



A GUIDE FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING THROUGH THE ARTS IN CORNWALL

“It is time to recognise
the powerful contribution
the arts can make to our
health and wellbeing.”

Rt Hon. Lord Howarth of Newport, Co-Chair All Party
Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing



It is a real pleasure to support this campaign to raise awareness of the vital role that creativity can play in improving our health and wellbeing. Throughout my working life as a GP and as a Commissioner, I have championed the need for mental and physical health to have an equal footing with regards to access and provision of support within Health and Social Care. We talk of holistic care and of not separating body, mind, and spirit, yet we still often diminish the latter two. This work, which helps to publicise and reconnect us to our creative selves, is a great example of how to move us towards what we instinctively know is good for us.

We are fortunate in Cornwall to have a thriving creative culture which has evolved through individuals and from significant historical arts movements over many years. The language of the arts may be more familiar to some than others but ultimately the aim is to use creativity as a way to express our thoughts and feelings as well as nurture our souls in a safe and non-judgemental way. A lot of us still don't feel we are 'arty' enough to do some of these things but I encourage you to feel more confident to try something new or re-kindle an old passion. I hope that we can all find better balance in our lives, better connection to those around us and a better appreciation of the beautiful place in which we live.

Doctor Paul Cook
GP and Chair of NHS Kernow
Clinical Commissioning Group



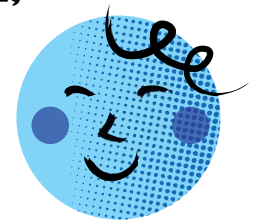
Creativity – it's good for you!

Cornwall is a hotbed of creative activity which is good, because doing something creative is essential for our health & wellbeing.

We all know that physical activity is good for our health; the evidence for the benefits of creative activity on our health and wellbeing is just as strong. In this leaflet, you will discover why, how, who and where. We have suggested a few **activities you can try out at home**. We have sourced **facts** and **statistics** to prove how amazingly **good** for us taking part in the arts is. There are also links to **further reading** on the subject, and access to a directory of practitioners and organisations offering a wide range of opportunities to get creative.

**“I can’t tell you
how much the
creative activities
have helped my
mental health and
wellbeing because
it’s been a struggle”**

**Diane. Participant in
Moving Landscapes project,
Grays Wharf, Penryn,
Cornwall**

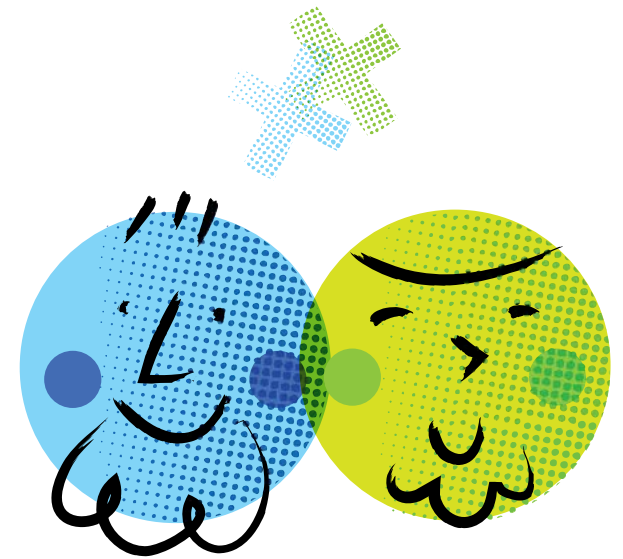


We can be creative **on our own** which,
'enables self-expression and provides a
chance to take stock of life'.

APPG report

We can be creative **with other people**:
'participation in creative activities
raised self-esteem, provided a sense
of purpose, helped people engage in
social relationships and friendships
and enhanced social skills and
community integration'.

Huxley Arts on Prescription



What type of activities are we talking about?

Taking part in what is called **'the arts'** could include doing any one of these activities...

Drawing and painting, filmmaking, watching a performance, singing, drama, pottery, sewing, knitting, weaving, writing, poetry, visiting a gallery, sculpting, making or listening to music, dancing, photography, crafting, woodworking.



Where can we be creative?

We can engage with the arts from our own home, in community hubs, libraries, village halls, galleries, theatres, heritage sites, outside in nature, and on our beautiful Cornish beaches! Other settings increasingly used to access the arts for health and wellbeing are hospitals and other health and social care environments.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could walk into a pharmacy and be presented with an arts section of activities we could do to improve our health and wellbeing?

