

FRESH ARTS ON REFERRAL EVALUATION SUMMARY DOCUMENT

February 2019



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Cover Image: Fresh flowers & art materials on the table during a Dementia Arts on Referral workshop

1.0 FACT FILE

Fresh Arts on Referral Purpose	Fresh Arts on Referral was a pilot to find out whether participation in arts activities in a safe, supportive group setting might provide patients with increased ‘knowledge, skills and confidence’, facilitate ‘patient activation’ (NHS England, n.d.), and enable patients to better manage their own health and wellbeing.
Fresh Arts on Referral Aims	<p>To provide a non-medical referral option that can operate alongside existing treatments to improve health and well-being</p> <p>To support patients with chronic conditions to better self-manage their condition</p> <p>To enable/encourage self-care or self-management of symptoms</p> <p>To alleviate and improve symptoms of stress, social isolation, boredom, pain, anxiety, depression, mobility issues or dexterity issues</p> <p>To create opportunities for patients to meet others with shared experiences</p> <p>To help to improve quality of life outside of the hospital</p> <p>To develop links with and knowledge of resources within the wider community which can support patients following discharge</p> <p>To supporting the patient discharge process</p>
Artforms Used	Visual Arts and Creative Writing
Project Partners	Fresh Arts, the arts programme of North Bristol NHS Trust NGS Macmillan Cancer Wellbeing Centre North Bristol NHS Trust Brain Clinic North Bristol NHS Trust Pain Management Clinic Arts and Health Consultancy Willis Newson
Funders	Southmead Hospital Charity Arts Council England Macmillan Cancer Support North Bristol NHS Trust
Artists	Ali Brown Claire Williamson Julie Matthews Rachel Davis
Participants	65 Southmead Hospital patients with chronic conditions including cancer, chronic pain and dementia
Location	Southmead Hospital, Bristol
Dates	March - July 2018

Outcomes Delivered	Improved self-management of chronic conditions Improved patient wellbeing (primary outcome) Increased sharing and connection with others in a similar situation Increased sense of freedom, expression and release Increased enjoyment Increased connection with self and others Increased confidence and self-esteem Increased motivation to manage self-care through creative activity and peer support
Cost	Programme delivery cost (artists fees, materials, catering, exhibition costs, Bristol Arts on Referral liaison) £20,900
Outputs (25 words)	50 two-hour arts workshops 6 focus groups 3 participant case studies one artist training day 50 artist-health worker debriefs

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Fresh Arts on Referral was developed and managed by Fresh Arts in collaboration with arts and healthcare consultants Willis Newson. It was funded by North Bristol NHS Trust and Southmead Hospital Charity, Macmillan Cancer Support and Arts Council England.

Fresh Arts on Referral is a pilot ‘Arts on Prescription’ programme. It is part of the Social Prescribing model and aims to support patients with chronic conditions to better manage their own self-care, a recognised national priority for the NHS. (Care Quality Commission, 2014).

Social Prescribing is a model whereby patients are referred to a range of local, non-clinical services, which seek to address people’s health and wellbeing needs in a holistic way.

Supported by National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidelines and NHS England, Social Prescribing is well-established in primary care and community settings.

Arts on Prescription forms part of the Social Prescribing model. A review of the evidence shows that Arts on Prescription can support a range of the social, emotional and practical patient needs, including improved mental health and physical wellbeing, increased confidence and reduced social isolation.

In Bristol, members of the Bristol Arts on Referral Alliance deliver a range of Arts on Prescription programmes across GP and community settings in the most deprived areas of the City.

Fresh Arts developed this pilot Fresh Arts on Referral programme to find out whether the Arts on Prescription model might also support the needs of hospital patients with a range of chronic conditions.

“The NHS Five Year Forward View sets out a central ambition for the NHS to become better at helping people to manage their own health. To meet this commitment, NHS England is making supported self-care a key part of personalizing care.”

NHS England



“For too long we’ve been fostering a culture that’s popping pills and Prozac... We can harness the incredible power of the arts and social activities to improve the nation’s health and wellbeing... Social prescribing can help us combat over-medicalising people, dishing out drugs when it isn’t what’s best for the patient.”

Matt Hancock, Health Minister,
The Kings Fund, 7th November 2018

The pilot aimed to find out whether participation in arts activities in a safe, supportive group setting might provide patients with increased ‘knowledge, skills and confidence’, facilitate ‘patient activation’ (NHS England, n.d.), and enable patients to better manage their own health and wellbeing.

While the evidence base for Social Prescribing and Arts on Prescription is growing, there is very little evidence around how the model might work in an acute setting.

There have been arts programmes delivered in hospital settings to support specific conditions, notably Singing for Breathing (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and lung health) pioneered by music therapist Phoene Cave at the Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital and Dance for Parkinson’s pioneered by the Mark Morris Dance Company and now delivered internationally, including as part of the Fresh Arts programme at Southmead Hospital Bristol.

North Bristol NHS Trust, through Fresh Arts on Referral, is thought to be the first to pilot the Social Prescribing model in an acute hospital setting through clinical referrals to a time-limited, condition-specific arts programme with onward signposting and referrals to local, community-based, non-clinical services to enable sustained holistic support for health and wellbeing.



“Evidence shows that when people are supported to become more activated, they benefit from better health outcomes, improved experiences of care and fewer unplanned care admissions.”

NHS England



2.1 NORTH BRISTOL NHS TRUST

North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) is a centre of excellence for health care in the South West and one of the largest hospital trusts in the UK. The Trust's commitment is that each patient is treated with respect and dignity and, most importantly, as a person. NBT aims to deliver excellent outcomes and a great experience for everyone who uses its services: exceptional healthcare, personally delivered.

2.2 FRESH ARTS

Fresh Arts is the arts programme managed by North Bristol NHS Trust and was established in 2007. It exists to enhance the patient experience and improve health and wellbeing by maintaining and extending an arts programme across Southmead and Cossham Hospitals for the benefit of patients, visitors and staff.

