

Evaluation Report

Creative Prescribing Discovery Programme

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For this report we are using the term creative prescribing, but the new National Social Prescribing Framework for Wales recommends the use of the term 'arts on referral' or 'creative referral'

Who We Are

In 2021 the Trittech Institute was launched. We are a team based in a bespoke facility within Hywel Dda University Health Board comprising of industry-leading engineers, scientists and clinicians.

Our Institute

Here at TriTech Institute, we support the development of healthcare solutions on a local, national, and global level offering designers and manufacturers a single point of access to the NHS through a collaborative and agile approach.

What We Offer

The team's advanced skills in clinical and research design are combined with technical engineering expertise to manage the whole innovative pathway from early unmet need, through to concept design, prototyping, clinical investigations, and real-world service evaluations.

Our Services

We provide specific services and solutions for clinical engineering, research and innovation and value-based healthcare and can also support with grant writing and submission.

Executive Summary

Background

Creative prescribing is an approach to healthcare in which people are connected to assets within their community to address their social, emotional, physical, or practical needs. Within social prescribing there is a term creative prescribing, also known as a creative referral, arts on referral and/or arts on prescription. Creative prescribing ' is an umbrella term that is used to describe the referral of individuals to community assets to participate in a broad range of creative activities. Examples of creative referral activities include singing / music making, painting, dance, drama, crafts, photography and film, theatre, and creative writing (Splossary, 2024). The activities that are offered under creative prescribing empower people to address the psychological and wellbeing issues that are often found in people who frequently visit the GP (University of Westminster, 2016)

A new National Framework for Social Prescribing in Wales has been published (Welsh Government, December 2023) which highlights the potential for social prescribing to reduce the pressures on frontline services if used in conjunction with conventional interventions. Though the benefits of social prescribing are wide-ranging, improved physical, mental and social wellbeing are commonly reported. This encompasses aspects of psychosocial health, healthy lifestyles and behaviours, social engagement, and self-management of long-term conditions.

Programme aim

The Creative Prescribing Discovery Programme had the overall aim of establishing a fertile environment for the growth of arts on prescription throughout HDUHB, exploring how to embed evidenced based arts activity into social prescribing practice across the health board to reduce health inequalities.

Objectives of the creative prescribing programme

1. Create a programme of Wellbeing activities for social prescribers and their clients/patients to do together in each of the three counties.
2. Create an Arts on Prescription induction and training programme for all prescribers
3. Create an online continuing professional development (CPD) arts on prescription learning module for general practitioners (GPs) and health professionals for the national Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) online learning platform
4. Develop a health board wide Arts in Health Network for arts and health professionals to come together to develop awareness and build trust
5. Run three (blended) themed Arts in Health Network Events to nurture partnerships and build cross sector understanding (themes: Quality, Evidence, Data/intelligence)
6. Create an Artist in Residence programme at Hywel Dda in partnership with each arts partner located within a protected characteristic team.
7. Develop an Arts on Prescription Research Group in partnership with the HDUHB Research and Innovation Team Activities will take place in each of the three counties and online.

Evaluation

The TriTech Institute and Innovation team supported an independent evaluation of the creative prescribing programme run by the HDUHB Arts and Health team.

Creative prescribing programme activity

The creative prescribing cafes were attended by a total of 126 arts and health professionals and 3rd sector individuals from Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Ceredigion across 6 sessions. The artist in residence workshops were attended by 195 individuals across 108 sessions, and the training and wellbeing activities were attended by 176 health professionals across 8 sessions. The HEIW film by the Wales Arts, Health, and Wellbeing Network (WAHWN) has been seen by 329 people as of March 2024. The creative prescribing programme also created three teams including a steering group with a total of 40 members.

Programme learning conclusion

The objectives for the learning programme were almost entirely met when considered against the original creative prescribing programme bid. The only objective that required a change in direction was objective 4 (A health board wide Arts in Health Network, for arts and health professionals to come together to develop awareness and build trust) however, even for this objective there had been activity to progress the programme. Some of the most important learnings that came out of the programme related to the complexity of creative prescribing.

Recommendation 1: Foster cross-sector collaboration across the health board

Find a suitable vehicle to foster the collaboration between the health and arts sectors, 3rd sectors and lived experience (patients). To enable more efficient communication and enable more effective working.

Recommendation 2: Develop a health-board wide pilot arts referral programme

Develop a pilot arts referral program that is built upon the work carried out following cross-sector collaboration. This will help to establish a health board wide network for arts in health. This pilot should also include mapping out the emerging benefits of previous work and how they can be evidenced more effectively.

Recommendation 3: Resolve the barriers to data capture and effective evidencing

One should be aware of the difficulties that come with data collection and the most effective methods to overcome this obstacle. More robust data capture will be required to evidence the emerging benefits of creative prescribing. This could be achieved by exploring more consistent measures of data capture or by identifying at least one measure that could be used across multiple activities to increase the size of available data sets.

Recommendation 4: Secure funding for larger evaluation activity

To verify any standardised assessment tools suggested in recommendation 3, more patients would be needed. Getting funding will help to obtain the resources, and involving consultant level clinicians who can contribute to these bids will help boost the likelihood of success on any bid. The research teams within HDUHB can also assist with this process.

Acknowledgements

We would like to recognise everyone who contributed to the Creative Prescribing Programme. [Appendix 1](#) shows for the full list of professionals and artists who were involved.

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1. Background

1.1. Creative prescribing theory

The need

In the UK, three quarters of long-term mental health conditions develop before the age of 25. When compared to previous generations, children, and young people of today are considered to have worse mental health conditions (Mental Health UK, 2022). Additionally, health inequalities are especially prevalent with falling life expectancies in some of the more deprived areas of the country. While there are social justice considerations, these issues could also have implications for the economy, where there are increased costs to the healthcare system and a loss of productivity.

What is creative prescribing

Social prescribing is an approach to healthcare in which people are connected to assets within their community to address their social, emotional, physical, or practical needs. Social prescribing programmes aim to address the social determinant in health and underlying causes of health issues socially. It also helps to bridge the gap between the clinical and non-clinical services, enabling the promotion of health through community-based resources (Welsh Government, 2023).

Creative prescribing is a form of social prescribing, also known as a creative referral, arts on referral and/or arts on prescription. Arts on referral (also commonly referred to as arts-based interventions, arts for health interventions or art on prescription) describes the referral of individuals to participate in a variety of art(s)-based activities (Splossary, 2024). Please see [appendix 2](#) for additional Splossary definitions.

Creative prescribing is a model of referral that is being widely promoted as a means to make general practice more sustainable. It links primary care with the resources of support that can be found in local communities. By providing a non-medical referral option it can be used as an asset by GPs to use alongside existing treatments to improve the health and wellbeing of their patients (NHS England, 2014). Social prescribing schemes can include an extensive range of practical advice and information, community, physical activities and befriending and support services. The activities that are offered under social prescribing empower people to address the psychological and wellbeing issues that are often found in people who frequently visit the GP (University of Westminster, 2016).

Benefits of creative prescribing

The benefits of creative prescribing are widely reported as it can be used as an asset to address some of the major challenges facing the NHS presently (Welsh Government, 2023). One of the main drivers of creative prescribing is to help connect people to their community. National frameworks have been developed in Wales which relate to creative prescribing, which include the National Framework for social prescribing (Welsh Government, 2024) and regionally, the Social Prescribing & Community Connectedness Principles West Wales Care Partnership.

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Many GP appointments, about 20%, are taken up by problems that have social causes (Torjesen, 2016). Therefore, social prescribing could help ease the demand on frontline services if used together with conventional interventions. Evaluations have shown decreases in GP appointments after referrals to social prescribing services ranging (Kimberlee et al, 2014). The evidence varies because the term 'social prescribing' is broad and depends on several factors such as the models used, the localities, and the assets available within the different communities.

For examples of creative prescribing in action in other areas please see [appendix 3](#).

National context

The Creative Health Review – How policy can embrace creative health was released on December 6th, 2023 by the National Centre for Creative Health and the All-Parliamentary Group on Arts and Health. The report shows how creative health can help with some of the most urgent problems in health and social care. The report gives many examples of successful stories in creative health for dealing with some of these problems. The Importance of creativity has been noted as it makes life more enjoyable and meaningful for people. It can help with reducing stress and anxiety and, in the prevention, and treatment for physical conditions such as cancer or strokes (Creative Health Review, 2023).

The Creative Health Review includes examples of creative health initiatives that have been carried out in different settings such as schools, workplaces, perinatal and palliative care. Health and social care are in a critical situation. The long-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost of living crisis have put huge strains on primary and secondary care. The amount of work in general practice has grown significantly in recent years, and it has not been supported by funding or recruitment. The older population in the UK means that the work in general practice is becoming more complicated and demanding. Creative health can be a resource for the GP community to shift more care from the hospitals to the community. Mental health is a public priority that requires public investment to improve wellbeing in children and young people.

