



Arts For Health Partnership Programme West Cork

Strategic Plan
2023-2028



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Acknowledgements



“Arts for Health TELLS THE UNTOLD STORIES. It provides staff and residents with a means of displaying our pride in what we are - ordinary but extraordinary!”

Roisin Walsh, HSE Director of Nursing Schull Community Hospital, 2022

1. INTRODUCTION TO ARTS FOR HEALTH, WEST CORK

Arts for Health Partnership Programme is based in West Cork and provides a managed arts programme for older people accessing healthcare services.

The programme takes place in eleven widespread, rural locations including Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre, five Day Care Centres: Bantry, Castletownbere, Clonakilty, Dunmanway, Skibbereen; five Community Hospitals: Castletownbere, Dunmanway, Schull, Skibbereen, Bantry General Hospital, Care of the Elderly Unit and, more recently, at home.

Arts for Health Partnership

Arts for Health, West Cork is underpinned by an inter-agency partnership between Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (HSE), Cork County Council, and Cork Education & Training Board (CETB). The partnership is governed by a committed group of regional arts, education and health representatives working together, with Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre and the HSE playing the key operational roles.

Arts for Health Artists

The programme is delivered by a team of professional artists managed through Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre. The artists establish a close, professional working relationship with the staff, integrating the arts and care services. They are supported with training, peer networking, residency and learning opportunities to develop their professional expertise in working with older people and in healthcare settings. Each with a distinctly different artistic practice, the artists work independently and collaboratively resulting in a diverse range of artistic outcomes.

“I think it's really important work and I am proud to be part of this team.”

Justin Grounds, Violinist & Composer, Arts for Health Artist, 2022

Arts for Health Participants

Access to and engagement with the arts in healthcare settings improves the quality of life for individuals in residential care and service users. Integrating an arts programme into the culture of the care setting allows for ideas and individual creative interests of the participants to be nurtured and developed over time. Participants are placed at the centre of the programme, their wellbeing and creative choices being paramount. In general, participants are older people, who reside in hospitals or attend day care facilities in West Cork. Participants might also be professional or family carers.

“My husband is so happy after his music sessions and the joy it brings into our home is immeasurable, so long may this programme continue in West Cork.”

Brid McAuliffe, Creative Carers Participant , 2022

Arts for Health Programme

The programme is delivered in three strands: Community Hospital, Day Care and Creative Carers each tailored to the creative needs of participants in the context of their environment.

Community Hospital Programme focuses on consistency of delivery and choice and is structured around onsite, regular group workshops and one-to-one bedside support to encourage and develop individual creative ideas. The content of the sessions evolves in response to conversations between artists, participants and staff.

Day Care Centre Programme is project-based and supports an ethos of creative exchange and experimentation between the artist and participant. The projects aim to be stimulating, enjoyable and culturally relevant for participants and each differs in the style of delivery, responsive to the group.

Creative Carers Programme looks towards the wellbeing of family carers and healthcare workers in a range of multidisciplinary engagements taking place: at home, at work and in community settings. The programme provides responsive approaches for Carers to access the arts as participants, audience and/or creative learners while allowing for social engagement, network building and peer support.

The programmes are all enriched by the sharing of artwork through exhibitions, performance, publications, creative community interventions and public and online events.

Fundamental to Arts for Health, West Cork is the arts centre based supporting framework of learning and development enabling artists to engage in training, peer network, mentorship, career clinics and studio residencies. To ensure an evolving and resilient practice, the programme leaders engage with national and international arts and health practice.

The programme seeks to work with people as they gain in age. Where possible we make links between our other older people's programmes at Uillinn, seeking a flow and connection between services to help the individuals build relationships with artists, professionals engaged with the programmes and the wider community.



2. BACKSTORY

Arts for Health Partnership Programme began with a ten-week action research pilot project in response to [Ageing with Confidence: a strategy for the people of Cork and Kerry in the United Nations International Year of the Older Person](#) in 2002. Recommendations from the project resulted in the forming of a new partnership between the local arts, health, education, and local authority, each with a stake hold in enhancing the lives of older people in West Cork. The Arts for Health Partnership met over two years before implementing the first programme in May of 2005. The programme had a team of two artists working weekly across five Community Hospitals.

The Arts for Health partnership are committed to ongoing evaluation and reflective practice. Measures such as Artists' team meetings, online documentation, reflective journals and collecting and disseminating feedback from participants and other stakeholders are structured into the programme management. In addition to regular reports and evaluation processes, the partnership has commissioned two evaluation documents, the first in 2005 at the outset of the programme [Conversations in Colour: Evaluation of an Arts for Health Partnership Programme 2005/6](#), by Jennifer Russell and the second in 2010 when the programme expanded to include five Day Care Centres, [Arts for Health Partnership: Day Care Centre Evaluation Report](#) by Ann O'Connor and Charlotte Donovan. 2012 saw the launch of [SPECTRUM](#), an image-based publication which reflects a five-month collaborative visual art project, led by the Arts for Health artists' team working with participants residing in a community hospital setting. The project is part of an on-going commitment to sharing and celebrating the important artwork that is created through the Arts for Health partnership programme.

As evidence of the partnership's commitment to "maintain and improve communications and advocacy"¹, the partners commissioned filmmaker and animator Jane Lee to document their effective partnership model. This short animation playfully demonstrates the roles and responsibilities of the partnership and stakeholders in supporting, managing, and implementing the programme. The [animation](#) and strategy were both officially launched on 10 December 2013 at Clonakilty Community Hospital, with guest speakers Gabrielle O'Keeffe, General Manager, HSE Cork and Ann O'Connor, Arts and Health Advisor to the Arts Council.

On 9 June 2015 at Dunmanway Community Hospital, Cllr Alan Coleman launched [By the Smoke of the Train](#), a limited publication featuring a collection of people's stories and experiences of the railway that ran through West Cork during the 1940s and 1950s illustrated with some of the participants' own drawings and paintings.

