

## Executive Summary

# Arts in Care Homes Policy Paper: Embedding arts and cultural activities in every care home in Wales

Summary focused on the wellbeing of older people - August 2023



The United Nations Convention on Human Rights states that anyone should have the right to access culture and to be creative themselves, regardless of age.

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 includes duties around provision of social and cultural wants and needs of people in need of care and support. Despite these requirements, a range of factors have meant that many care home residents have not had access to the range of cultural experiences, including creative arts, that are so vital to wellbeing.

It has long been established that participatory arts can help improve cognitive functioning, communication, self-esteem, musical skills, pleasure, enjoyment of life, memory and creative thinking. Participatory arts can be particularly important in counterbalancing the mental wellbeing difficulties associated with bereavement. It is also important to note that research demonstrates that participation in creative activities only ever have a positive effect. It does no harm.



# Recommendations

Age Cymru have analysed existing research and evidence to make the following recommendations of how the wellbeing of older residents in care homes can be supported through arts and cultural activities.

## Care homeowners

- Sustainability of support for activity coordinators' role sufficient to provide person-centred, and participatory activities.
- Ensure that meaningful conversations are held with all care home residents that include a focus on creative and cultural interests.
- Staff induction procedures should include a focus on embedding arts and creativity in daily care home life.
- Training for activity coordinators in mental health and wellbeing, dementia awareness
- Value the expertise of professional artists and allow budgets to include them in activity plans.
- Consider opportunities for resident-led activities, that engage with families and the wider community.

## Regional partnership boards

- Provide a coordinated approach by health, social care, providers of care and activity providers to facilitate creativity in care homes
- When commissioning community wellbeing services, RPBs to ensure that contract clauses include consideration of how programmes and activities can involve care home residents.

## Welsh Government

- Commission a toolkit and/or platform for activity coordinators and other care home staff to provide a range of person-centred activity ideas.
- Activity Coordinators to be recognised as valued members of the care sector, and need sustainability of support.
- Commission an update the Mapping the Care Home sector report from 2015
- Direct commissioners to ensure that community services contracted by local authorities include care home residents where there is an identified need.
- Promote the visibility of older people living in care homes within the community and encourage community connectedness.

## Commissioners

- Contracts and monitoring arrangements should include an increased focus on creative opportunities for care home residents as part of person-centred care.
- Funding of care homes to adequately cover the cost of delivering creative activities both by staff and external activity providers.
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and commissioners to work together to streamline the paperwork they require of care home providers for the benefit of care home residents
- Explore 'What Matters To Me?' as a tool for supporting older people as they move into a care home.
- Promote the visibility of care home residents within the community and encourage community connectedness.

- Community service contracts should include care home residents where there is an identified need.

## Care Inspectorate Wales

- Investigate how paperwork can be streamlined using creative assessment tools (like Nourish) and ‘What Matters to Me?’ to improve existing care planning
- Work with commissioners, care home networks and older people to develop best practice toolkit in arts and culture in care homes, integrating with admittance procedures, induction and training for staff
- Audit the volume of hours of creative opportunities that activity coordinators and carers are able to deliver across Wales
- Work with care providers to improve understanding of what they require from care homes through their inspections and how this links to positive outcomes for care home residents, especially around proportional risk

## Social Care Wales and the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru

- Work with commissioners, care home networks and older people to develop best practice toolkit in arts and culture in care homes, integrating with admittance procedures, induction and training for staff.
- Work with care providers to improve understanding of what they require from care homes through their inspections and how this links to positive outcomes for care home residents, especially around proportional risk.
- Prioritise continuing professional development training for all care staff and activity coordinators, including but not limited to; dementia awareness, mental health support, arts and creativity.

## Third sector, voluntary agencies and community groups including arts organisations

- Age Cymru to share learning from cARTrefu, Tell Me More, and the Care Home Volunteer project as widely as possible.
- Organisations to consider partnership working to provide opportunities for care home residents, and volunteering opportunities for people to support activities within care homes
- Arts organisations need to:
- See local care homes as part of their community and therefore their outreach offer.
- Support their staff/artists to develop a deep understanding of life in care homes, including de-mystifying ‘care sector language’.
- Consider promoting activities linked to cultural events, like St Davids Day.

## Funders

- Funding work and projects for older people that makes specific reference to older people living in care homes.
- Provide longer term funding that would help organisations to build lasting relationships with care homes and make it more likely for creative activities to become embedded.