Local Context

The population within HDUHB differs significantly between the three counties. For example, Ceredigion has a high number of children in poverty (ARCH, 2023) and there is a high population of Roma, gypsy, and travellers in Pembrokeshire. North Ceredigion has a higher population of young people, where there are 75% - 80% of students registering on a temporary basis annually. In Carmarthenshire, the population of the Tywi-Taf Cluster area is significantly older (22.1%) when compared to the national average in Wales (18.7%) (StatsWales, 2024).

1.2. HDUHB – A Healthier Mid and West Wales Strategy

Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) published its Healthier Mid and West Wales Strategy - Programme Business Case outlining its strategic objectives in January 2022. The strategy states: “Drawing upon previous years' plans, this comprehensive strategy incorporates fresh ideas derived from reflections on progress made. This Programme Business Case – the “PBC” - sets out our proposition to realise the vision we articulated in our Health and Care Strategy A Healthier Mid and West Wales: Our Future Generations Living Well and create an integrated, patient centric, community based and social model of care” – “the Programme” (HDUHB, 2022).



Figure 1 shows the six objectives from the “A Healthier Mid and West Wales” plan by HDUHB, 2022.

Hywel Dda Arts and Health Charter

Hywel Dda’s Arts and Health Charter is our public promise to integrate the arts into the work of the Health Board, making it an integral part of how we deliver health and wellbeing services. This Arts and Health Charter sets out an ambitious vision to ‘Put creativity at the heart of health and wellbeing’ and outlines a commitment to ‘integrating the arts into the work of the Health Board, to improve health and wellbeing and promote healing and recovery’ through a set of Arts and Health Principles and pledges. It has been genuinely co-created following extensive engagement with staff; public; patients; partners; the arts sector and Hywel Dda UHB Arts and Health Steering Group and is a first for Wales, if not the UK.

The Charter outlines how we will use the arts to help us to (reach beyond the service the NHS currently provides by) improve the patient experience, reduce health inequality; encourage healthy behaviours and support the most vulnerable people in our society. The Charter will also play a key role in contributing to the social prescribing agenda by working together to support people to:

- Feel better, happier and lead more joyful lives
- Have more support with staying well
- Have more control over their own health and wellbeing

The Health Board’s Arts and Health Charter outlines how the arts are utilised, delivered in various languages, to address health inequality and support vulnerable populations, such as children, older adults, those who are frail, lonely, or isolated, individuals with dementia, those facing mental health challenges, critical and long-stay patients, and communities with protected characteristics (HDUHB, 2023).

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Hywel Dda University Health Board Arts and Health Charter

Putting creativity at the heart of health and wellbeing



Integrating the arts into the work of the health board to improve health and wellbeing and promote healing and recovery

Figure 2 shows the draft HDUHB Arts in Health charter (HDUHB, 2023).

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2. Service Introduction

A new service that involves creative prescribing was set up by HDUHB in 2022, and its details are as follows:

2.1. Creative prescribing partnership

HDUHB collaborated with a variety of cross-sector partners for the Creative Prescribing partnership, such as the HDUHB Public Health Team, PHW, the Social Prescribing COP, HEIW, and arts partners; Span Arts, People Speak Up, Arts4wellbeing Haul, Arts Care Gofal Celf and the Wales Arts Health and Wellbeing Network. All partners share a vision of incorporating arts on prescription into social prescribing practices across HDUHB, building on the COP's mission to share best practices and identify training needs for social prescribers (2018). The proposal drew inspiration from the Span Arts & Health Pembrokeshire Network (Est 2019) and aimed to establish connections, foster learning, and enhance understanding between health and arts professionals throughout HDUHB.

2.2. Aims of the service

The Creative Prescribing Discovery Programme aimed to create a conducive setting for the expansion of arts on prescription across HDUHB, examining how to integrate arts activity based on evidence into social prescribing within the health board to reduce health inequalities.

2.3. Objectives of the service

The HDUHB Arts & Health team led the cross-sectional collaboration and carried out an 18-month (July 2022 to January 2024) project on creative prescribing throughout the three counties in the health board (Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, and Ceredigion) to enable arts on prescription. The goals that the HDUHB Arts and Health team established for the creative prescribing programme were:

1. Create a programme of Wellbeing activities for social prescribers and their clients/patients to do together in each of the three counties.
2. Create an Arts on Prescription induction and training programme for all prescribers.
3. Create an online continuing professional development (CPD) arts on prescription learning module for general practitioners (GPs) and health professionals for the national HEIW online learning platform.
4. Develop a health board wide Arts in Health Network for arts and health professionals to come together to develop awareness and build trust.
5. Run three (blended) themed Arts in Health Network Events to nurture partnerships and build cross sector understanding (themes: Quality, Evidence, Data/intelligence)
6. Create an Artist in Residence programme at Hywel Dda in partnership with each arts partner located within a protected characteristic team.
7. Develop an Arts on Prescription Research Group in partnership with the HDHUB Research and Innovation Team Activities will take place in each of the three counties and online.

3. Evaluation introduction

The TriTech Institute and Innovation team supported an independent evaluation of the creative prescribing programme ran by the HDUHB Arts and Health team. The reports, learning logs and collected data were shared by the HDUHB Arts and Health team to facilitate the evaluation process. The evaluation takes into account the HDUHB Arts and Health charter.

3.1. Aim of the Evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation was to independently evaluate the Arts and Health Creative Prescribing Programme, and to discuss potential next steps for the work.

3.2. Evaluation objectives

The objectives for this independent evaluation were as follows:

1. Summarise all activities that occurred during the programme.
2. Assess the activities and outputs against the original programme objectives.
3. Analyse the challenges and learning.
4. Create recommendations for future work.

4. Findings

4.1. Creative prescribing programme activity

The programme involved various activities for the well-being of patients and healthcare professionals. These activities involved artists collaborating with healthcare teams (artists in residence), arts and health initiatives for professionals and creative prescribing cafes. The programme was also discussed at a meeting of the research and innovation (R&I) sub-committee, and a film was made by Wales Arts, Health, and Wellbeing Network (WAHWN) to show the value of arts in healthcare for health professionals all over Wales. See [appendix 4](#) for a list of all workshops and activities that took place as part of the creative prescribing programme.

The creative prescribing cafes were attended by a total of 126 arts and health professionals and 3rd sector individuals from Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Ceredigion across 6 sessions. The artist in residence workshops were attended by 195 individuals across 108 sessions, and the training and wellbeing activities were attended by 176 health professionals across 8 sessions. The HEIW film by WAHWN has been seen by 329 people as of March 2024. The creative prescribing programme also created three teams including a steering group with a total of 40 members.

A map of the places where the arts and health activities have happened in HDUHB as part of the creative prescribing programme is shown in Figure 3. There have also been arts and health activities in Ceredigion, like staff wellbeing days that were supported by other funds.

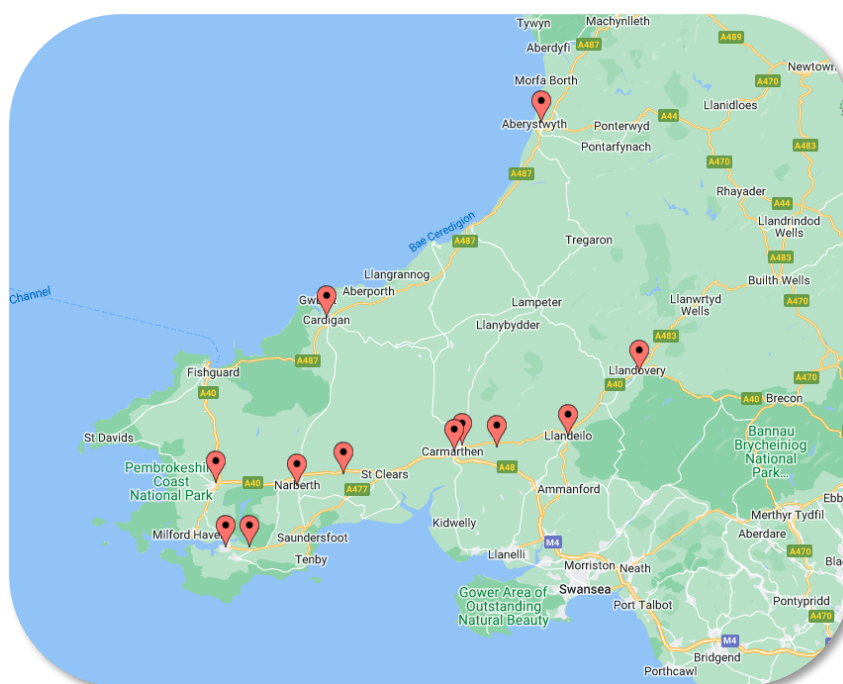


Figure 3 shows a map of the locations of HDUHB arts and health activity

The key activities under the portfolio of the creative prescribing programme included:

- Artists in Residence programme
- Arts and Health for Professionals
- Creative Prescribing Cafes
- Arts and Health Research and Innovation Group
- Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) Film

4.2. Artists In Residence (AIR)

The project Steering group collaborated to create an Artist in Residence programme at Hywel Dda, where arts partners joined health care teams in each county. They worked with a team and/or a priority beneficiary group that had a protected characteristic and matched the county's needs and priorities.