2.3 WILLIS NEWSON

Founded in 2001, Willis Newson is one of the UK's leading arts and health consultancies. The company works with healthcare partners to devise and deliver creative solutions to strategic health and wellbeing needs, including working with artists and designers to create positive healthcare environments. Over the past 18 years, Willis Newson has supported sector development through training, research and evaluation. Willis Newson delivered two academic knowledge exchange programmes with the University of West of England exploring how to evaluate arts in health programmes. The legacy of this includes the evaluation resource www.creativeandcredible.co.uk and evaluation training programmes delivered by Willis Newson in partnership with The University of West of England, The University of Winchester, The Royal Society of Public Health and the Welsh Arts and Health Network.

3.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fresh Arts on Referral was delivered by Fresh Arts at Southmead Hospital Bristol between March - July 2018.

“Coming here was a catalyst for my creativity; a ray of light”

65 Cancer, Chronic Pain and Dementia patients were referred by clinicians to a time-limited, condition-specific arts programme with onward signposting and referrals to local, community-based, non-clinical services to enable sustained holistic support for health and wellbeing.

“Really rewarding to just be me and not my condition. I’ve felt like me again”

3.1 FRESH ARTS ON REFERRAL ARTISTS

Artists Ali Brown and Rachael Davis and writer Claire Williamson were recruited to deliver the programme. Core competencies required of artists included:

- High level skills in making and creating art / creative writing
- Skills in leading and managing groups
- Empathic listening skills
- An ability to maintain safe boundaries and work within one’s competencies

Visual Artist Rachel Davis led gentle and accessible visual arts-based activities with patients referred with Dementia via the Neurology Outpatient Cognitive Clinic.

“Rachel worked her socks off. She was wonderful. She has such a charisma, so many ideas. Intuitive.”

Writer Claire Williamson facilitated creative writing activities exploring the theme of mapping the journey of one’s life with patients referred via the NGS Macmillan Cancer Wellbeing Centre.

Ali Brown used a range of artforms to explore kindness and self-care amongst patients referred via the hospital’s Chronic Pain Clinic.

The artist team received a full day induction training to the programme, were given a handbook with essential information about the programme, about the hospital context and about Fresh Arts. The artist team were also checked through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and underwent the North Bristol NHS Trust formal volunteer online Induction Process.

As well as debriefs with the Fresh Arts Manager after each workshop session, the artists also had access to creative supervision delivered by BACP counsellor and writer in healthcare Sue Mayfield.

3.2 EVALUATION

A mixed-methods evaluation was conducted by Jane Willis, Director of arts and health consultancy Willis Newson with support from Donna Baber, Fresh Arts Manager. The programme was overseen by the Arts on Referral Steering Group chaired by Gill Brook, Head of Patient Experience, North Bristol NHS Trust.

The evaluation sought to explore how the Social Prescribing model translates to an acute hospital setting, to identify the impact of the programme on 3 patient groups: Cancer, Chronic Pain and Dementia; and to learn from and refine the delivery process in order to develop a robust model for the future.

3.3 ATTENDANCE

Attendance across the programme was good. The size of the room dictated an ideal attendance of 8 and a maximum attendance of 10 people per workshop. Actual attendance varied between 5 and 11, with an average attendance 8.1.

The Chronic Pain programme was best attended with 26 participants across three programmes, closely followed by Cancer with 23 participants across the 3 programmes. Dementia received 16 participants across the 3 programmes with the lower numbers being, in part, because Dementia Programme 2 was cancelled.

“To come to somewhere where there’s no judgement and no expectation.”

3.4 FOLLOW-ON REFERRALS

Participants were referred to follow on activities according to their individual interests and what was available in their area. Of the 65 participants, 37 were referred to follow-on activities. 25 of the 37 participants referred to follow on activities reside in Bristol; 8 in South Gloucestershire; 1 in Bath and North East Somerset; 2 in North Somerset and 1 in the Mendips.

A total of 11 participants were referred to Wellbeing Arts, the community and primary-care based arts on referral programme in central north and east Bristol. 13 participants were referred to community-based arts on referral programmes including ArtEase at Knowle West Healthy Living Centre; Artshine at Wellspring Healthy Living centre, Artlight at Wellspring Healthy Living Centre and Shine On at M-Shed. 6 participants were referred to social prescribing community navigators in their areas. 11 participants were referred to things such as Tai Chi, Knowle West Media Centre’s community activities and knitting group at the Greenaway Centre. 1 participant joined the North Bristol Trust volunteer programme and became a Dementia Befriender.

“[You are] so focused on creating that your portals open and other things fall out.”

3.5 ARTS ON REFERRAL COSTS

The core cost of delivering Fresh Arts on Referral (artists fees, materials, catering, exhibition costs, onward referrals facilitation) was £20,900. This does not include the cost of developing the programme and the model, the cost of evaluating the programme or Fresh Arts overhead and project management costs.

The programme was delivered free to participants. However, based on the core delivery costs as outlined above, the following costs per head and cost per session have been calculated:

The cost of one 6-week programme	£2,322
The cost per cohort for 3 x 6-week programmes	£6,966
The cost per workshop	£418
The cost per head based on 65 participants	£321.54
The cost per head for a 2-hour workshop based on average attendance of 8 people	£52.25

In order to begin to assess value for money, we considered one possible cost saving.

The cost of a patient admission to an elective inpatient hospital bed for one night is £846.

The cost for one participant to take part in the 6-week programme is £321.54.

If participating in the Arts on Referral programme prevents someone from being admitted or readmitted to hospital for one day, there is a potential cost saving of £524.59.

“You’ve created this space for us and welcomed us and recognised we need support.”

3.6 EVALUATION FINDINGS

Overall Improvements in Wellbeing

During the delivery of the Fresh Arts on Referral Programme, participants wellbeing improved from 41.62 at the start to 47.2 at the end as measured using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. This is a significant increase in wellbeing of 5.58 points.

“This is how we’re rebuilding ourselves”

The most significant improvements in wellbeing were seen among Chronic Pain and Cancer patients. While wellbeing did not improve overall among the Dementia patients and their carers, this group saw an increase in high wellbeing.

Thematic analysis of data from participant focus groups, semi-structured interviews and feedback demonstrated that the Fresh Arts on Referral programme proved an important and valued source of support for participants with chronic conditions.

