



All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing

Meeting
Everyday Creativity
22nd October 4-5.30pm
House of Lords Committee Room 3

NOTES

Chair: Tracy Brabin, MP, Shadow Minister for Early Years **TB**

Presenting:

Paul Clark, Delivery lead, Campaigns, NHS Digital **PC**

Nick Ewbank, Director, Nick Ewbank Associates **NE**

Dr Daisy Fancourt **DF**

Alan Higgins, expert in systems of health and wellbeing and former Director of Public Health for Oldham Council **AH**

Stephen James-Yeoman, Editor Digital Development and Innovation, BBC Arts **S J-Y**

Dr Simon Opher, GP and Clinical Lead for Social Prescribing at Gloucestershire CCG **SO**

Chris Rolls, Senior Project Manager, Mental Health, 64 Million Artists **CR**

Robin Simpson, Chief Executive of Voluntary Arts **RS**

TB: Welcome and introductions.

Apologies from the Co-Chairs of the APPG: Ed Vaizey MP and Lord Howarth. As many of you will know, Lord Howarth's partner, Baroness Hollis, died recently. Our thoughts are with Lord Howarth. Baroness Hollis achieved an enormous amount in her work.

Recent press and announcements regarding Loneliness Strategy. Acknowledgement of the work of Jo Cox and the Campaign to End Loneliness. Impact on health care costs and potential for the arts to contribute to reducing loneliness.

This meeting will consider 'everyday creativity' and how "*The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived*", first Key Message of the *Creative Health* report. We will be considering the following questions:

What would the opportunities and challenges be for a public health campaign on the health and wellbeing benefits of everyday creativity?

What might the messages be and what is the evidence for them?

What are the next steps?

S J-Y: Get Creative started in 2015 in response to the recommendations of the Warwick Commission. Spring festival every year – celebrate everyday creativity that already happens and intended to inspire everyone to get creative. 11 partners including Voluntary Arts, Arts Councils, Creative Scotland.

This year we had the most successful festival so far. More than 1400 creative participative events across the UK. Events have to be in the date range (this year in March, next year in May) and have to be hands-

on and participatory, all have to be free or cost recovery. Creativity isn't defined, very broad. No detailed evaluation. Think over 100,000 people took part. BBC's particular role is directing people to the activities. Almost every BBC radio station reflected Get Creative in some way. Creating a noise and directing people to the map of activities.

Example of an 80 year old engineer, Ken, who had never painted in his life and decided to paint a copy of a Canaletto in his bedroom. BBC made a film about him, pushed out via social media channels - now been seen by more than 15 million people and promoted by BBC channels. Picked up by national newspapers.

Some step by step guides to make things for those who can't get to an event. 30,000 people went to the site; we know 7000 people made an origami frog! Small knitting group in Trowbridge feels part of a national event. Next year 11-19 May. Aim for 2000 events. Intergenerational focus, aligning with four national creative ageing festivals. This year Daisy Fancourt was commissioned to Great British Creativity Test.

DF: BBC New Generation Thinker. Research angle – encourage the messaging around health and wellbeing, encourage public to be active participants in the research, generate new research. New content – Today programme, Radio 3 programme on arts and health, Tomorrow's World programme for under 25s on digital creativity, short programme on arts on prescription – went viral during festival and had about a million views. Pushed out messages around the health benefits of creative engagement.

Getting people involved in citizen science. The Great British Creativity Test. Answer a research question How do creative activities affect our emotional and mental health?

We know they do, but from a cognitive psychology perspective, what is going on? Over 50,000 people took part so now probably the largest data sets on arts and health. We were able to create a new positive psychology model for how the arts affects emotion in the brain and we have been able to develop a new validation scale and now freely available. Series of research papers, for example looking at how socio-economic status affects arts and mental health, how arts affect people differently if they do or don't have depression, follow on citizen science programme with NASA and have now been able to combine data sets and compare virtual cultural experiences with live cultural experiences. And the data set is going to be made freely available next year. So we are hoping to publicise the results in line with the next Get Creative festival and at the same time launch the next research question. So we will have this ongoing cycle of public generated research and the ongoing messaging around the health benefits, alongside the promotion of actually getting people involved.

