THE ARTS AND DEMENTIA CARE IN ACUTE HOSPITALS
At any point a quarter of all acute hospital beds are in use by people with dementia and improving their care in hospital continues to be a national level strategic priority. The South West standards for Dementia Care in Hospital were developed in response to the many concerns expressed about poor quality care experienced by people with a dementia when they are in hospital. Three of the standards are particularly relevant to the projects showcased in this leaflet. They are:

- People with a dementia are assured respect, dignity and appropriate care
- The hospital and ward environment is dementia-friendly
- Appropriate training and workforce development are in place to promote and enhance the care of people with dementia and their carers/families

The arts and dementia care in acute hospitals project brought together nursing staff and arts coordinators in six hospitals in the South West in an action learning set. Staff shared experiences, ideas and information. Evaluation of the projects was led by Dr Marian Naidoo from Bath University. Each hospital delivered arts activities for patients including storytelling, music, reminiscence and dance. In one hospital, Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust, the focus was on the hospital environment and the creation of a dementia garden as part of a larger capital project funded by the Department of Health. The hospitals involved in the project were:

- Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust
- Salisbury District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
- Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

From this project we have a rich resource of ideas and experiences that will be used to develop a digital resource for other hospitals to use. There is an online community of practice that is open to anyone interested in contributing to discussions and learning more about the resource. You can find out more here: www.ahsw.org.uk/ArtsDementia

The project was managed by Arts & Health South West and funded through the organisation’s core funding (Arts Council) and a specific grant from the Rayne Foundation. We are very grateful for the support of the participating hospitals. Arts & Health South West (AHSW) is an information, support and advocacy organisation for people who believe in the value of creativity in enhancing people’s health and wellbeing. We are a free membership organisation www.ahsw.org.uk. AHSW represents the South West region in the National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk
A Right Old Song and Dance involved a storyteller and musician working with patients with dementia while they were staying on Barnes Ward, Dorset County Hospital. The project was funded by a grant from Awards for All. Artist/musicians Sammy Hurden and Tim Laycock delivered 32 one and a half hour sessions of music, storytelling or conversation over a period of 31⁄2 months in 2013. The project was evaluated through a mixture of reflective journals by the project team and a survey of staff, patients' history and personal narratives for both staff and carers, with input from volunteers and carers.

Key findings were:
- The patient experience of their hospital stay was enhanced, patients were generally more relaxed and increased their mental, social and physical activity during and after sessions.
- This activity improved nutritional intake, sleep patterns and encouraged physical exercise.
- Staff empathy for patients was enhanced and there was increased knowledge and insight into the patients’ history and personal narratives for both staff and carers, potentially impacting on care outside the hospital.
- Overall staff believed that the outcomes of the project were positive and that the programme should be continued – the challenge is to sustain this involvement over longer periods of time.

Projects to create environments to aid care at the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital

December 2012 – December 2013

In December 2012 Exeter Healthcare Arts led the first stage bid to the Department of Health’s ‘Improving the environment of care for people with Dementia’ £50 million fund. In March/April the Trust was invited to move to second stage in the bid process by submitting more detailed proposals. In August the Department of Health confirmed that the bid was approved and financial structures were put in place for budget and procurement control. Once the capital funding was confirmed detailed design began in earnest. The key design elements were fixed in August 2013:
- Meandering circular walking route based on a gingko tree leaf, within a landscape inspired by the village green concept
- Pavilion to provide shelter and performance ‘stage’
- Potting shed to hold hand tools with ‘lean to’ space for sensory experience via a ‘Cabinet of Scents’
- All weather ‘green’ to enable drama, dance and musical performances
- Raised planting beds to allow patients to garden and generally ‘diddle about’
- Restored Phone Box with ‘future proof’ the scheme to be fed by the scent project and post box will be transformed using the same palette of images and materials.
- A new system delivering recordings of inspiring stories and testimony of Exeter and Devon voiced by actors

Completed Design

The complete design holds true to the initial design concepts and has been enhanced by the consultation process. The retention of audio delivery systems and the scent project and post box will ‘future proof’ the scheme to be fed by patient activity and other arts projects.