Faced with the difficulty, trauma and loss associated with living with a chronic condition, participants connected with others in a similar situation, made new friends and were able to safely share their experience without fear of judgement.

“Forging friendships after all that isolation”

Creative activity enabled a shift in focus from one’s condition and provided a deep sense of enjoyment. It enabled participants to express themselves. It was

liberating and gave them a taste of freedom and release.

The process of making and sharing with others enabled participants to see that they still had much to offer and enjoy. It helped them to recognise the skills and resources they have and gave them the confidence to try new things.

“Need to look forward at what you can and will do. Finding a new path. Path is hidden in places but keep following and it will point to a new horizon and new direction.”

The programme enabled participants to reconnect with themselves and remember how important it is to care for oneself. It helped them to focus on what they can do rather than what they can’t do.

“Life begins to look brighter and we look forward with hope.”

Chronic Pain Findings

Chronic Pain participants wellbeing increased significantly over the course of the programme, from a mean score of 37.7 at the start to a mean score of 47 at the end; an increase of 9.55. This was the highest increase in all three groups.

“Even though we’re all down with pain we’ve all created a happy moment.”



The Chronic Pain cohort had the lowest overall levels of wellbeing at the start of the programme with 70% of participants reporting low wellbeing scores. This reduced significantly to 17% at the end.

Chronic Pain participants with moderate wellbeing scores also significantly increased from 22% at the start to 74% at the end. And the number of Chronic Pain participants with high wellbeing also increased from 7% at the beginning to 9% at the end.

“It’s so important to be with people with similar experience.”

Thematic analysis of data from the chronic pain focus group and participant feedback identified a number of themes:

- The difficulty of living with Chronic Pain
- Agency / Rediscovery of skills and abilities
- Feeling valued
- A safe space away from judgement
- Connection and friendship
- Acceptance / Finding oneself

- Making / Creating
- Enjoyment
- Space and Freedom
- Change / Self-Care

“Elsewhere people do things for me - here I was able to stand and do things.”

Chronic pain participants described “feeling stuck and down” at the start of the programme. Through Arts on Referral, they rediscovered themselves and the things that they were able to do. They enjoyed being creative in a safe space away from judgement. They “created happy moments together”, which brought joy and colour into their lives and, through this, they found connection, friendship and freedom. Participants described how the group had supported and encouraged them to look after themselves. The programme enabled them to reconnect with themselves as well as with each other; to discover renewed self-confidence and self-worth; and to prioritise self-care.

Cancer Findings

Cancer participants wellbeing increased significantly over the course of the programme, from a mean score of 42.3 at the start to a mean score of 46 at the end; an increase on 7.2.

The number of cancer participants suffering low wellbeing significantly decreased from 50% at the start to 19% at the end.

The number of cancer participants with moderate wellbeing increased from 40% at the start to 69% at the end.

The number of participants with high wellbeing increased from 10% at the beginning to 13% at the end.

“We felt safe within group. It was alright to be emotional”

The themes identified through the data collected from Cancer participants were:

- The trauma of diagnosis and treatment
- Agency / Rediscovery of abilities and interests
- Safety and Group Support
- Enjoyment
- Creativity
- Expression
- My Time
- Moving Forward
- A Peaceful Future

“I think this fills a gap. It wasn't about cancer - it was about me.”

The common narrative running through Cancer Participants' stories and discussion is one of being lost in a dark and painful place, where, after a cancer diagnosis, life as they knew it suddenly stopped. They describe this as a shock, like 'hitting a brick wall'.

“Detached – this word started me off. I felt this, and in a dark place.”

They talked of the Arts on Referral programme as a catalyst, a ray of light. It provided a safe space where it was alright to be emotional and, through writing, they were able to express themselves. They rediscovered themselves through writing, which helped them to put things in order and make sense of things. They described the process as empowering and freeing.

“If you don't have this group, you sit down and bottle it up. People need to talk and connect not bottle up. Take it out and share it and it puts your mind at ease.”

Through this process, many of them felt that they had been given a new life, a different way of looking at things, an opportunity for a new beginning. They seem to have found inner peace and calm; to have learned how to enjoy the moment.

“And the future? It is peaceful and calm and filled with hope.”

Dementia Findings

During the delivery of Fresh Arts on Referral, Dementia participants wellbeing did not significantly improve. There was an increase in mean score from 47.6 to 48; a barely perceptible increase of 0.23.

However, despite the lack of increase in overall wellbeing, there was a reported increase in high wellbeing. The number of participants with high wellbeing increased from 6% at the beginning to 15% at the end.

The number of participants suffering low wellbeing slightly increased from 13% at the start to 15% at the end.

The number of participants with moderate wellbeing slightly decreased from 81% at the start to 69% at the end.

“6 weeks ago, we met a group of people....”

The themes identified through the data collected from Dementia participants were:

- The difficulty of living with Dementia
- The loss associated with a Dementia diagnosis
- Loneliness
- A safe space away from judgement
- Being Human
- Connection
- Enjoyment
- Freedom and Release
- Confidence

“The biggest thing I find is loneliness and lack of conversation.”

It is perhaps harder to identify a common narrative for the Dementia Group since it is a mixed group of people living with dementia and their carers, so there are bound to be different perspectives. However, there is a clear narrative arc through the themes of difficulty, loss and loneliness, safety, connection, enjoyment, freedom and confidence.

“I don’t want to burden friends. I don’t want people to feel sorry for me.”

Life is hard for people living with dementia and their carers. They have all lost so much and can’t do many of the things they used to do. However, perhaps the biggest difficulty for many is loneliness. Conversation is a problem and people can be left feeling isolated.

“Chatting with other people and shared experiences.”

The Arts on Referral group was somewhere they felt safe, accepted and cared for.

“I’ve enjoyed every session. Just pottered and enjoyed it.”

They enjoyed feeling human again and were able to enjoy being creative, even catching glimpses of magic, laughter and love - the things that light up your life.

“Definitely gives us more confidence now to do more”

Impacts Observed by Artists and Health Support Workers

The impacts on participants as observed by the Artists and Health Support Workers closely mirrored those expressed by participants themselves.