TB: With the evidence we can go to government for funding. Hopefully that evidence will show that Flow is beneficial to your mental health. How is Get Creative Funded?

RS: It's a collective endeavor. Most of it is funded through the partnership. Small amount of funding from Arts Council England and Creative Scotland to fund a project manager and run the campaign. Principle from the start that we didn't want to be taking money away from the organisations that we are working with, so the central bit of the campaign is as lean as we can manage.

Chief Executive of Voluntary Arts, Chair of Get Creative Campaign, Chair of the Age of Creativity Festival, England's new ageing festival and Vice-Chair of Luminare, Scotland's creative ageing festival. More importantly, I'm an amateur musician. This is how I got involved. My interest is in those creative activities that people do themselves in their everyday lives, under their own steam. Across UK and Ireland, we think there are 63,000 amateur arts groups: orchestras, choirs, amateur theatre groups, morris dancers, brass bands, recorder players, knitters... Evidence suggests approximately 63,000 organised constituted groups and about 10 million people taking part on a regular basis. Most are self-funding. It's quite hard to stop people doing artistic activities, they'll find a way. Voluntary Arts has been going for 26 years but many of these groups more than a century. Only relatively recently that there is an academic and policy interest in this everyday creativity. In arts and health focus has tended to be on situations where there is an 'intervention', situations where a professional artist or therapist or a health professional is involved. In our field the motivation is usually your own interest, fun and enjoyment, and the social aspect. Voluntary Arts exists to speak on their behalf and to promote the whole idea of everyday

creativity. We think it is important for everyone to have some creative expression in their lives, because of the benefits to the individually but also ideally in a group with others because of the benefits to the community.

Parallel to Get Creative we have been working with BBC radio stations on a project called Up for Arts. Started in Liverpool 2009, now have five projects: BBC Radio Merseyside, Lancashire, Cumbria, Stoke and London. Recruiting for BBC Radio Wales and Humberside. Part-time officer in the radio station, who works with existing amateur groups, puts on taster events, showcase events, to give people a chance to have a go. Usually in public spaces where public can bump into them. Local groups put on the events. Radio station promotes and signposts. Bringing them together with Get Creative in May, but they continue all year. Self-evident link to wellbeing and beginning to look at this more closely. We asked Ewbank Associates to evaluate the wellbeing impacts.

NE Working in arts and health for many years. Strong evidence that there is clinical impact. Wheels of policy grind slowly but we get there in the end. Good to see everything coming together with the *Creative Health* report. Evaluation of Up for Arts is in early days – 6 months formative evaluation. Already compelling evidence of how effective the BBC can be when they engage with local authorities and other public bodies in the delivery of these activities. Last year a Wellcome funded Seed Award project looking at the impact of engagement on health and wellbeing outcomes. Feedback from Wellcome was that the proposal it seemed implausible that everything called ‘art and culture’ will produce similar effects. Captures some of the challenge. We are dealing with such a complex set of activities that are so integrated with our lives and our society, it’s really difficult to disentangle the effects when we are talking about the arts and creativity. However, it is important that we try and answer this question. Robin has talked about projects being shoehorned into the biomedical model where we are encouraged to look at specific clinical effects. It works well with Dance for Parkinson’s or singing for better breathing for example. But there is also a more holistic approach. World Health Organisation says that up to 40% of health spending is wasted due to inefficiency, they use this as the basis for a case for people-centred care and this is fundamental to the way we might start to look at our work. Putting the person’s subjective experience right at the heart of healthcare. Daisy’s work is very important in this. Firstly the importance of feelings, which is related very closely to subjective experience, is increasingly becoming recognized; also the way the arts can help us to manage our emotions. Antonio Demasio, an American neurologist, is very important in this respect. He has shown us how cultures are outbreaks of feeling or emotion. We see that creativity and the arts has a fundamental role to play in creating balance.

TB Clarion call to local radio. Locally, Creative Minds has had a massive impact. Powerful message.

