

arts and minds

Charity No: 1122845

Transformation Fund project no. M172 Final Report – April 23 2010

Section 1: Information about the project.

Organisation name: Arts and Minds

Project name: Arts on Prescription (Cambridgeshire)

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Summary of project plan:

At any one time, around 20% of women and 12.5% of men in England are experiencing common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety¹ and mental health services account for one pound in every seven the NHS spends².

Research has shown that taking part in arts activities can help to promote well-being, by offering a chance to relax and concentrate on something absorbing³. Drawing, painting and creative writing can offer a distraction from feelings of anxiety and distress and may open up new ways of looking at life.

There are a number of successful Arts on Prescription projects running in other parts of England and their evaluations have shown that participants with mental health difficulties including anxiety, depression and stress have found them of benefit.

In this project Cambridge-based charity Arts & Minds aimed to evaluate the impact on the mental and social well-being of up to 40 participants with mild to moderate depression and/or anxiety accessing a participatory arts course.

This pilot project aimed to test the feasibility and inform the future development of 'Arts on Prescription' in Cambridgeshire. Specifically, it aimed to demonstrate to participants and local healthcare and other professionals that participatory arts can be used as a vehicle for promoting health, well-being and social inclusion and addressing mental health issues.

It was also hoped that Arts on Prescription would provide a new route into informal adult learning for people who might not otherwise be able to access it easily.

¹ NHS Information Centre (2007), Adult Psychiatric Morbidity in England, 2007: results of a household survey.

² New Horizons: Towards a shared vision for mental health (Department of Health consultation, July 2009).

³ Secker et al, 'Mental Health, Social Inclusion and the Arts: developing the evidence base', Anglia Ruskin University/UCLan Research Team, 2007.

Summary of key project features:

The Arts on Prescription sessions ran in six locations in Cambourne, Fulbourn (rural suburbs of Cambridge) and central Cambridge from January to March 2010. The venues were a GP surgery, a community arts centre, a community hall, a museum, art gallery and a mental health drop-in centre.

Participants ranged in age from 19 to 76+; the majority were aged 25-49. 40% of participants were referred directly by their doctor or other professional; the remainder self-referred (the majority of self-referrers who provided the information reported hearing about Arts on Prescription from a healthcare professional). Of the 51 people referred, 43 (84%) attended at least one session; the average number of sessions attended was three. There is a waiting list of 55 people.

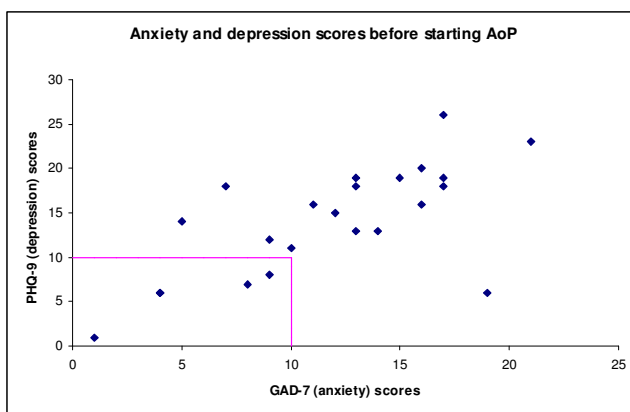
Participants were offered the opportunity to attend a regular group session on a weekday and/or Saturday 'taster' sessions held at an art gallery and museum in central Cambridge. There was no need to have any previous experience of art and all materials were provided. Participants were offered free childcare and refund of travel expenses to the sessions by public transport.

Sessions were led by an experienced professional artist, supported by an art therapist; however, the activities offered were intended for enjoyment and stimulation and not as therapy. Participants could try a range of activities from conceptual art to rag rug making; artists tried to tailor activities to participants' interests.

The project concluded with an exhibition of participants' work at Kettle's Yard, and participants were signposted to further arts activities.

The target group

The target group for this initiative was people experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues such as depression or anxiety. The hope was that the scheme could eventually be expanded to allow for people with more severe and enduring mental health issues.



The accepted method of assessing levels of depression and anxiety in primary care in Cambridgeshire is through asking patients to complete the GAD-7 (Anxiety) and PHQ-9 (Depression) questionnaires. A score of 11 or above on either scale denotes a score within the clinical range.

As shown on the chart above, all but four of the participants referred to

Arts on Prescription reported scores within the clinical range – meaning that far from attracting a target group with mild to moderate mental illness, most participants were experiencing moderately severe to severe depression and/or anxiety.

The project therefore had to grapple with devising suitable art sessions for people with severe and enduring mental health issues from the outset.

What went well?

After a slow start, local healthcare and other professionals participated enthusiastically in referring to our scheme. Arts & Minds received excellent feedback from our participants concerning their enjoyment of Arts on Prescription. Our evaluation and participants' comments showed a positive impact on levels of anxiety and depression and our final celebration event was packed with participants, their friends, carers and families.

What didn't go well?

The project was rushed due to the short timescale in which the funding had to be spent. As a result, Arts & Minds weren't able to provide as many sessions to our participants as we would have liked and the evaluation had to be written up before all the data was received. Communication and information-sharing between the artists, support staff and project workers wasn't as good as it might have been, again due to lack of time.

What would Arts & Minds do differently next time?

Assuming the same timescale applied, Arts & Minds would allocate the staff time differently, putting more resources into publicity and marketing at the beginning of the project and starting taster sessions earlier to build understanding of what the project could offer. We would also organise the basics such as model contracts, contact sheets, induction packs and petty cash in advance of the project work starting.

Lessons learned

Arts & Minds learned that it is possible to set up a functioning Arts on Prescription referral system in five months but only at the cost of a great deal of pressure on all concerned. When working with vulnerable adults such as mental health service users, elements such as proper assessment of participants' suitability to take part in courses cannot be ignored or rushed. However, our project has demonstrated beyond a doubt that there is a strong demand for this type of arts provision in the community for mental health service users in our area. Also, that where it is provided, it will be appreciated.