“What an experience for a non-dancer in her 60th year. I have been taught how to dance...for me (it) has opened a whole new aspect to my life.”

**Inner Ground
Dance Company
participant
Hacienda
Paradise Project,
Cornwall**



After
engaging
with the
arts:

79%
**OF PEOPLE
IN DEPRIVED
COMMUNITIES
ATE MORE
HEALTHILY**

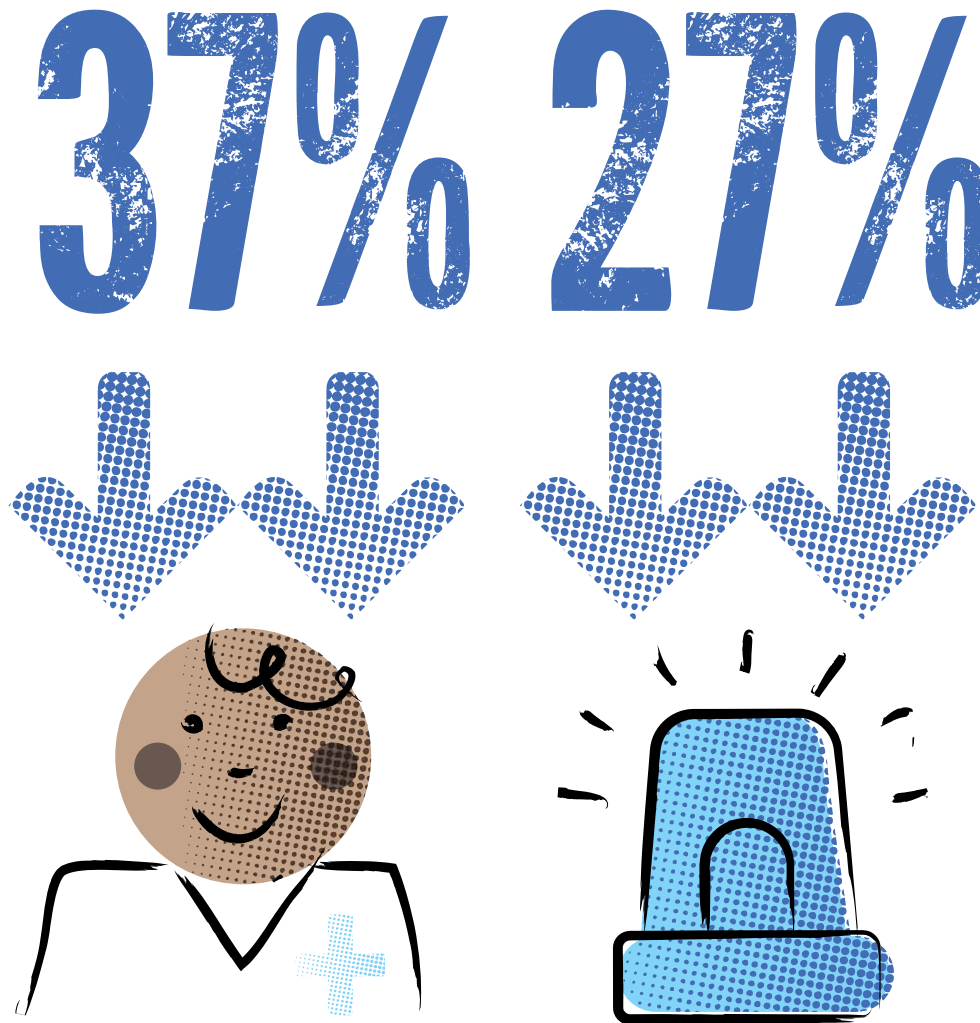
82%
**ENJOYED
GREATER
WELLBEING**

77%
**ENGAGED
IN MORE
PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY**



FINDINGS FROM THE APPG REPORT

An arts-on-prescription project has shown a 37% drop in GP consultation rates and a 27% reduction in hospital admissions



Why creativity is good for you

- + Engagement in the arts is consistently seen to increase self-esteem, confidence and purpose.
- + Doing something creative can help with recovery from illness, injury or addiction.
- + Having visual and performing arts in hospitals and other health care settings helps to reduce sickness and promote recovery.
- + Getting involved in arts activities helps to address loneliness and isolation and can be a protective factor against diseases such as dementia.
- + Taking part in arts activities helps with depression, anxiety and stress.
- + Regular creative writing – even just for five minutes a day – can have mental, emotional and physical health benefits.
- + Singing is really helpful for a wide range of health conditions – and it improves mood.
- + Creative activity is a powerful tool to help young people rebuild their mental and emotional health.
- + By focusing on a creative task we can clear our minds and reduce anxiety.
- + Being creative helps us practice useful skills such as problem-solving, perseverance, overcoming difficulties.
- + Creating something new is rewarding which improves our confidence, self-esteem and mood.
- + Trying new creative activities is especially good for our emotions and wellbeing.
- + It doesn't matter how 'good' you are, it's getting hands-on with something creative and taking part that counts.
- + Doing something creative with others is more beneficial to our mental health than working alone.
- + Although face to face interaction is best, doing something creative online can also help.