CR At 64 Million Artists, we believe everyone is creative and when we create we make positive change in the world around us. Passionate believers in everyday creativity and how that can transform lives. We are interested in building digital tools, we collaborate with organisations on grassroots project, we partner with organisations to help them become more creative. Work with museums, libraries, prisons, care homes. Do things, share is our motto – do something creative, reflect on it and share it with others. Website with lots of free creative tools. 30 day creativity challenge in January – simple creative activities to do every day. Keen that creativity is self-defined. We support people to do more of what they want to do. Generates a huge amount of sharing on creative media through a WhatsApp group. Spider networking out to reach people who are socially isolated. Support groups to develop and self-run. With UCL doing some clinical research – creativity in mind – 20 people who self-define as having low mood or anxiety – questionnaires based on Edinburgh Warwick scale plus some semi-structured interviews. Early results show that participants have shifted positively across all areas. Everyday Creativity report which we did for the Arts Council. We met with over 300 organisations in 10 workshops across the UK. Came up with three main findings: 1. value in everyday creativity in the wider arts ecology. ACE re-defining their mandate as Great Art and Culture **for, by and with** everyone. How organisations can co-create their cultural offer with the people who are the beneficiaries. 2. Supporting existing and encouraging what is already going on – not about delivering a cultural service but about working with what is already happening. 3. Democratising the existing funding infrastructure - who is making the decisions and who are the decisions being made for. How do we look at social return on investment. Next report ‘Cultural Democracy’ – looking at how organisations are embedding working with communities through case studies.

SO Barely started our public health campaign. Support from our MP, David Drew, and Ellen Rule, at Gloucestershire CCG. Now pretty consistent evidence that if you do a two-hour art class every week you get a predictable improvement in wellbeing. Appointments with me have doubled in 20 years, anti-depressant prescriptions have doubled in 10 years, A&E attendances all up. People are less well mentally than they used to be but physically they are living longer. Arts on Prescription is downstream, we are waiting until people get ill. So we are proposing in Gloucestershire – if you 100 hours a year, that's 2 hours a week, it seems to be a tipping point. It significantly improves your mental wellbeing. Not much upstream work going on for mental health. Physical has five a day and so on. Try to launch – two hours a week. Try it for a year with a number of partners. Charity to fund evaluate. All arts providers on board – one or two free courses for those who can't afford it. Very experimental. What is creativity? Might be divisive and we have to be careful but we think we should try to reduce demand before people get to the health service. Important thing is publicity, we need a lot of support on social media and hitting everyone in different ways.

TB Work coaches could ask about are you getting your 2 hours a week. Thank you, David for being a very supportive MP.

AH Link this to the local authority and combined authority context. When I was Director of Public Health in Oldham, I also had Libraries and arts in my remit. Leads on arts and health for a number of years, including on arts, health and social movements. We are still testing that out, seeing whether we can inspire social movements through engaging people's passion and emotion. Since January I have been freelance, mostly working for Public Health England and the Local Government Association. I'm a trustee of a community arts organisation. Finances are stretched to say the least and it is the community arts organisation where that is felt most. Opportunities: all local governments are concerned with worklessness, inclusive growth, social connections, connected communities and social isolation. Arts doesn't tend to feature but could do. When I am addressing those issues, I always bring arts and wellbeing to it. Another opportunity that encourages me is the way that public conversations on mental illness have changed over the last five years or so. Quite significant, a rapid development. Engaging with young people. Social Prescribing is the Secretary of State's priorities and again arts and wellbeing can work with that. One of the challenges for us in looking to offer arts activities the question of value and evidence arises. I believe there is sufficient evidence for arts and creativity on their own. Looking at achieving a staged approach, engaging some champions and give them something to connect with others, to share the evidence. A challenge, nothing annoys us more in local authorities than having an edict handed down to us, so a challenge would be how to engage people locally in this initiative. The voluntary sector and local governments. Message – 2 hours a week sounds good to me. In Greater Manchester we are looking at GM Moving programme on physical activity has grown in the last two years. More people, more active, more often is a very understandable message. Next Steps, if we are looking at this kind of engagement then the sooner we go wider with it the better, have conversations with as many people as possible.

