



Cornwall Health Research Unit

Arts in the Third Age: A Study of Arts for Health and Older People in Cornwall

**Simon Bennett MRes
John Bastin BSc, FLS**

**Cornwall Health Research Unit
Opie Building
Trevenson Lane
Pool
Cornwall
TR15 3RG**

March 2009

E-mail: simon.bennett@ccb.cornwall.ac.uk

Web site: www.chru.org.uk

Phone: 01209 616162

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	4
Overall Findings	4
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Arts and Health in the United Kingdom (UK)	6
1.2 Arts and Health in Cornwall	8
1.3 Arts and Older People Project	8
2. Aim	10
3. Methods	10
3.1 Methodology	10
3.2 Data Collection	10
3.3 Data Analysis	10
4. Findings	11
4.1 Developing Activities and Piloting Creative Interventions in Care Home and Hospital Settings	11
4.1.1 Activities in Care Settings, Phase One	11
4.1.2 Activities in Care Settings, Phase Two	12
4.1.2.1 The White House, Bodmin	14
4.1.2.2 Eschol House, Portscatho	15
4.1.2.3 Beech House, Saltash	15
4.1.2.4 Hayle Day Care Centre	17
4.1.2.5 Bonaer Care Home Hayle	18
4.1.2.6 Tregartha Court, Looe	20
4.1.2.7 Trefula Nursing Home, St Day	21
4.1.2.8 Newquay Day Centre	21
4.1.2.9 Courtlands Care Home	24
4.2 Developing Intergenerational Projects	24

4.2.1 Falmouth Funchal 500 Tall Ships Regatta	25
4.2.2 Flushing Art Week 2007	27
4.3 Establishing an Older People's Creative Network for Professionals	29
4.4 Training for Care Staff in Creative Skills	31
5. Discussion	31
6. References	35
Table	
1. Projects in Care Settings: Phase Two	13

Acknowledgements

CHRU is grateful for the assistance of Jayne Howard, Director of Arts for Health Cornwall (AFHC), Jenny Atkinson, Older Person's Project Coordinator and all of the artists engaged on the project for providing data and being freely available for discussion.

Overall Findings

- Arts interventions in healthcare settings designed to improve health and well-being have attracted considerable attention in recent years, with a growing body of evidence reporting positive outcomes in a variety of healthcare settings.
- AFHC secured funding from Arts Council England and the Cornwall Older People's Partnership Board to support a range of art-based activity in Cornwall between 2007 and 2009.
- Funding strands included: artist-run interventions at community hospitals and care settings; intergenerational community projects; a network for practitioners and care professionals; and a training module in Arts and Health for Older People at a local College.
- Qualitative methods were used to establish patient and community outcomes from the variety of projects. These methods included analysis of artist evaluations (which included patient feedback) and discussions with artists, care staff and commissioners.
- The first phase of interventions in care settings involved 16 locations. The second phase excluded community hospitals (who adopted a reading project) and focussed on nine care settings. An open recruitment process sought artists with experience with older people and an understanding of care settings.

- Activities for older people included art and craft, poetry and other creative writing based on reminiscence, music, movement and dance. The artists were involved in the training of care staff to encourage sustainability of activities beyond the life of the funded project, and toolkits were developed to enable other care settings to deliver activities.
- A number of positive outcomes were reported from clients at care settings. These included improvements in communication and interaction, confidence and self esteem, increased stimulation and relaxation through creativity. Care staff also reported greater confidence in dealing with clients and motivation to try new activities.
- The project incorporated a number of intergenerational projects, designed to bring community members from all ages together to improve understanding between societal groups. Successful ventures include workshops coinciding with the Falmouth Funchal 500 Tall Ships Regatta and the Flushing Art Week.
- Care professionals and art practitioners met together in a series of networking events which enabled the sharing of ideas and best practice in a relaxed setting.
- Overall the project has been successful in its stated aims. The evidence collected showed that those partaking in the project benefitted in terms of confidence and self-esteem, developed or revisited skills and expertise, improved mobility and progressed in the areas of socialisation and communication. These benefits were particularly apparent in those clients diagnosed with dementia. Wider benefits included the meeting of professional development needs for both care staff and art practitioners, and, through training and the development of toolkits, the groundwork for sustainability in the longer term has been laid.

"One key to wellbeing in dementia is to constantly play the soundtrack of your desert island discs to a backdrop of your favourite art" (James, 2008)

1. Introduction

1.1 Arts and Health in the United Kingdom (UK)

Over the past decade the role of the arts in health has received increasing attention from health practitioners and policymakers, particularly in the UK. There has been a growth in some regions of public funded arts and health interventions and there is growing evidence that the arts can bring about physical changes in the body - in Bristol for example the Royal Children's Hospital was designed with the help of artists to help create a relaxed and interesting environment for children and their families. The research of Rosalia Staricoff and colleagues at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital between 1999 and 2002 (Staricoff *et al.*, 2003) underlined that the involvement of visual and performing arts in healthcare not only led to significant differences in clinical outcomes, reduced drug consumption and shorter stays in hospital, but also enhanced job satisfaction for staff.