Try one of these activities designed to let you explore the arts for yourself. Try them, share them and see where it takes you.

Creative writing



Think back over the last 24 hours – make a note of what smells, tastes and sounds you've encountered; what did you see and what did you feel on your hands or elsewhere on your skin? When you've made your list, choose one to write about for just 5 minutes or you could use the 5 minutes to make a short poem – it doesn't have to rhyme – about your sensory experiences.



Music

Create your own Desert Island Discs – think about 6 songs or pieces of music that bring you joy or tell the story of your life – create a playlist and share.

Photography & Film

Use your phone to take a photo or video of the same place or scene at the same time each day or week, month or season – compare.

Painting and drawing

Instead of using a traditional brush, think about using found items such as a feather, twig, leaf or vegetable. Instead of using paint, think about using coffee, food colouring, spices and fruit.

Dance & Sing

Turn up the radio and dance like no-one is watching or sing like no-one is listening.

**EVEN A
SMALL
AMOUNT OF
CREATIVITY
CAN HELP
YOU COPE
WITH MODERN
LIFE**
BBC ARTS AND UCL

Colour Mood Connections



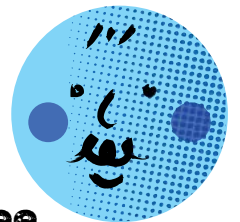
Choose a colour as a theme for your day, week or even month: Dress in the colour. Collect and display objects and artefacts you find around you. Make a collage using pictures in magazines, old cards, wrappers and packaging, fabric remnants, ribbons, coloured or patterned papers, plastics etc.

These are just a few ideas to get you started – you can find many more in library books, magazines or on the internet. Just as with physical exercise, you'll get most benefit if you build

up a creative habit – and you'll notice the impact on your wellbeing very quickly.

Try and find a bit of time each week to do something creative – it could be in your lunch break, or at the beginning or end of the day. You can get the benefit from just a few minutes a day – a daily doodle, 5 minutes of free writing, taking a photo on your phone, picking up some knitting or crochet are all easily done almost wherever you are and will help you feel good.

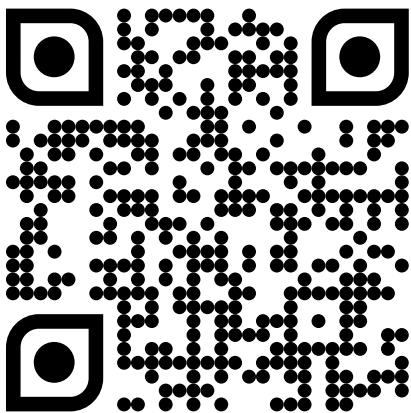
“ Covid's hidden cost has been isolation and mental health problems. Art has been an emotional lifeline. You can become absorbed in a piece of work and temporarily put aside your worries and anxieties. ”



Therese, participant in Penlee Art Group, Penzance, Cornwall

Directory of opportunities to connect with creativity in Cornwall

There are many organisations, practitioners and community groups offering ways to engage with creative activities. Use the QR code to connect with ones that can be accessed wherever you live in Cornwall.



[www.arts-well.com/
resources/directory](http://www.arts-well.com/resources/directory)

“At the close of the session, there is a sense of achievement and a wonderful relief from the stresses we come with, to the group.”

**Ann, Mylor
Writing Group,
Cornwall**



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In this document we have collated information to explain why creativity is good for you and how it can improve our health and wellbeing. We have sourced the content from a range of published reports, through evidence collated by other organisations working in the field and from projects and activities. There are too many sources to list here, but there are three key reports we recommend if you want to find out more:

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing – Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing

https://ncch.org.uk/uploads/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf

The AHRC Cultural Value Project – Understanding the value of arts and culture

<https://www.ukri.org/publications/ahrc-cultural-value-project-report/>

BBC Arts Great British Creativity Test in partnership with UCL

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2019/get-creative-research>

