



Northern Health  
and Social Care Trust

# Creating Healthy Lives Through the Arts

Northern Area Arts and  
Wellbeing Strategy  
2020-25



# Our Vision

*"To enhance care and enrich the lives of our people through engagement with the Arts"*



# Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the first Arts and Wellbeing Strategy for the Northern area. This strategy led by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHST) will be delivered in partnership with service users, carers, staff, local councils plus the wider community and voluntary sectors. The Trust works closely with a range of arts providers and would acknowledge the support of Arts Care in developing this strategy.

In recent years the Trust has developed numerous community partnerships locally, establishing a range of exciting new arts programmes. Feedback indicates these have had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of participants. In 2018 and 2019 the Trust hosted Gala Performances, involving service users and staff. Our partners for these events included Mid and East Antrim Council, Mid Ulster District Council, Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Arts Care. The feedback from participants and staff was excellent with many highlighting how participation in the arts had enhanced their motivation and enjoyment at work.

Recent research and evidence based practice has shown that the arts can make a major contribution to both the prevention of ill health and the treatment and management of long term conditions. This strategy provides clear direction for the delivery of arts and wellbeing in the Northern area, over the next five years. I would like to thank everyone who took part in the consultation events. Having listened to these key messages, we have used these themes to inform our vision and develop a creative and innovative strategy.

As Chair of the Northern Arts and Wellbeing Network I have had the privilege to oversee the development of arts within the Trust in recent years. I am keen that this continues to grow to ensure that residents of the Northern area have the opportunity to take part in or experience the Arts. Over the next five years we will work in partnership with key individuals and organisations who can drive this strategy forward in order to achieve our vision.

**Dr Tony Stevens**, OBE *Chief Executive, NHST*

# Why Arts in Health & Wellbeing?

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust has for many years been committed to using the arts to improve the health and wellbeing of patients and clients. In recent years it has become increasingly recognised that art can make a major contribution to health and wellbeing for all. Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Report, 2017 highlighted three key messages:

- **The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived.**
- **The arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health.**
- **The arts can help save money in the health service and social care.**

The World Health Organisation European Report published in 2019 also highlighted the role of the arts in improving health and wellbeing. This report found evidence to support the contribution of arts in the **prevention** and **promotion of good health** and also for the **treatment and management of acute** and **chronic conditions** across the life-course.

The Northern Trust will build on the many arts initiatives that have been developed to date and will work in partnership with others to ensure that as many people as possible, across the Northern area, can experience the numerous health benefits participation in the arts can offer.



### **Building a Sustainable and Innovative Model of Arts and Wellbeing**

In order to help drive the arts agenda forward within the Northern area a Northern Arts and Wellbeing Network was established on 31st January 2017. This group is made up of a wide range of staff from various departments within the Trust and also includes representation from Arts Care and several local Councils. A great start has already been made, promoting and implementing a wide range of arts initiatives. Some of the key successes are highlighted in the next few pages.

# Northern Wide Initiatives

- Integration of arts and wellbeing initiatives across Trust Directorates and Programmes of Care. This has involved a range of departments across the Trust including; day centres, adults centres, care homes and mental health services.
- Arts based training programmes for staff in dance and singing.
- Participation in Arts Care regional programmes including the Here & Now Festival for Older People, the Twilight Arts Project for Cared for Young People and the Red Flag Mental Health and Well-being Young People's Project.
- Creation of Trust choirs for staff and service users.
- Annual Arts and Wellbeing Report.
- Employment of 3 part-time Artists-in-Residence across the Trust.



# Locality Initiatives

## East Antrim Locality

### **Newtownabbey Singing for Health Programme**

Singing for Health aims to improve the health and wellbeing of participants with a particular focus on bringing people together to promote inclusion and reduce social isolation.



### **Larne Dementia Friendly 'This is ME' Choir**

This choir was established with the aim of reducing social isolation for older people and their carers. The members recently received an Alzheimer's Award for Dementia Friendly Community of the Year.

