



The Baring Foundation

What do we know about the role of arts in the delivery of social care?

Briefing paper

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Introduction

Skills for Care in partnership with Skills for Care and Development (SfCD) and Creative & Cultural Skills (CCS) commissioned Consilium Research and Consultancy to undertake an evidence review and activity mapping study to inform future thinking around the role of arts in the delivery of adult social care and in particular the implications for workforce development¹:

- Consilium (2013) *What do we know about the role of arts in the delivery of social care? Evidence review report*. Leeds: Skills for Care.
- Consilium (2013) *What do we know about the role of arts in the delivery of social care? Activity mapping report*. Leeds: Skills for Care.

This briefing paper pulls together the main findings from these two pieces of research and the employer workshop that fed into the work and research themes that emerged from the work.

Parameters of the research

The research has focused on the use of arts in adult social care including activities delivered in a range of social care settings such as residential, day, domiciliary and community care. It has also included activities for adult recipients of care delivered in community settings such as libraries, galleries or community centres. The research acknowledges a current lack of consensus on some of the definitions and language used to frame discussion within the sector, for example the absence of a clear distinction between health and social care, the role of art therapy or the use of outcome and impact measures.

Policy context

The policy context for the use of arts in the delivery of social care services is very clear. For example, *Caring for our future: reforming care and support* (HM Government 2012) outlines the need to promote independence and wellbeing as well as increase control of care and support for individuals. The White paper recognises the need to transform people's experience of care and support with services responding to the need to improve quality of life. Other policy supports this stance (e.g. SCIE 2010). The arts have a role to play in promoting quality of life and independence and there is potential in exploring existing and potential models that use arts to delivery social care.

¹For full reports, please visit:

http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/research/latest_research_reports/research_reports_introduction.aspx

Increasing the use of arts in social care

The evidence review demonstrated some support for the physical and psychological benefits of using arts with people using social care services. When delivered effectively, interventions were able to facilitate social interaction as well as enabling participants to pursue creative interests. The evidence also found benefits for social care staff through challenging preconceptions on the abilities and talents of people with a range of conditions or needs. For some staff and/or organisations the use of arts can act as a catalyst for change in workforce culture, which in itself can serve to deliver longer-term improvements to the quality of care and experiences of those within the social care system. The evidence was less clear about the associated learning and development needs of both arts staff to understand social care settings better or social care staff to deliver or commission arts related projects.

Currently the range of art projects and activities delivered across England represents a considerable if yet largely unrealised asset. A review of National Care Forum members conducted in 2011 found that 82% included details of art activities within their care home services on their websites. The activity mapping exercise completed as part of this research identified 432 project and activities. However, the profile and visibility of these projects is low with learning and practical guidance not communicated effectively across the wider art or social care sector.

The research recommends a coordinated approach is needed to raise awareness amongst the social care sector of the contribution that quality art activities can make in supporting better health and social care outcomes. Crucially this approach needs to be sufficiently tailored to increase the profile of using arts in the delivery of social care at a policy, strategic and operational level. Importantly the approach also needs to raise awareness amongst service users and families of service users in order to increase the demand for and expectation that art activities will form an integral component of care packages.

Promoting quality and effectiveness

The evidence review highlighted considerable variation in the approaches to using arts in the delivery of social care. These variations in practice present challenges to either comparing the effectiveness of different approaches or making judgements relating to their quality. Nonetheless, there was some evidence to suggest that the use of art, when delivered effectively has the power to both facilitate social interactions as well as enabling those in receipt of social care to pursue creative interests. More detail can be found below.