- Increased Confidence
- Activation
- Enjoyment
- Connection
- Increased Expression
- Distraction from condition
- Sharing experiences of condition
- Feeling valued
- Increased compassion for self
- Identifying meaning and purpose
- Increased Resilience
- Changing Perspectives

There is significant commonality of experience across all groups. Each talked of the impact of the programme in terms of:

- Providing a safe space away from judgement
- Providing increased connection and friendship
- Providing enjoyment
- Enabling the rediscovery of skills and abilities
- Increasing confidence and self-esteem
- Fostering an attitude of self-compassion and enabling self-care
- Supporting people to move forward

Each group talked about creativity in subtly different ways. For cancer patients, who took part in creative writing, creativity was linked to expression. For chronic pain and dementia participants, who took part in visual arts and mixed media activities, the emphasis was on creativity as a form of freedom.

“I enjoy just being creative”

However, there were some subtle differences. The difficulty, trauma and loss associated with living with a chronic condition was expressed more clearly by the participants themselves than by the Artists and Health Support Workers.

The Artists and Health Support Workers said that taking part in the programme had helped them better understand the experience of patients. They talked of having come away from the project with an “Improved understanding of the daily impact of a condition.”

Impact of the Programme on Artists and Health Support Workers

The programme also impacted the Arts on Referral Artists and Health Support Workers, who noted that it:

- Provided a safe space in which to explore and develop practice
- Facilitated an improved understanding of patients’ experience and needs
- Enabled them (Health Support Workers) to reconnect with their own creativity
- Facilitated learning which they (Health Support Workers) were able to share with the wider team



“I have more empathy for people in their situations in life; there are a lot of people holding a lot of hard stuff that you don’t know about when you see them in the street or in the hospital.”

Health Support Worker

3.7 EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

Activating Change: A Recipe for Transformation

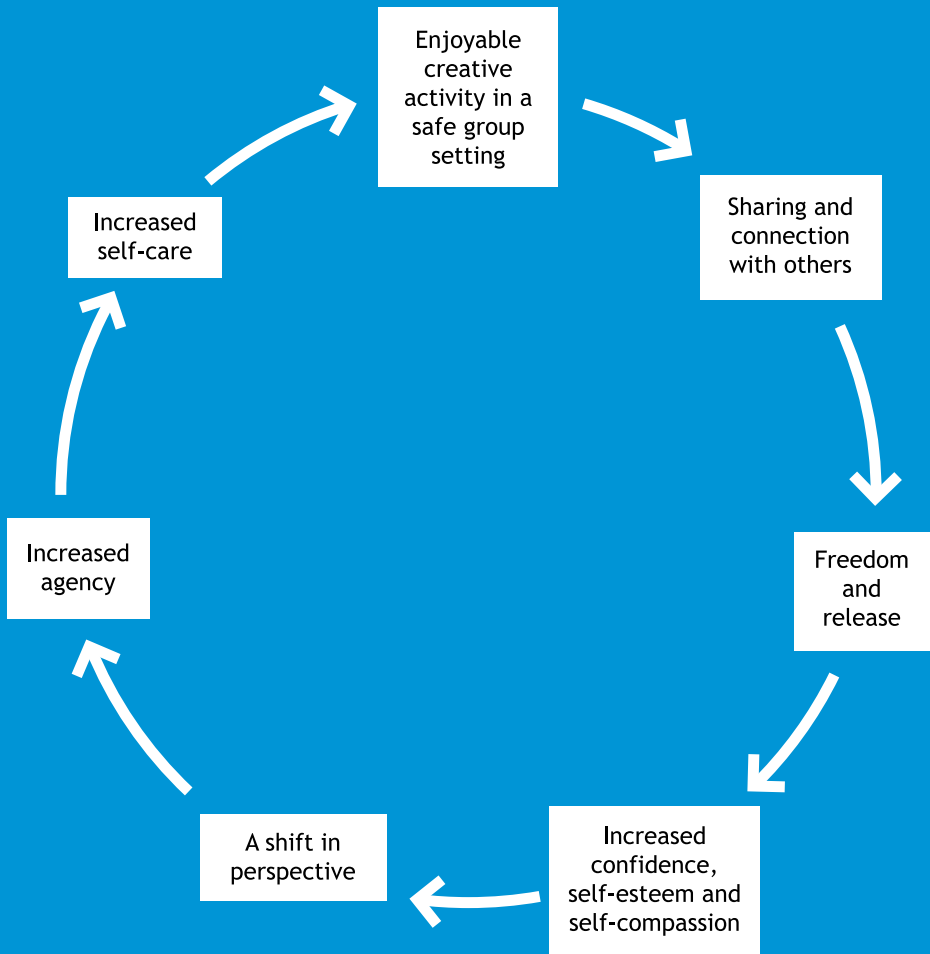
The stories shared by participants as part of this evaluation, highlight the transformative potential of Fresh Arts on Referral for patients with chronic conditions.

Through access to high-quality, enjoyable creative activity in a safe group setting, patients were able

to share with others in a similar situation to their own, experience increased connection, freedom from judgement, a sense of release, and increased confidence and self-esteem. This led to patients reconnecting with themselves and recognising and valuing their individual skills and resources, often experiencing a shift in perspective leading to increased self-care alongside renewed agency and energy to make changes in their lives.

This can be expressed as a cycle:

Fresh Arts on Referral as a Mechanism of Change



Self-Care

The programme prompted deep reflection around self-care amongst participants, Artists and Health Support Workers. Self-care is important to all of us. However, it is especially important to anyone with a chronic health condition, which can affect people emotionally and psychologically as well as physically.

