

Building Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Arts Prescriptions

CHAIR Alexandra Coulter, Director of the National Centre for Creative Health

ALEXANDRA COULTER has been Director of Arts and Health Southwest since 2010 and is delivering the Culture, Health and Wellbeing International Conference in June 2021. She project managed the two-year inquiry by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing which led to the *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing* (2017) report. She is the Director of the new National Centre for Creative Health which launched on 9th March 2021. Alex trained in Art History at the Courtauld Institute of Art and in Fine Art at Chelsea School of Art. She was previously the Arts Programme Manager at Dorset County Hospital for 15 years.

Welcome everyone to this next session on building cross sector partnerships for sustainable art partnerships. I'll briefly talk to theme and introduce speakers, Claire Stevens, Bev Taylor and Kate Parkin. At the National Centre for Creative Health launch, of which I am Director, Esme Ward of CHWA said that 'the future is collaborative.' We know that the experience of the pandemic has made some of us feel more connected than ever, yet more physically confined to our place than ever. We know the experience has been isolating and damaging for many others, and particularly hard for those living with dementia or living with the fear of a dementia diagnosis. I would suggest that many of us feel a collective responsibility, energy, and determination to work more collaboratively in order to confront the many challenges and inequalities that this pandemic has laid bare. Neither the statutory nor the voluntary sector can do it alone, nor any single organisation. I like the concept of collective impact as a way of us thinking about joining forces to achieve better outcomes for people and communities, helping us to shed our historic territories and divides. Many of the barriers to collaboration seem to be structural, to do with funding streams, lines of reporting, as much as to do with territorialism or competition. Many smaller arts and cultural providers struggle to make the time and space for collaboration, but as we work collaboratively across arts and health, the difference in scale, power, money, and language are being confronted and bridged in some pioneering places.

In order for creative health to be embedded in systems, in the planning and the operational models we need to span the boundaries through shared purpose, finding shared language and understanding, through co-production and genuine engagement in the personalised care agenda, in putting individuals and communities centre stage in every way we can, and including those who are marginalised, and wouldn't

necessarily be around the voluntary and community sector table, let alone around the table where decisions are made at an Integrated Care System (ICS) level for instance.

To make the work sustainable, we have to work in partnership, and share our knowledge, resources and experience. I believe that thinking about place is helpful. In England the 42 ICSs will provide opportunities for partnerships to develop across sectors. Within them there will be different geographic levels of partnership working, and if you were here earlier, John McMahon was talking about this, how at every level we need partnership working. Place can mean different things for different people. There does seem to be a move towards a relatively permissive and flexible approach to show how ICSs will evolve at a local level. The mechanics are complex, and there is no easy solution.

We are seeing some excellent examples from around the UK and it is fantastic to have speakers today who can talk to a national, regional and local perspective on this critical challenge of cross sector partnership working. A recent publication by the Early Action Task Force, *Making a Good Place – How to invest in social infrastructure* (2021), has amongst its recommendations, reform the financial planning and budgeting system so that it incentivises long term investment and promotes wellbeing, with a new wellbeing budget and a new Wellbeing and Future Generation Act. That of course mirrors things happening in other parts of the world, including Wales, with the Wellbeing and Future Generation Act 2015 which has been so effective, and in New Zealand with the wellbeing budget. So, there is so much we can learn from across the whole of the UK as well as internationally. It is therefore very appropriate that our first speaker is Claire Stevens, who is Chief Executive, Voluntary Health Scotland (VHS), and has over 35 years of experience working across Scotland's public and third sectors, Claire is Secretary of Arts, Culture, Health and Wellbeing Scotland, and is going to talk about VHS programme of discussion and series of events, Keeping the Conversation Going.

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