Hints and tips for other organisations

Arts & Minds would suggest to any other organisation planning to set up an 'Arts on Prescription'-style scheme that it will take at least three to six months to get the referral system up and running and that a year is the minimum length of time that should be allowed to complete and evaluate a successful project. Long-standing mental health problems do not go away overnight and if best practice is to be developed it is not desirable to offer vulnerable participants a few sessions and then end provision. Clear communication with participants about the scope of such delivery is essential.

Section 2: Links with other areas of work

Learning Revolution themes involved in this project:

1. Learning Champions
2. Involving a library or museum service
3. Opening up spaces
4. Directory of opportunities, resources, spaces
5. Partnership working
6. Self organised learning
7. Broadcasting and technology
8. Effective outreach

The project helped people to develop their skills in the following subject areas:

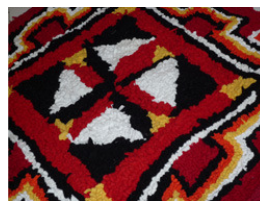
- Health and wellbeing

The project delivered wider benefits in addition to the learning achievements of participants, including:

- Increased participation in art and culture
- Participants reporting improved mental wellbeing
- Participants' confidence increasing
- Participants increasing social skills and developing new networks
- Helping to join up existing local services, identify ways to improve access for local people and include their views in further service developments

Steps Arts & Minds have been able to take towards securing the future of the project

- Identifying new sources of funding
- Developing a strong and on-going partnership with commitment to continuing the project
- Using lessons learned to develop and improve the project and deliver a second version
- Engaging with local authorities and other local services to secure ongoing use of facilities and resources
- Developing opportunities to continue using equipment purchased for the TF project to support further informal learning experiences



Rag rugs produced in Arts on Prescription sessions

Section 3: Project partners

Name of organisation	Type of organisation <i>(e.g. Local Authority, Charity, University)</i>	Contribution made <i>What did this organisation do?</i>	Match funding provided? <i>Please state amount and what for.</i>	In kind support provided? (e.g. free premises) <i>Please state value and what for.</i>
Arts & Minds	Charity	Raised the money, organised the project, hired the staff, recruited the participants		
Kettle's Yard	University Museum	Provided venue for art 'taster' sessions and exhibition/celebration		Free premises for four workshops and exhibition/celebration Value £200
The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology	University Museum	Provided venue for art 'taster' sessions		Free premises for two workshops Value £60
Nuffield Road Medical Centre	GP Practice	Provided venue for participant assessment and regular art sessions		Free premises Value £300
Cambridge Primary Care Trust	Health body	Helped us with research scales and contacts for counselling services; promoted our project via the 'Cambridge Locality Primary Care Mental Health Liaison Group'		
Lifecraft	Charity	Hosted art sessions in their building		Provided mental health support staff for 8 workshops Value £800

Section 4: Evaluation of your project

Aims & Objectives

The overall aim of our project was to explore the need for and efficacy of providing an Arts on Prescription service in Cambridgeshire. In order to achieve this, our objectives were to:

- Set up a functioning referral system from three key GP practices
- Recruit 30-40 adult participants with mild to moderate depression, anxiety or stress
- Hold 20 participatory art group sessions in three locations in Cambridgeshire
- Recruit professional artists to lead the sessions, supported by mental health professionals
- Link with mainstream arts venues in Cambridge and therefore introduce our participants to what the professional cultural sector has to offer them
- Gather data on participants' self-reported levels of anxiety and depression and track if and how these changed over the course of the project

Methodology

Learning from others

Before we started to design our project, Arts & Minds studied four existing Arts on Prescription schemes that had been running for periods of time between a year and ten years. The schemes were Stockport Arts on Prescription, Creative Alternatives, Sefton (Liverpool), Time Being, Isle of Wight and Open Art, Essex.

Arts & Minds benefited in particular from expertise shared with us by the Creative Alternatives project in Liverpool, as it has developed a robust referral system and a positive working relationship with both its local authority and Primary Care Trust. Arts & Minds also had productive conversations with Professor Jenny Secker, who devised the evaluation methodologies for the major national study of arts and social inclusion carried out in 2007.

Arts & Minds also discussed the most appropriate evaluation methods to use with the Cambridge Locality Primary Care Mental Health Liaison Group. As a result of these discussions, Arts & Minds decided to use the GAD-7 (Anxiety) and PHQ-9 (Depression) scales, as these are in common use in primary care and therefore our data would be both comprehensible to doctors and counsellors, as well as comparable with evaluations of psychological therapies being rolled out in the NHS locally and nationally.

Quantitative data

The artists leading the Arts on Prescription workshops were asked to record the number of participants at each session and to keep a register showing how many sessions each individual participant attended.

Data on participants' postcode, age band, gender, ethnicity, disability (if any), education and employment status was gathered at the beginning of the course in a self-completion questionnaire. To evaluate any impact of the project on participants' self-reported levels of depression and/or anxiety, participants were asked to complete the GAD-7 (Anxiety) and PHQ-9 (Depression) questionnaire. Each participant was asked to complete these questionnaires before starting the course, at mid-point and at end-point.

As it is not practical to have a control or comparison group in a project of this type and timescale, participants were asked in their questionnaire if they attributed any improvement that may have occurred in their GAD-7 and PHQ-9 questionnaires to their arts participation. Although less robust than control or comparison groups of people who did not participate in Arts on Prescription (Cambridgeshire), this approach proved promising in Secker et al in 2007.

In addition, participants were asked five questions about their levels of social participation and inclusion at the beginning and end of their participation in the project, and any changes over time were analysed. The questions were selected from a social inclusion measure developed by Secker et al, as the ones that were most relevant to the Arts on Prescription (Cambridgeshire) project.

Participants' GPs were asked (with participants' prior permission) about any prescriptions the patient might have for their mental health problem, and how frequently they had visited the doctor over the previous 6 months. Arts & Minds planned to ask these questions again at the end of the project and note any changes.