In September 2006, following these initial investigations the Department of Health began a review of the role the arts played in the general health and wellbeing of the population. This initiative was to become part of the increasing emphasis being placed by the Government on taking opportunities to improve public health by working with other agencies. A review was set up by Nigel Crisp, the former NHS Chief Executive, led by Harry Cayton, National Director for Patients and the Public. Following a positive response from a wide cross-section of stakeholders the review concluded that a report should be produced as joint publication with the Arts Council (Department of Health, 2007).

This report was entitled '*A prospectus for arts and health*' (Arts Council, 2007) and was a celebration of the value of the arts in various settings related to health provision. The document contained a wealth of evidence and good practice examples showing improvement in both clinical and therapeutic outcomes. It amounted to a strong body of evidence that the arts can and do make a major contribution to health and public health issues.

Until this point many had dismissed the arts as simply 'add on' with little value in a technically focused health care environment. Now however it was demonstrated that tangible benefits could be seen and that the arts should become an integral part of quality health care delivery. Health care workers were now to be encouraged to value the effectiveness of incorporating the arts in all health initiatives and celebrate the benefits to patients, service workers and their carers. It also became clear that the term 'arts' could include a whole spectrum of activities and these could be incorporated in the patient experience in a variety of ways.

Despite the evidence provided in the joint document the Government was challenged on its lack of leadership in this area on the 6th March 2008 in the House of Lords. Lord Howarth of Newport pressed the Government to show how they intended to develop their policies to link art with healthcare, and concluded at the end of the debate on Arts and Healthcare that the only way to move forward was *"to put arts and health on to the regional and local arts agenda in a systemic way"* (Hansard, 2008). He found it frustrating that so much positive evidence existed yet no real progress was being made nationally and in reality funding for the arts had reduced by £100 million in the last 10 years. He speculated on the effect this would have on the general health of the population.

In recent months there have been signs that the Government is again seeking to put Arts and Health at the heart of NHS provision. This is evidenced in a speech given by Secretary of State for Health Alan Johnson in September 2008:

"Access and participation in the arts are an essential part of our everyday wellbeing and quality of life. Arts therapy has an important role to play in providing better, more personalised care for patients. I expect this role to become even more important as, following the publication of the Next Stage Review, we look at how we transform the NHS, from a service that's excellent at recognising illness and treating it, to one that can more successfully prevent illness and promote health and wellbeing." (Johnson, 2008)

Amongst the wealth of literature now assembled in the field of Arts and Health are examples of research and evaluation into arts interventions amongst older people. Papers addressing the role of the arts within this demographic group have been published recently in the UK (Groombridge, 2007) and in the USA (Dahlberg, 2007). The Scottish Arts Council (2002) commissioned research into all such activity within Scotland and the resulting report comprehensively reviewed the issue and recommended a higher profile for such work moving forward. The organisation Arts for Health South West has given attention to this area through specially arranged workshops and conferences, and their support material (Arts and Health South West, 2008) lists a number of current projects within the region, for example Bournemouth Borough Council's Arts Development Programme and the Borough of Poole's Partnership for Older People Project.

1.2 Arts and Health in Cornwall

Arts for Health Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (AFHC) was constituted in 2001 and operates as a registered charity. It generates funding independently of other organisations but is a member of the regional organisation Arts for Health South West and works closely within this network to promote arts and health activity. The aim of AFHC is to “... *advocate the role of creativity in improving health and well-being and to develop and facilitate specific projects to deliver health improvement*” (AFHC, 2008). Historically funding has been provided by Arts Council England as well as from public donations and other sponsors. The charity employs a full-time Director with an office in Penryn and administrative support. Its Board of Trustees represent the local arts community as well as health, professional and voluntary and community sectors.

1.3 Arts and Older People Project

The project was delivered in partnership with the Cornwall Older People's Partnership Board, who provided funding with Arts Council England. The project was designed to address the Local Area Agreement (LAA) outcome for Cornwall (HCOP6), namely to improve the quality of life and the independence of older people (Cornwall Strategic Partnership, 2006). The

Partnership Board were “... particularly interested in enhancing quality of life and looking at issues surrounding dignity and respect, recognising their importance in maintaining independence and reducing social isolation.”

(Green, personal correspondence)

The stated aims of the project were as follows:

- To increase confidence, mental well-being and self esteem;
- To reduce depression and facilitate the expression of feelings despite failing senses;
- To value the skills and expertise of older people;
- To promote physical health through increased mobility, improved circulation, improved continence and reduced constipation and lowering of the impact of diseases such as respiratory disease;
- To address social exclusion; and
- To positively impact on the life of people with memory loss and dementia (AFHC, undated)

The project consisted of a number of related strands, designed to achieve the aims described above. In summary these were:

- Developing a countywide approach to music and movement activities for older people in a variety of settings;
- Piloting a range of creative interventions in various settings and evaluating their impact; (these first two strands are covered in Section 4.1 of this report)
- Developing three intergenerational projects (4.2);
- Establishing an Older People’s Creative Network for professionals to explore ideas, develop further projects and ensure that learning and best practice are shared (4.3); and
- Training for care staff in creative skills (4.4) (ibid.)