“Self-care gets left by the wayside”

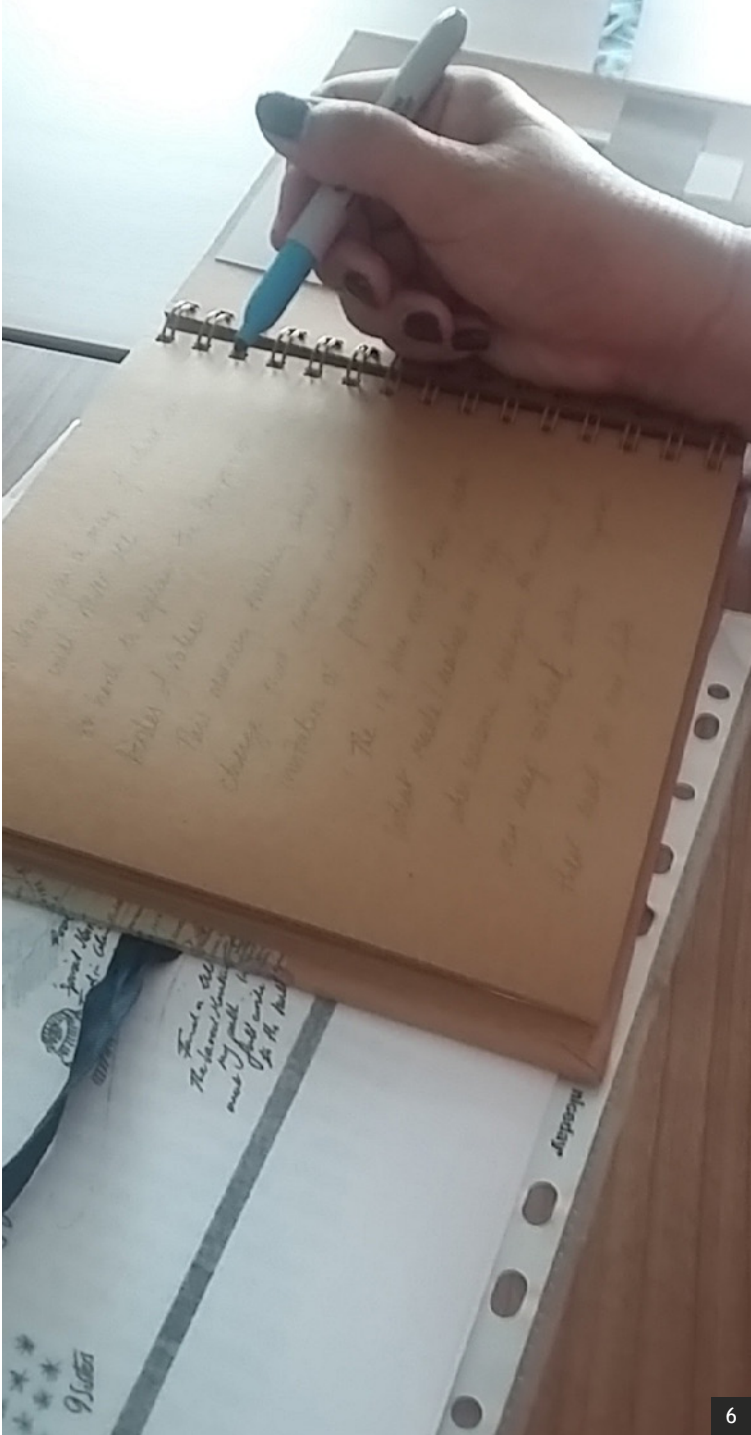
A diagnosis of a chronic health condition may be experienced as a trauma which impacts on the person as well as on families, friends and relationships and necessitates finding new ways of being in the world.

Self-care therefore becomes a priority where it might not have been before. It becomes even more important to understand, pay attention to and look after one’s own needs in order to be able to cope with day-to-day life.

“You need to treat yourself well”

For the Fresh Arts on Referral participants, therefore, developing a practice and attitude of self-care will help maintain wellbeing and quality of life despite the health condition. It will also enable them to develop resilience in order to face future challenges.

The experience of participants within the Fresh Arts on Referral programme suggests that practicing self-care leads them to feel more confident and empowered despite often still being reliant on others for help and assistance.



“Trying to eat healthy, chilling, spending time with family. Time for finding myself and spontaneity”.

Health Support Worker

Through an analysis of Fresh Arts on Referral Evaluation data, it became apparent that self-care should be understood as a process not an activity (like going to the gym).

The process of self-care starts with creating time and space for yourself so that you can take notice and become aware of your own needs.

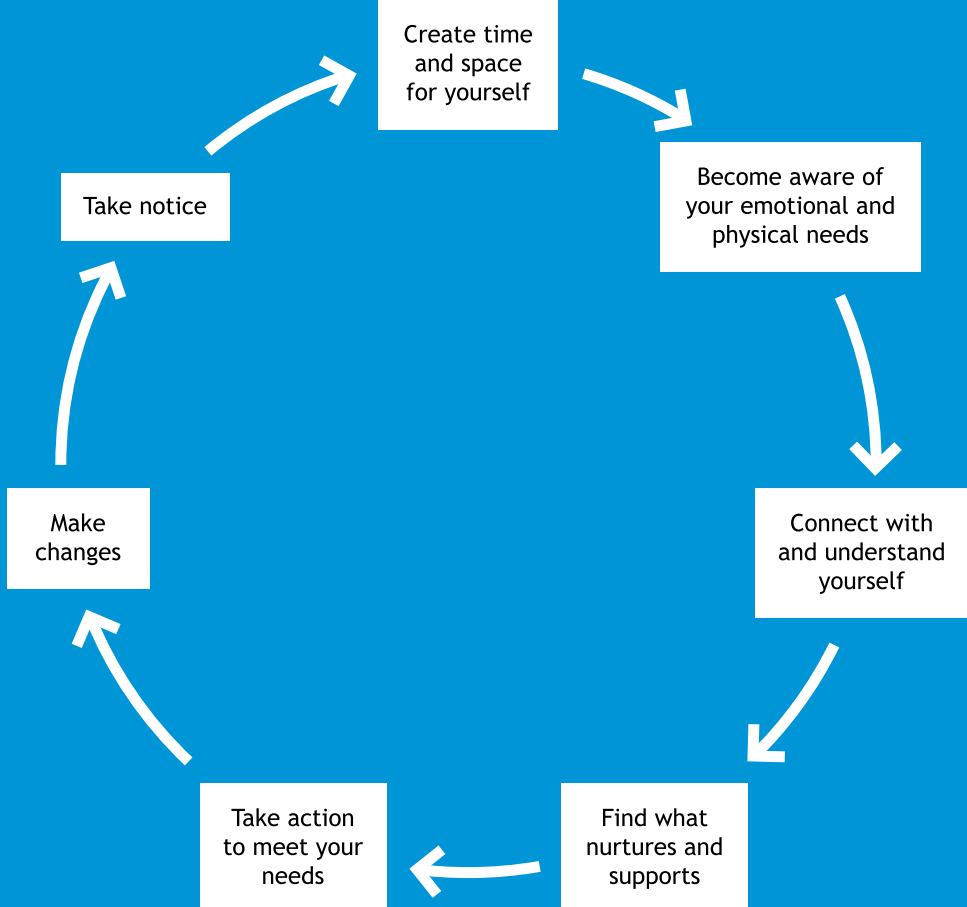
It is supported by any creative and / or reflective activity which helps you to connect with yourself,