Qualitative data

All participants were asked to complete an open-ended question in the first questionnaire about what they hoped to gain from the course. At mid-point, they were asked, again in open-ended questions, how they had found the course so far and if they had any comments. At end-point, they were asked for their opinion on their participation in the course, and what, if anything, they felt they had gained.

Participants were asked during the project if they would like to participate in audio/video interviews. The intention was to use these interviews to explore in more detail the benefits, if any, that participants felt they had gained from the project and if suitable, and if participants consented, to use them in future advocacy and fundraising.

The project artists and therapists/counsellors were asked to write comments about the sessions in a project log to be completed after each session. They were also invited to an hour-long feedback session held at the end of March 2010 at Arts and Minds' offices.

Protecting participants' confidential information

Participants' confidentiality was protected by assigning each person a unique identifying number at random; the numbers were used to identify which data came from which person without names needing to be used.

Questions Arts & Minds aimed to answer

Arts & Minds aimed to answer the following questions:

- a) Whether there was a demand for the Arts on Prescription service in Cambridgeshire
- b) Whether it would be of benefit to participants experiencing mild to moderate depression and anxiety
- c) Whether Arts & Minds could achieve buy-in from healthcare and other professionals
- d) How sessions might be best designed so that participants could gain maximum benefits from them
- e) How Arts & Minds could best enable progression routes for participants

Findings: what Arts & Minds achieved and did not achieve, and why

Recruitment

The first three months of the project were spent setting up a functioning referral system. Tools such as referral forms and flow charts had to be developed, publicity materials commissioned and sent out, venues booked and the artists and arts therapists to support them recruited. Referrals were slow to come through from GPs at the outset, so Arts & Minds redoubled publicity efforts, contacting counsellors, therapists and mental health professionals in the community and in primary care.

We also worked out a system to deal with self-referrals effectively; this involved our arts therapists making an initial assessment of potential clients to judge whether they were suitable for the Arts on Prescription session. Arts & Minds also made links with a mental health drop-in centre that was able to host an additional weekly session and formed partnerships with two museums that would also host Saturday taster sessions.

Arts & Minds received our first referral in January 2010 and as reported above, eventually received 51 referrals and a further 55 enquiries that had to be placed on a waiting list as they could not be accommodated in the funded period.

Issues with data collection

Compliance with the data collection was not as good as it might have been, with only 14 out of the 43 participants who attended at least one session filling in two or more questionnaires (33%)⁴. Because a single measurement of anxiety or depression can only show how anxious or depressed that person is feeling at that point in time, it is necessary to compare at least two measurements in order to show whether there has been any change over time.

The rushed nature of the project and the fact that participants could join the groups at any stage created issues for data collection, as questionnaires could not be sent out in a structured way. For example, it was not sensible to send a 'mid point' questionnaire to a participant who joined at a stage where the project would be finishing in a few weeks, so

⁴ As the data had to be evaluated within 3 Weeks of the sessions finishing to meet the reporting deadline, it was not possible to allow much time for end of course questionnaires to be received. It is likely that more completed questionnaires will be received after the deadline.

where that applied participants were only asked to complete ‘pre-course’ and ‘end-course’ questionnaires. The low response rate may also have biased the responses towards participants who had positive experiences.

It was simply not possible to gather feedback from the 21 GPs and other healthcare professionals who referred participants to the project, as Arts & Minds had hoped, in the timeframe of this evaluation. However, Arts and Minds will be contacting the professionals concerned and will consider their comments carefully if and when they are received, as it is vital for the future of Arts on Prescription that professionals see it as a credible service that is potentially of benefit to their depressed and anxious patients.

What participants hoped to gain from participating in Arts on Prescription

(18 of 22 who responded made narrative comments - many comments resonated with several themes)

Relieve anxiety and/or depression	9
Meet (like-minded) others/make friends/get out of house	9
Positive creative activity/enjoyment	7
Learn new skills/hobby	5
Something for myself/me time	4
Finish something/sense of achievement/confidence	3
Guided/supported/safe environment	3

It is apparent that the social nature of the activity was felt to be very important, in addition to the expected benefits in alleviating anxiety and/or depression. Comments received from the end of course questionnaires included those below, showing that some of the hoped-for gains were being made.

‘Very positive experience. Great atmosphere. Super teachers.’

‘I thoroughly enjoy the [sessions]. It is fun. [The artist] always has lots of exciting and varied ideas. They are encouraging and I feel I’m learning lots. The sessions are relaxing and supportive. I look forward to the sessions very much every week. I’m enjoying making the rag-rug. I feel productive. It’s a very soothing activity.’

‘Over the short period, I felt meeting others and listening to them, plus spending time for myself was helping me. I feel I need this type of therapy and encouragement to relax and give me “me time”. Thanks for the ladies who care.’

‘A wonderful experience – we all had problems that won’t go away – but we’re starting to support each other. More please.’