The Journey from Ward to Garden

The concept for improving the environment at ‘front of house’ i.e. the ward entrance and the journey from ward to garden is agreed. The journey will consist of the walk from ward entrance to the lift or stairs for the more able. In the past staff and physiotherapists have taken patients to garden and generally encourage patients to walk for exercise in intervals along the journey to aid and encourage patients to walk for exercise and mind stimulation. The lift will also be transformed using the same palette of images and materials.
Under the Art at the Heart umbrella, Soundbite brings a varied programme of live music and creative activities to patients, staff and visitors at the Royal United Hospital in Bath, Somerset. The aim of the Soundbite programme is to improve wellbeing and overall patient experience for older patients, in particular those with dementia. In February 2013 Soundbite music coordinator, Rose Heald, led a 5 week pilot study as part of her Master’s Degree in Music Psychology. The specific objectives were to:

1. Explore the effects of musical interventions on agitated behaviours displayed by patients with dementia.
2. Examine the effects of live music on mood and anxiety of patients with dementia.
3. Investigate the effects that live music can have on sleep patterns of patients with dementia.
4. Evaluate the agitation, anxiety and mood scales as an objective measure with a view to using them in a larger randomised control trial (RCT).

Evidence was gathered through a range of methods and tools:

- Cohens Mansfield Agitation Inventory (CMAI) was completed by nursing staff every 48 hours to monitor the patient’s overall levels of agitation.
- Staff completed a numeric rating scale of their opinion of the participants’ overall wellbeing after each session.
- Participants completed a numeric rating scale assessing their level of anxiety and mood before and after each session.
- Observations were conducted by the researcher.
- Semi-structured interviews examining the participants’ perception of the choice of repertoire, to improve their mood and patient experience, and organisational factors such as the frequency of the performances.

Results:

- Participants’ mood was significantly improved (p=0.005)
- Anxiety was reduced by 29% after the music
- On average agitation levels were lower for participants that listened to the music

In 2013, Soundbite Musician in Residence, Frankie Simpkins, delivered a 12 week pilot creative reminiscence project – ‘Reflections’ – assisted by Eloise Guest (Creative Arts Therapies student, City of Bristol College) generously funded by the Gallett Community Foundation. The project was based around the book ‘A Little Aloud,’ which consists of story extracts and poetry groups in themes. This formed the basis for the workshop, providing self-contained weekly reminiscence workshops for older patients, particularly those with dementia or cognitive impairments. The group sessions were based on a different theme each week; based around the book ‘A Little Aloud,’ which consists of story extracts and poetry groups in themes. This formed the basis for the workshop. The activities clearly had a positive effect on patients and staff, and from March 2012 the activities were increased to six sessions each week, in four different wards. Since the start of the programme in April 2011, Young at Heart has delivered 160 ward sessions in the first year, and 240 ward sessions in the second year, and a total of 2000+ patient contacts. Some patients will have taken part in several sessions. Sometimes the Young at Heart sessions take place in a dayroom. This works well for example in the storytelling sessions, and has an additional benefit that it enables more socialising between patients. When it is practically not possible to get the patients to the dayroom, the artists work in patients’ bays, or on the bedside. Participation is monitored through a monitoring form, filled out by the artist or the volunteer, and spontaneous feedback is also noted down on the form. The monitoring forms also contain some personal information on the next artists, so they have pre-knowledge about which patients are on the wards and their preferred activities they enjoy. We have to date not had to give any further factual research into the impact of the activities. However, the qualitative data collected through the monitoring forms is encouraging. Patients have said:

- ‘I’m buzzing. I wish the doctors would see what we are doing.
- ‘I haven’t had this much fun for years!’
- ‘You forget all your troubles.
- ‘This is ever so good for my hands. I am doing so much better than 2 weeks ago.
- ‘The exercises do you good, I couldn’t move my hands 5 months ago.
- ‘This has been the best morning in 2 weeks.
- ‘You have done me an absolute world of good out of the blue, but through the music I suddenly remembered Porgy & Bess and lots of memories came flooding back to me.