### **Visual Arts Project, Psychological Therapies Service, Whiteabbey Hospital**

Service user-led project facilitated by Ciara O'Malley, Artist-in-Residence, to produce artwork to be exhibited at The McArt Rooms, Psychological Services Unit at Whiteabbey Hospital.

## Antrim and Ballymena Locality

### Yoga for Carers

The Northern Trust is committed to improving the lives of carers and helping to support them in their carer's role. A programme of yoga was delivered to carers to provide an opportunity to relax and de-stress.



### Farmers Choir

The Northern Trust has a large rural population with a high percentage of farming families. The choir has greatly improved the mental and social wellbeing of those involved by providing opportunities to learn a new skill and connect with others.



### Gala Performance, June 2018

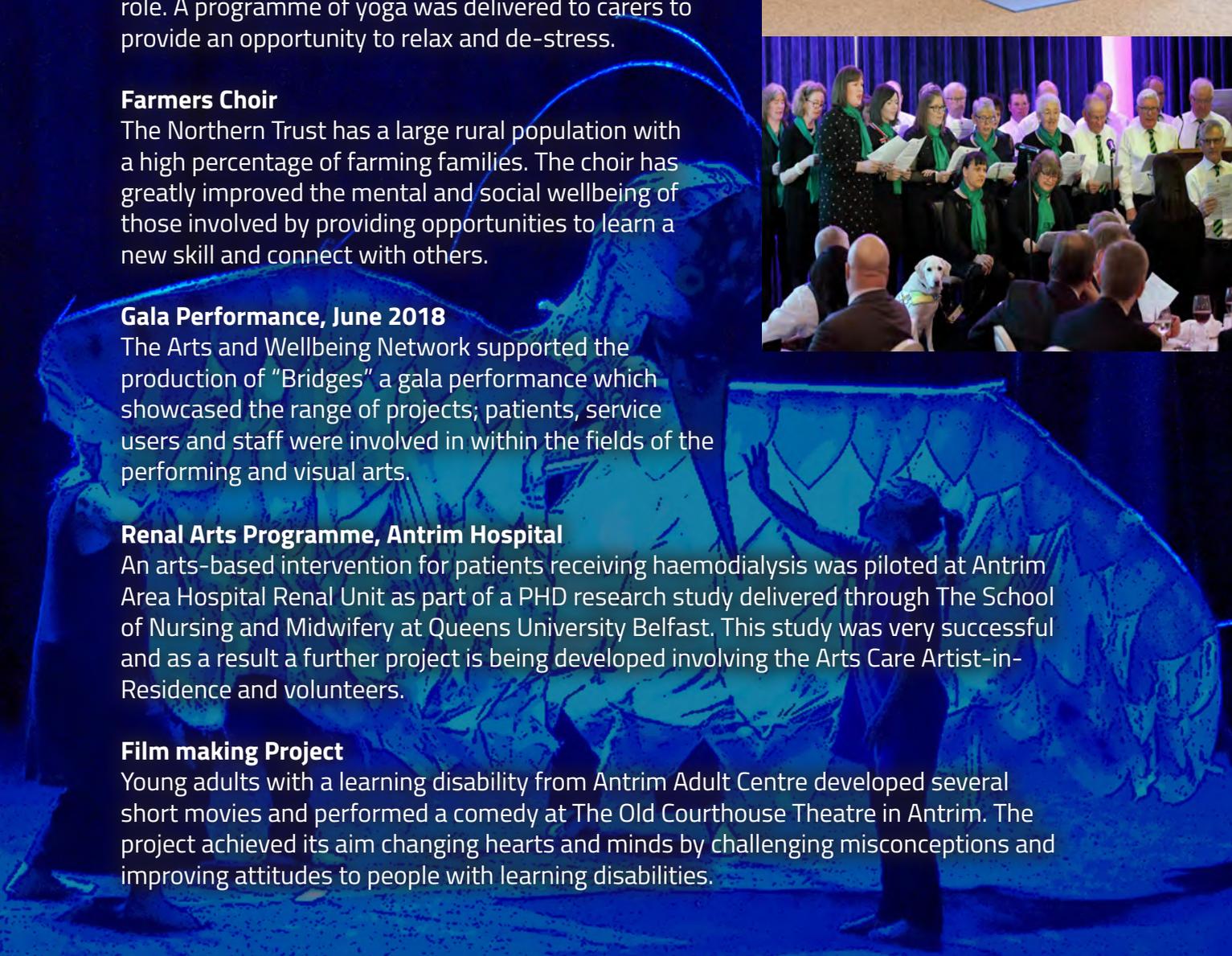
The Arts and Wellbeing Network supported the production of "Bridges" a gala performance which showcased the range of projects; patients, service users and staff were involved in within the fields of the performing and visual arts.