TB Key cities – offer from ACE to cities. Where is the offer to towns. It has to be bottom-up. Persuading LAs that it will save money in the long run.

PC How we work with Public Health England. NHS Digital used to be called NHS Choices. We deliver the PHE portfolio campaigns e.g. Change4Life probably best known. Quarterly campaign schedule and we work with approximately 20 campaigns. We recently completed the Every Mind Matters campaign for mental health. Probably where opportunity lies in a public health campaign is within mental health. Campaign brands are spread across all life course: Starting Well; Living Well; Ageing Well; Partnerships. Partnerships could be with VCSP, local authorities. One idea is that we could make generic campaign materials for LAs and they can make them relevant to their locality. Each stream has a number of products e.g. websites, apps, tools. Marketing planning process – PHE have a commitment to Cabinet Office each year and that is how they receive their funding. That decision process is between the Secretary of State for Health and the Marketing Directors of PHE. That is where the road map is set for the year and where you would need to influence. Based on financial year and done quarterly. Change4Life is about 10 years old, a campaign to tackle the causes of obesity, various campaigns every year on exercise, nutrition etc. Other campaigns on Cancer, staying well in the winter. What you propose has to fit within this landscape. All campaigns require evaluation.

TB Interesting to see if the Loneliness money will lead through to a PHE campaign. Our way in could be Every Mind Matters.

AC Daunting list of criteria. Process right through to Secretary of State for Health and Cabinet Office in order to decide what they will put their money in to. Do stress that they do partnership projects. They tend to be connected to identified health issues and priority areas. If we were to link to Every Mind Matters we would be associating ourselves with the mental health agenda. First bullet point is how bad is the issue, the burden of disease, a very medical model. Then is there a role for government, who else is doing it. So a conversation here might be how much is BBC Get Creative already doing what we need. Do we need the health input to strengthen the messaging or is it better that it's kept out.

PC Bit of red herring because there are obvious examples, e.g. Cancer Research UK, where others are also doing similar campaigns

AC Is it the right way to make behaviour change happen? Health inequalities relevant and interesting to us. Also return on investment. I have asked if we can have a further meeting when we know what our ask is.

TB interesting issue around health inequalities. Not very diverse in the room and nobody has talked about reaching communities that are marginalized. Do you think this will come up in your number crunching, Daisy?

DF One of the things we looked at was the social gradient and whether we are only finding benefits for people who are healthier and wealthier. We have to keep it under wraps but the good message is that it is not the case. We are seeing equal or stronger effects down the social gradient. People with poorer mental health tend to get more out of activities than people who are already in good mental health.

Question and Answer session

Ellen Rule, Gloucestershire CCG: Interested in comment about people returning to work. We had an interesting situation in Gloucestershire. We have been doing a lot of work in arts and health including with people who have medical needs. One thing we have found is that some of our local government departments have taken the view that if a patient was engaged in an arts and health intervention and was able to attend that intervention, that was a signal to reduce benefits. If they are able to go out and engage in something therefore they are able to go out and engage in work. We have had to try and intervene and manage that. We need to have a conversation about this because it's a very positive first step, someone coming out of a socially isolated position. If there is a punitive response to that first tentative step.

TB I am going to ask a written question because if that is happening, we will never have an impact. I'd like to get the evidence.

SO We have a fantastic film made with these men with chronic pain and he didn't want the film shown because he thought the benefits office would see it.

AH I haven't come across that but that is one of the issues that I will be discussing with local councils. It's very worrying.

DF Reflecting on what everyone has said, it's very encouraging to hear that there are many different campaigns and approaches. I work in a behavioural science department and from a behavioural science perspective, it is unlikely that one approach will be right for everyone. Better if there are many different approaches and from different types of voices, because different people are convinced by different types of people and stakeholders. In future efforts, I hope we don't combine our efforts into one because it will be less effective. Secondly, even amongst other health campaigns, such as Five a Day, the research data doesn't actually say that Five a Day is the magical threshold. It's more likely to be 8 or 10 a day, but five seems more realistic to achieve. Promoting any amount of engagement is good, and we should worry too much about it being a particular magic number grounded in a particular research paper.