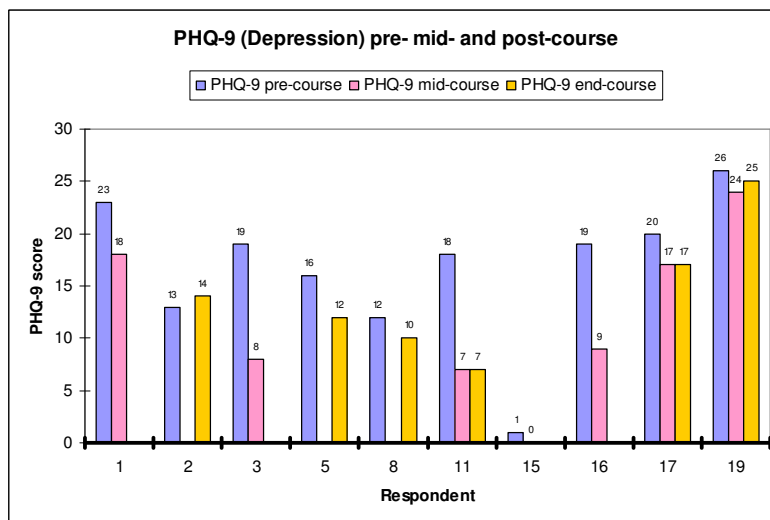
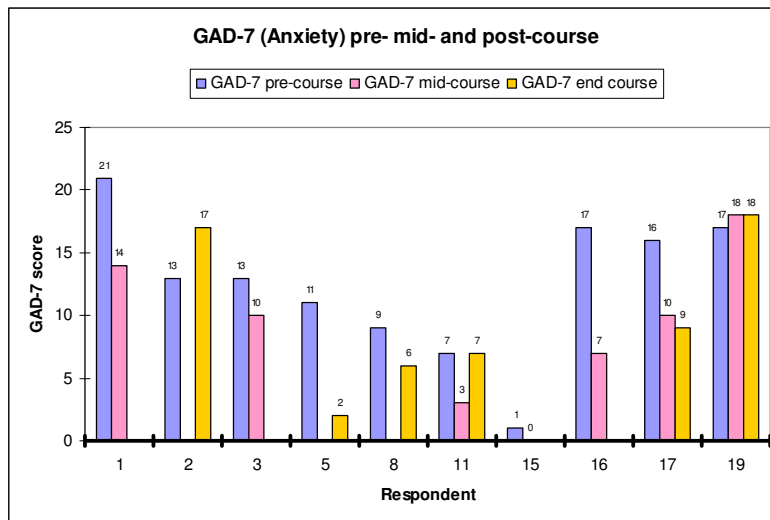
One critical response was received:

‘I had Cognitive Behaviour Therapy training/treatment via GP and attended a 5 week Assertiveness training course privately. I found these, separately, to be more useful to my mental health and depression than the Arts on Prescription.’

Changes in participants' anxiety and depression levels

Considering the fourteen participants who filled in two or more questionnaires, ten complete sets of data were received (the remainder had not answered all the questions on the form, meaning the validated scales could not be applied).

When analysed, the ten sets of data showed reductions in self-rated levels of anxiety in all but two cases and reductions in self-rated levels of depression in all but one case. See bar charts below.



It is of course not possible to state definitely that participation in Arts on Prescription caused these positive changes.

However, three of the ten people concerned answered 'Yes' to the question 'You answered the questions above before you started taking part in Arts on Prescription. Do you think that any change in your answers to the questions above, is because of taking

part in Arts on Prescription?’ (one answered ‘No’ and the remaining six were unsure or did not answer).

Eight of the ten stated they had enjoyed the course ‘a lot’ and seven of ten would recommend Arts on Prescription to a friend (see table below). Nine participants were willing to consider taking part in an interview, and five video interviews were eventually recorded, despite there being (deliberately) no pressure on participants to do so.

Enjoying at mid course?

Yes a little	1
Yes a lot	8

Would recommend at mid course?

Yes	9
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Would take part in interview at mid course?

Yes	5
Maybe	4

Enjoyed at end course?

No not much	1
Yes a little	1
Yes a lot	8

Would recommend at end course?

Yes	7
Maybe	3

In addition, when asked in the end of course questionnaire about the impact the course had had on art skills, confidence, motivation and positivity, there were 30 positive responses (‘Yes a lot’ or ‘Yes a little’) and only 10 negative responses (‘No, not much’ and ‘Not at all’). See table below.

As a result of the Arts on Prescription course...

	Yes a lot	Yes a little	No not much	Not at all/N/A
Have your art skills developed?	4	2	3	1
Has your confidence increased?	2	7	1	0
Has your motivation increased?	3	6	1	0
Do you feel more positive about things?	1	5	3	1
Totals:	10	20	8	2

Taken together with the many positive written comments received, and allowing for the fact that these are individuals who in many cases are suffering with severe levels of depression, these are encouraging results and suggest real benefits were experienced by those individuals who filled in questionnaires.

When anxiety and depression measures are plotted against each other for each participant, it is possible to observe levels retreating inside the clinical cut-off area (e.g. improvement) and then rising again. See bar charts on next two pages.

This would be consistent with participants experiencing benefit from participation in the course and then these benefits being offset by concerns about the course coming to an end – something that is borne out by narrative comments from the artists and participants, e.g. (see over):

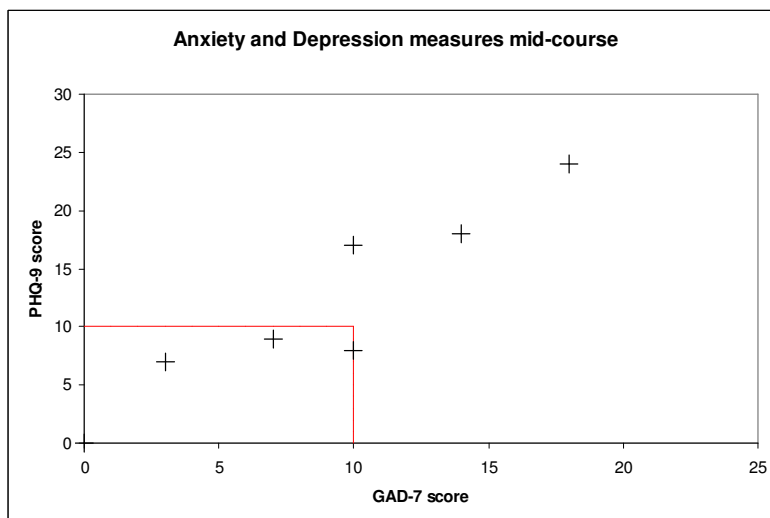
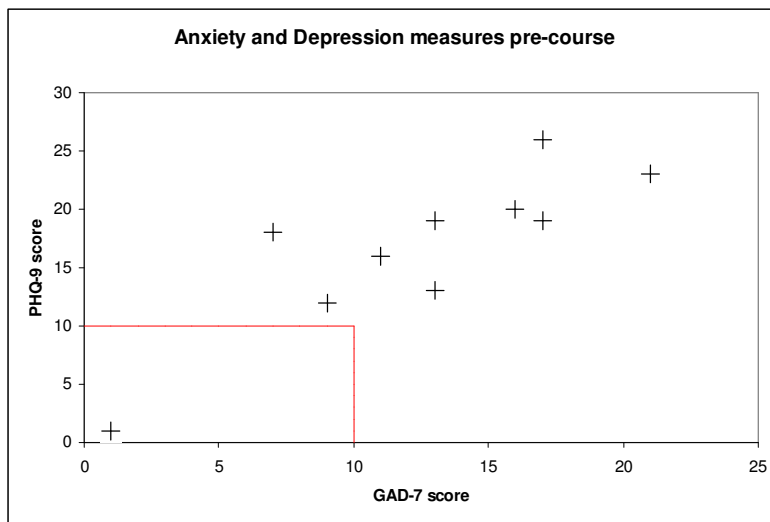
‘Last session, group rather subdued.’ (Artist)

