

Document contents:

1. [Introduction and Context](#)
2. [Summary of Activity Undertaken](#)
3. [Key Findings](#)
4. [Key Themes](#)
5. [Recommendations](#)
6. [Appendices](#)

1. Introduction and Context

In March 2020, Nikki Crane Associates (NCA) was commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) Culture and Health Teams to conduct a review of culture and social prescribing activity (see Appendix 1 for definition) in four London Boroughs to ascertain the level of ‘cultural social prescribing’ and to provide recommendations for future programmes.

The work is driven by the Mayor of London’s determination to tackle health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of Londoners through enabling more Londoners to access social prescribing and the wide recognition of the role that arts and cultural activities can play in achieving this.

The aim of this work is for the GLA to use the recommendations to review its own commissioning strategies and understand how it can work in partnership with others to enhance social prescribing and cultural activity in London. The Mayor is committed to using his influence and convening powers to:

1. Deepen future investment in cultural activity for social prescribing.
2. Shape cultural programmes to contribute further to social prescribing.

The four London boroughs selected were: Barking and Dagenham, Camden, Lewisham and Waltham Forest. The boroughs were jointly selected by the GLA and NCA due to a combination of: the quality and diversity of their cultural activity, links to the London Borough of Culture Programme, ability to engage with the project and to ensure a diverse and geographical spread.

This short report details the work undertaken, the key findings, themes and recommendations for the GLA to consider. The report references examples of good practice in the four boroughs and a case study of a cultural social prescribing programme in each borough (see Appendix 3) to bring the work to life. The recommendations are presented in the context of embedding them into social prescribing developments across London and into the London Borough of Culture Programme.

Importantly, the report must be read acknowledging the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which broke in the UK just as this work was commencing. The impact of the pandemic and UK government lockdown measures has been unprecedented and has had significant implications for the way in which the project was carried out and the findings and recommendations in the report. A significant number of the key stakeholders we were seeking to engage were either furloughed or redeployed to other crisis-related roles. For those still in their existing roles, the primary focus of their work was on short-term crisis management with limited capacity for analysis of the current state of play in social prescribing or longer-term thinking.

Despite this, we have still managed to engage positively with many culture and social prescribing advocates across the four boroughs and beyond. Their passion, resilience and resolve in the face of such adversity speaks volumes for the potential that culture can bring to the future of social prescribing.

The report was completed as we enter what is being termed the 'recovery' phase of COVID-19. There is a need and an opportunity for all stakeholders to learn from the initial phases of the crisis and begin to understand the 'new normal'; to determine what it is that we should keep from previous ways of working and what opportunities there are to affect change - both organisational/cultural change as well as to systems and services. The recommendations in this report should be taken forward with this in mind.

2. Summary of Activity Undertaken

The effect of COVID-19 lockdown measures in the UK has meant that most of our work has been carried out via phone, email, online meetings and desktop reviews. The key activity undertaken includes:

1. **Consultation with GLA Culture and Health Teams** to clarify the brief, provide context and gather intelligence to understand current programmes and priorities at the GLA.
2. **1-2-1 meetings/correspondence with approximately 20 key contacts** across the four Boroughs. This included Arts and Health organisations and champions in various roles, Local Authority Culture Team members, Social Prescribing Link workers, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) organisations with a keen interest in Arts, Culture and Social Prescribing and senior health and social care representatives (see Appendix 2 for list of key contributors).
3. **Meetings/correspondence with key contacts in arts, culture and social prescribing at a local, regional and national level** including those who have an overview of arts and health. This has included Richard Ings at Arts Council England, Jenni Regan at London Arts and Health, Dan Hopewell at Bromley By Bow Centre and the London Social Prescribing Network, The Social Prescribing Advisory Group (SPAG).
4. **Meetings with other GLA Culture and Health Team social prescribing projects** to ensure our work is joined up with other key GLA initiatives. This has included meeting with London Plus and Simply Connect who are leading on the development of the London-wide VCSE social prescribing network and the VCSE materials and toolkit for social prescribing respectively.
5. **Desk research and review of documents** has been undertaken to follow up on signposting from key contacts above. E.g. Camden Social Prescribing and Care Navigation Pandemic Update Paper, Kentish Town Health Centre's Free Space Project Annual Report.

3. Key Findings

1. ***There is a rich variety of arts/culture social prescribing 'provision'*** in each borough across all art forms, contexts (formal health and social care settings to informal, physical to online), scale and across all age groups. There are many outstanding examples and case studies we can draw on.
2. ***Referral pathways and partnerships***
There are a number of strong culture and social prescribing referral pathways and partnerships already in place. *Free Space Project* being co-located within a Camden health centre and establishing a long-term partnership with its local GP practice is a leading example of this (see Appendix 3). This is also particularly evident in Lewisham and several other London boroughs with the emergence of a local Community Hubs model to respond to the COVID-19 crisis building on already well established and highly effective partnerships across the borough. **Community Hubs** create opportunities for cultural organisations to work symbiotically with other local community sector partners, identifying need and ensuring that there are joined-up responses. Through the interconnected networks of the Hub, arts organisations are able to obtain priority referrals, dovetail into existing communication and distribution routes and significantly extend the reach of their programmes for isolated and vulnerable people.

However:

- a. Recognition of the value of culture in social prescribing and awareness of cultural social prescribing provision is sporadic across social prescribing link workers, GPs and other professionals in the statutory system with some notable exceptions, for example there

are some important opportunities emerging with hospitals including Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust which is directly referring patients to groups such as 'Singing for Health,' fully embedded as part of pulmonary rehabilitation, and plans are underway to extend this to out-patients. These initiatives would benefit however from coordination with other groups and referral routes in the community.