### Renal Arts Programme, Antrim Hospital

An arts-based intervention for patients receiving haemodialysis was piloted at Antrim Area Hospital Renal Unit as part of a PHD research study delivered through The School of Nursing and Midwifery at Queens University Belfast. This study was very successful and as a result a further project is being developed involving the Arts Care Artist-in-Residence and volunteers.

### Film making Project

Young adults with a learning disability from Antrim Adult Centre developed several short movies and performed a comedy at The Old Courthouse Theatre in Antrim. The project achieved its aim changing hearts and minds by challenging misconceptions and improving attitudes to people with learning disabilities.



## Mid-Ulster Locality

### Gala Performance, November 2019

Following the success of the event in June 2018, the Northern Arts and Wellbeing Network, in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Mid Ulster District Council supported the production of 'Take 5', a gala performance which once again celebrated talent across diverse groups and highlighted that the arts is for everyone.

### Set Dancing for Parkinson's

Outstepping Parkinson's is a set dancing programme delivered in the Mid Ulster District Council area. This involves a partnership programme between the Northern and Southern Trusts, Parkinson's UK and Mid Ulster District Council. The programme has grown in popularity with four blocks of classes delivered to date. In August 2019 the programme was featured on the BBC One Show. Participants were interviewed by Paul Mayhew Archer (Co-writer of the Vicar of Dibley) who is also living with Parkinson's.



### Film Making Project for Adults with Learning Disabilities

The Base Centre at InVOLve House, Magherafelt took part in a 12-week film making programme. This project enabled those involved to work collectively to achieve a shared outcome, helping them to develop interpersonal skills as well as new friendships in a fun, safe and relaxed environment.

## Causeway Coast and Glens Locality

A range of arts and wellbeing activities have been developed as a result of a successful partnership between the Northern Trust and Causeway Coast and Glens Council.

### Cancer Focus Arts Therapy Programme

Cancer Focus NI provided a 6-week Art Therapy Programme for people affected by cancer at Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart. This very worthwhile partnership helped enhance the wellbeing of participants.

### Christmas Crafts for Carers

A series of Christmas Crafts workshops were provided for carers in the Causeway locality. These proved to be very popular.



*"Thank you so very much for a fabulous event! I really enjoyed the whole experience, from meeting you all, and the other attendees to actually making something lasting and personal to take home with me. I wouldn't say that my reindeers were very artistic, but they will remind me of a lovely morning spent among new friends." (Carer)*

### Dementia Friendly Tea Dances

These events attracted a wide range of participants from across the Causeway locality and highlighted that arts-based programmes can make a contribution in addressing loneliness, which has been identified as a leading public health challenge.

# Benefits of the Arts in Health

There is an increasing body of evidence indicating that participation in the arts and access to a range of arts opportunities can dramatically improve health outcomes and increase wellbeing. As part of the development of this strategy a wide range of staff and service users were consulted. They highlighted the following key benefits of engagement with the arts:

## **Mental Health**

- Improves mental health and wellbeing, reducing feelings of anxiety, stress and depression
- Improves emotional health
- Boosts self-esteem
- Encourages creative thinking, concentration and motivation
- Reduces staff burn out and helps create a great place to work

## **Physical Health**

- Singing, dancing and playing musical instruments increases lung capacity and improves breathing
- Improved physical health through participation in performing arts

## **Social Health and Wellbeing**

- Reduces social isolation
- Improves the healthcare environment and uplifts the mood of staff, service users and visitors
- Promotes social inclusion and a sense of belonging
- Provides a sense of pride and achievement through participation in performances and events

# Arts in Health within the Northern Area

In recent years the Northern Trust has worked in partnership with a wide range of organisations to develop a number of successful arts-based programmes both within Trust facilities and at a local community level with the aim of being all inclusive. The key art forms have included visual art, crafts, creative writing, poetry, dance, drama, film making, digital art, photography, music sessions and singing groups.



