independent review of integrated care systems (2023)
- Health and Social Care Committee – Prevention in health and social care inquiry (2023)
- Department of Health and Social Care – Call for Evidence on a Major Conditions Strategy (2023)

Next Steps

We will continue to identify opportunities to advocate for creative health with the new government and to make the case for creative health with national, regional and local decision-makers, responding to consultations and producing resources which highlight how creative health can help them to meet their policy aims.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing will be reformed as the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Creative Health, inviting a new cohort of parliamentarians to support creative health in policy debates.

We will strengthen our relationship with creative health networks in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to share learning and support the integration of creative health across the devolved nations.

“

I am proposing that we should articulate a duty for Integrated Care Boards to embrace non-clinical practice in their whole way of working. By non-clinical practice, I am referring to a range of services and interventions that promote human flourishing, such as engagement with the arts and culture to stimulate the creative imagination, a healthy discovery of meaning, self and personal agency.”

The Right Honourable Lord Howarth of Newport CBE,
Health and Care Bill Debate, January 2022



Influencing and Disseminating Research

Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities (MCA)

NCCH is a partner on the £30m UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)-funded research programme Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities, working with the research team at University College London (UCL) to coordinate funded projects and generate programme-wide evidence.

The programme investigates how community assets such as museums, libraries, creative and community organisations, parks and waterways can be strategically integrated into healthcare systems to reduce health inequalities. It brings together different academic disciplines with partners from across health and social care, local authorities, community groups, people with lived experience, charities and policymakers.

Forty funded projects across the UK are producing evidence about the causes of inequalities, and how community assets can help to address them. They are exploring new collaborative models and ways of working through which community assets can be integrated into health systems and scaled up to address inequalities, as well as investigating the barriers and enablers of this approach.

“

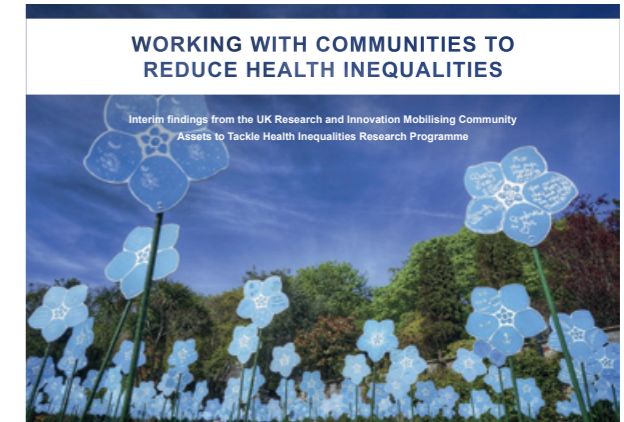
The evidence is clear – intellectual stimulation, a sense of purpose, engagement in your community and a fulfilling social life are as important as diet, exercise and medical care when it comes to living a long and healthy life. ... These projects seek to improve the length and quality of our lives by making use of the rich cultural, artistic, natural and social resources that already exist within our communities. In this way, we can shape a healthier, happier United Kingdom.”

Helen Chatterjee, Professor of Human & Ecological Health, UCL and AHRC Programme Director for Health Inequalities.

Phase 1 and 2 Key Outputs

- 721 organisations were involved in cross-sectoral partnerships from across academia, health, local government, culture, education, voluntary and community sectors.
- Over 16,000 people engaged with the programme through 460 events including, workshops, focus groups, public engagement events and conferences.
- 128 new posts were created including academic posts, community researchers and creative facilitators.
- £5.8m of additional funding was leveraged
- 85 journal papers, posters and project reports were published, along with 8 policy briefings.

The MCA Programme Team and NCCH produced two interim reports, two peer-reviewed papers and organised a knowledge exchange event with 120 attendees from across the programme.



Key findings and outputs from projects funded in phases 1 and 2 are collated in the Mobilising Community Assets Interim Report. Read the report here: <https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/MCA-Interim-Report.pdf>

Next Steps

Phase 3 projects will continue their work until 2027, developing new interdisciplinary models and cross-sectoral ways of working to reduce health inequalities. The MCA Programme Team, with NCCH, will bring together and disseminate the findings of this research to inform practice, policy and further research.

NCCH is developing new relationships to further research in creative health and has supported several funding applications for exciting large-scale research projects.

721

organisations were involved in cross-sectoral partnerships from across academia, health, local government, culture, education, voluntary and community sectors.

Next Steps

Our priorities for 2024-25

Moving forward, we will continue to build our networks and relationships, working collaboratively to maximise the potential of creative health, and supporting systems to improve health and wellbeing. Priority areas for 2024-35 include:

Embedding creative health in systems and places

We will work to expand our reach within systems and places. The Creative Health Associates programme continues into 2025 and an independent evaluation of the programme will provide important learning for the next stages of this work.

NCCH will focus on priority areas emerging from our Hubs work including:

- Development and implementation of creative health strategies
- Funding and commissioning models for creative health

A changing policy context

In a changing political context, we will draw on resources such as the Creative Health Review to showcase how creative health can align with key policy targets, particularly in relation to new approaches to health and social care focussing on prevention and community-based healthcare. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Creative Health will support this work in Parliament. With further devolution anticipated, we will work closely with the leaders of combined authorities to make them aware of the benefits of a whole-systems approach to creative health in their region.

