

NEWSLETTER FOR GPs AND PUBLIC HEALTH

July 2014

ARTS & HEALTH SOUTH WEST

Arts & Health South West is an information, support and advocacy organisation for people who believe in the value of creativity in enhancing people's health and wellbeing. This bi-annual newsletter informs NHS Chief Executives, Directors of Public Health and GPs about current developments in arts and health in the South West. Arts & Health South West's website www.ahsw.org.uk provides access to the evidence base and examples of good practice. Arts & Health South West (AHSW) is a FREE membership organisation. To receive our monthly Ebulletin you can join at: www.ahsw.org.uk

WORK WITH GPs

We work with a group of GPs who have a particular interest in how the arts and culture can contribute to health and wellbeing outcomes. In December last year we met to hear about and discuss a number of 'Arts on Prescription' schemes in the region. Arts on Prescription is a form of social prescribing appropriate for a number of patients, including those with mild anxiety, depression, those experiencing loneliness or bereavement as well as for those managing long term conditions. We heard about schemes in Bristol, from GPs Dr Louise Younie and Dr Gillian Rice, as well as Artshine, which has been delivered by Public Health in Bristol for several years and is now being delivered as part of IAPT.

Gloucestershire GP, Dr Simon Opher, presented his cost benefit analysis of Artlift, which showed that for 90 patients there was a 24% reduction in GP consultations in the year following their participation in the Arts on Prescription scheme, and a 27% reduction in overall healthcare spend. Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group is now planning to commission Arts on Prescription across the county and is the lead partner in a wider programme of arts and health supported by a national initiative called Cultural Commissioning. Artlift is also being commissioned by Public Health in Wiltshire to develop Arts on Prescription within a small number of surgeries in Wiltshire. Arts & Health South West is working with Artlift, with the aim to introduce Arts on Prescription across the Wessex area



Artwork made by participant in an Artlift session

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of Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight. The longer-term aspiration is to make the South West the first region in the country to provide Arts on Prescription in every locality.

Dr Malcolm Rigler, a GP in North Somerset, is passionate about the potential for libraries to support GPs in disseminating and guiding patients with regard to health information and management of their conditions. He has been working with Bristol University, North Somerset Libraries, Hewlett Packard Innovation Team and Arts & Health South West to explore innovative partnership projects to pursue this further. As an ambassador for the Patient's Association, Malcolm recently gave a presentation, titled 'A lack of imagination is the worst kind of poverty', to their President, Sir Robert Francis QC, and Trustees. The presentation is available to download on our website at <http://bit.ly/1s491oD>. He argues for a partnership between Libraries and Health. With the plethora of leaflets, books, DVDs and websites available to GPs and their patients he believes that only libraries and librarians can provide the structure and access needed to ensure that up-to-date, good quality health and social care information can be brought together and made available to patients and carers when it is needed.

We have a new area on the Arts & Health South West website for GPs. If you are interested in joining this special interest group and being informed about meetings and developments in the region, please do have a look at <http://bit.ly/1s491oD>

WORK WITH PUBLIC HEALTH

We are collaborating with the Peninsula Public Health Network on the programming of their annual conference for March 2015. The conference will focus on the Arts and Public Health. In May 2015, the Public Health and Palliative Care International Conference in Bristol will include cultural activities related to public health, such as theatre and film, on relevant themes. In Dorset we are involved in a project supported by Public Health, in partnership with Bournemouth University, to explore engaging the community in conversations about their health and wellbeing needs through creative processes and activities.

Further afield, the Director of Public Health for Dudley in the West Midlands, Valerie Little, has made arts and public health the focus of her annual report. You can read it here <http://creativehealthcic.co.uk/dudleyartsandhealth/>. At a national level the All Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing recently hosted a seminar on The Care Act: How the arts and culture can contribute to improving the quality of care following the Francis Inquiry. Sir Robert Francis QC was the keynote speaker and there was an interesting discussion on the new statutory requirement for Local Authorities to deliver wellbeing. One of the Co-Chairs of the group is Sarah Newton, MP for Truro, and the Vice-Chair is Sarah Wollaston, GP and MP for Totnes and recently elected Chair of the Health Select Committee.

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