



Berkeley Vale Health Community Arts Project

Name of Organisation

Berkeley Vale Health Community

Title of project/programme

Berkeley Vale Health Community Arts Project

Dates of project/programme

2010 - ongoing

Summary

Berkeley Vale Health community, an integrated health community serving 38,000 people, has pioneered using the Arts to improve people's health and to enhance health environments. **Winner of the Arts & Health South West Award for a Health Organisation in 2012.**

Led by local GP's a range of medical needs were identified across the whole community:

- An ageing population in which dementia and associated conditions, giving rise to lack of self esteem, loss of confidence, and a loss of their histories, are increasingly prevalent
- An increasingly obese population in which childhood obesity is of great concern
- Increasing costs and rising consultancy rates amongst GP's

Furthermore these conditions gave rise to the general feeling that it is difficult to quantify that larger numbers of people are less happy with their lives, so addressing their 'well being' was part and parcel of the need identified by the GP's

The work was broken down into a number of different projects that took place in primary care premises, in local nursing homes and also involved a major arts project to humanise a new community hospital:

- Vale Community Hospital arts project
- Artists in residence- GP surgeries
- Dance – using dance to enhance peoples physical health
- Try to Remember- poetry project in patients with Dementia

Overview

The aims and objectives of the project were to:

- Improve patient experience, orientation and wellbeing in health buildings
- Address obesity, especially childhood obesity, in creative ways
- Reduce GP's consultation rates
- Reduce patients costs
- Give patients with dementia a voice
- Increase awareness of local distinctiveness, and hence patients' pride in the shared histories of the area

4 special projects were initiated including commissioning arts for the new Vale Community Hospital.

1. Vale Community Hospital Arts Project This long awaited community hospital with 20 beds was opened in Dursley in December 2011. An Arts in Health group appointed an Arts Co-ordinator, who secured an Arts Council G4A grant and other local charities. The aim of the project was to improve the patient experience in the new hospital through use of the arts. The hospital was commissioned under a tight budgetary regime and the local health community realised that without artistic input the hospital would be a harsh environment for patient care, and therefore set about using art to change this. Key art projects were:

A colour scheme was developed that was both attractive and welcoming, using locally distinctive colours to enhance the individuality of the building. Artist Catrin Jones was commissioned from a limited competition. She worked with local people, staff, and the local museum to design a colour scheme for the 3 storey external main entrance structure as well as the whole interior of the hospital. The colours conformed, with evidence from research in Dementia Care, as to the best colours to reduce confusion. The vibrant colours on the main entrance and throughout the hospital are inspired by the historic textiles industry of the Stroud Valleys – rich reds ("Stroud Scarlet"), brilliant blues ("Uley Blue"), yellows and greens from the dyes that are renowned for the colour of Victorian military uniforms, tennis balls and snooker tables, and carefully located to provide powerful visual signals for patients helping orientation around key areas of the hospital

Central Courtyard Sculpture. The Arts in Health group felt the central courtyard was an important area that needed a major installation to bring light and beauty into what is a potentially bland space. Internationally renowned artist Shelagh Wakely who created a large beautifully ornate stainless steel sculpture of leaf patterns won the limited design competition. It is universally admired and can be seen from many different viewpoints as patients walk around the hospital. This commission now has another special resonance. Shelagh Wakely suddenly died, before manufacture of the project had even started. To complete the commission

and see it through was the Art in Health group's special task. This work is Shelagh's last public art work and testimony to her memory.

The Dursley Donkey. Based on a locally well-loved historic train this project was to enhance the patient experience in the waiting room area and engage more local people in the new Hospital. Prema Arts Centre ran a family drawing workshop, which involved drawing real donkeys. Over 200 people attended and all the drawing were then used to commission an artist Cleo Mussie to produce a mosaic for the waiting room wall that would include the sketches.

Bringing the old into the new. A writing and photography 'transition' project. The old and much loved hospital in Berkeley was to close and there was some sadness and bitterness from the local community about this. Therefore a project involving a writer and a photographer was commissioned to reflect on the passing of the old hospital and bring some of those memories into the new building. The photographs by Mark Crowe are being enlarged and mounted in stairwells and circulation spaces and the poetry and text by Marcus Moore will be painted on key walls in the hospital by a calligrapher, and the work distributed by post cards.

On going work – Now the hospital is open, we are embedding the arts project into the continuing development of the hospital. We are fundraising to commission the mosaic by Cleo (referenced above), and as a result of staff consultation following the opening of the hospital, a series of flowing glass images to help orientation to Outpatients Clinic, work for the exterior of the building, and a developing project with sound and music for older people who are on the ward, and live music within the hospital.

2. Artists in Residence GP surgeries

GP surgeries in Berkeley Vale provide "Arts on Prescription", (2007- on going) now funded by Adult Education, having been started with Arts Council money. This ongoing and popular scheme provided the template for Artlift, the Gloucestershire wide artist in resident scheme that has been extensively researched and provides the first clear evidence that using an artist can reduce GP consultation rate and also reduce the health cost of participants. Working with Prema Arts Centre has also enabled patients from the scheme to graduate into more progressive arts development.