The main learning points:

- schedule the sessions with regularity
- spend sufficient time to liaise with and engage ward staff
- be persistent
- give adequate support to the artists
Some of the positive observations from staff about the sessions included:

1. How friendships were created between patients by drawing them together through their participation in a session.
2. Patients becoming more settled after a session and feeling less anxious. One example of this was a patient who had been crying actually settled down and stopped crying as a result of doing the session.
3. How sessions drew people out of themselves and helped them to be more engaged. An example of this was a patient who was withdrawn and quiet during a session, but was later observed smiling and laughing during another session.
4. How patients and staff could be transformed by the experience. The overriding view of the staff and artists was that the sessions were a really beneficial experience for the patients and staff and that having done these initial sessions and evaluated them, it would be extremely sad not to be able to find a way of sustaining the work.

The aim of the Live Arts project was to bring a varied programme of high quality live music to patients, staff and visitors at YDH. A main aspect of the project was to improve the patient experience for older patients, particularly those with dementia; therefore the repertoire mainly consisted of familiar popular music. Music in Hospitals (http://www.music-in-hospitals.org.uk/) provided live music performances with professional musicians who have experience of working in healthcare settings.

The pilot project began in January 2013 and ended in December 2013. There were 50 live music performances with 30 musicians. The music reached around 2,000 patients, visitors and staff.

Evaluation:

• Most patients have engaged with the music and have responded by smiling and tapping their feet. The music has improved mood and overall wellbeing.
• Many staff would ask the patients if they were enjoying the music, and this would spark a conversation. Some were even spotted dancing or singing along to a song. Music may help staff to care more easily for patients who display agitation behaviour as the music can help to create a more positive, relaxed environment.
• A partnership with Yeovil College’s music department has provided students with the opportunity to perform. This has led to a plan for 6 week placements starting in January 2014.
• Staff have commented that the music performances have often reached out to a patient with dementia, when nothing else can. For example one patient was unable to communicate with staff and appeared uninterested in her surroundings. With the music, her eyes lit up and she smiled.
• Patients with dementia were often heard singing along to familiar songs, and tapping their feet. The music has improved mood and overall wellbeing. For example one patient was unable to communicate with staff and appeared uninterested in her surroundings. With the music, her eyes lit up and she smiled.

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)
OVERALL THE PROJECT EVALUATIONS IN ALL THE HOSPITALS IDENTIFIED EVIDENCE OF THE FOLLOWING OUTCOMES:

- Increased levels of engagement from participating patients
- Improvement in mood of patients
- Increased level of conversation resulting in better relationships between staff and patients
- Reduction in anxiety and agitation
- Increased level and time of staff engagement with patients
- Wider partnerships emerging
- Better understanding from staff of benefits of arts participation
- Improved level of mobility and maintenance of mobility for patients
- Improved confidence and concentration from patients
- Improved nutritional intake for patients
- More respect and dignity shown towards patients
- Improved sleeping patterns of patients
- Better person centred care
- Increased understanding of patient narratives
- Staff stress reduced
- Better communication with carers

Challenges:
- Funding and resources at a local level to sustain arts activity
- Lack of funding for national infrastructure and support for arts
- Managing the transition of working with older people whilst they are active to continuing to support when their health deteriorates
- Blockers – those who perceive art activity to be a luxury
- Marketing to those in most need requires patience and additional resource
- Not being based in communities where you want to work – making links takes time
- Dealing with the politics of large organisations
- Short term thinking prevalent
- Keeping up with the wider context and integrating with the wider policy agenda
- Reaching rural areas
- The constant changing shape of the NHS, local authorities and people
- How to use the right language with different audiences
- Finding ways to measure enjoyment and joy and its impact on wellbeing
- Showing tangible outcomes is a challenge
- Hard to find space to work in a busy acute hospital setting

The Digital Resource

Initial consultation with the participating staff identified the following aims for the digital resource:
- It should:
  - Allow those not able to participate to benefit from the learning
  - Give permission for others to try out ideas and become involved in their own developments
  - Include working examples, ideas and activities that have been tried and tested
  - Provide examples of evaluations: Guides, ideas and outcomes and relevant case studies
  - Include an online forum for communication, discussion and sharing
  - Provide updated specialist information and resources

Broadly speaking three categories were identified for the sharing of the project:
- Sharing the process
- Sharing the product
- Sharing the outcome

Go to www.ahsw.org.uk/ArtsDementia to download the full project reports, evaluation report and tools and resources. To join the community of practice you will need to join Arts & Health South West, a FREE membership organisation.