An information leaflet was designed for new participants to receive on admission and launched alongside the new [Strategic Plan 2017- 2020](#)² by Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People Jim Daly TD at Dunmanway Community Hospital, 24 November 2017 with senior sector representatives from Arts and

¹ Arts for Health, Arts for Health Partnership Programme West Cork, Strategy Document 2013 - 2016 (December 2013): 20.

² Arts for Health, [Arts for Health Partnership Programme, West Cork: Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020](#) (November 2017): 1 - 60.

Health - Ann O'Connor, Arts Council and Gabrielle O'Keeffe, Head of Social Care, Cork Kerry Community Healthcare.

In February 2017, Arts for Health doubled the number of workshops delivered in each of the long-term units from 44 to 88 sessions in the year to give more creative choice for participants. The artist's team was significantly increased with the recruitment of a new team of composers and musicians to deliver this expanded programme. The Day Care programme was also significantly increased from 17 to 21 sessions per year in each setting, rising again in 2019 to 25 sessions.

After several years of communicating, documenting, and sharing through an online Wikipedia page, established in 2008, a new website was launched in 2017 www.artsforhealthwestcork.com providing news on events, the members of the artist team, some highlighted projects, information on each of the participating healthcare settings, the supporting learning programmes and the partners.

Two public art works were launched in 2018, [Sail On](#) and [110 Skibbereen Girls](#). *Sail On* is a large-scale glasswork installed at Schull Community Hospital remembering the lives of the residents funded by the Friends of Schull, Community Hospital. It was celebrated with a launch on 11 April 2018 with guest TD Michael Collins. *110 Skibbereen Girls* is a series of bronze cast spoons installed at the entrance to the old workhouse in Skibbereen Hospital Grounds. The project received a Creative Ireland Cork County Municipal Award and National Lottery Award. It brought together all the staff, residents, and service users at Skibbereen Hospital Campus to research the heritage of their shared place in remembrance of the story of 110 Skibbereen girls who left Ireland for Australia as part of the Earl Grey Scheme during the Great Famine. The sculpture was launched in July 2018 with a new Skibbereen Hospital Choir and guest speakers Simon Mamouny, Deputy to the Ambassador to Australia and Ger Reaney, General Manager of Cork Kerry Community Healthcare (watch [HERE](#)).

Also, in 2018, the programme was a partner in a national conference Check Up Check In with artsandhealth.ie taking place at Crawford Art Gallery in April 2018. A short film documenting the newly implemented music strand of the programme, [Carepool](#), was screened and two artists from the programme - Liz Clark and Justin Grounds - shared their work at the conference.

In 2019, Arts for Health Partnership Programme participants and artist Tess Leak, puppeteer Eoin Lynch and composer Justin Grounds collaborated on [Stories from the Well Field](#). Funded by an Arts Council Arts Participation Project Award this project took Arts for Health in the new direction of theatre production and performance. The Arts Council Project Award gave the artists involved an opportunity to raise the profile of their work to a national level and in turn elevate the programme's national profile.

In 2020, the resilience of a strong partnership, the hospital staff on the ground, the imagination of the artists and the flexibility of the funders supported a programme that seamlessly pivoted to provide participants in the community hospitals with an [array of remote options](#) to engage with, including imaginative projects such as *The Museum of Song*, *Time in Our Lives* and *Radio Requests*.

The closure of the Day Care Centres and redeployment of the Day Care Coordinators to testing and vaccination centres presented a great challenge to the programme. In response, the Arts for Health HSE partners in Public Health Nursing and Community Work, met to seek a way to help maintain contact with the older people who were reported as becoming more despondent, with increasing numbers moving to full-time residential care. Working closely with management at the HSE, the partnership built a new infrastructure to support the delivery of an 'at home' project for hundreds of day care participants staying safe at home throughout 2021.

To assist with the development of internet infrastructure in the other hospitals, Cork ETB provided several tablets on loan through the programme and developed bespoke staff training opportunities to each of our participating Hospitals on the Arts for Health Partnership Programme. While we are still challenged by the inequalities of rural internet the infrastructure is slowly improving, giving way to more possibilities within the programme.

For residents and colleagues in the Community Hospitals, a special live gig was streamed from DeBarra's in Clonakilty on Friday 14 May 2020 to simultaneously connect with all the residents and staff across West Cork. The event was hit directly by the horrendous ransom attack on HSE that morning. This further collapse in communications gave rise to new chat groups with the hospital staff – making a new resource that was later used for creative purposes - and the gig resumed the following week with renewed vigour in the face of more adversity.

HSE partners in Public Health Nursing and Community Work, met to seek a way to help us remain in contact with the older people who were now reported as becoming more despondent, with increasing numbers moving to full-time residential care. Working closely with management at HSE we were able to build a new infrastructure to support the delivery of an 'at home' project for hundreds of day care participants staying safe at home throughout 2021 and with the introduction of Creative Carers in 2022.

With a gentle re-opening of our society in autumn 2021, and incentives from HSE Health and Wellbeing we took three new actions to re-establish the arts programme: re-introduced Arts for Health programme in Clonakilty Community Hospital; delivered a series of live interactive concerts to six residential units across west Cork. The third step was to develop a community music programme for older communities on the Mizen Peninsula (Schull & Goleen).

With the full re-opening of our society in February 2022, there was an increase in demand for access to our art services, especially from those who have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Throughout the continuing months, hospitals are closed periodically for infection control and Covid-19 management. To manage this, triple scenario planning is in place whereby when a hospital closes to in-person sessions, they could choose to: receive a visual art postal activity, go for an online music event or reschedule according to participant and staff needs.

[*Bringing Art Home \(BAH\) Postal Programme*](#) concluded in March 2022 and a report was completed documenting the work. This decision was taken due to the reopening of Day Care Centres and the tentative resumption of in person activities. Running for 2 years throughout the pandemic, BAH was

conducted in three strands - Bringing Art Home, Ways + Means and More Ways + Means resulting in an exchange of drawings, songs, poetry, stories, puppetry, postcards, letters, histories, and ideas. To celebrate the work of BAH to date, a selection of artworks and correspondence were exhibited at Uillinn in May 2022 as part of [Bealtaine Festival](#) and a book published and distributed for participants and stakeholders.