Strengthening the evidence for creative health

Our collaboration with the Mobilising Community Assets to Tackle Health Inequalities research programme continues until 2027. We will work closely with Phase 3 funded projects as they develop and test new models for the integration of community assets into health and social care systems. NCCH will translate and disseminate these findings across our networks.

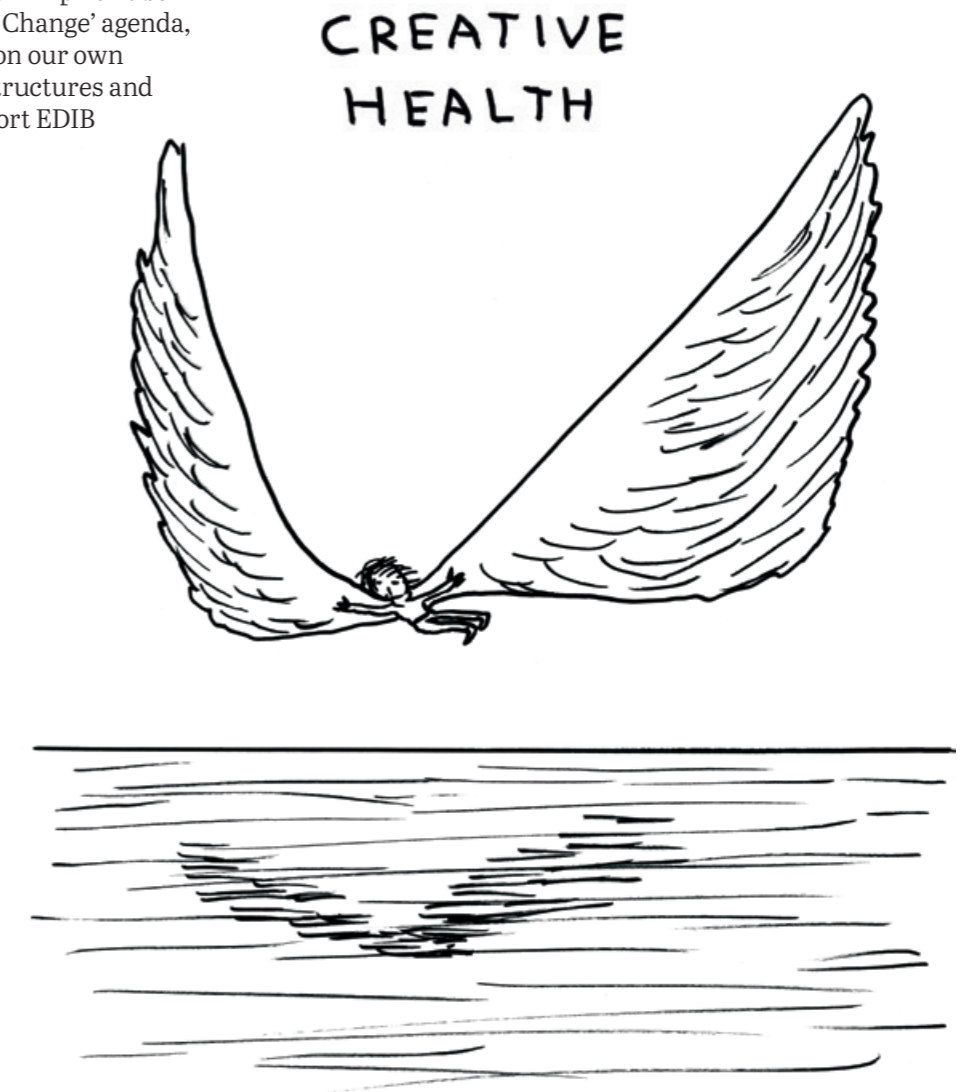
With a proliferation of new research about creative health practice and implementation, we will ensure that the latest evidence is available to our audiences in an appropriate format and produce new resources that support people to make the case for creative health within their systems and networks. We will also explore new research partnerships in this rapidly developing area.

Promoting Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

We are committed to creating the conditions for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) to be embedded in creative health work and empowering others to collaborate to advance change. In 2024-25 we will prioritise the development of a 'Creating Change' agenda, through which we will reflect on our own organisational practices and structures and develop an action plan to support EDIB across the sector.

Evaluating our impact

We will continue to monitor and evaluate our own role as a strategic organisation within the creative health sector and identify areas for further growth.



The NCCH Team

Our Core Staff Team

Director
Alexandra Coulter

General Manager
Alexis Butt

Finance Officer
Sarah Holmes

Programme Manager
Jayne Howard

Research and Policy Manager
Hannah Waterson

Creative Health Associates

East of England
Olivia Dean

London
Conni Rosewarne

Midlands
Jane Hearst

North East and Yorkshire
Alice Thwaite

North West
Elaine Ryan-McNeill

South West
Penny Calvert

South East
Esther Watts

Our Board

Rt Hon. Lord Howarth of Newport CBE
(Honorary President, Chair 2021-2024)

Professor Martin Marshall CBE
(Chair 2024 - Present)

Bill Boa

Professor Helen Chatterjee MBE

David Clayton Smith

Professor Martin Green OBE

Nancy Hey

Isabelle Paagman

Dr Guddi Singh

Debbie Teale

Jane Thomas

Our Funders and supporters

We would like to thank our funders and supporters who have enabled this work to happen





More information about our work
can be found at www.nceh.org.uk