CR It is interesting to consider the relationship between everyday creativity and outcomes and outputs. Output might be two hours a week of something creative might be good for you, but what is the outcome of that. I question a public health campaign around creativity if it is too output driven. What is the creativity? It is self-defining. The boundaries are very blurred. But a public health campaign will raise awareness which is good.

TB yes, and BBC Get Creative talked about linking it to other events, so people aren't thinking, I am being told to be creative, they can think about responding to this defining moment in our history for instance.

S J-Y: Picking up with creative ageing festivals in 2019. If we are talking about a 'moment' in the calendar and then people go to the website and there is nothing in their postcode area. So we want to make it as easy as possible.

RS With the Up for Arts projects that go on all year round, we've found that the most effective hooks for our monthly campaigns are not the art itself. We are just finishing a project around Windrush for instance. We famously did a project to raise awareness of prostate cancer and asked people to knit fig leaves to go on the private parts of statues across the region. A lot of press interest and got a lot of people knitting, not by saying please come and do some knitting, but by using a message. Avoids the 'I can't draw' response. It worries me a little about the campaign idea. We need to be careful about unpicking the theory too much and taking the fun out of it. Creativity gives you the whole package together in a way that is motivating. We found with Get Creative that there is power in telling the story and others get enthused, rather than telling you that you should do it.

Ellen Rule If we are thinking about doing something like this, how much do we focus on just the engagement and how much do we focus on the outcome. There is still that worry that if you participate in the arts then the product has to be good. The Canaletto speaks to that. Having the go is the important thing. How do we structure a campaign that shows people that being part of something, that the message weaves in that taking part is good for you, not that the output matters.

Gilly Angell The key is the enjoyment, if you get joy from something you realise it's good for you. But people might need their hand holding to take part.

Michaela Ross: Researcher at the Bethlem Gallery. I think we have to be careful about who determines what the benefits are of artistic activity. I've encountered people who wouldn't say they use art to regulate emotions, sometimes they use art to have their voice heard, sometimes they use the art space to be disruptive, to be difficult.

DF There is a question of whether people are actually aware of the benefits. I go on long walks and eat strawberries because I like them, but understanding they are good for my health encourages me to keep doing them as well. So instead of shoehorning things into specific outcomes, I think there is a general messaging that these activities do have benefits. Re. process, from research the process seems to bring the benefit, but that said, developing skill is linked in itself to self-efficacy and agency, so it's useful to sustain engagement until you start to learn or make improvements, so that's a good message. The standard working definition of creativity in psychology has two components, it is original and novel in some way and it is also productive. Reading doesn't count because it's not productive as such, but writing a poem does. Walking can fall outside it but if you are walking and picking up pieces of nature it can fall in. There are blurred boundaries. There's something called the arts bias in creativity, which is that when we are talking about creativity, people often home in on arts activities because they are perfect examples of those two components.

TB Four minutes left and it would be good to get a final word on next steps.

AC Do people feel it is worth pursuing a public health campaign alongside the other work that is going on? I very much take your point Daisy about multiple approaches.

SO I think we should pilot it and see what happens. It's just a provocation. Five a Day isn't that you have to eat five, it's to get you thinking about vegetables.

RS I agree. My dream longer term is to get that point in the population as a whole, the way that there is in that belief that sport and physical activity must be good for your health, something inherent, that level of intuition

NE Joseph Beuys should be the guiding spirit. He believed in an extended definition of art, he believed that everyone is an artist. Maybe the challenge should be to PHE that there should be some kind of creative approach that is different from their usual process, working in partnership with other agencies.

CR Anything that raises awareness with people that doing something creative can improve their wellbeing can only be a good thing. Making people it is a safe and simple thing to do and enjoy the process.

TB 'Have a go' could be the strapline.

AH Yes, definitely we need to keep going at it. Challenge is inequalities.

S Y-J Anything that would be motivate organisations to be part of something that already exists should be encouraged. Anything that gives licence to audiences to say 'I can be part of that' is great.

DF Can we look at other public health campaigns and see if the arts can play a role, for instance can we help to promote dance as part of physical activity and latch onto other campaigns.

TB Thanks and please do send us further thoughts.