The findings of this report are structured into the different segments of the scheme as described above.

2. Aim

The overall aim of the study was to report on the various strands of the Arts for Health Older People's Project in terms of:

- The engagement of patients and staff in arts-based activities located in care homes and community hospitals;
- The degree to which an ongoing culture of such activities may be maintained beyond the duration of this project;
- Involving the local community in art-based activities

3. Methods

3.1 Methodology

The methodology was descriptive and used a range of data to inform the assessment of the benefits of the various arts projects.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Documentary evidence derived from (i) evaluation data provided by artists employed on the project, using reporting forms prepared by AFHC; (ii) notes from meetings with the Project Manager, also a meeting of all artists involved with Phase Two of the activities organised in day care and care home settings.

3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews with artists and care staff involved in the project. Managers from the NHS Trusts involved in the commissioning of arts initiatives were also contacted and they responded by e-mail.

3.3 Data Analysis

Common themes were drawn from the interviews and documentation using the 'Framework' method to elicit the main themes and categories (Ritchie *et al.*, 2007).

4. Findings

4.1 Developing Activities and Piloting Creative Interventions in Care Home and Hospital Settings

4.1.1 Activities in Care Settings, Phase One

In order to audit the activities already being carried out within care settings prior to the start of the funded project, and to recruit participants, AFHC carried out a survey of older people and arts activity in 2006. All care homes listed in the Cornwall Care Services Directory as well as all Community Hospitals were invited to complete a short questionnaire, and to indicate whether they would be interested in taking part in the scheme. The questionnaires produced a 22% response rate (40/183). A wide range of activities were reported, including singing and music (mentioned in 11% of responses), exercise (11%) and craft activities such as card making (9%). Other activities included pets, entertainers, talking books etc. The frequency at which such activities were undertaken was patchy – these were carried out at least once per week in only 42% of cases. It was also noted that such activities occurred with less regularity in community hospitals than care homes.

Funding, the skills of care staff and their related confidence were identified as the principal limitations to such activity. A range of activities were listed that were not being undertaken because of these limitations, mainly associated with arts and crafts.

In addition to the survey of care settings, two pilot projects in Truro and Falmouth were set up to highlight the main issues.

From the results of the survey and the pilot projects, and the interest shown by those responding, a series of projects were initiated at 16 care settings, representing approximately one third of the respondents. The intention was to ensure a fair geographical spread across Cornwall and to address some of the skills needs reported from the various settings. Teams of three people, consisting of a practitioner, volunteer and a designated member of staff, were assigned at each location to initiate and manage each project. Each team was encouraged to develop their own activity as a

package which could be passed on to others following the conclusion of the formal stage of the project. The sustainability of projects was an important element of the planning, as this was an issue flagged up from the two pilot projects. Support was provided by AFHC, and communication between all of those involved was maintained through a series of networking events, held every few months. These events, reported more fully in Section 4.3, provided an opportunity to share ideas and best practice. Each individual project was evaluated using tools prepared by AFHC.

Ten artists were recruited to cover the 16 venues. AFHC ensured that all those recruited had experience of working with older people and an understanding of their particular needs and the potential constraints of the settings in which they might be working. Open recruitment processes were used, which involved interview by a panel including commissioner and service provider representation alongside AFHC staff. Only six volunteers were found via Cornwall Centre for Volunteers and local contacts, somewhat fewer than had been hoped. Projects were initiated under three main types: music and movement; arts and craft; and word-based, e.g. story-telling, poetry and creative writing. Positive responses were reported in the early evaluations, and the lessons learned were fed into the second phase of the project which is reported more fully in the next section.

There was a particular focus on sustainability, enabling activities to continue within the care settings beyond the life of the funded project. This was addressed in two ways: the need for practitioners to help equip staff to take on the activity, enabling the staff to progressively lead the sessions and feel confident in delivering these in future; and the development of a toolkit, designed to enable another care setting to deliver a particular activity.

4.1.2 Activities in Care Settings, Phase Two

“I feel all twinkly” (Care Home Resident)

One important outcome from the evaluation of Phase One was that community hospitals in particular struggled to provide the necessary resources in terms of staff time. Additionally, clients at the community

hospitals tended to be cared for over a shorter period of time, with implications for the continuity of a project designed to run over a longer period. As a result, a reading project was introduced at these community hospitals, facilitated by the Cornwall Library Service and volunteers. Phase Two of the main project therefore focussed only on care homes and day care centres.

Table 1 summarises the nine projects undertaken in Phase Two.