**Arts in Health and Wellbeing within the Northern Area**

**Social Prescribing and Community Engagement**

e.g. Mae Murray Foundation's music programme for children and adults with complex needs

**Staff Health and Wellbeing Initiatives**

e.g. Staff choir, creative workshops, photography competition

**Arts in Acute Settings**

e.g. Renal Programme, Antrim Hospital, Piano Recital, Causeway Hospital, Painting, Holywell Hospital

**Arts within Community Health and Social Care**

e.g. Day/Adult Centres and Care Homes

**Public Arts**

e.g. Sculpture on hospital grounds, art in waiting areas and pop-up galleries

**Community Planning and Arts**

e.g. Arts and Wellbeing programmes developed and delivered in partnership at a local Council level aiming to benefit the health of residents

**Health Information**

e.g. Smoking posters and healthy lifestyle messages created by school children

**Art within Children's Services**

e.g. Arts-based programmes targeting children and young people

### **Arts in Acute Settings**

Several arts initiatives have been delivered in hospital settings across the Trust including painting with patients in the Care of the Elderly wards at Antrim Hospital, arts in the Renal Unit at Antrim Hospital, programmes with service users at Holywell Hospital, Antrim and a week of music at Causeway Hospital. The highlight was a piano recital by Ivan Ilic, sponsored by Ulster University.



*Ivan Ilic, Piano Recital at Causeway Hospital*



*Service Users Enjoying Art with Artist-in-Residence Andrea Spencer*

### **Arts within Community Health and Social Care**

The Northern Trust has integrated arts within a range of Health and Social Care facilities such as Day Centres, Adult Centres, Care Homes and Base Drop in Centres for adults with learning difficulties. Many staff have embraced engagement in the arts and availed of opportunities to be upskilled.

## Staff Health and Wellbeing

The Trust aims to create a great place to work and is committed to engaging and seeking the views of staff. As part of the development of the strategy staff were encouraged to complete a SurveyMonkey Questionnaire and to attend one of the four consultation workshops in order to share their experiences of arts in Health.



*Staff and Volunteers participating in a Singing for Health Training Course, Music Yard, Larne*

Dave Rogers, Clinical Psychologist at Whiteabbey Hospital engaged Ciara O'Malley, Artist-in-Residence to work with service users to create artwork for a new unit, The McArt Rooms. Dave commented:

Staff also have the opportunity to participate in the arts which has led to the development of a staff choir and a wide range of other initiatives including creative workshops and yoga classes.

The Northern Trust is keen to involve staff and volunteers in the arts and has invested in building the capacity of staff to deliver quality arts programmes. Within the last year staff have attended dance and singing training courses.

*"Personally I was honoured to be a part of this project and I found it one of the most rewarding things I did during work over 2019. There is strong evidence that participation in the arts, and working in a beautiful aesthetically pleasing environment with lots of artwork, has therapeutic benefits for both service users and staff. We have another project starting soon and I look forward to working on this again."*

Trust staff were offered the opportunity to engage in a photography competition to highlight **'Take 5 Ways to Wellbeing'**. These include:

- **Connect**
- **Be Active**
- **Take Notice**
- **Keep Learning**
- **Give**

*Stephen Thompson, Staff Photography Competition*

## Community Engagement

The Northern Trust has been involved in the development of a number of arts initiatives, delivered at local community level, with the overall aim of improving health and wellbeing. Singing for Health programmes have been developed in a range of communities including Newtownabbey, Larne and Ballymoney. These have had a huge impact on improving wellbeing and reducing isolation.