A series of 4 artist in residencies were held, based on a model of 1 per county to design and develop a pilot project that was designed to meet the needs of 3 different protected characteristic groups.

4.2.1. DanceWell

Organised by AIR Carmarthenshire (November 2022 to August 2023)

Artist: Arts Care Gofal Celf with dancers Freya Dare, Ashley Newsham, Angharad James, Lucy Coldman, Abbie Robinson (first two blocks), Nadine Turk (assistant at Llandovery/Llandeilo)

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The HDUHB Arts in Health team led and managed a project called DanceWell that lasted for one year. There is another report by the TriTech Institute and Innovation that concentrates on DanceWell, but this report also contains some information about it as a summary. See full report published on the WAHWN Knowledge Bank at <https://wahwn.cymru/knowledge-bank/dance-well-dance-on-prescription-pilot-evaluation-report>

This project included dance-for-health prescriptions for patients in the Tywi and Taf cluster in Carmarthenshire (figure 3). The patients involved in this programme had chronic issues and/or mobility issues that were identified through community multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings. The pilot intervention (including data collection) was coordinated and delivered by the contracted arts organisation (Arts Care Gofal Wales), who had experience in delivering training in dance for health and wellbeing. Funding for this activity was provided by the Arts Council of Wales and the Tywi Taf Cluster.

The aims for the DanceWell project were to:

- Develop links with community MDT, chronic illness specialist nurses and GP surgeries to arts on prescription.
- Work in partnership with local arts partners to develop a high-quality programme of dance on prescription interventions across the locality.
- Improve access to arts and health intervention and physical activity for patients with chronic illness.

The aims intended for patients attending DanceWell sessions were:

- Improve health and wellbeing for patients living with chronic illness and/or frailty in the community through dance on prescription interventions.
- Provide access to physical activity for patients with chronic illness and/or frailty.
- Reduce social isolation for patients with chronic illness and/or frailty and their carers'.
- Increase physical activity, reduce social isolation, and improve mental wellbeing.

Over the pilot period of DanceWell, 168 patients participated in one or more of the 96 sessions offered, adding up to 734 individual sessions attended in total. Table 1 shows the total number of patient attendances by location. The patient sessions increased quarterly across all locations in 2024.

Carmarthen	Llandeilo	Llandovery	Whitland
151	171	263	145

Table 1 shows the total number of patient sessions attended by location for DanceWell

The feedback that was received from patients who attended DanceWell sessions shows it was extremely well received, with patients reporting benefits for both physical and mental health. All participants who provided feedback as part of this pilot indicated that they would continue with the programme in future if it was available.

Patient reported outcome measures (PROMS) were collected as part of the DanceWell pilot and there was little to no change in outcomes between pre and post intervention, however it was recognised that this data was incomplete with many participants not responding to the PROMS questionnaires. The outcomes data was difficult to collect and the most challenging aspect of the programme, which will have contributed to the inconclusiveness of the outcomes data.



Figure 4 shows a photo taken from one of the DanceWell classes, credit: Arts Care Gofal Celf

One of the key objectives of this pilot was the development of arts on prescription links within community MDT, (and GPs). There was a growing number of patients interested in participating with the dance classes, as indicated by the quarterly number of attended sessions (table 2). 77% of patients self-referred into the pilot with only 8% being referred by a GP. Social prescribers and community networks were the driving force behind the additional interest.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
94	124	217	295

Table 2 shows the total number of DanceWell patient sessions attended per quarter of 2023

The DanceWell pilot aimed to demonstrate how local arts partners can collaborate to provide a high-quality dance on prescription programme. This was accomplished as evidenced by tailored patient pathways, referral guidance and evaluation material development. There were valuable lessons from this pilot, one of which relates to the challenge of collecting evaluation data. More work is required to improve the evaluation and reporting tools for generating evidence. This was echoed by the staff interviewed who agreed that future projects must ensure more reliable data collection to support the case for long-term delivery and expansion of this type of service.

“My fitness, stamina and energy levels have significantly improved. The sessions have helped to keep my joints flexible, aided my mobility and improved my general wellbeing.”

Quote from DanceWell participant.

After the Dance Well Evaluation Report was published, it was found that more than 80 participants have kept going to and paying for the service. 'Willingness to pay' is one of the

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ways to measure social value, as mentioned at creative prescribing seminars. The fact that participants for DanceWell are ready to pay for ongoing sessions shows a gap in provision.

4.2.2. Haul Arts

Organised by AIR Ceredigion (April 2023 to September 2023)

Artist: Haul and artist Brian Swaddling

An artist in residence pilot was offered in North Ceredigion which focussed on the development of a strategic vision for arts on prescription for young adults and students. Aberystwyth was a particular focus for this pilot based on the higher-than-average percentage of young adults in this area. As of October 2023 there were 11,414 people registered at Padarn Surgery (up from 11,182 in October 2022) (StatsWales, 2024), a large proportion of whom are students as this is the closest GP to Aberystwyth University, where they sign up on a temporary basis. Projects for young people in this area focus on suicide prevention and improvements to overall mental health for young adults.

This artist in residence programme had the following aims:

- Building of knowledge and awareness within North Ceredigion healthcare staff and cluster
- Co-create vision for arts on prescription pilot focused on improving the mental health of young people/adults in North Ceredigion
- Learn how best to share info and encourage referrals – what tactics/platforms to use
- Improved health and wellbeing for students, young people/adults through arts activities.
- Creating positive associations around healthcare settings for students, young people/adults.
- Providing positive social opportunities for students, young people/adults and improving mental health

This pilot was developed through a series of meetings with various stakeholders who included HAUL (Arts in Health), HDUHB North Ceredigion Primary Care Cluster, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Aberystwyth University's Wellbeing Department & HDUHB Primary Care Link Workers. The artist and musician Brian Swaddling, who works with 'Landscape', led the creative sessions. Land art was the medium chosen for this pilot (figure 4), which used materials from the natural environment. The requirement was that only material that had fallen to the ground could be used. Several locations were explored for the sessions, but they had low attendance. At one point it was proposed to suspend the sessions until the students came back from the summer break.

One of the obstacles faced by this pilot project was the low attendance rate. This was partly due to the timing of the project and the type of attendees it aimed for, as many students left the area of the University during the summer months when the pilot was taking place. Another difficulty was reaching out to health professionals as a voluntary community

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organisation, but there was a positive attitude towards making arts in health beneficial for patients in organisations. Potential long term benefits included collaborating more closely with GPs and the young people they want to support, in order to create a joint ownership of the service.

"I really enjoyed the workshop. I loved having a chance to be creative and make art in a way that I haven't tried before. Getting out into nature is something I don't do often enough, and it was interesting, fun, and relaxed experience which I would happily do again."

Quote from HAUL participant



Figure 5 shows examples of 'Land Art' activity, credit: Brian Swaddling

4.2.3. Midweek Making Pembroke Dock

Organised by AIR Pembrokeshire (July/August 2023)

Artist: Span Arts and Nia Lewis

Aims

- Improved health and wellbeing for children and families through arts activities.

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- Creating positive associations around healthcare settings for children and young people.
- Providing positive social opportunities for young families and reducing social isolation.

Objectives

- Develop links with local GP surgery
- Work in partnership with local arts partners to develop 6 sessions of high-quality arts in health interventions
- Evaluate outcomes using a variety of measures

Four creative workshops called Midweek Making were held on Wednesdays in August 2023, in Pater, Pembroke Dock. Five patients from Argyle Street Surgery, which was close to and had input in choosing the venue, took part in these sessions with a total of 21 attendances. The workshop activities varied and were designed to be widely accessible so that everyone could have a positive experience regardless of prior experience. The workshop activities included embroidered bags, woven wall hangings, summer wreaths and printed journey books.

The sessions were advertised with digital flyers that were sent to Argyle Street Surgery, and physical flyers that were shown at the venue. Digital flyers were also sent to HDUHB and local organisations. The ways to join the workshops included an online form (from posters, Facebook or word of mouth) and by phone (team around the family).

The workshops showed that participants took part in the activities with great interest, with little communication among themselves at first. Outcomes discussion centered on child/parent interaction. Attendees gave positive feedback, and said they felt more relaxed and involved in the activities. These workshops helped the children become more confident.



