

## Workforce Training and Development

### Supporting the creative health workforce

With the NHS and social care under extreme pressures, creative health practitioners can complement the health and social care workforce to reduce some of the burden. As we have seen throughout this report, a skilled creative health workforce is already maintaining people's health and wellbeing across communities and in health and social care settings. In order to realise its full potential, the creative health sector must be supported to develop sustainably, with wellbeing, training and professional development of practitioners central to this.

Creative health practitioners often come to the field as a result of their own lived experiences or creative practices. This results in a socioeconomically diverse sector, but brings risks that impact the wellbeing of practitioners, and sustainability, breadth and quality of practice<sup>457</sup>. Training resources such as online toolkits, short term specialist-training and one-off Continuing Professional Development courses are available. However, the Creative Health UK State of the Sector Survey reveals a desire for further development opportunities, and that resource for this be incorporated into delivery contracts. Targeted support for global majority and Disabled practitioners is also crucial<sup>458</sup>. Creative health practice can be complex and emotionally demanding. Professional development pathways and the identification of core competencies that could support practitioners to mitigate some of these challenges should also be built into delivery to support workforce wellbeing and resilience<sup>459</sup>. Equitable funding and commissioning models such as those explored in Section 4.1 could help bring this to fruition.

The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA) Creative Health Quality Framework is a new tool, developed in collaboration with over 200 artists, participants, health commissioners and researchers which identifies the key quality principles that underpin good creative health practice and provides guidance on how to use these principles in delivery<sup>460</sup>. As well as supporting practitioners to develop best practice, the framework can be used to underpin training

and development opportunities and guide policymakers and commissioners to ensure they support the development of the creative health workforce through funding opportunities that are equitable, inclusive and sustainable, and which build in adequate budget for practitioner support, supervision, training and evaluation.

Creating the conditions for a creative health workforce to thrive will also provide an additional, complementary source of support for healthcare providers. The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan recognises the need to shift care from acute settings into primary care and communities and sets out expansions in roles related to personalised care approaches with an increased breadth of skills in multidisciplinary teams<sup>461</sup>. This indicates opportunities in the near future for creative health to be more closely linked to the NHS workforce, as part of a system which prioritises prevention and person-centred care.

### Training a new generation of creative health practitioners

A recommendation of the 2017 APPG on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report '*Creative Health*' was that the education of clinicians, public health specialists and other health and care professionals includes accredited modules on the evidence base and practical use of the arts for health and wellbeing outcomes.

Opportunities to develop skills and qualifications in creative health are increasing. This can be as an element of clinical training, as part of creative education or as a standalone qualification. University College London's Masters in Arts and Sciences (Creative Health), for example, offers students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines the opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of creative health and learn skills in practice, policy and research to contribute to the sector.

Within clinical training, arts have been used in medical education for some time, to help students foster an understanding of patient experience, and to improve communication skills<sup>465</sup>. Visual arts approaches have been used to develop observational and diagnostic skills, empathy,



resilience and cultural sensitivity<sup>466</sup>. A forthcoming interdisciplinary scoping review investigating creativity in clinical health education has identified an important role for a range of art forms, including the use of poetry in reflective practice, theatre to build cultural competency, film to reduce stigma, particularly in relation to mental illness, and dance to support movement workshops. The review also highlights an absence of literature focussing on patient-centred outcomes, indicating that there may still be a gap in clinical education around the evidence-base for creative health and in teaching students how creativity can be used to improve health and wellbeing. Creativity also forms an important part of the training of some Allied Health Professionals, in particular Art Therapy and Occupational Therapy.

Creative approaches have been used in medical education to humanise the patient in support of students developing person-centred approaches<sup>467</sup>.

*“As we humanise the patient, we also humanise the medical student as well”* – Dr Louise Younie, GP and Clinical Reader in Medical Education at Queen Mary University of London, Workforce Development and Wellbeing Roundtable.

In addition to the development of clinical skills, engaging with creativity as part of clinical training can support students to maintain their own wellbeing. Work on the concept of ‘flourishing’ in medical education draws on creative enquiry to enable students to express their lived experience, explore their emotions and vulnerabilities and connect with peers. In a time when many clinicians are experiencing loneliness, burnout or anxiety, it offers an alternative to the concept of resilience and bouncing back. Flourishing invites growth, meaning and purpose, connecting with rather than discarding that which might be painful or difficult, thereby supporting wellbeing<sup>468</sup>. Clod Ensemble’s Performing Medicine Programme delivers arts-based training to medical students and healthcare professionals which focuses staff wellbeing, including stress management and building confidence, as well as the development of skills in compassionate care and effective communication<sup>469</sup>.

