

Make ‘creative health’ part of solution to UK health and wellbeing challenges, report recommends

- *Cross-sector group finds evidence for the health benefits of creativity is increasingly robust and creative health programmes are gaining momentum*
- *Widening participation in creative health activities can save NHS money and help UK meet challenge to enable more people to live well for longer*
- *Creative health implementation offers cost effective opportunities for innovation and joined-up practice across government, healthcare, communities and creative systems*

18 September 2025

Greater use of innovative creative health approaches can help the UK meet its complex health and wellbeing challenges, advises a new report of experts across sectors.

The report sets out evidence and recommendations for strengthening creative health initiatives that use creative and cultural activities, processes or assets to improve health and wellbeing for individuals and communities.

Published by the Creative Industries Council (CIC) Health & Wellbeing Forum and Arts Council England, the report says creative health programmes can promote healthy behaviour, support prevention of ill health, and aid treatment and management of specific health conditions.

It cites evidence these programmes save the NHS money and argues they should play a critical role in the government’s efforts to shift the focus of healthcare systems away from a short-term reactive care model towards long-term health promotion, enabling more people to live well for longer.

Increased creative health provision would also offer new work and business growth opportunities for appropriately trained and supported creative practitioners.

The report recommends collaboration to build professional development programmes to ensure creative businesses, freelancers and not-for-profit organisations working in this growing field are entrepreneurial, fairly rewarded, and have high job satisfaction.

Produced by representatives from across creative, healthcare, business, policy and academic networks, the report's key recommendations include:

- Testing and scaling innovative ways to increase access to creative activities for children and young people to support better mental health
- Exploring potential for a public communications campaign to raise everyone's awareness of the benefits of developing healthy habits by getting creative
- More sharing of research and best practice about creative health interventions to ensure decision-making is informed by latest information
- Convening the NHS, CIC, government at all levels and creative practitioners to understand the needs of the health sector, and develop shared next steps, including routes to more sustainable investment in creative health
- Collaboration between skills' providers, health and social care partners and industry organisations to map training needs for creative health workers

The authors say creative health can be part of delivery of the 10-Year NHS Plan for Health, which aims to produce better health outcomes by shifting the focus of healthcare to health promotion, care in community settings rather than hospitals, and increased adoption of technology.

They also support calls for a creative health strategy across government departments, in partnership with Metro Mayors and combined authorities, to provide joined-up implementation and ensure the benefits of creativity are available to all communities.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, Industry Co-Chair of the CIC, said: *"This report builds on existing evidence which demonstrates how much the creative outputs of our sector can benefit health and wellbeing. By sharing projects that are having real impact, identifying priorities for action, and using our reach to raise awareness, we can move this important agenda forwards."*

Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England, said: *"From dancing for fall prevention to singing for lung health, demand is growing for targeted interventions that are cost efficient and effective. By bringing together the cultural community, the creative sector, health professionals and policymakers, our goal is to ensure this country continues to lead the way in creative health."*

Ian Murray, Creative Industries Minister, said: "Creativity and culture are a huge part of Britain's identity. Our creative industries are world-class, and have the power to be transformative for health and wellbeing. From still life drawing classes for meditation and mindfulness to dance classes to keep fit and be social, embracing your innovative and artistic side can be a great way to stay healthy in body and mind."

"The government will now carefully consider the Creative Industry Council's recommendations for embracing creativity and supporting a more holistic approach to healthcare."

Contacts

CIC – info@thecreativeindustries.co.uk

ACE – Polly.Pye@arts council.org.uk

About the CIC

The Creative Industries Council (CIC) is a joint forum between the creative industries and government. Set up to be a voice for creative industries, the Council focuses on addressing the challenges and opportunities facing the UK's creative industries. The CIC helps to drive forward progress on key areas of growth for the sector.

The CIC set up the Health & Wellbeing Forum following the publication in June 2023 of the government's Creative Industries Sector Vision, a report from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in partnership with CIC.

The Health & Wellbeing Forum aims to maximise the unique and positive impact of the creative industries on physical and mental health and wellbeing, by facilitating the sharing and dissemination of ideas, evidence and best practice, and identifying suggested priorities for further action by the creative industries, alongside partners in health, government, universities and the wider community. This report is a first step on this journey.

www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Our vision, set out in our strategy Let's Create, is that by 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.

Between 2023 and 2026 we will have invested over £467 million of public money from Government, alongside an estimated £250 million each year from The National Lottery, to help

ensure that people in every part of the country have access to culture and creativity in the places where they live.

Until Autumn 2025, the National Lottery is celebrating its 30th anniversary of supporting good causes in the United Kingdom: since the first draw was held in 1994, it has raised £49 billion and awarded more than 690,000 individual grants. Visit [our website](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/) to learn more about our work

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/>

ENDS