



National Centre for Creative Health Response to ICS consultation

I am writing on behalf of the National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH). We are a newly formed charity with the 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.*

The NCCH was founded in response to Recommendation 1 in the [Creative Health](#) report, the result of a two year inquiry led by the [All-Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health and Wellbeing \(APPG\)](#).

The Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, quoted the *Creative Health* key messages in a [speech](#) at the King's Fund Social Prescribing conference in November 2018 and placed arts and culture centre stage in a focus on prevention and social prescribing. The Creative Health key messages are:

- The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived.
- The arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health.
- The arts can help save money in the health service and social care.

Sir Michael Marmot endorsed the central premise of *Creative Health* when he wrote that the report: "*provides a substantial body of evidence showing how the arts, enriching the mind through creative and cultural activity, can mitigate the negative effects of social disadvantage. Creative Health should be studied by all those commissioning services.*" The *Creative Health* report is the most comprehensive publication to date documenting over 1000 published studies outlining the role of arts and creativity in supporting health across the life course. More recently, the World Health Organisation (WHO) scoping review: [What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing?](#) is intended to inform policy across the WHO European Region and beyond.

Creativity, the arts and access to and engagement with culture are beginning to play a key role in personalised care. The arts can support the commitment to placing people and 'what matters' to them at the centre of decisions about their care, and contribute to better quality and experience of care. Social prescribing and community-based approaches are key elements of the NHS Comprehensive Model of Personalised Care, and there is now an opportunity to extend social prescribing and the wider personalised care model to include the rapidly emerging arts and health practice across the country.

The National Centre for Creative Health will play a pivotal role in developing a collaborative approach to the integration of creative health approaches in health and social care and wider systems. We are working with Integrated Care Systems and NHS England on a pilot programme in four ICSs. We will be learning from those ICSs which already see creative health as part of their role and remit (One Gloucestershire and West Yorkshire and Harrogate ICS), where the arts and culture are embedded at a systems level, and test out how this can be adapted and adopted elsewhere. We are working with Academic Health Science Networks to explore innovation and new models including a commitment to spreading the learning from the [Shaper](#)

programme being delivered by King's College London and King's Health Partners, which is exploring scaling up arts-based interventions that have been shown to benefit the health and wellbeing of people with Parkinson's, those who have had a stroke and mothers with post-natal depression.

The Report on *Integrating Care: Next steps to building strong and effective integrated care systems across England* is a welcome move in the direction of devolved powers and greater collaboration at 'place', and the recognition of the important role of local authorities and the voluntary and community sector in tackling health inequalities, preventing ill-health and supporting broader social and economic development in relation to the social determinants of health. As discussed in the report, the pandemic has both intensified the need for more effective and targeted work in the areas of greatest disadvantage as well as shown the extraordinary achievements of communities and public sector services when they pull together with a common purpose. Working with communities, developing co-production methods with people who use services and developing culturally specific activities and opportunities are key to challenging inequalities in health.

Arts and cultural organisations, from grassroots to national, and individual creative practitioners, have stepped up to the challenge of the pandemic and used their creative energy and understanding of their communities to make a significant contribution to the wider effort. Activities included working closely with food distribution to provide additional activities for isolated individuals and families in challenging circumstances; transferring work with vulnerable participants online and using post and telephone for those without digital access. Across the whole country there have been extraordinary and heart-warming stories. This is continuing with renewed effort now that we are in another national lockdown. This report on [How creativity and culture is supporting shielding and vulnerable people at home during Covid-19](#) was based on case studies of 50 projects in England and Wales. This [webinar](#), organised by the APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, on how the arts and creativity are supporting vulnerable people during Covid-19 has been watched by over a 1000 people and includes presentations from Ellen Rule, the Integrated Care Systems Programme Director for One Gloucestershire, Cllr Julian German, Leader of Cornwall County Council, and Neil Churchill, from NHS England. There are also many moving examples of how the arts and creativity are supporting the wellbeing and mental health of healthcare professionals. In this [podcast](#), recorded inside Yeovil Hospital, a nurse and a housekeeper share their stories from the Covid Chronicles, a creative writing project to explore staff experiences during the pandemic.

We would like to draw your attention to the powerful role creativity, the arts and culture can play in the health and wellbeing of the nation. Engagement with the arts and culture can make a significant contribution to the recovery as we emerge from the pandemic and help with the growing need for mental health support. An important benefit of creative health is that it is highly cost-effective. The legislation needs to allow this approach to wider determinants of health to flourish in the future. This will be facilitated where the legislation supports true partnerships rather than a narrow focus on those parts of local systems that support the NHS mission. We urge you to incorporate this in your future guidance and to ensure that the guidance and legislation includes a specific expectation that ICSs will integrate creative health methods into their strategies for prevention and improving healthcare. The NCCH can advise and assist on the development of policy on creative health.

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