get to know yourself and better understand yourself so that you can discover what nourishes and supports you.

Having identified your needs, it is about prioritising and taking action to meet those needs.

This might necessitate making wider changes in your life, such as stopping things that are damaging to your health and making more time for the things that nourish and support you.

The Cycle of Self Care



Fresh Arts on Referral supports patients with chronic conditions to practice self-care by

- Providing Time and Space
- Creating a safe environment away from judgement
- Providing an enjoyable creative activity
- Enabling sharing and connection with others in a similar situation
- Supporting people to feel valued and to value themselves
- Taking a person-centred approach
- Giving permission
- Encouraging acceptance of imperfection
- Enabling people to take risks and try new things
- Providing opportunities for learning and achievement
- Facilitating freedom and release
- Facilitating increased confidence and self-esteem
- Enabling shifts in perspective to take place
- Empowering people to play an active role in their lives
- Increasing agency
- Building resilience



“Not to have to explain yourself in group of people not with same condition. Just being us.”

Patient

4.0 FOCUS GROUP COLLAGES



A Chronic Pain Collage

“Ta da! Mind map how we make decisions on what we do in art. Textures that feed you. Use everything around you. Jazz hands man - ta da! Use influences to create. Magic optical illusions -using them to change/ make other things. Create your own reality - survival skill. Self-sooth to be able to function and change what you see around you to comfort you.”

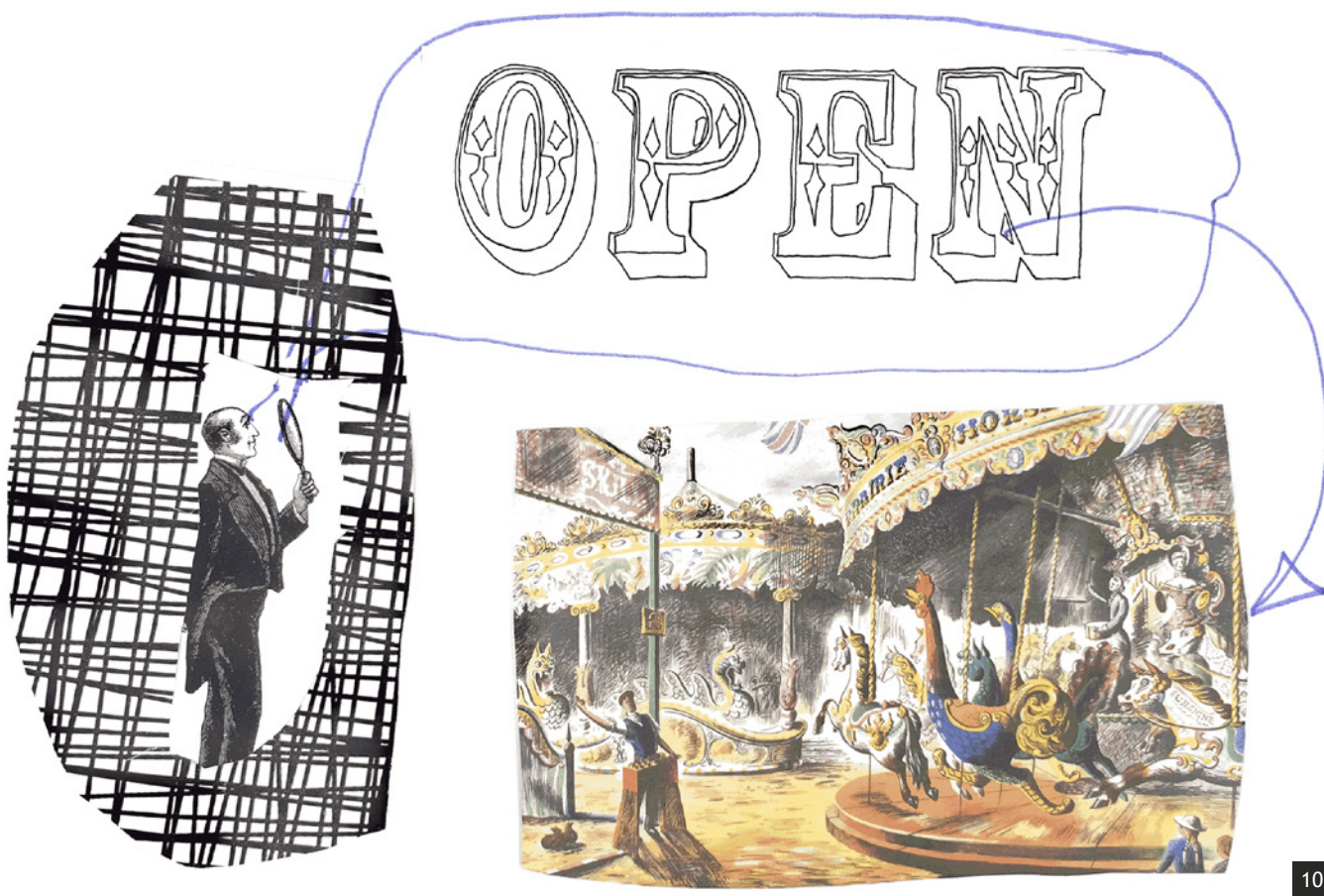
Chronic Pain Participant



A Cancer Collage

"Leading slightly eccentric 70-year-old life. Live alone. Hit a brick wall with diagnosis; life as it was just stopped. Such a shock. Treatment, surgery, mountain to climb. Left with permanent disability and frustrated and upset at what I can't do. Need to look forward at what you can and will do. Finding a new path. Path is hidden in places but keep following and it will point to a new horizon and new direction."