Figure 6 shows a photo taken from one of Midweek Making workshops, credit: Span Arts

As a result of these workshops, there were suggestions for improvement, such as digital flyers and communications, but they also emphasized the value of physical flyers and face-to-face activities to raise awareness. Parents said that word of mouth was important to promote activity in this area, and they proposed taster sessions could help encourage session attendance. They also pointed out that it would be useful for artists who did workshops like these, to go to pre-existing groups that were linked to Argyle Street Surgery. Families and volunteers who hosted the venue where the workshops took place commented on the advantages of these sessions. More interactions between the participants could be facilitated by longer sessions or a longer series of activities.

“R has always been really happy after the sessions and having something to take home and show family and friends really boosts her confidence”

“P has come home happy, calm and proud of her days craft, it has helped build her confidence with meeting new people and trying new crafts.”

Quote from Midweek Making participants

4.2.4. Creative Workshop with Gypsy, Roma Traveller Community,

Organised by : Mini AIR, Pembrokeshire & Dezza’s Cabin, Monkton Pembrokeshire (4th July 2023)

Artist: Arts4Wellbeing (A4W) In partnership with Community Outreach Team
As part of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller week.

Aims

- For the arts and health team and community outreach team to work together on a shared offering to get to understand the needs of Gypsy and Traveller community
- To work together to explore whether utilising the arts could be a tool for engaging with the Gypsy and Traveller community in healthy living conversations and sharing of health messages

Objectives

- To provide a safe, friendly and accessible day of arts in health activities for the Gypsy and Traveller community in Pembrokeshire in order to help create positive relationships and open conversations.
- To explore what the interest and take up might be like from the community.
- To learn about the challenges and find out more about how to successfully integrate art into activities with the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- To work with the community outreach team to explore how the health board might build relations with the Gypsy and Traveller community and engage the community in sharing healthier lifestyle messages, through safe and friendly arts activities.

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An Arts4Wellbeing (A4W) creativity wellbeing taster workshop was run at Dezza's Cabin, Monkton, Pembrokeshire. The tools and materials used for the workshop included jewellery making, pyrography, needle felting and decoupage.

Findings

- 14 people attended and stayed throughout the day sharing positive feedback – this was considered positive and higher number than expected.
- There was some initial anxiety as people weren't sure what to expect but with support, participated.
- The day was well attended with a positive culture throughout.
- Mostly attended by females, as expected, but males did drop by during the day which was considered unusual, and they may have stayed if more male orientated activities were on offer.
- The session ran well but it was vital to have the support, communication and guidance from the Community Development Outreach Team who have the best relationships and understandings of the needs of the community.
- Some participants may not have been to school and would have been unused to a formal environment, so it was important to be, slow, friendly, and accessible which was well received.
- The Community Development Outreach Team advised on location, time of day, venue, date, food, and catering for the needs of the community – all contributed to a successful event.
- It was considered bad practice to go in and offer an intervention and then not follow up with anything further based on the positive receipt of the community.
- Literacy levels were low – so arts activities needed to be suited to this with visual arts, drawing, crafting, and painting being good possible artforms for the future.
- The day was an opportunity for the community to have conversations about health that they may not have had in a relaxed non – threatening environment.
- The Community Development Outreach team have held further events on wellbeing which built on conversations that were had that day.
- The community would have told others about how much they enjoyed the day which would encourage others to come in.
- The community were able to access art activities that they may not have been able to without support.
- People are more likely return to other activities.
- This model could be replicated with other Gypsy's and Travellers in the region.

Overall, it was agreed that the arts may have a role to play in helping the health board build positive relations with the Gypsy and Traveller community. There was an interest in a longer-term project, whereby trust and relations could develop and a need for the community outreach team and arts in health team to spend some time together to further clarify the aims and objectives of a longer-term project and source funding for this.

“I’ve enjoyed every single minute of it”

“Really nice to have something to do that I have not tried before. Just to do that and chat with people, really relaxing, lovely. We need to do this every week.”

“Lovely – At first, I came and did not think it was for me – but after a while I really enjoyed it, it was relaxing.”

Quotes from A4W participants

The workshop received very good feedback from the staff involved. The participants were young girls who are not attending school, who have low levels of literacy and who may struggle with anxiety, so it was encouraging to see them participating in the activities and benefiting from the session. It was observed that the participants were at first uneasy, but the relaxed environment helped them feel calm. There were more attendees than expected, with a health discussion forming part of the workshop. The staff running the workshop also reported that the male Gypsy Roma attendees were difficult to engage with, but a suggestion following this event was to consider other activities that may appeal to the males more in future, such as metal work, clock making or the use of blow torches.

The community showed a lot of interest and engagement, and they appreciated Arts4Wellbeing’s gentle, beginner-friendly arts activities. They said that the day had a nice ambiance, which was warm and pleasant for the participants and the activities were well-received and enjoyed by everyone. The Team felt that the day was a great success as an introduction to the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.



Figure 7 shows a photo taken during jewellery making at the Gypsy Roma A4W workshop on the 4th of July 2023, credit: Arts4Wellbeing

4.3. Arts and Health for Professionals

4.3.1. Creative Connections (January and June 2023)

Artists: Ed Holden/Mr Phormula – beatboxing, Pip Lewis – visual arts/drawing, Uschi Turoczy – creative writing/poetry, Cai Tomos – movement.

With the Connect Wales Network

Delivered by Wales Arts Health and Wellbeing Network

[Connect Wales / Cyswllt Cymru \(padlet.com\)](https://padlet.com)

Digital Communities Wales offered to support the meeting with technical support.

As a consequence of Hywel Dda's Creative Prescribing programme, WAHWN was invited to participate in the Connect Wales event for the national Social Prescribers Network in November 2022. However, because the event had a very full programme, it was proposed that social prescribers should have separate events, which were called Creative Connections and took place online on two dates (25th January 2023 and 15th June 2023). The number of registered attendees for these two dates were 58 and 27 for January and June respectively.

Before the Creative Connections events took place, planning meetings were organized to decide on the workshops that would be offered on the corresponding event days. Potential attendees received surveys, where they could choose which of the workshops, they were interested in attending on the day.

Before the January and June events, online polls were undertaken to measure the interest in the arts for the audience. Both of these polls showed positive responses, indicating that the audience enjoyed going to art and cultural events at different times of the year. Cost was a factor that prevented most respondents to these polls from attending more events regularly. These online events featured workshops led by artists doing various activities that attendees could participate in, and breakout rooms and presentations from healthcare professionals. These events were designed to promote and educate the audience on the benefits of social prescribing.

A short survey was conducted at the end of both of these digital events, to collect feedback on the events. The response rate for this feedback was 19 out of 20 (95%) and 20 out of 25 (80%) for the January and June events respectively. The participants' reactions were favourable for both events, with the following responses being highlighted as what they liked the best:

- Interaction with others
- Storytelling
- Break out rooms
- Time to be creative
- Learning new skills and techniques for self and others

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- Learning new information to use with others
- Trying something new – getting out of comfort zone
- Taking time out
- Learning new relaxation techniques
- Opportunity to do something creative
- Time to reflect and gratitude for the space to do this

A closing poll from the January event (28 responses) indicates that 93% of attendees said they learned more about how arts can help their clients, and 86% of attendees said they were more willing to suggest arts activities to their clients.

4.3.2. Junior Doctors (June 28th and 30th 2023 and November 2023)

Junior doctors attended a series of training events that aimed to teach them how creative prescribing and arts in health activity can benefit their patients. Out of the 17 attendees, only one had previous training related to arts in health. Some of the outcomes of this training, collected using survey feedback, were:

- Increased awareness of arts in health (100% of attendees)
- Greater Knowledge of evidence base for arts in health (100% of attendees)
- Improved understanding of arts in health benefits (94% of attendees)
- Personal experience of arts in health activity (94% of attendees)
- Better able to refer patients to arts in health activities (100% of attendees)
- Inspired to experience arts activity for myself (76% of attendees)

“Thank you so much Dr Jenkins. Wonderful to explore creative aspect of our mind now and again. Will def recommend it”

“I used to encourage my patients to continue their hobby or inspire them to listen to soothing music / dance with partner, but never realised these things could be so beneficial for patients. Today’s session is very useful and informative for me.”

““Excellent session. Will try and be more arty.”

Quote from Junior Doctors

4.3.3. Lifestyle medicine (13th February 2022)

Postgraduate Centre, Glangwilli Hospital

An introduction to arts in health for clinical staff with an interest in lifestyle medicine through British Society of Lifestyle Medicine (BSLM) Networks.

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The session showed that many clinicians are interested in how to prevent and treat health problems with lifestyle interventions. These are usually based on the main areas of lifestyle medicine - nutrition, exercise, avoiding harmful substances, stress management, sleep and healthy relationships. The group felt that arts and creativity were often overlooked in this. Even among clinicians who were interested in lifestyle medicine, they knew little but were curious about the strong evidence for arts and health. Some clinicians shared creative projects that they had participated in, such as nature retreats for staff wellbeing, poetry workshops with GP training groups. They felt these activities were beneficial to them. The presentation explored the idea of being a 'creative prescriber' and what that meant. It was important to share the Benefits of Arts in Health Care film across HEIW platforms to raise awareness for other clinicians as well as GPs.