*"I really look forward to each week, I've made many friends and my lung problems have improved. Since I lost my mother this has helped me through my grief so I don't have to attend my doctor or take as much medication."*

*Participant, Ballymoney Singing for Health Group*

*"J loves Singing for Health. It gives him the social life that he needs by giving him the chance to get out of the house to have the time to talk to others. He goes home afterwards and starts to practice for the next sessions. This is his only group outing now and without it he would really miss it."*

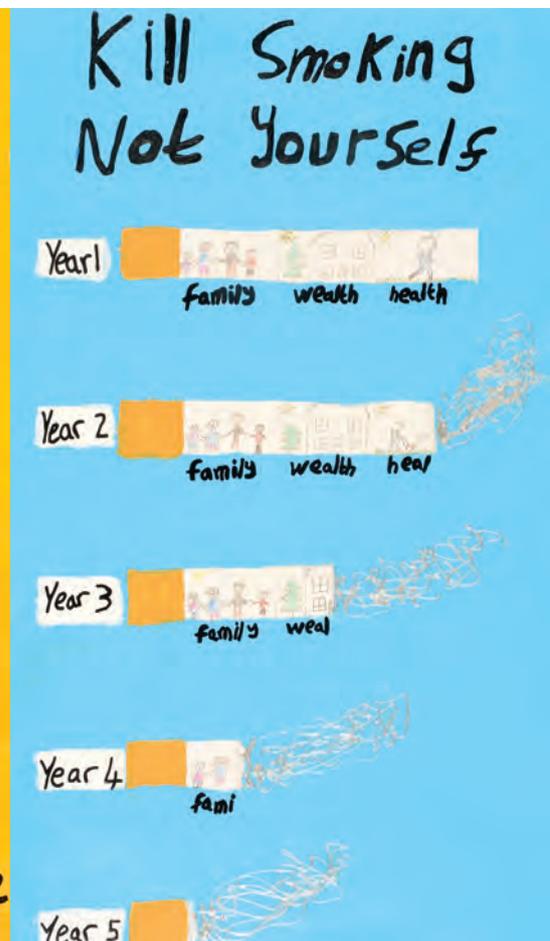
*Carer, Ballymoney Singing for Health Group*

*Ballymoney Singing for Health Choir*



## Health Information

The Northern Trust has also engaged the arts in the promotion of health information and key public health messages. This has involved children from local primary schools across the Northern Trust area.



Smoking awareness posters by children from Grogan Primary School

Young people from Our Lady of Lourdes School in Ballymoney have been involved in designing a new healthy lifestyle resource targeted at their peers aged 11-16. A group of fourteen year 9 pupils were provided with a brief to design a healthy lifestyle resource for promoting physical activity, good nutrition and the importance of hydration. Pupils worked in partnership with the Children & Young Peoples Strategic Partnership and a local illustrator to develop their ideas and bring the concept to life.



## Public Art

The Northern Trust uses a wide range of public art to enhance the physical environment for patients, staff, services users and carers. This includes a mixture of visual arts, sculpture and installations created professionally and by clients.



## Art within Children's Services

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, Article 31 - leisure, play and culture - aims to ensure that the arts are not an added bonus but an essential part of life that children and young people should have the opportunity to enjoy. There are huge health and wellbeing benefits for children and young people who participate in the arts especially in relation to promoting positive mental health and self-esteem.

The Northern Trust has facilitated, for several years, Arts Care regional arts-based programmes for children and young people. We plan to build on this work and extend the range of programmes available in the future.

Artwork by Looked After Young Person

"Art really helps me,  
you can see that I haven't been  
well so when I draw I get it out of  
my head and into my hands and I feel  
better. I don't think so much about  
bad things."

Young Person



# Developing Our Strategy

## **Trust Commitment**

In light of the evidence base for arts and wellbeing the Northern Trust took the decision to co-develop and co-deliver an Arts and Wellbeing Strategy with local community partners, service users, carers and Trust staff.

## **Staff Survey**

A SurveyMonkey Questionnaire was undertaken with Northern Trust staff to seek views and experience of arts and wellbeing.

