



APPG Creative Health Briefing Paper

The 10 Year Plan: Digital Health and CreaTech

Digital Creative Health (also referred to as health-centred CreaTech) sits at the intersection of the Government's priorities for prevention, community-based care, and digital transformation, offering new ways to engage people in their health and wellbeing. Evidence and practice from across the UK demonstrate its potential to improve outcomes, enhance patient experience, and reduce pressure on overstretched services. However, insights from a recent All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) roundtable highlight that, despite strong innovation, adoption within health systems remains inconsistent and fragmented. Stakeholders identified a series of structural barriers – including unclear regulation, limited infrastructure, a lack of clear pathways into the NHS, and inadequate cultural education – which, together, slow progress and limit impact at scale.

The following recommendations set out practical, system-level actions to unlock the full potential of digital creative health and support its safe, equitable, and effective integration into health and care.

Recommendation 1: Create a clearer, proportionate regulatory pathway for digital creative health

- The current system is described by CreaTech specialists as a “grey area”
- Some stakeholders have found regulation to be prohibitively expensive, with reported costs up to ~£2-million. This creates a disincentive for responsible innovation.
- Stakeholders have found that regulation can take up to 2 years, disadvantaging those who take the regulation of their work seriously, compared to competitors that risk going to market without going down the appropriate regulatory paths.
- Stakeholders suggest that a regulatory sandbox (test environment) would enable greater innovation without full regulatory burden.
- Stakeholders also call for a single, streamlined point of regulation within healthcare systems, instead of working across multiple, inconsistent requirements across Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and Local Authorities.
- Stakeholders with experience in the field recommend that regulation is differentiated by risk – for example, by differentiating between immersive clinical tools which are comparatively low risk to higher risk digital provisions that rely on social media environments.

Recommendation 2: Develop digital infrastructure to connect services and people

- Stakeholders emphasise that digital infrastructure should enable visibility and navigation of creative and community services for both clinicians and the public, addressing current challenges in awareness and referral.
- Community referral platforms (like WISH) are important in supporting members of the community to stay aware of- and connected to- their local community services and creative opportunities, reducing demand on clinical services and improving personalised, preventative, and patient-driven care.

- NHS-driven data collection processes that link population health data to creative health service attendance – via the use of NHS numbers (as exemplified by Gloucestershire ICB) – offer an opportunity to measure the health benefits of creative engagement at the population level.
- Stakeholders (like Noise Solution) demonstrate the opportunity for digital infrastructure to support real-time, low-burden data collection and evaluation, including the ethical use of AI and video to analyse service-user experiences and outcomes.
- Moreover, stakeholders see the development of digital infrastructure as an opportunity to create pipelines for cross-sector collaboration between artists, clinicians, academics and regulators, enabling them to co-create from the onset.

Recommendation 3: Provide a clear roadmap for NHS adoption of digital creative health solutions

- Roundtable participants shared that the NHS is keen to harness the benefits of Digital Creative Health, but that it needs guidance.
- Stakeholders highlight the need to support the spread and adoption of proven digital creative health interventions by enabling integration into existing pathways, moving beyond short-term pilots, and supporting consistent delivery across systems and places.
- Researchers are already developing ethical frameworks for digital and AI in creative health – including consent, attribution, and data use – but continuous work is required to support the adaption, adoption, and iterative review of these frameworks within a healthcare context.
- Stakeholders emphasise that trust must be actively designed into digital creative health systems – including through transparency, ethical data use, and clear value for users. This is particularly important for engaging those whose data or IP will be utilised. Healthcare planning should appropriately account for the time and resources that this trust-building exercise requires.
- Stakeholders also highlight the need for alignment with existing NHS priorities – such as prevention, neighbourhood health, and digital transformation – to support broader adoption.

Recommendation 4: Help to cultivate a culture where CreaTech innovation can thrive

- Education providers have a part to play in promoting the value of creativity as a tool for emotional regulation, social development, and health more broadly.
- Art therapies, creative approaches, and tech-enhanced services should be more proportionately available to patients and service-user, alongside existing approaches such as CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy).
- NHS platforms – such as the NHS app or public health campaigns – have an important role to play in providing trusted information about the benefits of creative health and the availability of local provision.
- Digital platforms and tools offer new opportunities to engage people in creative health in ways that are scalable, accessible, and relevant to different populations.
- Digital tools and AI should be celebrated for their role in making the arts more accessible – such as access to music making for people with Parkinson's.

Appendix

List of Speakers from our APPG Roundtable on Digital Health and CreaTech

- **Giovanni Biglino**, Associate Professor in Bioengineering, Bristol Heart Institute
- **Dr Sofie Layton**, Artist/Researcher – Visual and Material Lab, Discovery Research Platform, Institute of Medical Humanities, Durham University
- **Kiz Crosbie**, Artistic Director and CEO
- **Ellie Turner**, Executive Director, Mortal Fools
- **Dr Lisa Dowler**, Artist Director, Small Things Dance Collective
- **Oliver Gingrich**, Associate Professor in Animation, University of Greenwich
- **Simon Glenister**, CEO Noise Solution, and young person
- **Emilios Lemoniatis**, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Founder & CEO Medical Creatives
- **Alan Naismith**, CEO and Founder, Polyatrics Ltd
- **Dr Pani Sissou** GP, Director Decorum GP Federation
- **Justin Varney-Bennett**, Regional Director of Public Health - South West, and Creative Health Lead at the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

Contributions from invited attendees during Q&A:

- **Sir Muir Gray** CBE, British Physician
- **Martin Marshall**, NCCH Chair
- **Persephone Sextou**, Leeds Beckett University
- **Sarah Ticho**, SoulPaint
- **Tom Underwood**, Strategy Team, DHSCE/NHSE
- **Paula Hedderly**, Operational and Clinical Lead Central, NW London NHS FT
- **Dr Shama Rahman**, NeuroCreate
- **Andrew Hall**, CW+
- **Flora Faith-Kelly**, Creative Health Lead SE London ICB

Chaired by

- **Dr Simon Opher**, MP and Chair of the [APPG on Creative Health](#)

Monday 20th April 2026, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Case Study Links:

The following case studies are examples of how CreaTech and digital solutions are driving innovation in health systems, improving service delivery, system efficiency, patient outcomes or experience.

- [Arts for the Blues](#)
- [Digital arts and culture - the perfect 'hook' for digital inclusion: Leeds Art & Culture Digital Inclusion Pilot](#)
- [Digital Dialogues](#)
- [Exploring Digital Techniques in Music Therapy for Young People with Complex Mental Health Needs](#)

- [Glowing Stars - a study using an educational app to prepare children for MRI scans at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust](#)
- [HERO Academy / HEX Vanguard / Unlocking Minds: Digital Creative Health Pathways](#)
- [LifePathXR](#)
- [MELVA Digital Programme Supporting Mental Health Education](#)
- [Moments of Grace](#)
- [Music, Dementia, Technology: Designing new musical technologies for older adults' wellbeing](#)
- [NHS CaRE Project](#)
- [Noise Solution](#)
- [Ombri](#)
- [Play and See](#)
- [Place4Hope](#)
- [Arts4Us](#)
- [Screen-based Artworks at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital and West Middlesex University Hospital](#)
- [Shifting Landscapes-VR immersive performance experience for hospitalised Children and Young People](#)
- [Soul Paint](#)
- [Soundwalk in South East London](#)
- [Talk Town](#)
- [The Heart of the Matter](#)
- [Virtual reality \(VR\) use during intrauterine device \(IUD\) procedures – a London experience.](#)
- [VR-Melody](#)
- [Zeitgeist](#)