4.3.4. Storytelling

28th June, Junior Drs, Glangwili and 30th, 6th November 2023 Specialist Children, Adolescent and Mental Health Team (S-CAMHS)

People Speak Up and Allied Health Professional David Easton facilitated two events on storytelling for wellbeing that had 44 health professionals as participants.

" My experience affirmed how important connection is for wellbeing and how stories connect us all"

Quote from Storytelling attendee

Feedback from those attending the applied story telling sessions indicated that it was Interesting, enjoyable, informative, boundary pushing, and could change mind-sets.

The participants of the story telling sessions were asked one question: "How has being part of a story telling session supported you in your work as a health professional?" The answers were:

- "Relaxing... able to be in the moment"
- "Reminded me to listen"
- "Stress relief"
- "More empathetic"
- "Good to calm down and reflect..."

The question "How can the workshop you attended today benefit you in your work in the health and care sector?" was also posed to the attendees. The responses were:

- "Made me understand the impact of storytelling"
- "Knowing more about it and more insight to know who would likely to attend and what to expect"
- "I feel that I can better understand patient experiences"

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- "Taster sessions like these are useful"

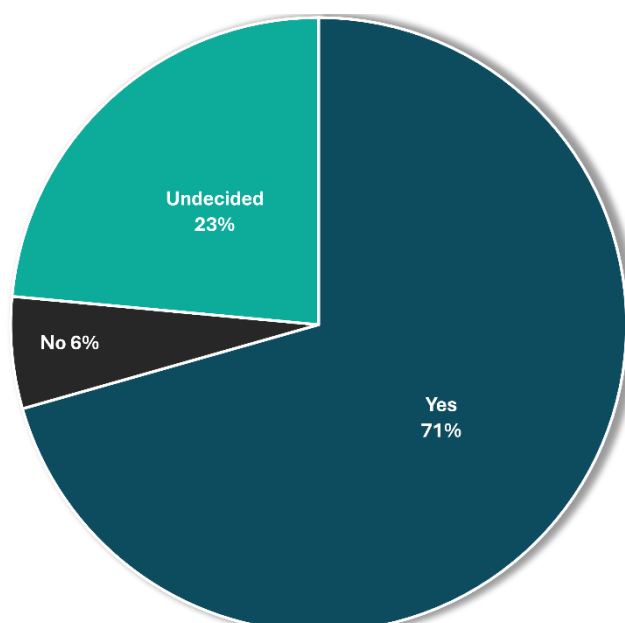


Figure 8 shows a pie chart of results for interest in future applied story telling events.

4.4. Creative Prescribing Cafes

The project included three creative prescribing cafes in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Ceredigion with the goal of bringing together people with diverse views on creative prescribing. This would help to establish a common knowledge of creative prescribing and enable the exchange of good practice and networking among the various groups participating.

Creative Prescribing Café Brief

How can we Work Together to create a fertile bed in which arts on prescription can grow across Hywel Dda?

Shaping Arts on Prescription through conversations that matter

As part of Hywel Dda's Creative Prescribing Discovery Programme in partnership with Public Health Wales, HEIW, WAHWN, 6 arts partners

Funded by the Arts council of Wales.

Aims

- Improving wellbeing for communities and reducing health Inequalities
- Improving mental wellbeing and reducing loneliness

Event Outcomes

- Bringing together different perspective to create a shared understanding
- Creating a community around arts on prescription - generating ideas, sharing knowledge, and exploring action through networking opportunities and partnership development
- Stimulate innovative thinking - Sharing examples of best practice

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- Providing a wellbeing experience

Carmarthenshire	Pembrokeshire	Ceredigion
Theme: Working together? For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from each other • Good practice for creative prescribing • Opening up conversations 	Theme: Co-creating Arts on Prescription? For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting focus from illness to health and wellbeing • Tackling Health inequalities • Access & inclusion 	Theme: Embedding & delivering arts on prescription? For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we develop sustainable funding for arts and health • Understanding pathways • People centred
Arts Lead – People Speak Up & Arts Care Gofal Celf	Arts Lead – Span Arts	Arts Lead – Arts4wellbeing
Date: Friday 29th April 2023	Date: 27th June 2023	Date: 22 nd Sept 2023
Venue: Ffwrnes Fach, Llanelli	Venue: Bloomfield Community Centre, Narberth	Venue: Small World Theatre, Cardigan
Who attended? 30 people from healthcare and Arts sector	Who attended? 46 people from healthcare and arts sector	Who attended? 50 people from healthcare and arts sector
Wellbeing activity – Dance and storytelling	Wellbeing activity - Collage	Wellbeing activity – Mixed media

Engagement in creative activity with members of the local community supports improved social integration, which is one of the key factors that leads to good population health, particularly among less affluent groups (Welsh NHS Confederation 2020)

4.4.1. Creative Prescribing Café Carmarthenshire

29th April
Hosted by: Arts Care Gofal Celf and People Speak Up

At Ffwrnes Fach, Llanelli, People Speak Up and Arts Care Gofal Celf partners hosted a creative prescribing café in Carmarthenshire. The session had 30 arts and health professionals and 3rd sector individuals as attendees. The café let attendees recognize the benefits they have seen from creative prescribing activities such as the opportunities for people to share their feelings,

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feel accomplished, and boost confidence in managing their own health. The feedback from the café also indicated that the arts and health professionals think that creative prescribing activities have helped people better understand the benefits of creativity and has challenged common misunderstandings about arts and health.

The participants mentioned several difficulties they have encountered in getting people involved with creative prescribing programmes, such as the dependency on social media as a way to inform the public about the ongoing activities, which can create access problems for some. The group also talked about the fears and worries for some people to leave their homes participate in activities, especially some of those who are socially isolated. There is also a problem of a lack of confidence in non-medical interventions such as creative health among the general public, and they may also respond negatively to being advised to attend these sessions by their GP.



Figure 9 shows a Dancewell demonstration at the Carmarthenshire Creative Café

To deal with some of the challenges of creative prescribing, the attendees came up with some suggestions such as setting up a system that uses volunteers or assistants to make follow-up calls, especially after the first session. They also advised creating and sharing a clear referral process, building a common knowledge among GPs and social prescribers for creative prescribing, and adding another process for self-referral.

“Great to learn about the projects that are happening to help people in the art field”

“Great opportunity to network and gain a better understanding. It would be of benefit to grow on this and meet up again.”

Quotes from Carmarthenshire Cafe

4.4.2. Creative Prescribing Café, Pembrokeshire

27th June

Hosted by Span Arts

Span Arts hosted another creative prescribing café in Bethesda Chapel, Narberth in Pembrokeshire. The attendees participated in a vision board activity based on different prompts. These prompts involved thinking about how money affects people's participation, finding out what changes are needed to make a welcoming environment, and discovering how to go beyond personal echo chambers to foster engagement. The session also examined the obstacles to involvement and devised strategies to overcome them.

Attendees were urged to use their privileges to advance inclusive creative prescribing. Moreover, discussions focused on showing the results and outcomes of the work in a way that respects individual inputs and builds on people's engagement to help social causes or community projects. Asking questions about who is not currently involved led to reflections on modifying structures for more inclusivity. Lastly, participants examined the changes required to make such provisions more affordable and truly accessible.

The café stressed key themes that showed the value of co-creation and joint efforts. The aim was to work in a more integrated way, highlighting community/patient and artist/practitioner cooperation. Participants acknowledged the importance of refocusing on the individual and their needs through a holistic perspective, preferring a social model over a medical one. Solving barriers to engagement and success, such as financial difficulties, transportation problems, and location issues, came up as essential parts of the discussion. The session also emphasized the need of spreading information and raising awareness about existing opportunities. Moreover, the dialogue included the recognition of a lack of confidence or knowledge in creativity and the importance of overcoming this obstacle for a more diverse and enriching creative prescribing environment.



Figure 10 shows a group discussion by attendees at the Pembrokeshire Creative Café

“The Arts are seen as a luxury, not a standard for creative prescribing”

Quotes from Ceredigion Cafe

4.4.3. Creative Prescribing Café, Ceredigion

22nd September 2023

Hosted by Arts4Wellbeing

Arts4Wellbeing hosted the Creative Prescribing Café in Ceredigion, where they discussed social prescribing and how to tackle future challenges. The participants enjoyed a very dynamic and interactive day with many people from arts, health, social and 3rd sector collaborating to identify problems and find solutions through creative activities led and facilitated by Arts4Wellbeing.