## **Consultation Arts Workshops**

Four locality strategic art workshops, facilitated by Arts Care, took place in the following locations:

- Flowerfield Arts Centre, Portstewart
  - Involve House, Magherafelt
- Merville House, Newtownabbey
- Braid Arts Centre, Ballymena

In total over 150 participants ensured a wide representation from the Trust, local councils, community and voluntary sectors, service users and carers. All of the workshops adopted a co-production framework that involved the creation of large scale art works and participation in table discussions exploring key themes such as inclusion, partnership, loneliness, creativity and enhanced wellbeing through art.



*Workshop attendees enjoying participation in the Arts*

# What we Plan to Do

## Aims

1

**To improve health and wellbeing through wider access to and involvement in the arts.**

- Continue the commitment to deliver high quality arts programmes.
- Develop a wide range of art forms across the Northern area with an equal emphasis on visual and performance art.
- Promote and support the facilitation of meaningful, high quality arts activity for all residents of the Northern area.
- Explore the potential for providing arts-based initiatives through social prescribing.





## 2

**To promote Arts and Wellbeing through co-production, implementation and partnership with relevant stakeholders, communities, health and social care providers and service users.**

- Build strong Trust and community partnerships to help with the delivery of a wide range of arts programmes in acute, community and rehabilitation services.
- Develop an effective delivery model by establishing Arts and Wellbeing Locality Groups.
- Strengthen and develop the existing Northern Area Arts and Wellbeing Network Group.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the role of Arts and Wellbeing in Health.

# 3

## To promote and integrate arts and wellbeing across the Northern area.

- Create a culture for the promotion of arts and wellbeing within health by equipping staff with the skills to create and deliver high quality arts-based initiatives.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to design and deliver training to build capacity for the arts in promoting health and wellbeing.
- Encourage the engagement of artists and performers in arts initiatives.
- To identify arts champions and volunteers to create a network to increase arts opportunities across the Northern area.





# 4

## **To promote innovation in the use of the arts in Health and Social Care and measure the impact.**

- Use an Outcome-Based Accountability Framework to analyse the findings and report on the impact of arts-based programmes in health.
- Make the Northern Trust a great place to work by developing a creative workforce and providing opportunities to experience the positive impact of arts and wellbeing.
- Encourage and facilitate the participation of service users and residents of the Northern Trust area in the development of sustainable arts-based programmes.
- Link with research organisations and universities to help build the evidence base for arts and wellbeing interventions and make the case for further resources and investment.

# Delivery and Implementation of the Strategy

The Northern Arts and Wellbeing Strategy is strongly supported by the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team who are committed to ensuring the key aims are delivered.

The Northern Area Arts and Wellbeing Network will continue to oversee local implementation and set the strategic direction to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of area wide arts and wellbeing programmes for the local community. This group will be strengthened and developed to play a key role in ensuring that the Strategy is being delivered within the Northern area. This will involve setting Northern wide priorities and helping to ensure sustainability, monitoring and evaluation.



The diagram below illustrates the model for implementation of this strategy.



# Measuring Success

The Creative Health Report provides evidence to demonstrate that arts can make an invaluable contribution to a healthy and health creating society. By adopting an Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) approach, the link between arts-based interventions and health improvements in the Northern area can be measured and evaluated. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis will measure:

- Improvement in population indicators
- Improvement in service performance measures
- Other accomplishments and positive activities evidenced
- The lived experience, behind the statistics, that show how the population of the Northern area is better off through for example; observation, reports/questionnaires, videoing, service user and carer experience.



Little as we know about the way in which we are affected by form, by colour, and light, we do know this: that they have an actual physical effect. Variety of form and brilliancy of colour in the objects presented to patients, are actual means of recovery.

*Florence Nightingale 1860*



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### Thanks

Thank you to all the staff, artists, service users, carers and volunteers who have contributed to the development of the first Arts and Wellbeing Strategy for the Northern Area. A special thanks to Dr Tony Stevens, Chief Executive who has inspired and supported this Strategy.

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