- b. There appears to be a significant gap when seeking information about cultural organisations that deliver social prescribing. Currently information about organisations varies enormously between boroughs and areas. Some areas such as Greenwich have a well populated community directory with some signposting to specific cultural activity whereas link-workers in Camden have told us they have had to build their own database using online searches and word of mouth. While meeting the Social Prescribing team in Waltham Forest, we were informed they had little knowledge of arts or cultural organisations they could refer to, instead much of their focus was on exercise and debt advice. Knowledge is generally concentrated in one or two key champions with an interest in arts and culture. The role of the link-worker in primary care is to integrate into the local area and make connections with organisations who can support social prescribing. This requires a highly proactive approach and with a lack of coordinated information available there may be many smaller, grassroots organisations that are missed.
 - c. Culture within social prescribing is generally not considered part of 'mainstream' health and social care services and there is significant inconsistency of referrals and use of cultural social prescribing within the four boroughs. Activity is often found in small pockets where key individuals in the referral pathway know and trust one another (e.g. Free Space Project) or where a funded project has facilitated connections (e.g. New Town Culture in Barking and Dagenham). There is some way to go to 'fold in' and embed community-based arts provision so that activity is not being undertaken in parallel with the NHS.
 - d. There is an important role within the referral pathways for Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) infrastructure organisations, Volunteer Centres and Large VCSE providers (e.g. large charities such as Age UK):
 - i. CVS poses both an opportunity for the cultural sector but also a potential threat:
 1. Opportunity:
 - a. Facilitate better connections to cultural groups
 - b. Can raise awareness of culture and social prescribing and build trust between health/local government and local groups
 2. Risk:
 - a. Drawing funding away from the sector
 - b. Acting as gatekeeper to culture/social prescribing
 - ii. Similar to the statutory sector above, there is a lack of knowledge in some cases of the value, and awareness of, culture and social prescribing. Training of CVS organisations, VCSE providers, Volunteers and link workers to increase understanding of the value of culture and social prescribing is therefore key.
 - iii. Engaging Volunteer Centres across London to capitalise on the wave of community engagement since the outbreak of COVID-19. The rise of 1000s of Mutual Aid groups across the country and 750,000 volunteers signing up to the Good Sam app is evidence of the scale of the opportunity.
 - iv. However, despite there being no shortage of volunteers with a wide range of skills there are concerns about lack of coordination, focus and clear direction of this resource. This is where the community hub model can make a significant difference.
3. **Key individuals/champions** - A large part of the success is down to key individuals/champions in each borough. Champions in the four boroughs were spread across many different roles, sectors and grades (e.g. Daniel Regan as Artistic Director of the Free Space Project, David Slater CEO at Entelechy Arts, Marijke Steedman a Programme manager at New Town Culture Project and

Barbora Ertlova a social prescribing link worker in Waltham Forest) and all shared the following in common;

- a. A deep commitment to arts and culture and experience of how arts and culture can contribute to wellbeing and ‘social prescribing’ in many different contexts.
 - b. A desire and ability to affect system and organisational change – e.g. incorporating culture/social prescribing into strategy and delivery
 - c. Ability to ‘translate’ and broker connections between the many stakeholders (ranging from small to large cultural organisations through to health professionals and officers and commissioners in the Council/NHS commissioning group)
 - d. The leadership skills to establish a large network across all stakeholder groups
 - e. A manager/director that is supportive of them and has given them freedom to operate
4. **Senior level ‘buy in’** and understanding of the value of culture beyond entertainment or pleasure is key. E.g. in Barking and Dagenham and Waltham Forest, senior level support is extended right up to the Director of Culture and CEO of the Local Authority and in Lewisham to the Director of Adult Health and Social Care
5. **The Positive Impact of the London Borough of Culture**
- a. Waltham Forest as the 2019 London Borough of Culture has put the spotlight firmly on culture and the role it can play in the borough. This status has acted as a catalyst for change due to its ‘feel good’ factor, funding for projects (e.g. funding an artist in residence at the iconic Walthamstow Wetlands to facilitate various wellbeing projects connecting art and nature) and its reach across all sectors and departments.
 - b. Having a flagship culture and wellbeing programme provides an enormous opportunity for joining up local assets and raising the profile of culture. The vision and funding from the GLA ‘*legitimised and validated the New Town Culture project in LBD*’.
6. **The Regional and National Context for Culture and Social Prescribing** - This exploration into culture and social prescribing in the four London boroughs can be seen against a backdrop of accelerating developments regionally and nationally in arts, health & wellbeing. In particular:
- a. Arts and Health sector support organisations have been set up through funding by the Arts Council England including the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA) and its London Regional body, London Arts and Health
 - b. The National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH) is soon to be established at Imperial College Health Partners within the Royal College of General Practice. This is a highly conducive place for the development of culture within social prescribing.
 - c. The Government has set up the National Academy for Social Prescribing backed by £5m in funding, with the aim of increasing provision of social prescribing in England
 - d. Arts Council England now has a new strategy for 2020-2030 ‘*Let’s Create*’ with Arts and Health as an important priority. Areas they are currently working on include:
 - i. The London office has worked closely with the GLA and the Healthy London Partnership to develop two social prescribing pilots in the boroughs of Merton and Southwark, which are soon to be launched. There is an opportunity here to share learning from these pilots and to consider following-up on emerging good practice that might be rolled out over a wider number of boroughs.
 - ii. Arts Council England is committed to building on its role in sharing learning from arts and health with the wider cultural sector and beyond, showcasing examples of how arts organisations are meeting the COVID-19 crisis head-on, reaching out to often marginalised and isolated individuals and communities with creative opportunities and outlets and supporting their health and wellbeing.
 - iii. Arts Council England also has a London Champions Network with arts and health as a priority within it.
 - e. Arts Council England and London Arts and Health have launched a new London Arts and Health Stakeholder Group, which met for the first time shortly before lockdown. The GLA has subsequently agreed to co-convene this group in July 2020, which includes representation from the Mayor’s Office (regional PHE/NHS), London Councils, LENS (Lived Experience Network), Thrive London, CHWA (London reps), King’s College