Key barriers:

- Awareness of what’s going on
- Funding
- Transport & access
- Referral pathways
- Action needed

Several questions were posed to the attendees of the café, who were split into different groups. Some of the key questions that were asked include:

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- What does/should creative prescribing look like?
- Who is involved in creative prescribing and in what way are they involved?
- What are the barriers to the provision?
- What can we do to mitigate some of the issues around creative prescribing?
- What is not in Ceredigion?

Some of the suggestions for how creative prescribing should work include suitable referrals, collaborating with others, communicating between services, building confidence and gently pushing people to try new things. Some of the key people the attendees mentioned as being involved in creative prescribing include social workers, physiotherapists, creative/arts practitioners, the Arts and Health Team at HDUHB, friends and neighbours' groups, and community connectors. Some of the main obstacles to the provision that were identified by the attendees include access/rurality of the communities, a lack of funding/resources, and a lack of holistic planning. Some of the ways to overcome these obstacles include asset mapping the facilities available within the Ceredigion to support the creation of hubs, better communication between the services, and the development of community connectors partnerships. The café received very positive feedback, with one of the most common themes of the feedback being the chance to network and learn from the different views of other practitioners in the field.

"Come together and connect"

Quote from Pembrokeshire Cafe

4.5. Arts and Health Research and Innovation Group

Facilitated by HDUHB Creative Prescribing Programme team

The Arts in Health Research and Innovation Group had its inaugural meeting in September 2023. The group's goal is to connect those who are interested in Arts & Health Research and Innovation in South-West Wales. A research consultant who leads Arts Health Research chaired the meeting. The Hywel Dda Arts in Health Coordinator emphasised the value of supporting arts in healthcare for patients, communities, and staff in the region.

The health board is committed to evaluating the impact of arts and health initiatives led by clinical teams. The Arts and Health Coordinator suggested creating the group to improve cooperation, skill development, and resource sharing in the active area of arts and health. Several stimulating questions were used to assess the group's interest and readiness for joint action. The need for clearness on what metrics to use and how to achieve significant change through collaborative efforts was discussed.

The chair Rosie Dow (Arts and Health Consultant) gave a presentation on research and innovation in arts and health, which showed how these two areas work together. The first part of the presentation by the chair talked about how research and innovation in arts and

health are connected. It covered the need for research methods that suit the project settings and scales, and looked at different research approaches, as well as the effect of arts on population health, with examples of successful interventions like drumming for mental health and singing for postnatal depression. A case study showed the process from initial trials to European rollout, which stressed evidence and evaluation. At the end, the HARP approach explained stages in arts and health projects, focusing on storytelling, evidence, and building trust.



Figure 11 shows music in hospitals in an ITU

The importance of combining quantitative data with qualitative narratives to demonstrate the value of arts in health interventions effectively was discussed. Additionally, attendees recognised the significance of targeting different audiences with tailored messages to maximise impact and influence change. The conversation emphasised the need for coordinated efforts, standardised approaches, and effective communication to overcome challenges and advance Arts & Health Research and Innovation.

The meeting reflections highlighted several key points

1. The importance of leveraging existing research evidence to inform and guide new projects, rather than starting from scratch each time. This approach can help avoid redundancy and maximise the impact of interventions across different settings and populations.
2. Exploring ways to integrate data and models from various projects to create a cohesive understanding of Arts & Health initiatives. By synthesising information from disparate sources, stakeholders can gain valuable insights and identify common themes or best practices.
3. Considering the development of a tool kit to support Health Partners in implementing Arts & Health interventions effectively. This tool kit could include resources, guidelines, and frameworks to streamline processes and facilitate collaboration among stakeholders.
4. Recognising the importance of identifying interventions and referral pathways to connect individuals with relevant Arts & Health programs. This proactive approach can

help ensure that people have access to appropriate resources and support for their well-being.

5. Remaining informed about national activities and initiatives in the Arts & Health field. It's crucial for stakeholders to contribute to these efforts and align their work with broader strategies and priorities to maximise impact and promote synergy within the sector.

4.6. HEIW Film

This film can be accessed at:

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/news/the-benefits-of-art-in-healthcare/>

The launch of the WAHWN and HEIW Arts & Health film aimed to raise awareness of the benefits of arts on health and wellbeing for communities, patients, and staff across health boards. The film explores how healthcare is changing to not only treat illness but also enhance wellness and prevent health problems, emphasizing the significance of feeling well, which includes emotional, social, and environmental factors. Arts in health is any creative activity that seeks to improve people's health, social wellbeing, or community connection.



Figure 12 is from Rubicon Dance at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board which is used in the HEIW film for the benefit of arts in healthcare

The film features case studies, which include the use of singing for Long Covid patients to enhance lung function and lower anxiety, and arts interventions in dementia care, illustrate the different ways that arts can be used in healthcare settings. The joint efforts between health boards and local cultural resources are also examined, highlighting the significance of community involvement and social prescribing initiatives. In the film, the national study conducted with the Arts Council of Wales to increase awareness of the benefits of arts in health, along with the creation of arts coordinators in Wales to support such initiatives is shown.

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Figure 13 is taken from the HEIW film for the benefit of arts in healthcare

5. Assessment of original programme objectives

The original bid for the creative prescribing programme outlined 7 objectives that the service [context section](#) describes. The team that worked on creative prescribing have shared their results for each of these objectives and have explained how these goals have changed during the implementation of the programme. These results and changes are reviewed below.



1) A programme of Wellbeing activities for social prescribers and their clients/patients to do together in each of the 3 counties

The Connect Wales online Wellbeing event was organised for the national network of social prescribers on 25th Jan 2023. This event was then organised for a second date on the 20th of June 2023. These events were called [Creative Connections](#).

The creative prescribing team's interim report explained how the wellbeing activities for healthcare professionals were cut down because of various reasons such as a changed financial model, more arts partners, and a national strategy with the Connect Wales events. The infrequent community practice meetings also contributed to this. The Arts Council Wales (ACW) agreed to this reduction in activities in the spring of 2023, so this objective was achieved.



2) An Arts on Prescription induction and training programme for all prescribers

Creative prescribers had various activities and workshops to learn and train for their roles. On November 30th, 2022, a learning and wellbeing event was held for GP trainees to expose

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them to arts and health. On February 13th, 2023, an introductory event was arranged for clinical staff who wanted to know more about lifestyle medicine through BSLM networks. On this day feedback for [HEIW film](#) was also obtained.

On the 9th of March 2023, there was a presentation to the G2xTs cluster during the GP collaboration meeting on arts and health and [dance on prescription](#). There were pop up shops in Haverfordwest on the 22nd and 26th of June 2023. Training and induction activities were also carried out on 28th of June 2023 with Drs Mess, Glangwili Hospital (GGH) and 6th of November 2023 at the S-CAMHS learning academy. This range of activities covered this programme objective.



3) An online CPD arts on prescription learning module for GPs and health professionals for the national Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) online learning platform

To meet this object the HEIW film and additional learning links and resources is now available for GPs and health professionals at: <https://gpcpd.heiw.wales/vitals-series/arts-and-health-in-wales/> There have been various screenings of the HEIW film to promote this learning module, and it's availability meets this objective.



4) A health board wide Arts in Health Network for arts and health professionals to come together to develop awareness and build trust

This objective was not achieved as originally intended, because the programme did not identify the optimal method. However, some outcomes that were produced were the creative prescribing steering group, the creative prescribing arts team and the research and innovation group. This objective yielded useful insights, and while a network across the health board was not established, the diverse working groups added value to the programme.



5) Run 3 (blended) themed Arts in Health Network Events to nurture partnerships and build cross sector understanding (themes: Quality, Evidence, Data/intelligence)

During the planning and delivery of creative prescribing cafes, one for each of the three counties of HDUHB, this objective was achieved. The creative prescribing cafes took place on 28th April in Carmarthenshire, 27th June in Pembrokeshire, and 22nd September in Ceredigion in 2023.



6) An Artist in Residence programme at Hywel Dda in partnership with each arts partner located within a protected characteristic team

This objective was met through four artist in residencies across the health board. In Pembrokeshire there was the Span Arts at Argyle Surgery in Pembroke Dock (which was called [Midweek Making](#)), which had a focus on health for children and young people (May to August

2023). Also in Pembrokeshire was the [Arts4Wellbeing](#) with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community which occurred on the 4th of July 2023.

The dance on prescription activity for older frail adults in Carmarthenshire was [DanceWell](#), and it took place with the Teifi and Taf GP cluster from July to September 2023. The [HAUL arts](#) in health activity for young adults and students happened in Ceredigion during the same period.



7) An Arts on Prescription Research Group in partnership with the HDdHUB Research and Innovation Team Activities will take place in each of the 3 counties and online.

The objective was met through the establishment of the arts in health R&I group. The group has only met on one occasion to date (22nd of September 2023), and [this is discussed](#) in this report. It is hoped that the R&I group will play a key role in further developing the creative prescribing programme.