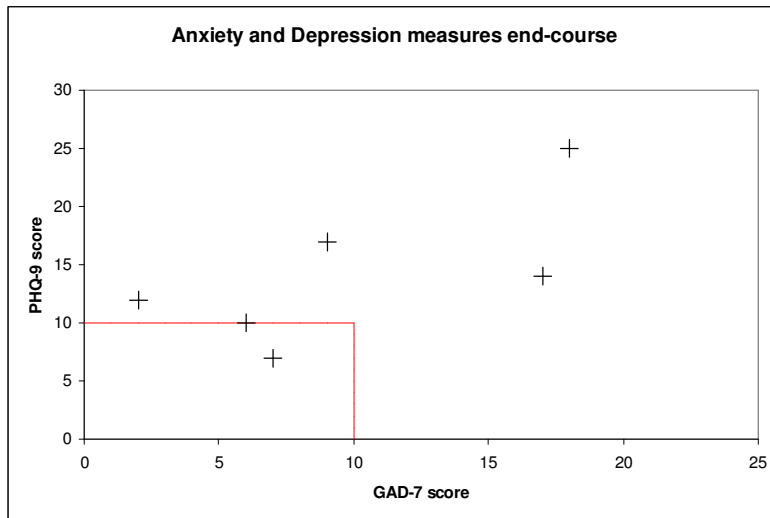
‘It needs to be longer, as just start getting into it and getting to know people, when it finishes.’ (Participant)

‘The problem is, I only went twice.’ (Participant)

‘Members a bit anxious about end of group.’ (Artist)

This supports our view that the project was unduly rushed and that participants would have benefited more had Arts & Minds been able to offer the 20 sessions originally envisaged.





Social participation and inclusion

Social isolation is well known to be a common consequence of mental ill health⁵. Participants were asked to consider the following questions, thinking about the previous three months:

- I have felt isolated from my family
- I have friends I see or talk to every week
- I have been out socially with friends (for example to the cinema, restaurants, pubs, clubs)
- I have done some cultural activities (for example gone to a library, museum, gallery, theatre, concert)
- I have been to new places (other than the Arts on Prescription sessions)

Nine participants answered these questions at the beginning and the end of the project, but the results were inconclusive; 26 responses to the statements were the same both times, 10 had improved and 9 had got worse. It is likely that the timeframes involved were simply too short to evaluate this aspect of participation.

Code no.	Isolated	Friends	Socially	Cultural	New places	Isolated	Friends	Socially	Cultural	New places	AoP=Change?
2	Yes definitely	Yes a bit	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not at all	Yes definitely	Yes definitely	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Yes/Unsure
5	Not particularly	Yes a bit	Yes definitely	Yes definitely	Yes definitely	Not at all	Yes a bit	Yes a bit	Yes definitely	Yes definitely	Unsure
8	Yes a bit	Not particularly	Not particularly	Not particularly	Not particularly	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not particularly	Unsure
11	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not at all	Yes a bit	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Yes
14	Yes definitely	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not at all	Yes a bit	Yes a bit	Not particularly	Not at all	Not at all	Yes a bit	Unsure
17	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not at all	Not at all	Not particularly	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not at all	Not particularly	Not particularly	Unsure
18	Yes a bit	Yes definitely	Not particularly	Yes definitely	Not at all	Yes definitely	Yes a bit	Yes a bit	Yes definitely	Yes definitely	Unsure
19	Yes a bit	Not particularly	Not at all	Not at all	Not particularly	Yes definitely	Not particularly	Not at all	Yes definitely	Not particularly	Unsure
21	Not at all	Yes a bit	Yes a bit	Yes definitely	Yes a bit	Not at all	Not particularly	Yes a bit	Yes definitely	Yes a bit	Unsure

Same	26
Improvement	10
Worse	9

⁵ Discussed in more detail in Secker et al, 2007, pp13-14

Conclusions

In conclusion, Arts & Minds believe that our evaluation shows that we largely achieved what we set out to do, although benefits to participants were limited by the tight timelines of the project. With 51 people referred and 55 on a waiting list, Arts & Minds has certainly proved beyond doubt that there is a need for this service in the area and that healthcare and other professionals will refer to it.

Arts & Minds has discovered that the vast majority of people referred to Arts on Prescription, far from having mild to moderate levels of anxiety and depression, are in fact within the clinical range. This has implications for how Arts & Minds recruits to, supports and staffs the sessions; it is essential that they are led by appropriately trained staff and that referral processes are followed diligently.

Arts & Minds has discovered that there appears to be a substantial un-met need among people suffering with anxiety and depression for accessible, social educational activities in the community where they can draw support from others in a similar situation.

The demographic data Arts & Minds collected shows that there is a 'typical' Arts on Prescription attender: she is female, White British, aged 25-49, probably considers herself disabled by her mental health condition and also in some cases by issues of physical ill health, is likely not to be in paid work and has probably not taken part in adult learning for some time. However, Arts on Prescription attracted both genders, all age groups and people from a broad variety of social and educational backgrounds.

While Arts & Minds was not able to achieve much as regards progression routes for our participants in the short timescale, we were able to point them towards other arts activities (many free) available to them locally and online, and initial indications are that a number of participants would take up further and higher education opportunities in the creative arts if these were open to them.