Table 1: Projects in Care Settings: Phase Two

Location	Artist	Working Title	Medium
The White House, Bodmin	Jo McIntosh	Here's One We Made Earlier	Arts and craft
Eschol House, Portscatho	Paul Farmer	Tales by the Sea	Poetry and creative writing
Beech House, Saltash	Colin Curbishley	The Tea Dance (with a Difference)	Music and movement
Hayle Day Care Centre	Caroline Schanche	Roll Up, Roll Up or Roll Over	Creative movement and crafts
Bonaer Care Home, Hayle	Victoria Field	Creative Words	Poetry, story and memoir
Tregartha Court, Looe	Lois Taylor	Music and Movement Sessions	Creative dance
Trefula Nursing Home, St Day	Rachel Lambert	Small Dance, Big Dance – Dancing for Everyone	Music and movement
Newquay Day Centre	Rosie Allen	Global Hop and Bop	World and social dance
Courtlands Care Home, Rosudgeon	Val Stagg	Singing Project*	Voice

** This project is described briefly in Section 4.1.2.9 but was still ongoing at the time of this report*

In addition to those activities shown in Table One, all of the artists were given an opportunity to demonstrate their chosen activity at four of the other locations – where reported these are mentioned in the summaries of each location. Evaluation forms were provided to artists and care staff in order to reflect on both the individual sessions and the project overall. In all cases evaluation data has been provided by the artist, and usually at least one representative of the care home. Each project is described individually below, with supporting photographs where available.

4.1.2.1 The White House, Bodmin – Here's One We Made Earlier (July – September 2008)

The emphasis in this series of sessions was on craft, incorporating skills and resources such as sewing, collage, felt and clay. Benefits for residents highlighted by the artist and the care home manager included happiness, increased socialisation (felt by the manager to be sustained beyond the life of the project), friendships and increased skills.



Residents making thumb pots from air drying clay

“Never done this before in my life”

“It was nice to have someone bright and ‘up’ coming in” (Residents)

The care home reported that it was keen to continue with art activities through the interests of two of the staff.

In October 2008, the White House hosted a standalone session in poetry from artist Victoria Field (see Bonaer Care Home, below). The artist reported a large group, and although this presented problems in engaging all

those present and encouraging participation, the reawakening of interest in poetry was evident from many of the residents.

4.1.2.2 Eschol House, Portscatho – Tales by the Sea (July – September 2008)

This project encouraged residents to become involved in poetry and creative writing, regardless of previous experience. Ongoing benefits to residents included confidence, improved concentration, increased socialisation and friendships. The activities coordinator at Eschol was provided with skills and materials to continue with the work.

Artist Rosie Allen attended Eschol House in November 2008 to lead an Old-time Music Hall session. This was a great success, involving a member of the care staff and a group that was very outgoing, supportive of one another and keen to join in.

“I had a ball, thank you!”

“This has been most enjoyable, I do enjoy singing” (Residents)

Eschol House also benefitted from a Tea Dance featuring clowning – see the Beech House description for further details. Although a key member of staff was not present, other staff members commented on the positive aspects of the session.

4.1.2.3 Beech House, Saltash – The Tea Dance (with a Difference) (June – September 2008)

All of the residents of Beech House are experiencing dementia to varying degrees, presenting a particular challenge to activities of this kind. The artist took on the role of a clown and introduced residents to a range of dances appropriate to the summer season – Floral Dance, Wedding Dance, Seaside Dance etc. Props, including a balloon, were used to engage residents in movement. Memories were shared and care staff were fully engaged and involved. There were many opportunities for one-to-one contact and these produced some of the more memorable moments. The artist reports one incident which typified the nature of the individual engagement:

“The most striking moment of the whole project came for me during this session, when two of the residents in a hallway became very aggressive and violent towards each other. When a member of staff tried to separate them she was verbally abused, then the clown appeared with his tatty bunch of flowers holding them out to one of the residents and doffing his hat, after a bit of banter the lady took the flowers and the man took the clowns hand then they all sat down together and exchanged smiles, including the staff.”

In terms of ongoing sustainability, the artist reported that the techniques used by the clown could be applied by care staff in daily interaction, for example singing or dancing with the resident according to their needs. Unfortunately, however, because of staff turnover at Beech House it was not possible for the project to be sustained, although it is hoped that it can be pursued again at a later date.

“The general atmosphere in the home was noted to be much lighter and brighter after each session. Staff became much more engaged with residents during the progression and both genuinely enjoyed the interactions.” (Artist)

“I loved the big balloon and the parachute especially” (Resident)

“Therapeutic input that allowed people to recover and use old skills” (Care Home Staff)

“Nice change with a lot of one to one interaction which is really needed” (Nurse Observer)

Victoria Field led a one-to-one poetry session with residents in October 2008. The residents were highly dependent so response was difficult to gauge, but based on eye content and verbal communication it was felt that they were able to focus on the content. Support was apparent from carers and management at the home.