Hospital, arts and museums, the National Social Prescribing Network and Healthy London Partnership. This forum is potentially perfectly positioned to take forward learning from the Boroughs of Culture on Social Prescribing and to help facilitate sharing of practice across organizations.

- f. One of the most ground-breaking developments has been the World Health Organisation's (WHO) review of the impact of arts in health undertaken by leading researcher Daisy Fancourt of University College London.
- g. There are a number of major conferences in the planning stages bringing together experts and champions in the field of arts, health and social prescribing including:
 - i. The Westminster Health Foundation policy conference "Next Steps for Social prescribing in England" in conjunction with NHS England, National Association of Link Workers & National Academy for Social Prescribing - Thursday, 17th September 2020
 - ii. The next Culture, Health and Wellbeing International Conference & Exchange will be held in June 2021. Plans include a digital conference in addition to a physical gathering in Bristol, UK.
- h. Universities are increasing their interest in the field manifested through building research capacity, curriculum development and the establishment of new posts e.g. Arts, Health and Wellbeing lead at King's College London.
- i. Local authorities are accelerating their commitment to arts and health recognizing the importance of the VCSE including arts and culture to public health amongst other areas; most notably Southwark has created the first borough-wide partnership for culture health and wellbeing.
- j. There is an opportunity to use this report to present at the new London VCSE Social Prescribing network

7. The impact of COVID-19 - It has been an extraordinary time to undertake this piece of work. Never could the opportunity for demonstrating the role of culture in social prescribing be better highlighted and as so common in crises, both the positives and the negatives are heightened. What is very clear is people's desire to build community and to continue the drive to connect in myriad new ways whatever the challenges. There has been a glorious outbreak of creativity in the cultural sector and the resilience and imagination of creative organisations has come to the fore. Artists across all disciplines are responding to increased demand for what the arts and culture do so well – engaging vulnerable and isolated people, improving wellbeing, connecting communities and supporting health professionals at a time of extreme pressure. Strikingly, however, many of the barriers which have been brought to our attention in the course of this work are much the same as they have been over the last ten years of arts and health development, in particular the challenge of integrating the organic, fleet-of-foot approach of artists within the more structured operations of the statutory system.

There is an opportunity now to strengthen relationships between the culture, health & social care sectors and to create more innovative, agile and flexible ways of working together. The contribution of culture and the wider work of the VCSE to health and social prescribing in particular will be even more important. Whether the realization of this value will lead to further adoption of this work in the future is another question as budgets tighten and the aftermath of this crisis continues to bite. What is certain is that the future will be one in which preventative mental health interventions and ways to reach and engage vulnerable individuals are in huge demand.

From our research cultural organisations have experienced very similar challenges to other VCSE organisations. Like many other sectors there has been considerable impact on their own wellbeing as well as on delivery and funding of projects. However, COVID-19 provides an opportunity to overcome traditional barriers to change and create a 'new normal'. Specific findings from our work:

1. Cultural organisations are adapting with great resourcefulness and ingenuity to COVID-19, reinventing models of delivery including new digital applications and sending out creative toolkits, newsletters and resources to people's doors. All of this has the potential to enrich the different approaches for culture and social prescribing in the future.
2. Cultural organisations are making an invaluable contribution to the overall COVID-19 response. This in itself is evidence of the sector's ability to contribute to social prescribing, e.g.:
 - a. Collaborating on efforts to support isolated and vulnerable people's welfare and ensuring they have enough food and the correct medication. Link workers have been focused on these priorities and most likely will continue to be so in the future so extra efforts are needed to keep culture in the frame. Good examples include:
 - i. Entelechy Arts delivering creative activity packs (300 to date) to people's doorsteps which can be coordinated with the local authority meal deliveries. This supports people with no access to on-line resources to remain active and engaged.
 - ii. Adult Learning services in Lewisham have created an online wellbeing resource pack (survival kit) and creative/cultural newsletter for Lewisham's most vulnerable residents
 - iii. Joy of sound (Waltham Forest and Pan London) - Organising of Social events, group sessions online (See Appendix 3)
 - iv. Arts Network – Making weekly phone calls to vulnerable isolated adults with serious mental illness
 - b. Providing creative mental health and wellbeing activities – e.g. Nordoff Robbins music therapy in Waltham Forest
3. Digital – There has been notable entrepreneurship from cultural organisations moving creative and wellbeing activity on line where they have the resources and skills to do so and all the current signs are that the role of digital platforms for arts activity will continue. A great example of this is Joy of Sound who have successfully transitioned all of its in-person activities onto Zoom (see Appendix 3). Additional technological support and training will be needed to ensure this is effective.
 - i. *Activators* (volunteer support staff) will be needed to help people access technology in their homes through training and confidence building
 - ii. Digital software and hardware will be required to support some people to access digital solutions
 - iii. There needs to be further thought on how to cater for the many people who are not digitally connected. Some good examples are emerging e.g. Entelechy Arts is piloting the 'old-fashioned' approach of conference calls - linking older people together for singing workshops also using radio to broadcast engaging activity; the production of newsletters delivered to people's doors to update them on available activity both on line and through other means; Arts Network in Lewisham are posting creative packs and making individual phone calls to engage and support digitally excluded patrons; Southbank Centre - *Art By Post* - are sending high quality packs containing free poetry and visual arts activities to isolated individuals across the London boroughs and UK-wide. Age UK Camden are just one of the key partners helping to facilitate targeted delivery on the ground.
 - iv. There is of course a risk of organisations becoming over reliant on digital beyond COVID-19 and losing some of the core 'relational' and face-to-face elements of their practice. At the same time, a number of arts professionals are concerned about their lack of technological skills and how they will be left behind if they cannot keep pace with digital developments.

