

Artists and arts organisations East Midlands networking meeting

29/6/18

This meeting was chaired by Alison Foote of Arts Council England, and attended by Helena Reynolds and Jodie Henshaw, Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance East Midlands representatives, plus 19 interested parties from the Arts and Health sector across the East Midlands (names not shared here due to data protection regulations). Discussions on challenges, benefits, and action points were held round the table, conflated and anonymised notes from which are here below.

Challenges in the East Midlands

- Finding work opportunities
- Capacity, huge reductions in staffing and time, often despite highly successful work
- Long term financial sustainability and funding – leading to ad hoc projects and no long term planning, continuity or sustainability
- Getting the message to those in a position to influence, and keeping arts and health on the agenda of key decision makers. Restricted by STP priorities and can be sidelined. Health professionals can even be keen, e.g. GPs wanting to begin social/ arts prescribing – but it is very complex within current systems and commissioning approaches
- Need to co-ordinate approaches e.g. to spread the word on how to access health care funding
- Constantly changing playing field in terms of systems and policy – working on ‘shifting sands’
- Need support for artists working in challenging situations e.g. prison settings (ACE recognises that this support is needed)
- Little ongoing/sustained evaluation
- Lack of opportunities to signpost people to after arts and health intervention – can the arts sector respond?
- Lack of diversity
- Fighting the idea that artists should work for free
- Health and public sector contracts onerous for small organisations – usually aimed at huge organisations not small arts organisations
- Arts professionals need to talk to the wider community?
- Health sectors need to talk to each other and to arts organisations, rather than working in silos
- Working with large partnerships is necessary but time consuming and often difficult to maintain
- Need workforce development within the health sector, e.g. home care workers, activity co-ordinators, health care assistants
- Training or sharing information on evaluation measures so everyone speaks the same language and can share the same data
- Arts sector funding is propping up arts and health work – should it be funded in the main by the health sector?

- More emphasis on prevention needed?

Benefits/ opportunities in the East Midlands

- The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance will create huge opportunity to develop the sector and to support networking – designed to be a two-way process of mutual support, giving a stronger, unified voice www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk
- Unit-cost brokerage system might work better than the current large contract system, e.g. spot purchase a Fibromyalgia group?
- ACE are developing a strategy including a Public consultation from the autumn
- Researching patients understanding of their health services will be useful
- Projects still exist with funding from a wide variety of sources and working with a wide variety of groups in creative and diverse ways. The teams and workers who exist are strong
- Partnership and consortium work leads to good projects, between health and arts services or with arts services working together.
- Sector beginning to use referral processes much more to access target groups
- Moves are being made to embed Arts and Health into statutory services/ policy
- Projects are popular with participants and get good attendance
- Strengths in learning with artists in challenging health situations e.g. prison settings.
- Networks are building e.g. the Arts in Dementia network, which can be used to apply for joint funding

Discussion and action points

- The Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance is trying to draw together active networks in each region, to cascade information, feed back into Alliance planning, and to provide access to the training and event opportunities that the Alliance will provide
- Thoughts around how we can stay in touch as an East Midlands network? A structure with co-ordination and collaboration is needed to move forward. Possibly a small working group including representatives from each county? ‘Task and Finish’ groups could be used to give feedback. We each need to each recruit people to the network from within our own areas. Need to adhere to GDPR requirements when building networks
- The evidence for the success of this work exists. The Creative Health report can be used to present and disseminate a comprehensive wealth of evidence. The Alliance will be publicising and advocating at a national level, and on a regional, local and individual level we also need to share our successes and our passion and advocate wherever we can. This is a grass-roots driven movement
- Need to look at evidence for economic value of the work already done?
- Artists may need to gear projects to the evidence – work with what is there