6. Programme learning

The learning programme achieved most of the goals that it had set out in the original creative prescribing programme proposal. The only goal that needed a different approach was number 4 (A health board wide Arts in Health Network for arts and health professionals to network and build awareness and trust) but, even for this goal, some progress was made in the programme. The creative prescribing programme team have kept a learning log that records all the learning and actions that took place in the programme. This report summarizes the contents of this log into several learning themes, which are explained below.

Complexity of creative prescribing

One of the key insights from the programme was the complexity of creative prescribing. This complexity required strong collaboration between the groups involved. It was also important to design the infrastructure in the early stages of the programme. This allowed it to evolve and adjust organically during the collaborations. It was also observed that new infrastructure would be needed to support the creative prescribing programme.

One way to help with the complexity of creative prescribing was to create the R&I group, which offered research and learning opportunities. Integrating prescribing and referral pathways was seen as a challenge. However, DanceWell was a successful example of an activity where prescriptions were part of primary care. But there is still a lot to learn about how to connect these kinds of services with procurement, contracting, existing referral pathways. This is more difficult because of long procurement processes that can last up to 6 months, which can hinder or complicate the quick impact approach of the arts and health activities.

Data protection issues were also identified as a challenge across referral pathways and services. The requirement for sensitive information to cross organisational boundaries creates problems that can delay these extra arts and health services and also make data collection harder. The contracting and financing of the different activities and workshops also

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faced difficulties, as they had to be approved separately due to the cross-organisational nature. Feedback from partners within the programme showed the need for more collaboration with broader arts contacts and other groups involved in arts activities. Working with the wider arts and health communities will help promote creative prescribing.

Data collection and evidencing

The programme did a lot of work to encourage creative prescribing and understand how much healthcare professionals already understood. Having more solid evidence will really help persuade more health care professionals to join. DanceWell was one example from this programme where collecting data was more difficult than anticipated. For DanceWell, these difficulties led to a lack of measurable changes before and after the intervention. This problem in data collection is acknowledged globally. It is expected that the upcoming work by Core data set which will be published by Welsh government as part of their national framework will help inform the next steps for evidence gathering. Keeping GPs interested will be important for many of these activities and workshops, and further evidence will help with the clinical support from a variety of clinicians long term.

Funding arts and health activities

Getting more money for arts and health activities was a major difficulty. The results collected so far show that patients could benefit from these activities, but this has not led to more funding. The creative prescribing programme team appreciated that they need a more rigorous evaluation with more data to prove the advantages of arts and health (both monetary and non-monetary) according to the benefits realisation framework.

Relating creative prescribing to wider health challenges

Creative prescribing can have a positive impact on the broader health issues of the public. This is why the programme explored how the creative prescribing teams could learn more about the wider needs and goals of GP clusters and health boards in the early stages, so that they could tailor their activities to assist them.

This involved working with the GP cluster lead in Ceredigion, who identified a possible mental health risk for students. They could benefit from outdoor art as one of the AIR activities. There are many students in the rural community in North Ceredigion, so one of the AIR workshops was aimed at them.

The meetings with primary care leads were fruitful, as they helped to turn cluster priorities into healthcare issues that arts and health could improve. This kind of engagement showed the age groups and mental health needs of the specific areas where this work was taking place. Mental health colleagues in the health boards have a lot of work, where arts and health might be of assistance. But good communication between all parties is needed to figure out how to do this best.

Learning and training resources for professionals

The programme revealed that professionals usually had little experience or knowledge about arts and health, but they responded well to the programme and said that the work done made them more confident in referring patients to these types of services. Engaging professionals

in activities. This helped the professionals to appreciate the benefits and communicate them to their patients.

WAHWN and HEIW collaborated on creating a learning resource that consisted of a video that was uploaded to the HEIW GP CPD platform and later added to the Hywel Dda Course Catalogue. The learning resource video gave an overview of arts and health in Wales and presented the evidence for how arts and health can benefit people. This video also featured various projects and patient stories.

Arts and health is an area that attracts more attention from clinicians who want to use it for their patients. The team behind the creative prescribing programme noted that arts and health is not part of the main elements of lifestyle medicine (nutrition, exercise, avoiding harmful substances, stress management, sleep, and healthy relationships) so it can be overlooked. Even those clinicians who were interested in arts and health mentioned they did not have enough knowledge or understanding of how to apply it effectively.

Identifying key beneficiaries for arts and health

The creative prescribing group talked in the beginning about who to involve in the programme, and which patient groups to target for possible benefits. Arts and health have a broad range of potential, so these talks were important to know where the focus should have been.

One example of this was the inclusion of the Gypsy Roma community for one of the arts activities. Discussions highlighted the unique challenges in engaging with this particular group of individuals and their unique needs. They understood that these people might be scared or distrustful of settled communities, so the arts was a good way of reaching out and talking to them. It was also important for the effective communication with these individuals to be able to deal with the challenges in literacy levels and health knowledge.

Another arts and health project that was not included in this report was Arts boost, which was Hywel Dda's Arts and Mental health Scheme for Children and young people who were referred to S_CAMHS. A key learning point for the programme was to expand this project for other young people. This could have a lot of potential, especially in Pembrokeshire where there is more child poverty than in other areas. Likewise, it was noted that DanceWell was helpful for older adults and the feedback was very good, so this could also be an important area to enlarge across a bigger area.

7. Conclusion

One of the key insights from the programme was the complexity of creative prescribing. It was important to design the infrastructure in the early stages of the programme. This allowed it to develop and change organically during the collaborations. It was also observed that new infrastructure would be required to support the creative prescribing programme.

The programme did a lot of work to raise awareness of creative prescribing and to assess how familiar healthcare professionals were with it. Having more solid evidence will help more health care professionals embrace creative prescribing in the future.

One of the main difficulties was getting more money for arts and health activities. The results collected so far show that there is potential to benefit patients, but this has not led to more funding. The creative prescribing programme team realised that they need a more rigorous evaluation with more data to prove the benefits of arts and health (both financial and non-financial), as per the National Social Prescribing Framework for Wales.

The programme also revealed that many health professionals did not have much experience or knowledge of arts and health. The feedback through the programme was positive and the work undertaken so far, has helped health professionals to feel more comfortable in referring patients to these kinds of services.

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- For this report we are using the term creative prescribing, but the new National Social Prescribing Framework for Wales recommends the use of the term 'arts on referral' or 'creative referral'

Appendix 1 – Professional involvement in the programme

Health care professionals

Kathryn Lambert, Arts in Health Co-ordinator, Hywel Dda University Health Board (H DUHB)

Dr Catherine Jenkins, GP General Practitioner, Morfa Lane Surgery, Carmarthen and H DUHB Arts & Health Coordinator (2021-2023)

Jan Batty, Senior Public Health Practitioner, (Hywel Dda Public Health Team, H DUHB)

Helen Sullivan – H DUHB – Head of Diversity and inclusion

Sandra Mitchell (Hywel Dda UHB - Community Development Outreach Team Manager)

Emily Van de Venter – (National Public Health Wales - Consultant in Public Health (Health Improvement) Lead Consultant, Mental Wellbeing

Mariann Pederson - Service Support Manager, Proactive & Planned Care Pembrokeshire

Joshua Beynon - Primary Care Services Manager Ceredigion

Gwyneth Jones - Connected Communities Programme Manager, Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS)

Jamie Horton – Community Connector, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services (CAVS)

Sue Smith, Community Project Manager for Carmarthenshire

Eleri Davies (Hywel Dda UHB - Primary Care Services Manager) Carmarthenshire

Hilary Thomas - Programme Manager CPD, Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW)

David Easton, Hywel Dda Allied Health Professional

Gabrielle Wales, Hywel Dda Arts in Health Coordinator

Arts Partners

Angela Rogers – Director, Wales Arts Health and Wellbeing Network

Eleanor Shaw, Director of People Speak Up

Chris Ryan, Director, Arts Care Gofal Celf

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Bethan Touhig-Gamble, Director, Span Arts

Mike Hotson, Co-Director, Arts4Wellbeing

Sara Wentworth, Co-Director, Arts4Wellbeing

Bryn Jones, Director, Haul

James Owen – Filmmaker and Director, Stori Cymru

Tracy Breathnach, Wales Arts Health and Wellbeing Network

Artists

Ed Holden/Mr Phormula – Beatboxing

Pip Lewis – Visual arts/drawing

Uschi Turoczy – Creative writing/poetry

Cai Tomos – Movement

Nia Lewis - Visual arts

Di Ford – Collage

Dance - Freya Dare, Ashley Newsham, Angharad James, Lucy Coldman, Abbie Robinson, Nadine Turk

Brian Swaddling - Nature Based Art

Ceri Philips – Storyteller

Jain Boon – Somatic artist

Alison Moger – Textile artist

Thania Acaron - Dancer, choreographer and dance movement psychotherapist

Phil Okwedy - Storyteller

Appendix 2 – Splossary definitions

<https://splossary.wales/wiki/creative-referral/>

Creative Referral

Description: **Creative Referral** is an umbrella term that is used to describe the [referral](#) of individuals to [community assets](#) to participate in a broad range of creative activities. Examples of **creative referral** activities include singing / music making, painting, dance, drama, crafts, photography and film, theatre, and creative writing). Some examples of commonly used terms that fall under the umbrella of creative referral are given below.