What did Arts & Minds do that was new to us and what were the lessons from this?

1. Learning Champions

Arts & Minds believe that Arts on Prescription has created a number of advocates for this type of learning both among our participant group and among the GPs and other who referred them. We were able to signpost all our participants to other arts learning and participation opportunities available locally and online.

2. Involving a library or museum service

Arts & Minds worked with two of the University of Cambridge Museums in this project – Kettle's Yard art gallery and the Archaeology and Anthropology Museum. Both organisations were keen to work with us as providing venues for mental health service users' art sessions chimed with their desire to open up their museums to as many visitors as possible.

Arts & Minds hopes to work with the Fitzwilliam Museum in addition in future phases of Arts on Prescription. Anecdotally, Arts & Minds observed that many of our participants from Cambourne, who are not in the habit of visiting central Cambridge, made the effort to attend our celebration event at Kettle's Yard to see their artwork being exhibited and show it off to friends and family.

3. Opening up spaces

One of our regular weekly sessions was held in a meeting room at a GP practice. While not an ideal venue for art in all respects, it certainly had the effect of stimulating interest in the project among the GPs there, who were able to drop in and see the sessions in progress. In the next phase of this project Arts & Minds aims to take Arts on Prescription to rural populations in the Fens using a specially equipped Art Bus.

4. Directory of opportunities, resources, spaces

Arts & Minds has produced an arts signposting document, available to all on our website, which includes both arts activities aimed at mental health service users and mainstream arts activities. As far as we know it is the first document of this kind to be produced in our local area.

5. Partnership working

As described above, the project brought together partners from the Primary Care Trust and Mental Health Trust, as well as developing links with mainstream cultural institutions.

Here is one of our participants on the difference being in a museum environment made to her:

'I really enjoyed looking at all the exhibits, especially those of African origin, and then having the choice of so many different media to choose to use. The room was very peaceful to work in, and the two staff were lovely.'

6. Self organised learning

In our Cambourne group in particular, where the participants were particularly keen to learn craft skills, the artist enabled them to take home materials and continue with activities such as rag rug making at home. One participant completed an impressive piece of work in between the final session and the celebration event.

'I really enjoyed it, it gave me something to look forward to each week, knowing that I could get out of the house (and not worry about a childminder). Also having something to do at home helps with stress.' [participant]

7. Broadcasting and technology

Arts & Minds has made the resources developed in this project available on our website, and has also recorded five video interviews with participants, which will be uploaded there shortly.

8. Effective outreach

The project has certainly engaged people who would have struggled to participate in mainstream learning, because of illness and disability, lack of confidence and in many cases, lack of childcare.

‘It has helped TREMENDOUSLY. I have something to look forward to and the children are not far away (next room). I have no-one to look after my children so this is my only outlet.’ [participant, her emphasis]

The project helped people to develop their skills in the following subject areas:

Health and wellbeing

The emphasis in mental health treatment these days is very much on the ‘Recovery’ model. Arts on Prescription has shown that participation in arts and crafts can contribute to recovery by providing a positive activity to take part in each week, in a social context.

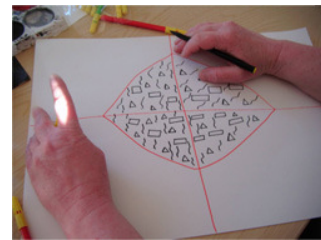
As one of our participants said: ‘I really enjoyed Arts on Prescription. It gave me something to look forward to and helped me a lot.’

The project delivered wider benefits in addition to the learning achievements of participants, including:

- Increased participation in art and culture (evidently, as this was the focus of our project)
- Participants reporting improved mental wellbeing (see evaluation results in Section 4)
- Participants’ confidence increasing (see evaluation results in Section 4)
- Participants increasing social skills and developing new networks in their communities (it is a little early to assess this, however, anecdotally, we know our participants are doing more and have been in contact e.g. through Facebook)
- Helping to join up existing local services, identify ways to improve access for local people and include their views in further service developments (we believe Arts on Prescription is a good example of a joined up project; we have consulted participants on how we might improve future sessions and they have made some helpful suggestions)

Steps Arts & Minds has been able to take towards securing the future of the project

- Identifying new sources of funding – see Section 6 below, ‘Exit strategy/legacy’
- Developing a strong and on-going partnership with commitment to continuing the project – see Section 6 below, ‘Exit strategy/legacy’
- Using lessons learned to develop and improve the project and deliver a second version – see Section 6: we are already doing this
- Engaging with local authorities and other local services to secure ongoing use of facilities and resources: we are doing this and Arts & Minds is also in the process of negotiating a new office base where there will be facilities to hold Arts on Prescription sessions on site and a small gallery space.
- Developing opportunities to continue using equipment purchased for the TF project to support further informal learning experiences; we will be using the publicity and art materials we have purchased/commissioned to support future phases of the project.



Mandala artworks made in Arts on Prescription sessions

Section 5: Case studies/learner stories

Participant 1

Participant 1 was female, White British and aged 25-49. She finished her education at 21+ but had not taken part in adult learning since then. She was not in paid work and considered herself to be disabled.

She self-referred to Arts on Prescription and attended seven sessions of the eight on offer.

From her end of course questionnaire:

<i>Have you enjoyed your Arts on Prescription course?</i>	Yes, a lot
<i>Would you recommend Arts on Prescription to a friend?</i>	Yes

As a result of the Arts on Prescription course...

Have your art skills developed?	Yes, a lot
Has your confidence increased?	Yes, a lot
Has your motivation increased?	Yes, a lot
Do you feel more positive about things?	Yes, a lot

Written comments:

Arts & Minds hope to continue the Arts on Prescription course in future. Do you have any suggestions about how Arts & Minds could improve the course?

‘It needs to be longer, as just start getting into it and getting to know people, when it finishes.’

Do you have any other comments about your experiences of taking part in Arts on Prescription?

‘I really enjoyed it, it gave me something to look forward to each week, knowing that I could get out of the house (and not worry about a childminder). Also having something to do at home helps with stress.’