Art form	Evidence
Music	<p>There is some evidence to suggest music can provide a social cohesion and contact, give a degree of empowerment and control and contribute to a good quality of life.</p> <p>Carers that have an open mind and facilitate access to activities support effectiveness. In addition, professional musicians can assist care staff by offering points of contact with older people for whom communication is difficult.</p>
Dance	<p>There is some evidence to support the positive impact of dance on physical health among both healthy participants and those with physical impairments Dance also has benefits for psychological status by reducing loneliness, alleviating depression and anxiety and the ability to promote creativity, allow nonverbal stimulation and communication.</p>
Literature	<p>Poetry and creative writing sessions offer patients who find it difficult alternative methods to express themselves</p>
Visual arts	<p>The evidence would suggest that art sessions give carers and participants an opportunity to 'feel special'.</p> <p>Training can be valuable in enabling some care staff to challenge preconceptions that the end product is the focus and realise the value of the process.</p>

The activity mapping exercise identified that while many projects are delivered collaboratively by artists and social care staff, a number of social care employers appear to be reliant on identifying and commissioning an artist to deliver an activity with their service users. However, this raises questions as to how social care employers firstly identify artists that are interested in working with people in social care and secondly how they ascertain that the artist has sufficient experience and skill to deliver a quality project.

From the research the following factors were identified which can help support effective use of arts to deliver social care:

Participants Taster sessions to allow participants and carers to see what activities

	can offer and empower choice
	Telephone reminders prior to activities taking place to remind participants to attend
	Person-centred approach to individual needs during activities
	Mix of approaches to enable passive or active involvement
Care staff	Networking and sharing opportunities with other staff
	Artist as mentors to support care staff deliver and reflect on sessions
	Running longer-term programmes to build confidence and engagement while retaining a focus on individual capacity and support needs
	Ensure effective evaluation methods
	Active staff participation in activities.

The research suggests that in order to support staff to deliver activities which are both effective and of high quality, the development of a Quality Framework may be useful. In addition, guidance and support to ensure greater consistency regarding the measurement tools used to assess impact of activities would help support quality and effectiveness. Finally, the development of an appropriate way to share information and experiences of artists would help commissioners when making decisions about employing artists.

Funding

The evidence review and activity mapping provided limited detail on how individual arts activities were funded in different settings. An understanding of the funding environment in both the arts and social care sectors is important as this will ultimately influence the models used to deliver activities and fund workforce development.

In summary just over half of the projects identified through the activity mapping were funded through a combination of grants and donations from trusts, foundations and funding programmes. The next most frequently cited sources of funding were local authorities (32%), funding derived from the organisations receiving or delivering the activities (20%) and the NHS (17%). However, there is concern regarding dependency on grants and trust funding especially if delivery of a programme is over a longer-term.

Some stakeholders felt that arts currently isn't high enough up the list for commissioners so the research would point to the need to improve understanding of the impact of using arts in the delivery of social care and potential to support commissioners by providing guidance on funding opportunities to support workforce development and delivery of programmes.

For arts staff, there is a need for accurate understanding of the composition of the sector and in particular how individuals are funded, as this will shape views on the opportunities available and approaches to engaging service users who are willing to pay to participate in arts activities.

Workforce development needs

The evidence review found limited published details of workforce development activities to support the adult social care workforce in effectively using arts with much of the evidence base focused on the impact of the activity on participants. In addition, the activity mapping exercise identified that under-exposure to arts activities was one of the factors limiting the use of arts by social care staff.

However the review did highlight that effective training can be instrumental in changing some social care staff's attitudes toward their job and care for older people. Providing them with the skills and confidence to deliver activities and see the difference it makes to people in their care can give them a new perspective of care, an understanding of the importance of activities and an enthusiasm for providing them.

The research highlights the need for a workforce development plan to address training and professional development needs of front line staff, care managers, volunteers and carers to build capacity and skills in this area. A range of approaches could support this work including guidance, mentoring, apprenticeships, NOS etc. and stimulate interest in using arts.

Finally the opportunity to share practice and experiences between arts and social care staff would help practitioners learn about their respective roles, skills, qualities and experiences and how they can be used to inform training and arts delivery in social care settings.

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