4. Training/safeguarding - will be needed for artists and other frontline workers to deliver pastoral care. Artists have cited examples of contacting people to undertake creative activity but recognizing that they first need to check if they are coping with their day-to-day lives in isolation. The reality is someone may have lost a partner suddenly and this has to be dealt with as a priority. Most artists are ill-equipped currently to deliver this essential pastoral care and there are also safe-guarding issues. Hence training and development opportunities will be required for arts organizations and health professionals/link workers to deal with the new world of social prescribing. There are highly experienced organizations that can provide this kind of support including Clod Ensemble's Performing Medicine Programme.
5. Funders of cultural activities have been extremely flexible;
 - a. Accommodating the need to adapt delivery plans
 - b. Willing to amend activity outputs/outcomes and use of funds
 - c. Relaxing of reporting requirements
6. Culture in most cases has been de-prioritised to focus on the health and other statutory system response during the COVID-19 Crisis. For example, several Local Authority Culture Teams have been redeployed from their culture roles during the COVID-19 Crisis. Is this an indication of a more general issue where cultural social prescribing is the afterthought after medical intervention prioritisation?
7. General findings (not just culture specific)
 - a. There is a requirement to open up platforms/channels for the community to express their lived-experience of the COVID-19 crisis. Social prescribing opportunities cannot be just about diverting people to a range of activity whether on line or face to face (in the future), it will also be about dealing with the grief and inevitable mental health issues that have mounted during the crisis.
 - b. It will not be enough for social prescribing to be focused on Primary Care - social prescribing needs to be more embedded in the community at the earlier stage of health and social care issues developing - prevention as well as treatment. The current crisis has heightened this need.

4. Key Themes:

We have identified a number of key themes from the findings from our research:

1. **Connectivity and coordinating cultural activities**- There is undoubtedly a need for greater connectivity and coordination between culture activities and the health and care sector and more formal mechanisms in which to achieve this. There is a huge range of cultural activity that could support social prescribing but because of poor coordination and no central portal for information it is confusing and difficult for people to access. Linkworkers in particular identified this as a key issue that needed resolution but this view was also shared by health professionals who find it hard to navigate what activity is available and often end up 'prescribing' the same one or two activities they are familiar with.
2. **Raising Profile** - There is a need to raise awareness/profile of the role of arts & culture in supporting social prescribing and wellbeing, tackling inequalities and engaging people from all backgrounds. This is across all stakeholder groups, not just health;
 - a. Within the cultural sector (some organisations don't realise they are 'social prescribing' or what the term means; others have decided not to call their activity social prescribing)
 - b. Within infrastructure organisations (CVS, volunteer centres, larger VCSEs)
 - c. Within the NHS/Local Authority – providers, policy makers and commissioners
3. **Fragmentation of cultural activity** - Within the cultural sector itself; there is a lack of joined up cultural activity, lack of awareness of who/what other provision exists, lack of opportunity to collaborate, share and learn and an inequality of access to provision across London boroughs.
4. **Culture seen as an 'add-on'** - Despite a strong evidence base to support it, Arts/culture (and to some extent social prescribing) is seen as an add-on to mainstream health and social care services. There are significant challenges with bringing work to scale and attracting sustainable