4.1.2.4 Hayle Day Care Centre - Roll Up, Roll Up or Roll Over (June to September 2008)

This project sought to engage residents in simple exercise and movement sessions, moving on to the creation of decorations and games for an event at the centre.



Crafts at Hayle Day Care Centre

The impact of the sessions was evident in a number of different facets of the residents' behaviour. In terms of increased social interaction, the regular sessions were eagerly anticipated and the centre manager noticed a 'buzz' which included enhanced communication between residents. Peer support developed amongst residents, e.g. for those unavailable for the main sessions but wishing to catch up at a different time. An example of increased physical awareness and confidence included an arthritic resident who was initially reticent but ended up participating fully in the exercise and movement activities. New skills were learnt or old ones renewed – the picture on the following page shows the work of one resident who had once been a professional baker, and produced these cakes and pastries from salt dough.



'Pastries' made from salt dough

"It has really helped clients with dementia socialise and start up friendships"
(Co-ordinator)

As was the case in Saltash, it was felt that those residents with dementia and other special needs demonstrated particular benefit from the sessions, and it is the intention to target this group with similar work in the future.

The relationship between the artist and the activities co-ordinator at the Centre, as well as the availability and enthusiasm of volunteers, were factors contributing to the success of the project.

4.1.2.5 Bonaer Care Home, Hayle - Creative Words (July - December 2008)

Over a series of sessions residents were assembled in small groups of about six. They were encouraged to reflect on life experiences in respect of a variety of subjects, and these thoughts were made into poetry by the practitioner.

This was a change in emphasis for this particular home, where activities prior to this had been primarily in the form of games and quizzes. The care home manager noticed that this format created an opportunity for residents to have meaningful conversations that were difficult to facilitate in the daily routine. It was observed that one gentleman resident's tone and

volume of speech improved greatly, benefitting not only himself but his visitors and carers in improving the quality of conversation.

The artist completed evaluation forms for each session which reflect the progress in the confidence and abilities of the residents over the nine sessions, which culminated in a celebration event where the poems composed in earlier sessions were read by residents and by the artist – the event was covered on BBC Radio Cornwall.

“I am so glad we joined this project as it has given us a different focus on ‘Activities’ – one that is so much more interactive with our residents and teaches us so much about the rich and valuable lives they have lived.” (Care Home Manager)

Bonaer hosted two one-off sessions based around singing and movement. A number of the group were unable to contribute fully to the movement element because of physical restrictions, but props such as balloons were used to address this. A member of staff supported the artists fully and commented on the value of the sessions. One resident who had suffered from a stroke two years previously expressed her gratitude:

“I’ve gained so much from this. Two years ago I was a cabbage, and sometimes this (her left hand) won’t do anything, but today it’s been joining in and I’ve had a lovely time.”



Music and Movement at Bonaer Care Home

4.1.2.6 Tregartha Court, Looe – Music and Movement Sessions (June – September 2008)

The practitioner provided a detailed feedback document which discussed the planning and implementation of the project and described the way in which the relationship to the care home contact developed through the various stages.

The feedback showed how the ideas originally formed by the artist could change in the light of the experience of the early sessions. In this case the intention of revolving the sessions around a loose theme of the sea was dropped, as was an intention to incorporate a craft activity. A return to the basics of movement and dance to a range of musical styles proved to be beneficial in a number of ways – increased communication within the group, the enjoyment of the participants and a noticeable improvement in numbers attending. The artist built up a good relationship with the activities co-ordinator, who led some of the later sessions, thus demonstrating the training role that each artist was required to address within each project.

Tregartha Court also hosted two one-off sessions: a poetry group; and a singing session based on old-time music hall. The latter brought out a

number of frustrations that were experienced to a greater or lesser degree by artists at other venues – interruptions due to the nature of the space allocated for the activity, the appearance of tea midway through the session, and an alarm going off, although the activities coordinator remained fully active and supportive throughout. The artist reflected on this in the evaluation form:

“There were many disruptions at the beginning and throughout the sessions, so although frustrations were setting in, I worked at just going with the flow and delivering as best I could.”

4.1.2.7 Trefula Nursing Home, St Day - Small Dance, Big Dance – Dancing for Everyone (June – September 2008)

The artist’s report spoke of individual clients and how they reacted to the singing and dancing sessions. These reflections illustrated how each resident had their own particular needs to be addressed – conditions included depression, memory loss, as well as physical conditions such as stroke and severe arthritis. With such a range of circumstances, the reported positive outcomes were often very small improvements, such as a gentleman drumming his fingers to the music or a usually reticent lady picking up a set of bells, laughing and smiling.

‘The atmosphere has really changed since the activities started, it’s a lot happier place to work now’ (Care Staff)

The activities co-ordinator was similarly upbeat in feeding back and noted in particular the amount of positive comments from other staff and relatives regarding the response of patients.