The cessation of BAH crossed over with the introduction of [SHOUTOUT](#) a new quarterly magazine that goes to the homes of older people across the region through HSE Community Development Department CKCH.

The Arts for Health Team have gained valuable experience of running remote activities and a recent feedback survey shows that a small number of participants would value the option of at-home activities in the future during times when they are unable to attend Day Care Centres. These learnings and feedback from participants will be fed into the upcoming Arts for Health Strategic Plan which seeks to explore the potential for new ways of working and new cohorts to whom the programme could be extended.

A significant development for Arts for Health in 2022 is the research, development, and implantation of a new strand – [Creative Carers](#). Research began on the new pilot project Creative Carers in April and rolled out September to December in three strands: At Home; At Uillinn and In the Community with the aim to develop and deliver a new participatory arts programme strand for and with home Carers in West Cork.

In June 2023, we launch our third strategic plan...

1. PARTNER RATIONAL & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre

Central to the work of Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre (WCAC) is our commitment to public access to and engagement with the arts. Uillinn is committed to developing and implementing an artistic programme that places public engagement, the right to cultural expression and social inclusion at its centre.

The Arts for Health Programme Strategy is aligned with Uillinn’s WCAC strategic objectives and serve as an example of programming and engagement which:

- Inspires and ignites
- Excels as a regional hub
- Strengthen the core with a programme that has been strategically invested in
- Shines a light on the exceptional artists and work involved³

Outlined in [Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre 2022-2025 Strategy](#) is our commitment to strengthen community and partnership. ***To reflect and celebrate our people and particular place, resonating with their lives and interests, and broadening and deepening our reach. Increase our reach to older people on the mainland, peninsulas, and islands through the Arts for Health Programme.***⁴

Grow partnerships and collaborations that support our ambition and potential, our strategic priorities and our organisational resilience. Continue to strengthen our significant partnership with HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare, seeking to build resilience and develop the work of Arts for Health Partnership. Play an active role in Arts and Health Coordinators Ireland (AHCI) advocating for the progression of Arts for Health in Ireland seeking Integration of Arts and Health into national policy and build relationships on a statutory and governmental level to develop new channels of support for Uillinn's work.⁵

We plan to embed environmental awareness and sustainability in all aspects of our work, from our physical infrastructure and operations to our artistic programming, critical thinking and in our business partnerships.⁶

Our work is supported by the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon who are committed to “creating opportunities for increased engagement in the arts by particular communities through investing in artists

³ Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, [Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#): 13.

⁴ Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025: 18.

⁵ Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025: 20.

⁶ Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025: 22.

and arts organisations with a commitment to high-quality collaborative, community focused arts practice.”⁷ Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre supports the right to participate in the artistic and cultural life of our country in whatever way we may choose, regardless of our age. Learning at Uillinn is a dialogical practice; through the arts and the work of artists our programmes foster a spirit of public enquiry and curiosity. They enhance understanding, meaning-making, expression, experimentation, and risk-taking.

The form of participation will be different for each individual. For some, it will be an opportunity to engage directly with an art form: to learn techniques, explore ideas and create new work. For others, it will be an opportunity to engage with the work of others: to watch, listen, enjoy, and be challenged by new perspectives and modes of expression. For some, the honing of artistic skills and the satisfaction that is derived from finished work will be the most important elements of the experience, while for others, it will be the personal journey undertaken during the creative process, with no product at all. Whatever mode of participation is chosen, the arts experience on offer should be meaningful and of the highest possible quality.

Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre supports a responsive approach, enabling a ‘conversation’ between artists and participants; a learning community where the artworks, the artist and the participants all contribute to the project and to the learning.

We are championing accessibility and promoting the right for everyone, of all ages, to enjoy and participate in arts and culture based on the principles of dignity, independence, inclusion, and equal opportunity. We ask ourselves: who else needs to be in the room and what do we intend to do to ensure that they are? We want to create equality of opportunity in practice and, importantly, in action.

We are aiming to ensure that our artists, artistic programme and audiences reflect the contemporary society in which they are situated and this moment in time. We are asking ourselves what our communities will need as they re-emerge from lockdown and re-integrate into society, into a post-Covid-19 context. The pandemic has given rise to a heightened awareness of the value of interconnection and of the local; of supporting each other's well-being, both mental and physical.

Furthermore, Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre adopts the statement that “it aims to promote health and wellbeing by improving quality of life and cultural access in healthcare settings.”⁸

Health Service Executive

Cork South Community Work Department

Cork South Community Work Department develops innovative programmes which respond to the many factors that determine the health of individuals and communities. We support a variety of Arts and

⁷ The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, [Making Great Art Work: Leading the Development of the Arts in Ireland, Arts Council Strategy 2015 - 2026](#) (September 2015): 25.

⁸ The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, [Arts and Health Policy and Strategy](#) (2010): 4.

Health programmes across different age groups and care groups within the health services and the health-related community and voluntary sector.

We operate from a community development model and perspective and are committed to the development of an Arts and Health agenda that will effectively contribute to the promotion of individual and community health and wellbeing. Cork South Community Work Department actively develops relevant partnerships with other statutory, community and voluntary services to enhance the resources available for projects, to develop projects and to ensure the most effective outcomes for participants / service users.

Arts for Health Partnership Programme, West Cork has provided and continues to provide an evolving model of excellence in relation to the development of a managed arts programme working with older people in hospital and day care settings, and has the potential to expand into the community, working with older people at home as well as with carers.