3. Dance

The role of dance in improving physical fitness has been used extensively in the Berkeley Vale area. The ongoing "Salsa on Prescription" (2009 - ongoing) annually has over 120 patients referred, and after initial funding by the Berkeley Vale Health cluster of practices, is now self-funding running alongside the exercise on prescription scheme (Gym based exercise). There is increasing evidence from the evaluation that not only do people lose weight, but feel happier after dancing. In a new innovative scheme to increase levels of childhood activity, World Jungle, a local activity based provider, has been commissioned by Berkeley Vale to deliver dance lessons in every school, together with training for teacher in dance techniques, with follow on classes arranged for immediately after

school. Although there is no evidence yet, we are hoping that this will make an impression on childhood obesity levels and this is why NHS money is being invested into the scheme. Dursley and Stroud District Council also supports the scheme.

4. Try to Remember

This project takes place in GP surgeries as well as care homes throughout the locality. The Barnwood Trust funded this project (2008-2011). Patients with dementia are referred to a poet (Karen Hayes) who sees them once or twice for hour long appointments, and then, with the patients own words, construct a poem which is then given back to the patient, as well as sent to GPs to file in their notes, and given to relatives and care homes. It is aiming to give patient with Dementia a voice. It has been formally evaluated by The University Of Gloucester , Dr Helen Gregory has formally evaluated this scheme and outlines 6 areas of benefit. The scheme has also been written up in The Journal of Dementia Care and the poems created are being anthologised. The book is due out this year.

Innovation

There are four key aspects to this project that make it innovative – arguably unique:

1. The whole project is *collaborative* involving all levels of healthcare including clusters of GP practices and the PCT
2. The art is seen as an integral part of a *holistic* approach to treatment, whether it is “on prescription” or intrinsic to a health building
3. A *range of art* activities contribute to the project – painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, dance, poetry
4. *Evaluation* is integral to the project – whether it be GP’s monitoring their own work, or independent academicians undertaking external assessments

Participation

Approximately 30 people are referred each year and prescribed ‘art’ through the Artists in Residence scheme, and 50 to the “Try to Remember’ programme and all primary schools in the locality referred to the Dance programmes; a family workshop involving 200 people were invited and engaged drawing donkeys at Prema Art Centre for the Vale Hospital Commission; approximately 10,000 people a year will use the Vale Hospital environment that art has enhanced and experience the art

Outcomes

Evaluation of all the programmes takes place, two are in process:-

- Vale Community Hospital with effect on patients well-being whilst in hospital
- Dance and obesity will be evaluated at the end of 2012

The Artists in Residence programme has been evaluated and GP consultation rates dropped by 38% in patients seeing an artist, thus reducing the health costs to the NHS of participants.

Dr. Helen Gregory has independently evaluated the 'Try to Remember' project and defines 6 areas of benefit referenced in the following texts. She observed the most important finding is that time spent intellectually with dementia patients is essential, and that care staff, including doctors, view patients differently after intervention, so overall working with a poet improves caring for Patients with Dementia

*Gregory, H. (2011) Using Poetry to Improve the Quality of Life and Care for People with Dementia: A Qualitative Analysis of the Try to Remember Programme. *Arts & Health*. Vol. 3 (2): 160-172.* Gregory, H., Hayes, K., Jones, V. & Opher, S. Using Poetry in Dementia Care: Four Voices, One Journey. *Journal of Dementia Care*, Jan/Feb: 27-30.* Gregory, H., Hayes, K., Jones, V. & Opher, S. (2011). Issues and Impacts of Poetic Interventions in Dementia. *Journal of Dementia Care*, 20: 20-23.

Learning

The main challenges were:

- Finding the best artists for the work and usually a 'limited competition' has been held
- Fundraising – all the programmes are proving their worth and are being sustained but funding can ever be guaranteed

If we were to do the project differently we would have commissioned an art coordinator and artist for the Community Hospital to work with the architect *before* the drawings were completed.

Critical Success Factors

The achievements of the programme are because:

- We have a local champion and powerful voice in Dr. Simon Opher
- We have a collaborative and supportive local health network at all levels
- We have local arts organisations such as Prema art centre prepared to give their all to facilitate the projects at little costs

The programme has led to further work in the sustaining of all the above projects,. This group making the application are determined to secure more success in arts and health and increase the knowledge of the impact of creativity and well being.

Funding and Resources

Arts Council England has been pivotal in giving the first grant support to all the projects, thus giving other funders confidence that these projects are artistically worthwhile. The Gloucestershire PCT Charitable Trust is also a pivotal funder – with out these two, the scale, continuity and impact of these projects would have been impossible.

The Future

Berkeley Vale Health Community Arts Project is attempting to embed arts and health as widely as possible into the delivery of health care locally. The scheme is mushrooming and creating its own agenda. It is hoped through time that artists will be used in every area of health care delivery. That vision is fast becoming a reality.