4.1.2.8 Newquay Day Centre – Global Hop and Bop (July – November 2008)

The sessions involved clients in a variety of music forms and encouraged ‘dance’ in its various forms according to the physical limitations of the individual. Dance styles included Greek, Argentinian, Music Hall and American Jive. There was also a session for making ‘dance mobiles’ using photographs from previous sessions and the project concluded with a

Christmas event. The sessions were attended by as many as 25 people and support was forthcoming from a number of helpers – the artist commented that having at least two or three helpers on hand was integral to the smooth running of the sessions. The role of activities coordinator changed a number of times over the period of the project, but despite these changes staff remained fully engaged, leading some of the sessions.



Greek Dancing

The project was thoroughly evaluated by the artist, following each session and an overall evaluation considered the aims and outcomes of the work.

“One example of confidence building and establishing positive communications on an individual basis was highlighted in a client with autistic tendencies. In the first couple of sessions his attitude was negative and disruptive, he didn’t leave the sessions and underneath his behaviour I observed he had a great tenacity for remembering movements and displayed a good understanding of rhythm. I decided alongside some of the staff to focus on this and encourage him and by the fourth session his attitude began

to change rapidly and he 'blossomed' he began to smile and laugh and really enjoy himself and produced some really interesting creative ideas. A wonderful outcome!" (Artist)

The artist praised the role of the support staff throughout. The project benefitted from an initial planning session to establish the tenor of the sessions and to organise roles and responsibilities. There were a number of personnel changes in the course of the project and staff were generally reluctant to complete evaluation paperwork due to time pressures. However the manager of the Centre was enthusiastic in her support to the practitioner, and this indicated that the activities would be sustained after the artist had finished the project.



Art and craft activity

*"... the project has further developed my practice as a creative arts practitioner especially with a deepening understanding of the needs of older people on both a physical and emotional level and how creating the right ambience and environment is so very important. This experience has further allowed me the insight and understanding on how the creative arts can draw us into **'the present moment'** a place where creativity and the celebration of being alive truly lies." (Artist)*

4.1.2.9 Courtlands Care Home, Rosudgeon – Singing Project

Although this work is ongoing at the time of this report, its role within the overall project is important and a short review is included here.

The aim of the work at Courtlands is to produce a training resource and support pack that can be rolled out to other care homes. The resource will take the form of a DVD covering all the elements of introducing singing therapy to older people, including warm ups, repertoire and the involvement of musical instruments. At the time of writing AFHC is looking for four or five care homes in the West of Cornwall to conduct a pilot of the singing project, with the ultimate intention of making it available to all eligible care homes in due course.



Singing Project at Courtlands Care Home, Rosudgeon

A summary of the learning points gleaned from Phase Two of the project can be found in Section 5.

4.2 Developing intergenerational projects

This aspect of the Older People's project took the form of work in which AFHC funded artistic work in a community as part of a significant local event, with the particular goal of bridging social gaps between the young and old, and the antagonism and mistrust that can develop through the lack of social contact.

The first project, namely the Falmouth Funchal 500 Tall Ships Regatta, is briefly covered here, and the reading project in community hospitals arising out of Phase One of the activities in care settings has also addressed this strand of the project. Additionally, AFHC were one of the agencies contributing to the Flushing Art Week, which is described below.

4.2.1 Falmouth Funchal 500 Tall Ships Regatta – 2008

The objectives of this scheme, designed as a tie-in with the Tall Ships Regatta, were as follows:

- To engage the local community in Tall Ships event, especially those that are traditionally 'hard to reach' e.g. the older and teenage generations.
- To unite the youth with their elders in a common purpose, which will engender a sense of purpose, respect, value and achievement.
- To facilitate a sense of involvement and pride, leading to a reduction in antisocial behaviour, which can undermine the good work of others.
- To support the objectives of the Tall Ships Committee and Falmouth's Chamber of Commerce, by attracting people to Falmouth through the creation of a vibrant, lively, cohesive environment.
- To raise awareness for the event.
- To provide the opportunity for sustained publicity leading up to the event. (Project Agreement)

The outcome of the work was the production of flags to cover the Falmouth town centre area, incorporating the maritime themes of the Tall Ships event. The Arwenack Ward was identified as being an area where the bringing together of older and younger members of the community would be of particular benefit, e.g. in reducing the fear of crime and the self-imposed isolation that this can create in older people.

Artist Tony Minnion was commissioned to work at the Falmouth Day Care Centre, already a central meeting point for older members of the local

community, and to bring in Year 10 pupils from Falmouth School to collaborate on the flag designs. The designs were based on maritime reminiscences, and after stencilling and printing the flags were hung in the Town Centre from early August until the Tall Ships Regatta in September – the Town Council intends to use the flags again in the future.