- funding. e.g. Despite the Free Space project being based in Kentish Town Health Centre, GPs often don't know "what happens in those rooms down the hall" and "gaining funding for creative practices at the health centre is always a challenge".
5. **Lack of understanding of the value of Arts and Health** - Outside of the champions, there is a lack of understanding of the value of arts, culture and social prescribing and a lack of confidence/trust in cultural organisations to deliver on key outcomes. It is important therefore that we communicate:
 - a. The value of arts/culture to support social prescribing
 - b. The definition of what we mean by arts/culture
 - c. Cultural Social Prescribing has been happening for many years and that there are many highly-reputed organisations delivering work to excellent standards
 - d. There is a strong and growing evidence base for this work
 - e. Formal versus informal social prescribing – the need to clarify that a substantial amount of activity takes place outside of "formal social prescribing"
 - f. There is a powerful national movement in arts and health and a strong national and regional infrastructure to provide further momentum for this work e.g. Arts Council England, the new National Centre for Creative Health, The Royal Society for Public Health, Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance, London Arts and Health etc
 6. **Leadership** – Even for those that do understand and value culture's role, the barriers to embedding culture and social prescribing are significant. There is often insufficient will or skills to embed and sustain it in the mainstream. Key to the success of culture and social prescribing is developing leadership in two key areas:
 - a. **Champions** – identifying and equipping champions with the right skills, tools, connections and evidence base.
 - b. **Senior level buy-in** – without support from senior leaders within the local authority and local health system, it is extremely challenging for culture and social prescribing to gain any traction
 7. **Differences in ways of working** – Arts and cultural organisations are typically strong on creativity, adaptability and agility; being able to respond to changing needs. There is a challenge finding a meeting place between this way of working and statutory services which are often less fleet-of-foot and manoeuvrable. More opportunities and formal mechanisms are needed to bring together different services, both informal and formal, to explore ways of working together.
 8. **Quality of provision** – There is inconsistency in the quality of cultural provision, which will ultimately lead to poor practice and poor outcomes within social prescribing. Hence the importance of sharing knowledge about those cultural organisations with a demonstrable track record and ensuring that the quality not just quantity of activity is valued. The effective dissemination of the evidence base for arts health and wellbeing is key here.
 9. **COVID-19** – It is clear that culture has a significant role to play in the recovery and reinvention phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is especially relevant in supporting the needs associated with a 'social recession' resulting from several months of social isolation from lockdown measures.
 10. **Building on existing initiatives** – there is a rich foundation of cultural provision supporting social prescribing to build on. There are also many existing networks and organisations with similar interests and aims that have much to contribute to and benefit from culture and social prescribing if connections and partnerships can be made.
 11. **Community use of buildings** - there is an opportunity to work with health centres and GP practices where there is provision of community space e.g. Downham and Waldron Health Centres in Lewisham to embed the arts and to link into referral routes.

5. Recommendations

We have developed a number of recommendations to address the key themes identified above. The recommendations have been determined based on their ability to address multiple themes at once and should be viewed as 'a piece' to ensure we take a whole-system approach to the issues and

opportunities arising in culture and social prescribing for the future. We have grouped the recommendations in 4 key areas: Connecting and Coordination, Leadership and Development, Systems Change and Raising Profile through the London Borough of Culture:

Connecting and coordination

1. **Interactive Map of Culture & Social Prescribing Activity** - It is vital that Londoners have access to view the cultural social prescribing activities in their area in order to make more informed choices about their health and wellbeing. We would recommend that an interactive tool, whether it is a digital app, interactive map or similar should be built for London. In the same way as the current GLA Cultural Infrastructure Map (CIM), it could be built upon crowd-sourced information which once produced also encourages users and organisations to add and edit content, leave reviews and suggest new projects. This information needs to be available and accessible for a number of key audiences:
 - a. Linkworkers
 - b. Health and social care professionals and commissioners
 - c. The Public

In consultation with London Arts & Health, we would recommend that this is set up as an open access tool, building on the CIM to encourage collaborative working across the cultural sector. It is important that this tool is not simply a static directory of arts and health organisations. As shown with previous directories, these become out of date quickly, don't serve the needs of key audiences and are rarely used. This solution needs to be something that fulfils multiple needs, allowing easy access and connectivity as well as organisations to champion what they are doing.

An example of a dynamic directory of activities was the Creativity and Wellbeing Week directory where organisations listed information about themselves as well as events they were planning. This was a huge success and has had an impact far beyond the week. Organisations 'owned' the space and were able to update and keep the content relevant. -

<http://creativityandwellbeing.org.uk/region/greater-london/?pg=2>

As the key arts and health support charity in the capital, London Arts and Health are in prime position to be able to support the GLA with developing this resource and bringing this information together with key stakeholders to complement other social prescribing work taking place in London.

2. **High Profile Culture and Social Prescribing Event(s)** – Our discussions have shown that there is significant interest in the GLA hosting a high-profile event or conference (potentially annually) to raise profile and awareness, facilitate connections and collaboration, share learning and good practice and generate ideas for future working particularly during these challenging times. This might form part of existing plans for culture/health-focused conferences within the GLA or be conceived as a separate event.
 - a. It would provide a powerful platform for culture and social prescribing advocates to champion their work and increase their networks.
 - b. Partnership for such an event could be drawn from a wide range of borough level stakeholders as well as regional and national partners such as Arts Council England and the London Arts and Health.
 - c. The conference could be used to contribute to Social Prescribing strategy and to support tackling key challenges facing cultural organisations such as Research & Evaluation, sustainability & scale etc.
 - d. As a follow up to the main event, a number of key stakeholders also indicated interest in being supported to run similar events at a borough or a regional level (e.g. by STP area) to facilitate local connections and increase relevance to specific local assets and needs.

Leadership and development:

3. **Champions and Leadership Network** – We recommend supporting the development of a Cultural Social Prescribing Champions Network across London to provide peer support, collaborate and exchange best practice. The network should also facilitate introductions to senior leaders within Local Authority and NHS settings to support champions with adopting cultural social prescribing in their different settings. To facilitate coordination and for ease of set up, we recommend that this is done in partnership with existing initiatives such as The London Arts and Health Stakeholder Group and/or the new London VCSE Social Prescribing Network.
4. **Training** – We recommend a number of areas where training would address some of the key issues identified within this report:
 - a. Individual artists, Arts and Health practitioners –
 - i. To support quality of delivery, introduce a programme of reflective practice sessions for practitioners across arts and health, building on the model from ‘Flourishing Lives’. Reflective Practice Groups are aimed at arts, health and wellbeing professionals offering support and a safe space to explore and learn with other practitioners working in arts, health and wellbeing settings - including those working in day centres, practitioners working in clinical settings, or in freelance community arts. These sessions are an opportunity to share the challenges and opportunities practitioners are encountering in their work.
 - ii. To support their ability to cope with enhanced pastoral care responsibilities as we enter the COVID-19 recovery phase. This includes dealing with trauma, bereavement, domestic abuse situations, loneliness and isolation and general mental health issues
 - b. Joint training of cultural practitioners, link workers, GPs and other health and care professionals and for infrastructure organisations (CVS, volunteer centres, NHS/Local Authority teams) – deliver training to increase understanding and awareness of the value of culture and wellbeing, the evidence base behind it and the building blocks of sustainability. A best practice example of this is Performing Medicine’s Culture, Creativity and Health Workforce Development Programme - a bespoke programme aimed at cultural practitioners and organizations with primary care staff, link workers and Integrated Health System leads to help develop the workforce to meet the challenges of the coming years. Drawing on almost 20 years’ experience of co-designed, artist-led training with and for healthcare practitioners and artists, Performing Medicine are leading this initiative with a powerful consortium of partners including the GLA, the Culture Health & Wellbeing Alliance and the National Academy for Social Prescribing. The aim is to help develop the skills of the workforce at all points in the chain to create an interprofessional community.
 - c. Embedding Practice:
 - i. Develop specific training and development opportunities for funders and commissioners to facilitate embedding cultural programmes into mainstream commissioning. There is a need for joined-up strategic planning to ensure sustained access to cultural activities for patients within local communities. Effective systems for joint working could make it easier for local arts partners to make the case for longer term external funding, breaking away from a project by project model. A good example of this is in Gloucestershire where the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Council have been jointly commissioning arts on prescription within its social prescribing offer since 2017 - <https://www.onegloucestershire.net/gloucestershires-approach-to-social-prescribing/>.
 - ii. There is a need to create cross disciplinary support structures enabling artists to work in consultation with multi-disciplinary community health specialists – occupational therapists, dementia support teams etc to maximize the value and impact of creative interventions. We therefore recommend that, where

appropriate, the training is offered as joint or multi-disciplinary training open to arts and health practitioners, health professionals, VCSE staff, link workers, volunteers and others to learn together. Joint training enhances cross sector/cross disciplinary partnership-building and coordination of referrals: greater awareness of the role of culture; sharing of practice and knowledge exchange. There is an opportunity to learn from the success of the New Town Culture Project in Barking And Dagenham who have created knowledge exchange sessions and joint training between artists and social care workers to facilitate this - see Appendix 3; also the work of Entelechy Arts in supporting skills development for their artists to prepare them for future working. Across all training initiatives the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA) and London Arts & Health Forum (LAH) are natural potential partners.

Systems change and capacity building:

5. **Embed culture and social prescribing into existing work**, including the Mayor's other Social Prescribing work-streams to avoid duplication and maximise synergy. In particular:
 - a. Use the London VCSE social prescribing network as a vehicle for delivering these recommendations, fostering connections and raising awareness. Within the network:
 - i. Support the development of culture and social prescribing sub-forums/discussions to bring together arts practitioners/organisations together with each other and with other key stakeholders (health professionals, commissioners, funders etc) to collaborate, share best practice, improve knowledge and referral routes
 - ii. Deliver awareness-raising talks and sessions
 - iii. Champion the most innovative projects in cultural/social prescribing in different boroughs
 - b. Ensure that the findings from this report are embedded in social prescribing toolkits and digital resources for staff/providers/referral leads.
 - c. Support existing and future London Boroughs of Culture to connect their work to the health sector and to social prescribing
6. **Local community hub model - The new normal?** – We recommend learning from and linking in with emerging community hub models to help coordinate and join up cultural social prescribing activity in the future. This model brings all the key partnerships together, interlinks local assets and volunteer support to deliver to the people most in need. They facilitate coordination and strategic thinking rather than crisis management.
7. **Supporting cultural organisations as part of general VCSE support** – capacity building, referral routes, funding, sustainability of digital solutions and maximising the use of volunteers are all key issues where cultural organisations engaging in social prescribing require support and additional training. However, these issues are the same as those experienced by all Voluntary and Community Sector providers engaging with social prescribing. We therefore recommend that this is taken forward as part of the London VCSE Social Prescribing Network

Raising Awareness of Cultural Social Prescribing through the London Borough of Culture:

8. **Flagship Culture and Social Prescribing programme** – We recommend the GLA consider developing a flagship culture and social prescribing programme in conjunction with the London Borough of Culture, to raise the profile and significance of culture and social prescribing. It is clear that the London Borough of Culture and its association with the Mayor of London has the ability to raise awareness, generate senior level buy-in and provide validation for culture and social prescribing projects. A significant programme with this endorsement would fuel wide engagement across all sectors and departments facilitating connectivity and breaking down traditional silos.

10 July 2020

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – What is social prescribing and cultural social prescribing?

Social Prescribing is about helping people find non-medical ways to improve their health and wellbeing by linking them up with what's going on in their local area. From gardening clubs, food growing spaces, art classes to toddler groups, from social activities for those who are isolated to benefits and legal advice, social prescribing enables people to access activities that meet their wider emotional, physical and social needs, moving towards a holistic and person-centred view of well-being.

There are many opportunities for arts and cultural activities to form a key part of the offering to people to improve their health and wellbeing; from individual clinically based arts activities, to arts projects engaging people physically and emotionally fostering relationships, social inclusion and recovery, to building stronger communities through cultural and heritage venues.