This participant did not show any clinical improvement, with her self-reported anxiety and depression scores not changing markedly over the seven weeks of participation.

When asked if she thought if the changes in her scores were the result of Arts on Prescription, she said she was unsure, but added ‘yes to positive changes’, suggesting there had been other stresses in her life over the period the sessions were held.

Participant 2

Participant 2 was female, aged 18-24 and from ‘any other’ ethnic group. She finished her education at age 19-20. She was a current learner and was not in paid work. She considered herself to be disabled.

She was referred to Arts on Prescription by her GP, who stated that the participant suffers a chronic illness, to which her depression is a reaction. The participant attended four of the eight sessions on offer and also went to two ‘taster’ sessions on a Saturday.

In her pre-course questionnaire she gave her aspirations for Arts on Prescription as: ‘Going somewhere, where it is ok to be.’

From her end of course questionnaire:

<i>Have you enjoyed your Arts on Prescription course?</i>	Yes, a lot
<i>Would you recommend Arts on Prescription to a friend?</i>	Yes

As a result of the Arts on Prescription course...

Have your art skills developed?	Yes, a lot
Has your confidence increased?	Yes, a little
Has your motivation increased?	Yes, a lot
Do you feel more positive about things?	No, not much

Arts & Minds hope to continue the Arts on Prescription course in future. Do you have any suggestions about how Arts & Minds could improve the course?

‘I really enjoyed my arts and all the things were good and everything was perfect. So I like it as it is.’

Any other comments?

‘No, just that I like it and I hope that Arts & Minds can do more. Thank you.’

During the course this participant’s anxiety levels measured on the GAD-7 scale dropped from 7 (moderate) at the beginning to 3 (mild) in the middle, rising again to GAD-7 at the end. There could have been an impact from anxiety about the group coming to an end, when she had enjoyed it. The artist leading her group noted in the final register: ‘Last session, group rather subdued...some members exchanged contact details.’

The participant’s depression levels measured on the PHQ-9 scale dropped from 18 (severe) at the beginning to 7 (moderate) in the middle of the sessions, and this improvement was sustained, with a score of 7 at the end of the course.

When asked if she thought if the changes in her scores were the result of Arts on Prescription, she said yes.

Participant 3

Participant 3 was female, aged 50-74 and White British. She considered herself to be disabled. She had been prescribed anti-depressants and suffers from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. She was educated past the age of 21 but had not taken part in adult learning since then. She was not in paid work.

She was referred to Arts on Prescription by a GP specialising in primary care psychology.

She attended seven of the eight sessions on offer.

In her pre-course questionnaire she gave her aspirations for Arts on Prescription as: 'Get out of house and talk to others.'

From her end of course questionnaire:

<i>Have you enjoyed your Arts on Prescription course?</i>	Yes, a lot
<i>Would you recommend Arts on Prescription to a friend?</i>	Yes

As a result of the Arts on Prescription course...

Have your art skills developed?	(not answered)
Has your confidence increased?	Yes, a little
Has your motivation increased?	Yes, a little
Do you feel more positive about things?	Yes, a little

Arts & Minds hope to continue the Arts on Prescription course in future. Do you have any suggestions about how Arts & Minds could improve the course?

'Could have been longer.'

Any other comments?

'A wonderful experience - we all had problems that won't go away - but we're starting to support each other. More please.' [participant's emphasis]

This participant's GAD-7 (Anxiety) score fell from 16 before the course to 10 at the middle and 9 at the end – therefore dropping from a clinical level to a non-clinical level. Her PHQ-9 (Depression) scores were not so strongly altered, falling from 20 to 17 and then remaining at 17, showing she still felt severely depressed.

When asked if she thought if the changes in her scores were the result of Arts on Prescription, she said yes.

Participant 4

Participant 4 was male and aged 18-24. His ethnic group was 'other white'. He considered himself disabled and was not in paid work. He had been educated to 21+ and had taken part in adult learning during the last 3 years.

He self-referred to Arts on Prescription, picking up one of the leaflets in a shop, and attended four of the eight sessions.

From his end of course questionnaire:

<i>Have you enjoyed your Arts on Prescription course?</i>	Yes, a lot
<i>Would you recommend Arts on Prescription to a friend?</i>	Maybe

As a result of the Arts on Prescription course...

Have your art skills developed?	Yes, a lot
Has your confidence increased?	Yes, a little
Has your motivation increased?	Yes, a little
Do you feel more positive about things?	No, not much

During the course his GAD-7 (Anxiety) scores fell from 11 at the beginning to 2 at the end, taking him out of the clinical range. His PHQ-9 (Depression) scores fell from 16 at the beginning to 12 at the end.

When we asked if he thought if the changes in his scores were the result of Arts on Prescription, he said yes.

He did not choose to make any written comments on his questionnaires.

Section 6: Exit strategy/legacy

Describe what will be the lasting outcomes from the project

The Arts on Prescription project has made a promising start and has definitely demonstrated that there is a demand for this sort of provision in the area, setting up a robust referral system.

Have you secured any funding for the work in the future?

Arts & Minds have managed to secure some continuation funding from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Mental Health Foundation Trust. This will allow for approximately ten additional sessions in two locations only. Arts & Minds also has an opportunity to access some funds from government sources once again (not DBIS), but this is dependent on securing match funding from health partners.

How will you continue the project?

The next round of Arts on Prescription sessions will be delivered in two locations (the Fulbourn and Nuffield Road sessions will combine and meet in a central Cambridge location) while the Cambourne session will continue as it is. Arts & Minds is also applying for funds from Learning and Skills East to deliver more sessions in Cambridge/South Cambridgeshire while carrying out initial development work for a scheme in Huntingdon.

The potential government funding will allow for additional evaluation relating to the project and will include a health economist to deliver cost benefit analysis specific to this intervention model. It will also move us nearer to our desired model of delivery in five locations across the county of Cambridgeshire, including a mobile art studio for isolated rural communities in Fenland.

What are the barriers to this?