[*The HSE Health Promotion Strategic Framework*](#)⁹ introduces a model that illustrates the main structural elements of health promotion for the HSE. This work takes place in three settings; Health Service, Community and Education. The Arts for Health Partnership Programme West Cork provides services consistent with this model in which:

1. Health Services are reoriented through community participation, mobilisation and the provision of socially inclusive services.¹⁰
2. Supportive environments for health are created using multi-strand approaches to promote and enhance health through lifestyle, behavioural and social-environmental approaches and through full engagement in collaborative partnerships.¹¹

This approach supports the ethical principles set out in [*Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025*](#).¹² The principles of equity, fairness, proportionality, openness and accountability, solidarity and sustainability are evident in the strategy. It also responds to the 2013 [*National Positive Ageing Strategy: Positive Ageing - Starts Now*](#),¹³ which seeks to promote the development of opportunities for engagement and participation of people of all ages in a range of activities including the arts. Furthermore, the work of the Arts for Health Partnership Programme, West Cork is congruent with the Healthy Ireland framework for actions with its emphasis on partnership and cross-sectoral working, empowering people, and communities, through research, evidence, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. This strategic approach ensures that an active meaningful and meaning-making life can be enjoyed through to older age across the eleven settings in which the programme operates.

⁹ Health Service Executive, [*The Health Promotion Strategic Framework*](#) (2011): 1 - 67.

¹⁰ Health Service Executive, [*The Health Promotion Strategic Framework*](#) (2011): 11.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Healthy Ireland, [*A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 - 2015*](#) (2013): 1 - 60.

¹³ Department of Health, Patient Safety First, and Healthy Ireland, [*The National Positive Ageing Strategy*](#) (April 2013): 1 - 78.

West Cork Day Care Centres

The vision of the Healthy Ireland Framework 2013-2025, “where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility”.¹⁴ In keeping with this vision, participation in the Arts for Health Partnership Programme is a core component of day care centre social care activity in the five West Cork centres. For service users it empowers people to reach their potential, learn new skills and enables clients, at all levels of dependency, to participate in an activity which enhances their cognitive, emotional, and social wellbeing and produces positive mental and physical outcomes across the client spectrum. In keeping with the Arts for Health Strategy, the Arts for Health Programme promotes participation and cross-sectoral work.

Community Hospitals in Schull, Dunmanway, Castletownbere and Skibbereen provide services which include continuing care, convalescent care, respite care and palliative care. Other services, including activity programmes, are an integral part of the operating philosophy of a community hospital complex. There are over 119,000 people over the age of 65 in the Cork and Kerry region, i.e. 15% of the national over 65 population.¹⁵ Nationally, this is expected to increase by 24.6% by 2051.¹⁶ In the same period the number of people over 80 is expected to increase by 270%.¹⁷ Ageing on this scale is unprecedented in Irish history. At the same time the number of dependent older people is expected to rise. There are 194 patients cared for in the five community hospitals in West Cork. Bantry General Hospital provides for extra patients in long term care. The Arts for Health Partnership Programme has become part and parcel of the activities in long stay units throughout. Working with the arts recognises and values the creativity of older people, enhances the self-worth and dignity of the participants as well as being a pleasurable experience. Arts for Health helps us in our vision for the older adult of “improving the health and quality of life of the individuals and communities we serve”¹⁸ as set out in [Ageing with Confidence: a strategy for the people of Cork and Kerry](#). Arts for Health is an essential element in the social care needs of older adults in residential care and is an integral part of our activities programme which helps us to meet the [National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland](#) as set out by the Health Information & Quality Authority (HIQA). Involvement in arts and cultured activities makes a difference to the quality of life of our residents. Arts for Health is a large contributor to this. The programme stimulates our residents to express themselves through the medium of art, poetry, and music. This is a new opportunity for most of our residents. The existence of an arts programme in community hospitals fulfils the requirement to meet HIQA standards.

¹⁴ Healthy Ireland, *A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 - 2015* (2013): 5.

¹⁵ “[Press Statement Census of Population 2022 - Summary Results Kerry](#),” and “[Press Statement Census of Population - Summary Results Cork](#),” CSO, accessed 26th June 2023.

¹⁶ Mark Hilliard, “[Population over 80 to increase 270% by 2050, conference hears](#),” *The Irish Times*, November 26, 2019.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Southern Health Board, [Ageing with confidence: a strategy for the people of Cork and Kerry](#) (2002): 3.

Cork Education & Training Board

As a driving force in education and training in Cork, we value the partnership approach that the Arts for Health model offers. It allows us to promote Arts and Health as a valuable lifelong learning tool. In line with our vision of providing high quality services which are innovative, responsive, and inclusive, Cork ETB rolled out a QQI Level 5 Arts for Healthcare Professionals Programme in 2015 and proposed similar programmes going forward.

The programme encompasses ideologies outlined in the [Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education](#), “the role of adult education in enabling individual members of the society to grow in self-confidence, social awareness and to take an active role in shaping the overall direction of society – culturally and socially”¹⁹ *Learning for Life; White Paper on Adult Education, Department of Education and Science, 2000*, enshrined the following concepts: lifelong learning, social inclusion, equality and justice, active citizenship, and partnership.²⁰ The Arts for Health Partnership Programme encompasses all these concepts and more. Education through partnership and the involvement of the community (hospitals and day care centres), West Cork Arts Centre, Cork County Council, HSE and the artists in this programme is evidence of strong and effective collaboration. AfH supports CETB’s Arts strategy reinforcing commitment to arts education. The core objective of this strategy is to provide structure and direction for a quality and valued provision of arts education across CETB in City and County Cork.

Cork County Council's Arts Service

A strategic objective of Cork County Council is to work to create or improve opportunities for all citizens to have access to and enjoy active lifelong creative participation in the arts. This is articulated in the Cork County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024 which, *inter-alia*, aims to promote “... a collaborative approach to building healthy, inclusive and resilient communities through social and economic development, enhancing our urban and rural communities guided by a quality of life ethos”.

In furtherance of this goal the Council’s Arts Service aims to support purposeful, collaborative, and cooperative partnerships to deliver agreed cultural and creative goals.