Culture and social prescribing is the process by which creative and cultural activities are prescribed by healthcare professionals and other referral agencies to people experiencing a range of physical and mental health conditions in particular those with anxiety, stress-related symptoms depression or other mental health problems. The aim is for prescribed cultural activities to complement the more conventional forms of medicine.

Appendix 2 - List of key contributors/consultees

Abigail Viner, Special Projects Manager & Senior Producer, Culture and Heritage, Waltham Forest

Ann Marie Pena, Head of Culture and Community Engagement for Barking & Dagenham

Anna Mathams, Arts Manager, Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust

Barbora Ertlova, Social Prescriber and Arts and Health Champion, Social prescribing Team, Waltham Forest

Berenice Lamblin, Insights, Events and Marketing Manager, Bromley-by-Bow Centre

Camden Care Navigation and Social Prescribing Service Pandemic Update – by Age UK Camden, Voluntary Action Camden and Camden Council

Dan Hopewell, Director of Knowledge and Innovation, Bromley-by-Bow Centre

Daniel Regan, Artistic Director, Free Space Project at Kentish Town Health Centre, Camden

David Barnard - Social Prescribing Lead at One Health, Lewisham

David Slater, CEO Entelechy Arts and organiser of Age Against the Machine Festival.

Diana Hofler, Director of Services at Age UK Lewisham & Southwark

Fiona Kirkman, Portfolio Holder, Whole Systems Model of Care, LB Lewisham and NHS Lewisham CCG

Gavin Barlow, CEO of The Albany Theatre, Lewisham

Gerald Jones - Service Manager for Adult Learning, LB of Lewisham.

Hayley Simms - Evaluation Lead, Strategy and Change, LB of Waltham Forest

Helen Keall, Link Director, Camden Council

Jenni Regan, Director, London Arts and Health

Kate Aldous, London Plus

Maria Ryan, Creative Learning, Camden

Marijke Steedman, Curator of New Town Culture Programme, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Mo Saunders, CEO of Arts Network, creative mental health charity in Lewisham

Navinder Kaur, London Plus

Richard Ings, Relationship Manager and London Area champion for Arts in Health, Wellbeing & Criminal Justice, Arts Council England

Sirinda Bhandal, Founder, Simply Connect

William Longden, Creative Director, Joy of Sound

Appendix 3 – Four case studies of cultural social prescribing

1. Free Space Project – Kentish Town Health Centre, Camden - <http://freespaceproject.org/>

The Free Space Project is a charity supporting arts and community initiatives within Kentish Town Health Centre, Camden. Established in 2010, its aim is to relieve mental and physical suffering through the use of the arts and holistic care in conjunction with the James Wigg GP Practice. They do this through providing a range of activities to patients and those in the local community including:

- *Creative activities - Dance for Parkinson's, Drawing for Aphasia, Baby Singalong for parents, carers and children under 5, Exhibitions focusing on health and wellbeing, comprehensive range of 29 arts workshops (ranging from textiles workshops for isolated older adults to visual arts, photography and video workshops for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), classical music concerts and a wellbeing garden.*
- An Arts and Health Hub – a peer to peer support network and professional development for arts and health professionals.
- Partnerships with the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide advice and support for patients of the Health Centre and the 'Pain Space' with the Camden Pain Service to support people with Chronic Pain.

The Free Space Project is a leading example of integrating Arts and Health through its partnership with the James Wigg GP Practice and co-location within the Kentish Town Health Centre. This enables patients, health professionals, social prescribers and artists to work much more closely in providing proactive, positive, holistic and joined up care to patients. It also creates many operational synergies for the partners involved. For example, the Free Space Project is able to make use of the text messaging service from the GP practice to enhance its outreach and communication with patients.

During 2019 the Free Space Project had:

- 2,174 participants engaged in their projects
- 26,500 visitors to their exhibitions
- 2 community concerts with 467 attendees

- 35 artist facilitators and 67 exhibiting artists working across their projects

2. New Town Culture Programme – Barking and Dagenham

Launched in 2018, New Town Culture is a pioneering new programme enhancing social care through embedding art and cultural activities and new creative ways of working into frontline adult and children's social care practices in Barking and Dagenham. It aims to support social care staff to use approaches with young people that use culture and creativity as core tools within their work.

Working with Goldsmiths University, social care practitioners in the Borough, artists and cultural partners including Tate, Serpentine Galleries, Foundling Museum, Create London, Company Drinks, Barking and Dagenham Youth Dance, Green Shoes Arts and South London Gallery, New Town Culture has co-developed a wide-ranging programme of creative activities for people using social care services. This includes:

- 'Radio Ballads' - Led by Serpentine Galleries, this is a series of collaborative projects exploring the world of labour and employment made by artists Helen Cammock, Rory Pilgrim, Ilona Sagar and Sonia Boyce working with adult social care users living in Barking and Dagenham. Over 800 Adult Social Care Users, 81 staff, 12 Voluntary Sector Organisations and 4 artists have taken part in the programme to date.
- 'In Your Time', explores the impact on young people of artistic and cultural activity embedded within social care services. This ambitious programme working directly with young people including unaccompanied minors, foster families, victims of exploitation and young people at risk of offending, supports them and their social care staff to develop new connections and levels of communication. So far almost 400 looked after Young People and Young Care Leavers have participated in the programme alongside 60 Foster carers, 68 Social Care Staff and 15 artists. The team have learned from working with young people in social care that having a place to discover and express yourself creatively and develop new interests and skills is important to them. By setting up open-ended creative learning opportunities we hope to enable young people (often with little or no English) to participate, express themselves, grow in confidence and process their difficult experiences.

The Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies Team at Goldsmiths are researching and evaluating how these creative activities can support social care professionals and artists in their day to day professional practice. In addition, to facilitate embedding of cultural activities and new ways of working into core social care practices, Goldsmiths University have developed and delivered a programme of continuing professional development for social care professionals to demonstrate how creative approaches can reinvigorate their professional practice and foster deeper relationships with service users.

This includes developing a module 'Creative Social Work' that is part of an MA in Social Care at the University and a programme of training and knowledge sharing to support artists and social care professionals to work closer together and adopt new ways of working.

This ambitious project was piloted thanks to a Cultural Impact Award for the London Borough of Culture, a Mayor of London initiative. The programme is now extending its scope connections through further support from the Young Londoners Fund, from the GLA and the MOPAC Violence Reduction Unit.

- For more information on New Town Culture visit - <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/new-town-culture>
- 'Radio Ballads' project with Serpentine Galleries - <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/learn/neighbourhood/radio-ballads>

- ‘In Your Time’ project with The Foundling Museum - <https://foundlingmuseum.org.uk/major-new-project-will-bring-art-and-culture-into-social-care-in-barking-and-dagenham/>
- For more information on the Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies Team at Goldsmiths University - <https://www.gold.ac.uk/stacs/>

3. Joy of Sound, Waltham Forest - (www.joyofsound.org or contact William Longden 07906916524)

From the inception of Social prescribing pilot in Waltham Forest in 2016, the Waltham Forest social prescribing team have been looking at developing partnerships with creative activities and groups to include them in the social prescribing offer for local residents. The London Borough of Culture Award in 2019, helped to facilitate even greater connections between cultural groups and social prescribing in the borough. This has included both local groups as well as London-wide groups such as Joy of Sound (JOS).

Joy of Sound (JOS), is a volunteer based organisation that has delivered year-round Inclusive Participatory Music and Combined Arts workshops and events for people of all ages and abilities since January 2000. Its participants include people with Profound and Multiple Access Requirements, Learning Disabled people and their support networks, and well over 1000 Volunteers many of whom are on employment, personal development, mental health and, increasingly, on Social Prescribing therapeutic pathways. Over the past 3 years, workshop attendances have averaged 7,600 per annum.

JOS stopped all face-to-face workshops on March 13th 2020 in response to COVID-19 directives and responded to the immediate needs of their highly vulnerable beneficiaries acutely affected by social distancing. JOS Volunteers adapted and were able to move all project delivery on-line, facilitating a weekly program of inclusive Zoom workshops tailored to meet the needs and preferences of a wide range of participants.

Their Monday to Friday program currently includes Movement and Dance; Sing and Sign; Ever-New Story Sharing; Seriously Silly Sensory Sessions and Seated Yoga. Additionally, regular Zoom research and development meetings explore fresh ideas for workshops; public on-line events and publications; a lockdown Dance Film “inside I’m Free” (in edit) and finalisation of JOS 20th Anniversary Year Album ‘Synthesis Meditation’.

JOS Zoomings have proven to be highly successful and attendances have increased throughout lockdown with demand from shielded or isolating participants and support networks and from social prescribing referrals, particularly from the Waltham Forest Social Prescribing Networks. Between March 13th and July 8th 2020, JOS delivered 75+ Zoom sessions with over 1200 participants. In addition, the Social Prescribing Team have recruited a small cohort of volunteers to support Joy of Sound’s online delivery, further cementing the partnership between the two organisations.

4. Entelechy Arts, The Albany, Douglas Way, Lewisham - <https://entelechyarts.org/>

Entelechy Arts is a participatory arts company based in the London Borough of Lewisham that collaborates with people from marginalised and excluded communities to place arts practice at the heart of a process striving to achieve more equal, connected and engaged communities. Entelechy Arts works alongside people who have often been invisible members of their communities, either because of disability, underlying health conditions or the ageing process. They work with artists who specialise in a range of art forms including dance, theatre, spoken word, music, circus, textiles, singing and sculpture.

Entelechy are known for high impact strategic programmes alongside their local, grassroots work for example: Age Against the Machine – A Festival of Creative Ageing and the Creative Ageing and the City symposium both co-produced with The Albany Theatre where they are based. An emblematic local programme is *Meet Me at The Albany* where isolated and lonely people have the opportunity to go to an arts centre instead of a day centre and engage in a host of crafts and arts activities.

There are a number of strong culture and social prescribing referral pathways and partnerships in place in Lewisham within which Entelechy Arts is a vital force. In particular, the company has established important relationships with a number of key health providers including Downham GP Practice and Waldron Health Centre where they are hoping to place artists to increase arts activity on site. Entelechy's aim is to seek out opportunities for arts organisations to work alongside community health teams at a hyper local level designing creative responses to clusters of population need and to look at how arts programmes could be designed to meet priority needs in a neighbourhood.

The company's close work with the local health and social care system has been enhanced in recent months through the development of Lewisham's local Community Hub which has created an opportunity for cultural organisations to work symbiotically with other local community sector partners, identifying need and ensuring that there are joined-up responses. Entelechy's Covid-19 programme, developed in partnership with the Albany Arts Centre is working closely with the Hub to significantly extend the reach of their programmes for isolated older people. Through the interconnected networks of the Hub they are obtaining priority referrals and joining up with existing communication and distribution routes.