Social prescribing is increasingly covered as part of a clinical education. The UK National Social

## Diversifying Creative Health

Whilst creative health can be used to improve health and wellbeing of individuals from marginalised communities and to overcome barriers to accessing services, we are mindful there are also inequalities in access to creative health and that the creative health workforce is not as representative as it could be. CHWA’s data suggests an urgent need to address representation in relation to a diversity of heritage in the workforce.

The Baring Foundation report *‘Creatively Minded and Ethnically Diverse - Increasing creative opportunities for people with mental health problems from ethnically diverse backgrounds’* investigates the barriers to participation in arts and mental health initiatives for people from ethnically diverse backgrounds both as practitioners and service users<sup>462</sup>. It identifies themes of best practice, including co-production and participant-led programmes, understanding cultural sensitivities, consideration of locality, incorporating lived experience, provision of safe spaces, and challenging hierarchies.

A number of initiatives are arising to diversify the creative health workforce. For example:

- The Artists’ Represent Recovery Network is a joint initiative between London Arts and Health, Raw Material and Arts & Health Hub. It is a professional development programme for London-based, freelance, ethnically diverse artists who identify as black, brown, people of colour who have faced systemic racism, and who are working in arts and health in a participatory or community setting<sup>463</sup>.
- The *‘Queering Creative Health Report’* produced by QUEERCIRCLE, a space where culture and the arts intersect with social action, investigates how specific marginalised communities, including LGBTQ+ communities, and the forms of discrimination they face, can be addressed through creative health policy or practice, and makes several recommendations to further this work<sup>464</sup>.

Prescribing Student Champions scheme was established to enable medical and healthcare students to promote social prescribing among colleagues in healthcare and to provide evidence supporting its introduction into the undergraduate and postgraduate medical and Allied Health Professional school curriculums<sup>470</sup>.

Many of these developments have been built from grassroots approaches led by passionate individuals, but there is an increasing demand from institutions to embed these concepts more formally into clinical curricula. Incorporating creative health and social prescribing into the curriculum in this way not only aids the development of specific skills and supports

student wellbeing, it provides students with an experiential understanding of the value of creative health, and holistic, person-centred approaches, which they will carry forward into their future practice.

As explored in Section 3.3 (Creativity for Health and Wellbeing in the Education System), opportunities for a creative education are important to maintain a thriving creative industries sector. Incorporating knowledge and understanding of the ways in which creativity can support health and wellbeing and creative health practitioner skills training into creative arts courses and arts education institutions will open up new career avenues for creatives and support the creative health sector to grow.

### University of Chester Creative Health Placement

In 2022, the Faculty of Health, Medicine, and Society at the University of Chester in partnership with the **Philip Barker Centre for Creative Learning**, trailed a creative placement for undergraduate student nurses. Sixty Year 1 Bachelor of Nursing undergraduate students were allocated a creative health placement as part of their practice learning experience.

Students worked with four experienced artists using dance, music, and visual arts to explore creative health practices through experiential process. Students also experienced creative health activities as participants and visited social prescribing offers in the area. Each week the students had time for reflection and action learning, and to meet their practice supervisor.

Through the placement students came to appreciate the benefits of creative health both for their practice and for their own health and wellbeing. Students reported increased confidence, and self-awareness, greater ability to network and the ability to communicate more effectively and were more reflective. They saw the value of holistic care and the importance of a non-medicalised approach as well as how this experience would impact on their future practice. They also had a greater appreciation of the community benefits of social prescribing.

In the academic year 2022-2023, all Year 1 Bachelor of Nursing students have undertaken this placement – a total of 450 students. In response to feedback from the pilot, a wider range of artists have been used, and connections made to themes such as mother and baby and dementia. Links to social prescribing providers have been formalised and local organisations have been invited to participate in a creative health cafe. The placement has received national recognition by winning the Student Nursing Times Awards 2023 for Student Placement of the Year: Community.

Significant groundwork was necessary for this placement. In addition to recruitment of artists, partners and practice assessors, a programme aim linked to creative health was written and approved at validation in 2020. The learning and teaching philosophy of the programme acknowledged the integration of arts and humanities and provided direction on how this could be implemented, such as experiential learning and assessment. An asset map of all social prescribing in the area was completed and a mapping exercise was conducted to ensure that students undertaking this placement would be able to achieve practice assessment requirements.

Reference to creative health in the Nursing and Midwifery Council Future Nurse Standards would help facilitate more widespread creative health education.