The personal and communal benefits of active participation in cultural activity is well documented and is recognised in national health, wellbeing, and arts policy. The Arts for Health Partnership Programme West Cork is an excellent example of how the delivery of a managed, integrated, well-structured programme of creative arts activity over an extended period has delivered excellent wellbeing benefits for the service users in the participating community hospitals and public day care centres in the west of the County. It has created an environment in which conversations and the exchange of ideas between all partners, artists, service users and their families has helped shape a dynamic programme that enhances the lives of older people involved in this programme.

¹⁹ Department of Education and Science, [Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education](#) (July 2000): 29.

²⁰ Department of Education and Science, [Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education](#) (July 2000): 52 and 195.

Through our participation in this partnership, we will work to support the objectives of the Arts for Health Programme 2023-2028 by:

- Supporting a community focused programme where healthcare and arts personnel work together to provide optimum conditions for artists to engage with individuals and groups in care settings in West Cork.
- Supporting artists' employment, training, mentoring, and professional development provided by AfH.
- To learn from this programme as a model of best practice and initiate similar methodologies in North and South Cork.
- To learn from the many pivots and adaptations to the AfH programme since 2020 and consider how these can be developed to be a part of a sustainable programme in 2023 – 2028 whilst still being centred in the care setting context.

4. FRAMEWORKS FOR THE STRATEGY

VISION

Integrating arts into the culture of care, making space for learning, being curious, imagining and creating together as we age.

MISSION

To deliver an exemplary model in a rural context of a managed and sustainable arts programme for older people accessing healthcare services.

VALUES

For the programme to be responsive, inclusive, forward thinking and creatively ambitious; delivered with integrity and care.



Monitoring and Review

This Strategy will be implemented and reviewed against the Goals and Key Actions outlined in each of the sections that follow. The Strategy will also form the basis of a series of annual work plans with maps, costings and timelines that will be reviewed annually and reflected on by the Steering, Working groups and staff team.

Several specific new plans are proposed under the individual goals:

- Conduct an external programme evaluation & capacity review.
- Extend the remit for programme participation.
- Contribute to Uillinn's Climate Action Plan.
- Build capacity and nurture relationships within both the artistic and administrative teams.

These are clear priorities for the programme, which will require investment.

The indicators of impact are outlined beneath each of the Strategic Objectives in the sections that follow. An evaluation of these indicators will enable us to demonstrate attainment of our goals.

Research funding will be used to conduct a three-year strategy review in 2024 to evaluate strategy goals and implementation.

Governance

Arts for Health Partnership Programme is managed by Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre, through the Programme Manager post. The interagency Steering Group made up of representatives from each partner organisation, is the body responsible for developing and implementing the programme, monitoring and reviewing to ensure high standards and a clear vision is maintained.

Working groups are established to achieve operational objectives which include Programme Manager, Steering Group representatives, healthcare staff and artists.

The Arts for Health Artist Team are responsible for delivering the programme through best practice methodology and maintaining a creative connection with the participants.

Healthcare professionals are responsible for patient care, ensuring excellent communications on site and allowing necessary support for the delivery of the programme.

The Programme Manager is the link between the partners, the artists, and the healthcare professionals and supported by Uillinn staff cohort.

The programme adheres to [National Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland \(2016\)](#) and has policies and procedures in place for safeguarding older persons.

West Cork Arts Centre is committed to the process of adopting and ultimately complying with [The Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland](#). West Cork Arts Centre has been added to the List of Organisations on the adoption journey, now up on www.governancecode.ie.

A number of other policies and monitoring procedures are in place to ensure best practice, see [HERE](#). Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre is also committed to upholding [Paying the Artist: An Arts Council](#) policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists.