The main issue is sustained funding for development with the delivery of a consistent model through a range of funders, some of them geographically specific. This will make it administratively demanding and the Arts & Minds charity needs to grow in capacity to deliver this efficiently.

To address this Arts & Minds will deliver presentations in partnership with GP advocates to secure GP service commissioner buy in for the future. Arts & Minds will also push for Primary Care Trust funds for mental health service delivery commissioning. Local authority partners will be approached for the mobile studio delivery in Fenland while a potential contract delivery for Peterborough Unitary Authority would meet the costs there.

Are there any staff training issues that have been highlighted by the project?

Yes, our evaluation with the artists who worked on the pilot project made it clear that they would benefit from specially designed training so that they can work more effectively with mental health service users.

Although the artists Arts & Minds recruited were all highly experienced at working with adults in community settings, only one of the three had previously worked with people suffering anxiety and depression. The artists told us that they needed training in what to expect when working with people with mental health conditions, advice on how best to manage behaviour and practical strategies to ensure that people suffering acute depression are able to finish artworks and feel a sense of achievement.

The artists also advised the project in future to clarify the role of the arts therapists in supporting them, as there had been some confusion of areas of responsibility.

In addition, Arts and Minds has been approached by a number of other artists and potential volunteers during the pilot phase of the project, all seeking to gain experience in this developing area of work. Arts & Minds would look to incorporate some aspect of open access training and possibly mentoring in future project phases, so that the impact of the project can be spread more widely than just to the relatively small number of artists that Arts & Minds can employ. We also hope to recruit and train volunteers to support the sessions.

What have you learned that could be used to influence policy or practice either locally or nationally?

This style of intervention can form part of an answer to the complex and interrelated needs of the target group. It can give a sense of individuality, purpose and self worth to individuals while building social capital amongst the participant group and within their immediate community. This then extends to the opening up of new opportunities through engagement with the wider cultural landscape of museum and gallery partners.

In relation to the 'Recovery' model being adopted by the local Mental Health Trust, Arts on Prescription is precisely the kind of linked up intervention with follow on pathways that will help deliver the model.

It represents a potentially cost effective intervention that could be applied to several contexts including social care and older people's services to encourage stimulation, interest and engagement of patients, carers and staff alike.

Other points include:

- Arts on Prescription has proved popular with GPs as a referral option.
- The buy-in from diverse referral partners shows a broad interest in the availability of this option.
- Cultural partners such as museums have been happy to engage as this sort of project helps to meet their audience development aims.

- The Department of Health's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme launched in 2007 explicitly refer to 'arts activities in the community' as a follow on so this makes this element a reality.
- There is national interest from Department of Culture, Media and Sport to evidence this kind of intervention and so strengthen the case for continued arts and cultural development.

Is there anything else you want to tell us about the project?

Yes, Arts & Minds would like to include this short piece, written by Clarissa Cochran, one of the art therapists who supported the sessions.

Why do we do it?

'The poet Kathleen Raine said: the purpose of art is to heal the soul. In this respect I see no difference between art and craft. Functional craft has the added dimension of a practical use but the exquisite baskets of Zimbabwe or Mali do more than satisfy the need to carry things. Art heals and inspires us and enables the expression of something deeply personal.

The NHS may not like talking about the soul because you can't measure it, but arts therapists have known for many years of the value of encouraging creativity for those of us beset by more than the usual helping of life's set-backs. In the current climate of 'evidence-based' practice and community approaches there is at last support for arts workshops (termed 'Arts on Prescription') that offer free classes for people (said to be one in four of us at some time) who suffer 'mild to moderate mental health issues'.

Having trained many years ago as an art therapist, I was asked to take part in running such a project in Cambridge. The stress is on the art/craft rather than the therapy and as such the classes are run by an artist. The therapists are there to ensure people are suitable and to support them, as well as the artist who may have no experience of this 'client group'.

Most participants that I see are suffering from depression, and/or anxiety issues or are recovering from a 'breakdown', or have bi-polar disorder and are trying to re-establish stability. They range from a university lecturer living in a well-to-do part of Cambridge, to those on benefits, from the rougher end of town, including one recently living in a hostel for the homeless. Child care is free and bus fares can be re-funded.

Attendance can be erratic and reasons for non-appearance range from 'too tired' to 'went into hiding because someone was threatening to beat me up' – or – more positively, 'I'm back at work!' Sessions are described as 'liberating', 'exciting', with 'an encouraging atmosphere', and as 'helping me to unwind', 'nice to be able to focus on the tasks without having to talk...and be with others but also with one's own thoughts, a bit like meditation classes'.

It is clear that the sessions can be hugely meaningful in enabling creativity and confidence, (crucial steps in recovery), and sociability, (isolation being a serious factor for those with mental health issues).

We all have our own reasons for enjoying being creative and for those of us for whom it is a way of life, we know how it can nourish the soul. For those whose self-belief has taken a battering it may well be a crucial turning point.'

Finally, Arts and Minds would like to give the last word to one of our participants:

'A wonderful experience –we all had problems that won't go away – but we're starting to support each other. More please.'

Section 7: What resources have been developed?

- 1) The Arts on Prescription information leaflet, the referral form for participants and an Arts Signposting information sheet, pointing participants to further arts activities available locally and online (both aimed at mental health service users and mainstream), are available from our website here:
<http://www.artsandminds.org.uk/projects/2010/aop/index.html>
- 2) Photographs of artwork produced in the sessions and the celebration event and exhibition held at Kettle's Yard art gallery in Cambridge can be viewed here:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/36516115@N02/sets/72157623708191727/>
- 3) Arts & Minds has recorded video interviews featuring five of our Arts on Prescription participants talking about their experiences during the project. These will be uploaded in long and short versions to our website www.artsandminds.org.uk as soon as the participants concerned have seen them and given their permission for us to do so. Arts & Minds plans to use extracts from the videos in presentations and applications to funders. Our Ofsted assessor is also keen to see the interviews as part of her reporting process.



The exhibition at Kettle's Yard