A flag produced for the Falmouth Tall Ships Festival

A number of quotes illustrate how the process of bringing together the young and old of the community with a common aim developed:

“The initial shyness that both groups had was overcome quickly in most cases as the communication between them developed. I really enjoyed seeing both young and older working together on their prints and the obvious enjoyment that both groups were having working together ... I was really pleased that the students enjoyed the first session so much that they asked if they could come

again later in the week - a great step forward from their initial apprehension and concern about what the visits might be like.” (Artist)

“Often the older generation are not able to participate in events like this due to mobility/ transport so it was lovely to bring the event/activity to them in a relaxed informal setting. We have a certain number of clients who tend to wander through the centre and the art activities gave them a focus for a few hours to lessen the anxiety.” (Manager, Falmouth Day Care Centre)

“Going to age concern was a great experience; we feel it worked really well with all the elderly. After spending an afternoon with the elderly we realised just how amazing tall ships really are!”

“Although we found it difficult to bond with them at first, after tea and cake it was very pleasant, this was a fantastic experience and well worth doing, we all really enjoyed ourselves.” (Students, Falmouth School)

“The finished art work is dynamic and has given them a chance to be a part of the community in which they live, everyone who took part enjoyed different aspects and they have taken away some brilliant memories and have created some vibrant designs.” (Teacher, Falmouth School)

4.2.2 Flushing Art Week 2007

Flushing Art Week developed from an initiative by four residents of the village whose original idea was to display artwork on the Flushing ferry which was part of their daily commuting. Two of the four were students at Falmouth College of Art.

The idea developed into an event in which the whole village was involved, the first of which took place in April 2006. The 2007 event incorporated workshops, exhibitions, an auction of local artwork and a host of associated events. Local businesses and community facilities were all involved in displaying work, which incorporated a wide variety of art styles from textiles, wood sculpture and jewellery to ceramics and photography.



Creation of a 'Giant Sundial' on Flushing Bowling Green

The involvement of AFHC reflected the aims of the intergenerational work:

"More activities than in the previous year were held with the activity type being selected following feedback from the residents and from AFHC experience on inclusion e.g. using music based activity to involve the harder to reach individuals, ensuring the age range for the activities was as broad as possible. Specific attention was given to the advertising and content in order to attract a wide age range to each activity, this proved highly successful." (Event Evaluation)



A Flushing window display exhibiting work by artists aged from 16 to 70

A number of longer-term spin-offs evolved from the Art Week, including regular art classes for locals and revitalising the Village Club, which will be used for film evenings on three or four occasions each year.

4.3 Establishing an Older People's Creative Network for Professionals

An important element of the Older People's project was to create opportunities for artists and care home staff to meet to exchange experiences and share best practice.

Networking events have been organised every few months since early 2007. These are intended to attract all of those involved with the specific care settings activities, as well as those who enrolled on the Truro College module addressing Arts and Health – see section 4.4 below. Additionally, a number of inductions have been held for those new to the scheme, and smaller groups also meet together under the organisation of AFHC, e.g. a meeting of all of the artists employed on the project. The AFHC Co-ordinator has also visited the care homes involved with the project, meeting with the artist and key staff to discuss issues.

The networking events have generally attracted 35-40 interested parties. A typical programme includes: one or more workshops of the

activities being piloted in care settings; discussion of the toolkits being developed for use in other locations; a presentation by AFHC staff; and time for informal sharing of experiences and learning from each other.



Shared activity at a networking event

As part of the evaluation of the care home activities, artists and care setting staff were asked to comment on the value of the networking sessions in terms of informing their practice and increasing their understanding of the wider picture regarding the work with older people – *“being part of something bigger”* was a common response. There was universal praise for the networking sessions and it was clear that the meeting of minds engendered by these had inspired and encouraged those who were able to attend. The main difficulty reported was the freeing up of time to take part in these events, which was a problem principally for care home and hospital staff. However, the regularity of the sessions suggests that there should be a reasonable opportunity for all to take part.

4.4 Training for Care Staff in Creative Skills

In February 2008 AFHC entered into a service level agreement with Truro College and their Centre of Vocational Excellence (COVE) to provide a module specifically covering Arts for Health and older people, entitled 'Creativity in Care Settings'. The module was validated for inclusion in an NVQ in care staff, although in practice the module was undertaken as a stand alone course by the first cohort. Sixteen individuals undertook the initial course. Most were already employed as care staff, and many were fulfilling the role of activities co-ordinator.

5. Discussion

In bringing together the various strands of the project it is important to point out that none of the individual elements should be considered in isolation. For example, the experience of the pilot projects in the care home settings will have prompted many to consider the vocational qualification offered by Truro College, and the networking events will have informed much of the practice being carried out elsewhere. The true value of the project is therefore best assessed holistically, that is by asking whether the combination of the different strands have been to the benefit of the older people exposed to the artistic interventions, and importantly whether a structure has been put in place that will contribute to the increasing body of art in healthcare, at the same time creating the basis of a sustainable network of activity that can continue into the short- and medium-term.