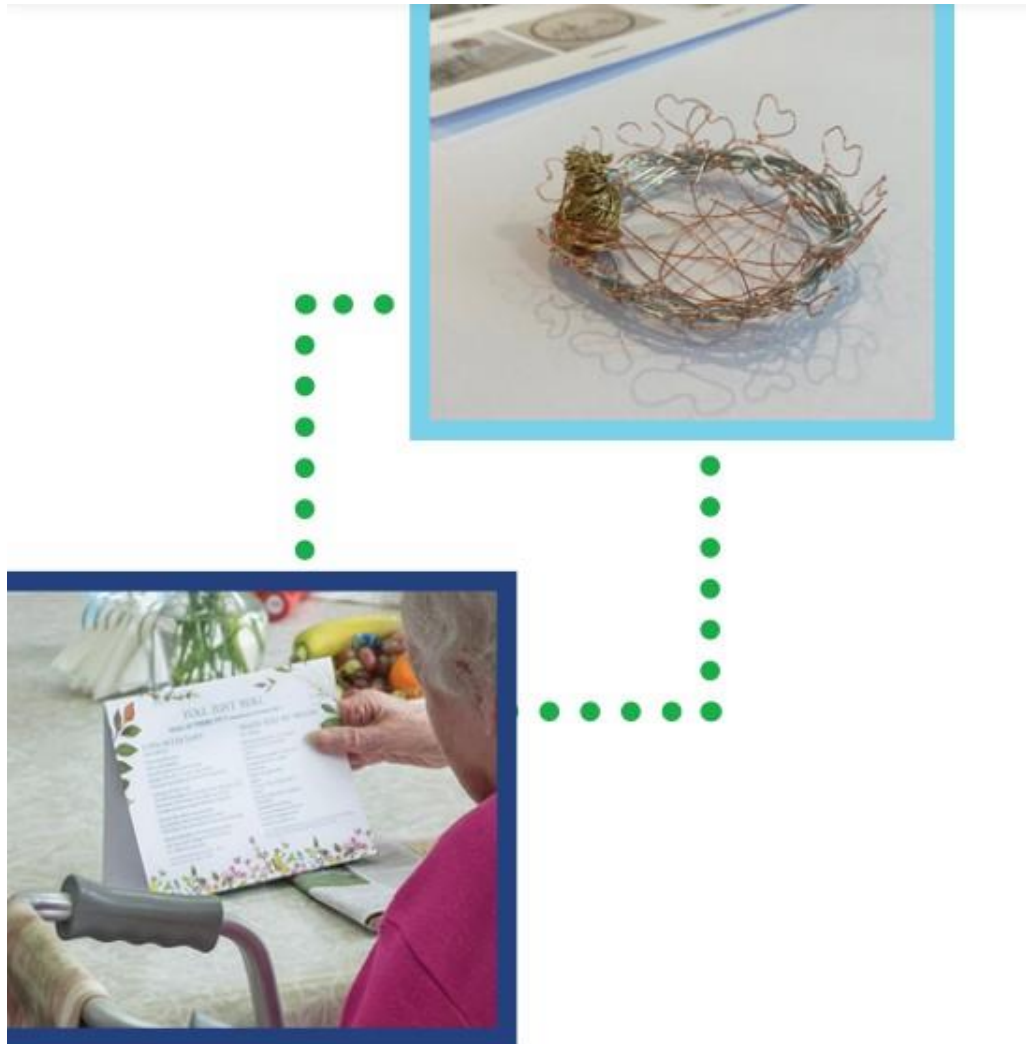


Image credits: Kevin O'Farrell and Arts for Health artists and staff

Strategic Priorities

-
- › Participant at the heart

 - › Building resilience

 - › Sharing learning

 - › Artistic innovation

PARTICIPANT AT THE HEART

Goal

Continue to place the experience of the participants at the centre of the programme, seeking out their opinions, input, meeting their needs, recognising diversity and respecting dignity.

Key Actions Implement questionnaires and residents' meetings to capture participant feedback on a regular and scheduled basis.

Provide training for artists on reporting priorities and how best to capture data that serves the person-centred care plan.

Support and plan for the involvement of more vulnerable or less able residents considering eyesight, mobility issues and comprehension.

Provide further training in the health and well-being needs of older people and the ageing process - the physical, mental, neurological, sensory etc. effects of ageing, to increase understanding of what it feels like to live in an ageing body and mind.

Incorporate learnings from the pandemic and maintain a digital element where it can enhance or make possible a person's experience.

Increase frequency and length of sessions particularly in Day Care centres.

Goal

Develop and embed creative engagements for people who care for older participants on the programme such as family carers. Develop the Creative Carers Programme to include:

People receiving healthcare at home / who may not have returned to Day Care

Older people and family carers, facilitated by resource centres and local link services

Key Actions Reinstatement opportunities for staff, participants, and families to learn about Arts for Health in the Community Hospital programme.

Research and reinstate the Arts for health QQI for care workers to include HSE and at home carers.

Extend access to the programme to families through all strands: Creative Carers, Community Hospitals and Day Care.

Further explore 1-1 at home, and continue to develop governance necessary to deliver work in this way.

Extend access to the programme through Creative Carers to participants unable to attend day care centres.

Link in with Resource Centres and all CHN – 10 to engage where appropriate with social prescribing, community development and carer programmes.

Goal

Explore developing the programme to work with St. Joseph’s unit at Bantry General Hospital to include people with dementia in the acute setting.

Key Actions Research possibility of working with people with dementia in Bantry General acute setting.

Take pilot action to deliver arts activity with people in acute settings of Bantry General.

Goal

Continue involvement with Creative Compassionate Culture Network initiative led by the Irish Hospice Foundation with a view to creatively supporting people/families experiencing loss.

Key Actions Advisory and operational role to delivering sessions in the West Cork area, supporting capacity to develop and integrate the work with the Irish Hospice Foundation.

Linking the delivery of the programme to the work of Arts for Health in Community Hospitals, focusing on Bantry as a pilot location.

<p>What will the impact be?</p> <p>Short Term we will have integrated ways to regularly capture the voice of the participants. Medium Term we will have established creative programmes for families, family carers and healthcare staff. Long Term we will have an integrated programme in the West Cork Community and an increased number of participants of diverse needs availing of the service.</p>

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Goal

Maintain the geographical focus of the programme in West Cork (CHN10), with expansion of the programme in the following areas:

- **Learning Programmes (3rd level placement, mentor, online)**
- **New Communities (Family Carers, Peninsulas, Island Communities)**

Key Actions Develop Steering group into two strands: strategic and operational; introducing relevant members with Senior management representation on Steering group, and Artist representation on operational group.

Link with organisations regionally and nationally to develop 3rd level placement for artists.

Reintroduce placement programme for artists.

Explore re-introduction of QQI level 5 in Arts and Health for Healthcare staff.

Learning days for all stakeholders: Artists, Families, Staff and managers on what AfH is and how to engage.

Work with CETB to provide CPD for the Artistic and Health teams to strengthen practice and promote wellbeing.

Directed by Cork County Council, connect with Creative Places to ensure inclusion of Island communities in the programme.

Engage with HSE Carers and Older Persons Development Workers for West Cork to connect with resource centres and individual service users in the community.

Goal

Streamline and increase funding to support this defined growth, allowing for more robust planning, programme development and reporting.

Key Actions Work with new HSE Art and Health staff to pilot Menu of Poems in Kerry Community Hospitals using AfH infrastructure.

Continue to explore working in Mizen and including other peninsula and Island regions of West Cork.

Commission research in the context of national and international Arts and Health development, and to better understand the issues involved in scaling and identify key factors for developing a model

Align AfH with Community Health Network 10 – West Cork – recognising gaps in AfH service delivery.

Goal

Contribute to Uillinn’s Climate Action Plan

Key Actions Refer to the detailed Uillinn Climate Action Plan across all aspects of planning, programming, and delivery - with a specific arts for health programme assessment

Where possible, seek to reduce travel to work, use public or alternative travel methods, minimise purchasing and material use.

Training and peer discussions on practice, reflection and addressing the issues.

Goal

Streamline and increase funding to support this defined growth, allowing for more robust planning, programme development and reporting.

Key Actions Work with HSE to ensure policy compliance and strategic development in line with Sláintecare and Healthy Ireland with a view to enabling more secure funding strands.

Continue work on role oriented infrastructure to ensure resilience: ensuring colleagues and line managers are fully informed on the workings of the programme. Engaging line managers, peers and colleagues in the work of the Arts for Health Partnership.