Arts on referral (also commonly referred to as **arts-based interventions, arts for health interventions, art on prescription**) describes the [referral](#) of individuals to participate in a variety of art(s)-based activities. **Museums on referral** describes the [referral](#) of individuals for creative engagement with museums, which often incorporates an element of art(s)-based activity. **Dance on referral** describes the [referral](#) of individuals to participate in a variety of dance and movement-based activities. **Dance on referral** activities are often suggested for adults with chronic conditions, limited mobility, neurological problems, or for older adults at risk of falling.

The literature, which is heavily based within health care, often prefers to assign the term ‘...on prescription’ to the various creative assets that fall under the umbrella of creative referral. However, consultation indicated that the term ‘on prescription’ does not easily sit within the cross-sectional model of [social prescribing](#) within Wales. Therefore, in the production of the glossary it was felt that moving forward the suggested terms of use should utilise ‘(on) referral’ to reflect both consultation feedback and the nature of the Welsh offer of [social prescribing](#).

Alternative Terms: **art on prescription, arts as healthcare, arts-based approaches, arts-based interventions, arts for health interventions, arts on referral, creative arts in social prescribing, dance on prescription, healing arts, museum-based social prescribing scheme, museums on prescription, social prescription arts programmes**

Connected Terms: [Active signposting](#), [blue referral](#), [books on referral](#), [community assets](#), [Community & Voluntary Sector Organisations](#), [education on referral](#), [exercise referral](#), [green referral](#), [nature-based interventions](#), [referral](#), [social prescribing pathway](#), [social prescribing practitioner](#), [welfare support referral](#), [wellbeing](#).

Appendix 3 – Examples of creative prescribing in the NHS

The Healthy London Partnership supported by the NHS and Public Health England published a report focusing on the feasibility of social prescribing investment for commissioners in London. The report outlines the steps needed for commissioners to take to set-up or expand social prescribing within their services. In the report, social prescribing is presented as a means to alleviate pressures on GP systems by presenting a business case for social prescribing based on three UK service evaluations. This includes the Bristol Wellspring project which showed a 60% reduction in GP contact times 12 months post intervention for patients referred through social prescribing (Bristol Wellspring Project; Kimberlee R. 2016). Another evaluation highlighted a 25% reduction in A&E attendance by a group referred for social prescribing programmes against another group who were not referred for social prescribing (City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group & University of East London 2014). Finally, the results from a report from the Rotherham Social Prescribing service showed a 17% reduction in A&E attendance and a 7% reduction in non-elective patient stays 12 months post-intervention (Dayson C. & Bennett E. 2016).

Additionally, the Bristol Wellspring project report on the social return on investment (ROI) and estimated a social return of £2.90 could be achieved in a year for every £1.00 invested in social prescribing. The financial modelling presented in the report published by the Healthy London Partnership suggests that there may have been a potential saving of £110m between 2013-16 across London's NHS organisations had social prescribing been implemented effectively (Healthy London Partnership 2017).

In the case of Arts on Prescription in London, in 2015-16 there were 1,892 patients with mild to moderate mental health patients who may have benefitted from community arts schemes. If these patients had been referred to the schemes in accordance with the cited evidence, there may have been the potential to save £1,416,606 across the NHS in London through reduced secondary care activities. Through projecting the NHS savings in London using arts on prescription, a potential saving of £1,403,770 could be achieved a year for this group (Healthy London Partnership 2017).

In Gloucestershire, a range of creative health activities have been co-developed by clinicians, patients, artists, etc, to address specific clinical needs. For example, in children and young people visual arts, music, and circus skills workshops have been used to improve adherence to medication for those with long-term mental health conditions. However, people have also shown improvements in self-esteem, social connections, and confidence through attending the workshops (National Centre for Creative Health).

The programme was delivered by collaborators in Gloucestershire including Art Shape, Art Space Cinderford, the Music Group, and led to reduced levels of anxiety. Another programme called Music for lung health by Mindsong showed an improvement in lung health with reduced A&E admissions of 100% at 3 months post intervention and 78% at 6 months post intervention. This has also led to a reduction in out of hours appointments as people have more self confidence in addressing their own conditions (National Centre for Creative Health).

To accurately demonstrate the impact of social prescribing, the Gloucestershire programme has been gathering patient experiences and pseudo-anonymised patient data to build what they believe to be the world's largest database on creative health interventions. The outcomes from each intervention are generated in a consistent format which facilitates comparison against other clinical interventions.

Create Gloucestershire is a network of people from the arts and cultural sector, and in 2022/23 the NHS provided them with funding to commission arts and health projects in their area. Create Gloucestershire then carried out six 'micro experiments' to assess how arts, creativity and culture contribute to 'living well'. The aim of this work was to make steps towards legitimising community-based arts and culture interventions to be used in conjunction with existing medical treatments as part of a personalised care model (Create Gloucestershire).

The six areas that each of the micro-experiments investigated include:

- The role of the 'creative catalysts' in the health ecosystem.
- The infrastructure that is needed to enable an arts and culture offer to support creative wellbeing.
- Developing confidence in data for arts and health delivery partners
- Aligning arts and culture with other social prescribing programmes
- Collectively developing a talent pool and career pathways of creative practitioners

The learning gained from the experiments found that hard and soft infrastructure is needed for creative health to level up solutions were achieved that would not be found that the reaction to arts and health is different between communities. The creative catalysts have been useful in aiding cross-working between by identifying opportunities for collaboration and engaging social prescribers with community arts and support organisations for example.

Appendix 4 – List of activities

Creative Prescribing Discovery Programme					
	Date	Where	Who for	Attendees (Attendances)	Number of sessions
Creative Prescribing Café					
Creative Prescribing Café Carmarthenshire	28/04/2023	Ffwrness Fach, Llanelli	Arts & health professionals and 3rd sector	30	2
Creative Prescribing Café Pembrokeshire	27/06/2023	Bethesda Chapel, Narberth	Arts & health professionals and 3rd sector	46	2
Creative Prescribing Café Ceredigion	22/09/2023	Small World Theatre, Cardigan	Arts & health professionals and 3rd sector	50	2
Arti Artist in Residence					
AIR Ceredigion - Haul	Aug/Sept 23	Aberystwyth Uni Wellbeing Centre	Students/Young adults	2	6
AIR Carmarthen - Arts Care Gofal Celf - Dance on Prescription	Nov 22 - Aug 23	Nurture Centre, Carmarthen, Whitland Town Hall, Whitland, Civic Hall, Llandeilo, Rhys Prichard Hall, Llandovery	Older, chronic illness & mobility	168 (734)	96
AIR Pembrokeshire - Span Arts	July/Aug 23	Pater Hall, Pembroke Dock	CYP	5 (21)	4
AIR Pembrokeshire - Arts4Wellbeing	04/07/2023	Dezza's Cabin Monkton	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Community	20	2
Film					

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Film - An introduction to the Benefits of arts in health care (produced by WAHWN)	Feb 2023+	https://heiw.nhs.wales/news/the-benefits-of-art-in-healthcare/	Health professionals	329 (as of March 2024)	3 screenings
Training and wellbeing activities					
Trainee GP's Carmarthenshire	30th Nov	Postgraduate Centre, Glangwili Hospital	Health professionals - Trainee GP's	17	1
Connect Wales – National Social Prescribers Network	Jan 25th	Online	Health professionals - Social Prescribers	58	1
BSLM Network – Clinicians with an interest in lifestyle medicine	13th Feb	Postgraduate Centre, Glangwili Hospital	Health professionals - Lifestyle medicine	20	1
Connect Wales National Social Prescribers Network	June 20th	Online	Health professionals - Social Prescribers	27	1
Pop Up Shop – Arts Care Gofal Celf	June 26th	Pop Up Shop, Haverfordwest	Public	0	1
Pop Up Shop – People Speak Up	June 22nd	Pop Up Shop, Haverfordwest	Public	0	1
Junior Drs – Glangwili GH	June 28th	Junior Drs Mess, Glangwili Hospital	Health professionals - Junior Drs	14	1
S_CAMHS Learning Academy	Nov	Nantgaredig Rugby Club	Health professionals - S-CAMHS Team	40	1
			Totals across activities	826 (1408)	125
Meetings					
Creative Prescribing Steering Group		Online		14 members	N/A
Arts Team		Online		10 members	N/A
Research & Innovation Group	22/09/2023	Online and Small World Theatre, Cardigan		16 members	N/A

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