At the core of the work, however, were the interventions at the various care settings. Although the projects that made up Phase Two of the artistic activities had many differences based on the specialities of the artists, the needs of the clients and environment of the participating care settings, the project as a whole brought out a number of common experiences which can be drawn together by way of reflection. The subheadings reflect the main learning points brought out by the artists in their evaluations:

Planning – what worked best was an early meeting with care staff to prepare for the sessions, to establish the extent of staff and volunteer support and to

anticipate any practical difficulties. This enabled a project agreement to be drawn up which detailed individual and organisational responsibilities and proved to be of value in ensuring the project activities progressed as planned.

Partnerships – many artists spoke of good relationships with the manager and/or activities coordinator. For example, the artists benefitted from care staff investing in preparation time by publicising the events in advance, thereby managing expectations and creating anticipation.

Practicalities – Issues included timing (proximity with tea breaks etc.) number of residents able to attend, other distractions (TV, visitors) as well as the availability of staff and volunteers to support the activity.

Training – this was vital in terms of sustainability of activities beyond the official period of the project. On a number of occasions, care staff were able to lead sessions under the supervision and guidance of the practitioner by way of preparation for future activity. Some of the artists felt that acting as a trainer as well as a practitioner was the most challenging part of their role.

Reflection and Evaluation – In the case of the artist practitioners their attention to this aspect of the project was universally good, thanks in part to the encouragement and guidance given by the Projects Coordinator at AFHC. It was apparent that reflection from care staff - whilst equally important in terms of the overall value of the project - was in a number of cases not as forthcoming. In some cases care staff were unsure of what was required of them in terms of appraising the activity, and often they were required to return immediately to other duties at the end of the session. Those artists who were able to organise a short meeting for reflection following one session recognised benefits in terms of fine tuning the activity for the next.

What was clear in every instance from the feedback given by artists, care staff and clients was that positive benefits were evident in the form of the following outcomes (see the quotes and reflections in section 4.1.2 for examples):

Clients:

Communication and interaction

Socialisation

Confidence and improved self esteem

Happiness

Improvement in creative skills

Stimulation

Relaxation

Care Staff:

Confidence in dealing with clients and other staff

Personal development, e.g. improvement in creative skills

Enjoyment

Motivation

Inspiration

New ideas, e.g. combining music/movement with arts and crafts

Artists:

Increased knowledge and experience of working with and delivering to older people

Increased repertoire of delivery methods

Development of toolkits for use by other leaders

Training techniques to encourage others

The intergenerational projects tackled so far have offered an important insight into what is possible, given the potent combination of community enthusiasm and professional support. The events in Falmouth and Flushing have gone further than simply giving an opportunity for art activity to individuals in the community – the outcomes have shown that there is core support for activities that bring people together in the common goal of a creative outcome, but with further implications for society in terms of mutual understanding and friendship between those of different ages and backgrounds.

There was recognition at the strategic level of the impact that the project had had on elderly care in those settings where there had been artistic involvement. This comment comes from a representative of Cornwall Partners in Care, the body representing independent care providers in the

county. It offers a fitting summary of what has been achieved and therefore is an appropriate statement with which to conclude this report:

“There has been very positive feedback from all the homes involved and most have continued the legacy of the project ... I view Arts for Health in care settings as a very positive initiative that should be made available to as many people in as many care settings as is possible.” (Pearson, personal correspondence)

6. References

- Arts Council (2007) *The arts, health and well-being*. Arts Council: London
- Cornwall Strategic Partnership (2006) *Local Area Agreement: Local Outcomes for Healthier Communities and Older People*
<http://www.cornwallstrategicpartnership.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=20475>,
[accessed 6 March 2009].
- AFHC (Arts for Health Cornwall) (2008) *Website home page*. [Accessed 25 June at <http://www.artsforhealthcornwall.org.uk/>]
- AFHC (undated) *Arts and Older People Project*.
- Arts for Health South West (2008) *Signposting Sheet: Arts and Health and Older People*. Arts for Health South West: Bristol
- Dahlberg (2007) *Think and be heard: Creativity, Aging and Community Engagement*. National Arts Forum Series
- Department of Health (2007) *Report of the Review of Arts and Health Working Group*. DoH: London
- Flushing Art Week 2007: Event Evaluation
- Groombridge B (2007) *Extra time: Arts, Health and Learning in Later Life*. NIACE: Leicester
- Hansard (2008) *House of Lords Debate on Arts and Healthcare, 6th March*. HMSO: London
- James O (2008) *Art - The key to unlocking dementia*. The Guardian, 20 December
- Johnson A (2008) *Speech at Arts and Healthcare Event - "Open to all: mental health, social inclusion, and museums and galleries"* [accessed 6th March 2009 at http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Speeches/DH_088160]
- Ritchie J, Spencer L and O'Connor W (2007) *Carrying out Qualitative Analysis*, from *Qualitative Research Practice*, eds. Ritchie J and Lewis J. Sage: London
- Scottish Arts Council (2002) *Research into Lifelong Learning, the Arts and Older People*. Scottish Arts Council: Edinburgh
- Staricoff R, Duncan J and Wright M (2003) *A Study of the Effects of Visual and Performing Arts in Health Care*. Chelsea and Westminster Hospital: London