Work with Cork County Council to secure Creative Ireland Funding for capacity development and rollout of Learning Programmes.

Work with Cork County Council to secure Erasmus or alternative funding for Artist exchange programmes and promotion of AfH and further learning opportunities.

Steering Group to work together to advocate for an increase in annual funding across the partnership to support operational and programme expansion.

Steering Group to work together to advocate for stream-lining of annual funding across the partnership to support future resilience and sustainability of the programme going forward.

Goal

Build artistic and administrative capacity to sustain programme growth, knowledge, development, and delivery.

Key Actions Review and outline all roles for succession planning including an analysis of the Programme Manager role and tasks.

Increase administrative capacity to meet growing workload and planned programme expansion.

Implement an archiving system to preserve programme records and learnings on an ongoing basis and in time for the 25 year celebration.

Increase funding, or adapt programme, to support an increase in pay that reflects inflation and responds to the Arts Council [Paying the Artists Policy](#).

Review payment structure with artists to increase worker satisfaction, offering an annual fee or hourly pay inclusive of time for report writing and attending meetings.

Continue to support artists CPD to include:

- Needs assessed training for artists to support the delivery of new project ideas e.g. software, report writing, filming, and documenting
- Peer and management mentoring
- Peer exchange training
- Agewise and End of Life Training
- Training in working with conditions specific to participants such as cognitive difference and inclusive facilitation methodologies.

Develop and review existing Handbooks for new artists and healthcare staff to provide understanding of the aims and benefits of the programme.

Continue to seek out the artist's voice and input in delivering strategic goals via updated and streamlined reporting system.

Ensure strategic input from an artist at management level with representation at operational strand of steering meetings.

Goal

Invest in healthcare staff, increase learning opportunities, continuing to seek their input and promote programme commitment on every level.

Key Actions Work with HSE staff wellbeing committees to support creative programming for healthcare staff.

Devise a longer-term project with healthcare staff (with support from management to participate) to learn more about the demands of their work, give voice to their experience and share the work of AfH with them in a tangible way.

Offer further healthcare participation in creative works of their own as CPD and present them to the artist team, to get to understand a bit more the vulnerability and courage required in this kind of process and in presenting creative work.

Bi- Annual induction meetings with healthcare staff to share the aims, objectives and benefits of the programme for participants and to give staff a sense of ownership, investment - creating opportunities for them to provide input.

Promote sharing of Arts for Health updates with healthcare staff at all levels (DON, CMN2, nurses, healthcare assistants, cleaners, kitchen staff) to support a team understanding of the work being undertaken.

Work with HSE staff beyond CH10 to share learning.

What will the impact be?

Short Term we will have engaged additional administration to support the increased delivery of new community programming.

Medium Term we will have reviewed roles, handbooks and policies to strengthen operational infrastructure and succession planning.

Long Term the programme will have increased annual and multi annual funding via fewer strands to realise the actions of this strategy.

SHARING THE LEARNING

Goal

Share our learning and experience to support recognition and development of Arts and Health practice nationally.

Key Actions Partners and programme administration to work with Arts and Health Coordinators Ireland (AHCI) to advocate for the development of Arts and Health practice.

Continue to work with the AHCI subgroup to advocate for policy and sector.

Use research opportunities to link in with other work to learn, streamline and consolidate.

Maintain links with Réalta, the new “National Resource for Arts and Health in Ireland”²¹, and seek ways for the national body to engage with and support the work of Arts for Health Partnership.

Goal

Engage in research to gain better understanding of the issues involved in geographical expansion.

Key Action Liaise with RENEW and HSE on Arts and Health to support establishment of health sector policy.

Goal

Continue to learn about and from international Arts and Health practice, taking opportunity to learn, share and platform the experiences of the Arts for Health programme.

Key Actions Seek funding to link in with international artists exchange to bring innovative approaches and ideas to the AfH artists team and build AfH profile internationally.

Management, artists, healthcare practitioners, and participants where possible to engage with conferences and events to learn and share practice.

²¹ “Home,” [Réalta](#), accessed 21 June 2023.

Engagement with other Arts and Health organisations to develop practice and standards such as with Music and Health Ireland, Helium, Age and Opportunity and new body for Arts and Health in Ireland Réalta.

Build links with Global Brain Health Institute/Trinity and other third level institutes such as MTU, UL for learning and development opportunities.

Goal

Engage in regional and national dialogue in relation to practice and standards in Arts and Health Practice.

Goal

Celebrate 25 years

Key Actions Organise a high-profile event to highlight the work of the programme and achievements of the participants, staff, artists, partners, and management.

Exhibition at Uillinn: A celebration of artwork through the years.

Write, design, and print an Arts for Health inclusive publication and film.

Commission or produce a creative and engaging documentation of the programmes development, celebrating the work and learning achieved over 25 Years.

What will the impact be?

Short Term we will have invested and engaged in research.

Medium Term we will have created connections for international artist exchange and residencies.

Long Term we will have outlined a programme of celebration for AfH 25th Year including an exhibition and publication launch.

ARTISTIC INNOVATION

Goal

Stay playful, creative, curious, and ambitious.

Key Actions Reduce pressure on all stakeholders by reimagining how we present the deliverables and outcomes such as reports and documentation.

Creative time for the steering group, partners and management to experience the benefits of Arts and Health.

Nurture the individual and collective workforce on the programme: participants, administration, artists, healthcare staff and partners.

Offer healthcare and arts workers Uillinn studio and workspace for creative, reflective, and restorative time.

Creative engagements and play between artists to foster creative relationships, team building and develop ideas for new projects.

Goal

Support artists team to innovate and introduce new concepts and ways of working into their practice and share their learning, respecting national levels of pay and conditions.

Key Actions Artists and Arts workers as participants - a focus on wellness to encourage healthy and sustainable artistic practice.

Work with Arts Office, HSE and CETB to signpost existing stress management prevention training for arts for health workers and develop provision where none exists.

