

Ian Lush, Chair, NHS Charities Together

IAN LUSH joined the Board of NHS Charities Together in summer 2019 and became its Chair on 1 April 2020, helping to lead it through the COVID19 appeal which has so far raised over £150million for the NHS. He has been Chief Executive of Imperial Health Charity since 2014, having previously been CEO of the Architectural Heritage Fund for 11 years. Following an MA in music at the University of York, he began his career as a professional viola-player with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, subsequently moving into arts management, including as Marketing Director of the Barbican Centre, and Managing Director of the London Mozart Players for eight years. Ian was Lead Governor of Great Ormond Street Hospital Foundation Trust from 2012-15. He founded and directed 'Discovering Places', one of the major projects of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad and was Deputy Chair of the Heritage Alliance from 2005-13. Ian Lush was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List 2021.

'A Growing Partnership – NHS charities and the arts sector'.

I actually started life as a professional musician, and orchestral viola player, I then spent 20 years in arts management before moving into heritage, and then recently over the last six years, running an NHS charity. NHS Charities Together, which I chair on top of my day job of being Chief Executive of one of them, is an umbrella body. There are 240 NHS Charities throughout the UK. We have a status written into legislation, which is official NHS Charities, that means that should someone leave a legacy to a hospital trust, it goes to that NHS Charity, even if it is not entirely clear who it is meant for. We support every part of the NHS, hospitals, community care, ambulance trusts and mental health trusts. Until April last year we were not widely known, the only one that everyone really knows before that is Great Ormond St charity, which is a global brand. Then we had COVID. We launched our appeal at the end of March with an ambitious target to raise over £100 million.

Then early in April last year, a man called Captain Sir Tom Moore began to walk up and down his back garden. It reached global exposure thanks to media and to the fact people wanted to latch onto something positive. So, Captain Sir Tom Moore, almost single handed, raised the profile of NHS Charities through his extraordinary fundraising. He raised in the end almost £38 million, which will remain the greatest individual feat of fundraising we are likely ever to see. So how do we spend that money? We have distributed nearly 100 million to the membership, that's the 240 charities. Firstly, through last year, supporting the emergency response of hospitals and other trusts in COVID. But now we are focused on reset and recovery, and partnerships with the wider community and voluntary sector.

Nice to see James speaking earlier, here's a quote from him from a report, *Orchestras in Healthcare* (2021) published by the Association of British Orchestras, about their work with arts and health,

What keeps us well is more than medicine (...) This is why connecting people to the arts is recognised by the health and care system as being valuable to its future.

So, we know that art projects are already featuring in NHS Charities VCS partnerships, and social prescribing is already being identified as one good way to embed this into local healthcare. It is fair to say that not all NHS Charities were working in this space before this last year, some of these relationships were quite early, but they are developing, and they really are starting to expand. Some good examples are emerging.

This is my charity, Imperial Health Charity, we are based in West London. Arts Council Museum Accreditation was mentioned; and we are the only NHS charity nationally with that museum accreditation for our art collection and exhibition programme. We have over 2,000 works displayed across five hospitals, most are limited edition prints, partly because they are very affordable, and partly because our insurance bill is not ridiculous. Our most valuable item is a Henry Moore, which we actually have on permanent loan from the Tate, it sits outside Charing Cross Hospital.

We also have an extensive arts engagement programme, which has grown considerably over the last two or three years. One of our favourite projects was intergenerational work, bringing together primary schools with older patients with dementia. This has been a really interesting and very rewarding project for our team, the hospital team and the primary teachers to work on. It has had some really amazing results. We have also worked with a South Indian dance company, Akademi, on some falls-prevention workshops, *Dance Well*, and that is just two examples of the sort of thing we have been trying to do. Obviously over the last year we have had to move a lot of our work online, but gradually practitioners are returning to hospitals, we have a couple in already and more coming later this month. We have been working with a poet in residence, which could be delivered through Zoom and other platforms.

We launched a funding scheme, *Compassionate Communities*, aimed very much at supporting VCS projects in West London, including social prescribing. Another example in the south of England is the Essex Partnership NHS Charitable fund. This is a community NHS fund, not a hospital trust, and their launching as *Open Arts* project with NHS Charities Together funding. This is aiming to enable wellbeing and recovery through creativity and community engagement. It is a really wide-ranging project, very much hoping to engage the public in

creative and expressive work, and most importantly, engage with local and professional artists who have obviously had a really tough time. Giving them the opportunity to lead studio placements with patients and other members of the community. In mid and west Wales, Hywel Dda Health Charities are piloting arts and wellbeing activities for staff. One of the key parts of the funding we have given over the last year or so is to support staff welfare, this arts project is very much aimed at that. When they have run the first phase of it, looking at stress relief, creative workshops, and arts engagement, they very much hope to roll it out into community work, there will be a dementia framework to that as well.

Other NHS charities actively engaging include UCLH, Derby and Burton, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Brighton and Sussex, Southwestern Ambulance, Shropshire Community Healthcare, CW+, which is a very active arts engagement charity, part of the Chelsea and Westminster hospital charity who have been working in this space for really quite some time. That's an example of one of our dance workshops with participants and staff

enthusiastically participating, as you can see, they do chair-based work to help with balance, and they do some work with patients who are able to stand with the falls prevention work.



As part of our intergenerational programme we worked with Vauxhall City Farm, bringing animals in with children and older people, that at a garden we funded at the side of Charing Cross Hospital.

What happens next? Well gradually NHS Charities are developing their stronger links with Integrated Care System (ICS) in their areas and also with the wider voluntary and community sector. We really hope that this will be something where people can realise the potential of engagement with the arts organisations and health. It's fair to say that knowledge of social prescribing is variable, but we're getting there, and the more good examples we see, the more we'll be able to encourage others to take part.

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