Cancer Participant



10

A Dementia Collage

“The picture is me going into the class (in a cage) and I open into a life full of magic.”

Dementia Participant

FRESH ARTS ON REFERRAL
FOR CHRONIC PAIN STUDY

Hilary

Five years ago, everything changed for me. I was leaving the house on a Sunday morning to go to the recycling centre when I saw a young man on a bench. I parked up and walked back to see if he was ok and he just went crazy. He was someone’s son. I just wanted to make sure he was ok. I wasn’t to know.

Nearly five years have passed, and I have gone from being a very capable, able, mobile lady - riding my bike, running and keeping fit - to someone who can’t even climb the stairs.

In the beginning they said it was PTSD, all in my head. But now they have a name for it - Trochanteric bursitis - inflammation causing constant crippling pain in my hips.

The pain management course warned us - how someone can start off taking paracetamols and two years down the line they are on morphine and opiates, anxious and depressed. It spirals. I do get very down. I’m a single Mum. I have got two children. I struggle with my mental health and I am a carer for my son too. So, I have to push on through and try and help myself so I can look after them.

When the attack happened, it changed my life. I had to give up my job and with that I lost contact with people. I felt very isolated.

So, last year when someone came to the pain management group to tell us about various groups that we could take part in, I just signed up to Fresh Arts on Referral right there and then!

I went to the first group at Southmead Hospital. It was lovely!

I love crafting and making things and I got to be creative again. I found that enjoyment again, of making and creating and thought perhaps it will spill over into my life at home. And it has. I’ve really got into crafting. I set aside time for myself at home, do my own little thing.

But meeting people has been important too. Apart from hospital visits, mental health appointments and things like that, this is the only thing that I do all week, just for me. This is my nice thing to do and I look forward to seeing people. I know that there are people who understand me there. We are respectful of each other and I have grown to trust them. It’s a safe place for me.

Doing the group at the hospital felt like the right first step for me. I associate it with care, being looked after, thoughtfulness and kindness. It was exactly that for me. I felt looked after and safe there.

The Fresh Arts programme went so fast! Only 6 weeks. Just before the end of the programme, Julie came to talk to us about other groups we could join, and I have been going to Arts on Referral Group at the Greenaway Centre. There are some weeks I cannot make it, if I am on more morphine and can’t drive, I can’t get there, and I am so disappointed. It is something that I look forward to all week. I have been going there for the past 18 weeks and, now the ball is rolling, I want to keep the momentum going. So, I have joined a follow-on group where you bring your own materials and projects to work on. I need this. It is for me. I really enjoy it.

I still struggle to keep on top of my pain. I do get down. Sometimes, I have a terrible week, but I just sit and craft and it’s a kind of release. It lifts me up from that dark place.

FRESH ARTS ON REFERRAL FOR DEMENTIA CASE STUDY

‘Frank and Margaret’

Frank and Margaret took part in the third Fresh Arts on Referral programme. They attended all but one of the 6 sessions.

I was up at Southmead Hospital because of my cancer. I had just been for a consultation and Margaret and I came out and saw the table in the atrium with the Fresh Arts team. We met Rachel and heard about the project. Margaret used to be into art and painting and all that and, with her dementia, we thought it would be a good idea.

Margaret’s dementia had not long been diagnosed and we were in a quandary about where to go, what was available, what provision there might be for support. We thought if we went along to Fresh Arts on Referral, we would be able to find out more.

The first session was slightly worrying for me. I was interested in the arts, but I have never practiced since childhood and I was apprehensive about taking part. But it was all very easy. We were heartily and happily welcomed into the group. I remember, there was even tea, cake and grapes on the table.

Rachel’s input was quite incredible. Not just her technical ability, which was paramount, but also her personality. There was absolutely no sense of being pushed around or being told what to do. It was very gentle, and great fun!

Taking part gave me a degree of self-confidence in my own abilities. There was no judgement. We looked forward to Monday afternoons every week.

Getting to and from the hospital was a bit of

a challenge. Luckily for us there is a bus that takes us straight there, but you tour a fair bit of Bristol to get there - it took an hour and a quarter each way. Having said that, I think having it at the hospital was important. We took it more seriously, the fact that it was supported by the hospital.

Taking part in the group, I came to realize that this - Margaret’s situation and my situation caring for her - is a common experience for folk. You often feel that this is us and us alone. Sharing with other people was important. By the 4th or 5th session you really got to know each other, and people were very open with each other. It often doesn’t happen. But we chatted as we painted or made things, sharing what we were doing, and the activity and structure of the group seemed to help us open up to each other.

Through the group, chatting away with others, we discovered that there is all sorts of support available. We looked into going to a local group here but, since the Fresh Arts Group, Margaret has had a fall and I have now been diagnosed with liver cancer, so we haven’t been able to go. But it has helped, just knowing that there are groups there to help and support us.

One is not in this alone. That’s the thing that has helped us the most. A feeling of not being in this alone. That has been very important.

If anyone in a similar situation is not sure about going along, I would say “Give it a go!” It was jolly good fun. It lightened our day, our whole week. In fact, I even mentioned it in our annual Christmas letter this year, telling friends how the group helped us along our way.

FRESH ARTS ON REFERRAL FOR CANCER CASE STUDY

‘Susan’

I was in the Macmillan Cancer Wellbeing Centre at Southmead because I had been doing the Living Well course and there was a poster for Fresh Arts on Referral on the table while we were having coffee. It appealed to me.

At first, I didn’t think that Arts on Referral was much to do with my cancer diagnosis. I felt I was getting really good information and advice from the Living Well course. It was about wanting to write.

But I really surprised myself at what I wrote. Even though it is two years since my cancer treatment, I found that those emotions were still there, and writing brought them to the surface. Feelings of being lost and not knowing how to find my way home.