Provide peer support for the artist team via:

- Hosting and coordinating monthly networking events
- Opportunities for artists to work with guest collaborators
- Opportunities for collaborative working within the team
- Opportunities for ideas exchange and creative discussion time

Work with CETB to develop CPD in artistic practice - exploring different techniques with related formal qualifications.

Programme individual and collective studio time for the artist team.

Continue to support opportunities for inclusion in national dialogue and ideas exchange with other practitioners and managers nationally.

Goal

Continue to invest in support for artists through residencies, career advice clinics, training programmes, mentoring and collaborative opportunities.

Key Actions Increase Arts sector funding to support an annual paid Studio Residency opportunity including a stipend to encourage innovation and ambition.

Realise the long-term ambition for a collective studio experience for the artists on the team. A group residency where artists can drop in and out of the studio and make individual and collaborative work and bounce off each other's practices.

Goal

Creatively document and record the work.

Key Actions Provide reporting options for artists to give either project focused reports or ongoing testimony, images, recordings, data, and other creative documentation.

Provide reporting options for participants to give testimony, images, recordings, data, and other creative and inclusive ways to feedback.

Be creative in all aspects of the work including reporting and documenting.

What will the impact be?

Short Term we will have implemented regular group discussion, feedback, idea sharing and play opportunities for the artists team.

Medium Term we will have implemented comprehensive training opportunities across artistic practice, CPD and wellbeing.

Long Term we will have secured additional funding for paid residency time and international artists' exchange.

6. WIDER POLICY CONTEXT

This strategy is significantly informed by the policy frameworks in [Arts](#), [Health](#), [Wellbeing](#) and [Education](#) and that of the lead organisation Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre.

This strategy considers national priorities for both the Arts and Health sectors e.g., Creative Ireland, RENEW working group, Community Healthcare Networks, The Integrated Care Programme for Older People and HSE Social Prescribing amongst others.

Prioritising the Arts Council’s [Making Great Art Work](#), the ten-year strategy of the Arts Council, maintains a twin focus on the artist and on public engagement. The definition of the artist includes that of collaborator and emphasises that artists work in a range of contexts, including social settings. *Making Great Art Work* sets forth a vision for an Ireland in which the arts are valued as central to civic life, as a hallmark of local and national identity, and as a sign and signature of our creativity as a nation. This encompasses the practice and enjoyment of the arts within communities and in dedicated venues and centres across the country. It embraces support for artists and practitioners of exceptional talent and commitment, so that they can have productive and rewarding careers. It supports and recognises the distinctive societal value of the arts and provides for them accordingly.

[The Arts Council’s Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy](#) seeks to ensure that artists, audiences, participants and partners from diverse backgrounds have equitable opportunities to engage with and make art.

The HSE [Healthy Ireland](#)’s vision is for a healthy Ireland where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone’s responsibility. The four goals of *Healthy Ireland* are to increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life, reduce health inequalities, protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing and create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland.

[Sláintecare](#) is the ten-year programme to transform our health and social care services. It is the roadmap for building a world-class health and social care service for the Irish people. The Sláintecare vision is to achieve a universal single-tier health and social care system where everyone has equal access to services based on need, and not ability to pay. Over time, everyone will be entitled to a comprehensive range of primary, acute, and social care services.

[Creative Ireland](#) an all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme with an ambition to inspire and transform people, places and communities through creativity. The launch of a second five-year programme from Creative Ireland (2023 – 2028) (following first programme 2018 – 2022), evidences the value of creativity in Irish lives, specifically with a focus on Creativity and Wellbeing. Commissioned by the Creative Ireland Programme was the [“Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing \(TILDA\) at Trinity College Dublin”](#), that evidences the benefits to older adults in Ireland of participating in arts, creative and cultural activities

reporting higher quality of life and lower levels of depression, stress, worry and loneliness. In 2022 they held [The Art of Health and Well being Conference](#) .

[Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025](#) provides a framework for the development of rural Ireland over the next five years. Its vision is for a “thriving rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development, which is built on the interdependence of urban and rural areas, and which recognises the centrality of people, the importance of vibrant and lived-in rural places, and the potential to create quality jobs and sustain our shared environment.”²²

[The National Positive Ageing Strategy](#) is a commitment in the Programme for Government, outlining Ireland’s vision for ageing and older people and the national goals and objectives required to promote positive ageing. The Strategy identifies four national goals, the first of which is to “remove barriers to participation and provide more opportunities for the continued involvement of people as they age in all aspects of cultural, economic and social life in their communities according to their needs, preferences and capacities.”²³ Cultural and social participation is a key policy area addressed under this goal.

[World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. \(2019\). Intersectoral action: the arts, health and well-being: sector brief on arts.](#) The policy framework has been adopted by all Member States of the WHO European Region to address Europe’s great social and health challenges, calling upon the health sector to reach out to and work with all the various sectors and parties in the continuing work of improving people’s health and well-being. A recently published WHO Health Evidence Network synthesis report (The role of the arts in improving health and well-being in the WHO European Region) demonstrates how arts interventions can help improve health and well-being, contribute to the prevention of a variety of mental and physical illnesses and support in the treatment or management of a range of acute and chronic conditions arising across the life-course. As such, arts interventions are often low-risk, highly cost effective, integrated and holistic treatment options for complex health challenges to which there are no current solutions.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 27

This [United Nations \(UNESCO\) Declaration](#) set out 30 inalienable rights which apply to all people at all times, in all locations. Among them is the human right to participate in and benefit from both culture and science:

Article 27

- Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary, or artistic production of which he is the author.²⁴

²² Department of Rural and Community Development, [Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021 - 2025](#) (March 2021): 7.

²³ Department of Health, Patient Safety First, and Healthy Ireland, [The National Positive Ageing Strategy](#) (April 2013): 20.

²⁴ [United Nations](#), “About Us: Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” accessed 21 June 2023.

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This document is written and compiled by Justine Foster, Uillinn and Arts for Health Programme Manager, 2023.



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