Even the very first exercise we did surprised me. It takes me a long time to write anything, so I was apprehensive when Claire read us an extract from some writing and afterwards said “write something in response, write for 4 or 5 minutes”. I thought 4 or 5 minutes, that’s not long enough. But I found myself writing and becoming quite emotional. There was a box of tissues on the table. Claire invited us to share what we had written with a partner. I wanted to share, but I said I’d probably cry.

I live on my own. There has been no husband or partner to share this cancer journey with. No one I could come home and talk to. There has been support from friends, Church, the community. But no one here with me at home. I think a lot. Things go around your head. Being in the writing group with others on the same journey has helped me to really release some of those feelings. With friends and family, it

gets to the point when you can’t talk about it anymore. “You’re really looking well” they say, and that’s what they want and need to see. In the writing group, we really bonded with each other, and we keep in touch. I think the closeness has come through being able to share what we wrote with each other, sometimes sharing things that are very personal.

When the six weeks came to an end, we were all so sorry it was ending. There is nothing available like this where I live. So, I was delighted when we were told that there was going to be a monthly follow-on group.

Claire has given me tools I can use to write. I didn’t realize how many different ways there are to be creative with writing. It has opened my eyes to the possibilities.

I’m not doing as much writing at home as I’d like. But I have got the tools. I just need to make time and space. And, going along to the monthly follow-on group gives me motivation and encouragement.

When I went to the last group, I walked into the room and greeted the ladies I had really bonded with. I could have burst into tears right there and then with the sheer relief of being there, with those people, on the same journey as me. It was liberating. It was a relief. I felt safe.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Future Development of Fresh Arts on Referral

The outcomes of the Fresh Arts on Referral pilot programme support its continued development within North Bristol NHS Trust.

“You need to look forward at what you can and will do”

“I discovered new talents. Simple things – like at 6am when I can’t sleep – so now I sit in garden. Yes... There are other ways of being creative.”

“I try and celebrate hope and see positives”

Southmead Hospital Charity has already committed to fund the programme for one more year, 2019 - 2020, with Chronic Pain and Cancer patients, as well as with one new department.

The Hospital Charity has also committed to fund a year of Follow-on Groups for Chronic Pain and Cancer patients, and the model is being explored through Writing for Wellbeing taster workshops for North Bristol NHS Trust staff.

It is recommended that Fresh Arts continues to evaluate these new iterations of the programme over the coming year, with a view to securing ongoing funding for this work.

In particular, it is recommended that Fresh Arts seeks to integrate the long-term development of Fresh Arts on Referral with the wider development of Social Prescribing across the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG) in partnership with the Bristol Arts on Referral Alliance.

“Essential to be here - it might be a springboard to other things. We all know other things exist but haven’t felt confident to go. We might now, with each other.”

Sharing the Fresh Arts on Referral Model

The Fresh Arts on Referral delivery model has proved well-considered and robust. The programme has led to the development of a number of resources:

- Artist Induction Programme
- Artist Handbook
- Referral mechanisms and referral publicity templates
- Creative programme and workshop structure and activities
- Evaluation tools

These programme resources are now in place to underpin future iterations of the Fresh Arts on Referral Programme within North Bristol NHS Trust.

However, it is recommended that consideration is given to how these resources might be developed and shared with other NHS Trusts and Arts on Prescription providers through Good Practice Guides and Training Days. Such learning programmes, built on good practice developed through Fresh Arts, could be delivered in partnership with organisations such as Arts and Health South West, The Hospital Arts Network, the Bristol Arts on Referral Alliance and Bristol City Council.

“Every time I leave here, I’m done but it’s worth it because it’s enjoyable, achievement, connection, happy. Going home, I smile at people.”

Collaboration with the Bristol Arts on Referral Alliance

Fresh Arts on Referral has worked closely with the Bristol Arts on Referral Alliance, employing one of its members, Creative Shift practitioner and Wellbeing Arts lead artist Julie Matthews to deliver the onward referral signposting. This has led to Fresh Arts joining the Bristol Arts on Referral Alliance to collaborate to ensure that a city-wide approach to arts on referral is developed and resourced over the longer-term.

It is recommended that Fresh Arts shares the Fresh Arts on Referral delivery model and learning with community-based arts on referral providers in Bristol as part of the Bristol Arts on Referral Alliance to see whether there might be benefit in developing a Bristol-wide delivery model and patient pathway, along with a shared approach to artist training and evaluation.

“If you don’t have this group, you bottle it up – this leads to anxiety and then this leads to loneliness.”

Future Research and Evaluation

Several academic evaluations of community-based Arts on Referral programmes have been undertaken by the University of Bristol, the University of the West of England and The University of Gloucestershire and others.

It is recommended that Fresh Arts connects with academic colleagues to explore opportunities to build on this learning through future academic research.

While this evaluation has chosen to align itself with community-based Arts on Referral evaluations by using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Health Scale to measure wellbeing, it is recommended that future evaluations and / or research considers the use of validated scales targeted at measuring patient activation and self-care such as the Patient Activation Measure.

Developing Cross-Sector Expertise around Self-Care

Discussions around self-care delivered learning that might be useful to all of us, including those living with chronic health conditions and those developing support programmes for patients.

It is recommended that the insights and learning around self-care gleaned through this evaluation be shared and developed with the wider Fresh Arts team, including artist Ali Brown who has been leading creative work around kindness and self-care through a series of artist’ residencies at Southmead and Cossham Hospitals.

It is recommended that future research explore how this learning around the activation of self-care might be taken forward into:

- Other aspects of the Fresh Arts Programme
- Psycho-educational programmes across North Bristol NHS Trust and elsewhere
- Staff wellbeing programmes within North Bristol NHS Trust and elsewhere

“Other groups (self/peer support groups) have focused too much on difficulties which is draining. Here the focus is the art.”

“I need to take care and look after myself in this process.”

Supporting People Living with Dementia in the Community

It is recommended that the Fresh Arts on Referral programme for dementia patients ceases within the hospital. However, it is noted that people living with dementia and their carers would benefit from a drop-in model of dementia-specific Arts on Prescription programmes in the community.