

Josie Aston - Arts and Health Consultant

My experience

I am an experienced freelance researcher and consultant in arts, heritage and health. I have managed and consulted on a number of arts and health programmes in NHS hospitals, mental health trusts and in the community. In addition, I am an experienced fundraiser and over the course of my career have raised around £400,000, mostly in trust and foundation grants, for both arts and health projects and mainstream arts organisations.

Work in 2011 includes an evaluation of a Falls Prevention Dance Group for older people in Burton-upon-Trent, fundraising advice for the arts for health programme at Shelton Hospital, Shrewsbury, as well as an update of the Advice section on the Creative Remedies website for the West Midlands (<http://www.creative-remedies.org.uk/Directory.aspx?vtype=Advice>). In 2010 I completed a music and health mapping of the UK, on behalf of Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy in London.

In 2009-10, I was the researcher for a new 'Arts on Prescription' programme in primary care in Cambridgeshire, run by the charity Arts & Minds. The project was successful in encouraging GPs and other health professionals to refer patients with mild to moderate anxiety and depression to community art courses. The programme included drop-in sessions hosted by the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology and Kettle's Yard in Cambridge. The full evaluation report from this project as well as other project materials can be downloaded here: <http://www.josieaston.co.uk/recent-projects>.

I was the Wellcome Trust Fellow 2008-9 on the Clore Leadership Programme, www.cloreleadership.org. In 2009 I created a website, www.josieaston.co.uk which provides free arts and health resources and a blog. My Clore research considered the professional development needs of hospital arts co-ordinators and I presented it as a paper at conferences in the UK, the US and Brussels.

I am the author of a paper on best practice in maintaining artwork in healthcare environments, *When the Architects Leave*, and in 2006 was commissioned by Arts Council England to produce a report, *Arts in Hospital: Handling the Media*. These papers are available as free downloads from my website.

History and heritage are particular interests of mine. I have completed two community history projects for hospitals in my local area resulting in large-format photographic history panels – see www.hospitalartstudio.co.uk (Orpington and Beckenham projects). In 2009, I was able to develop my interest in museums and heritage through a six month secondment to the Science Museum in London, arranged through the Clore Leadership Programme. I recently completed an Open University module 'Understanding Global Heritage' to further this interest.

Aside from my focus on arts and health, I have worked for a number of performing arts organisations including Opera North, Southbank and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, specialising in marketing, fundraising and education.

I have a First Class BA Hons degree in Economics and History with North American Studies from Leeds University (1995) and a MA with Distinction in European Cultural Policy and Administration from Warwick University (1999). In 2005 I completed an Open University module 'Health and Disease'.

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What my clients and colleagues say about me

"Thanks again, Josie, for all your work on this. I really have enjoyed working with someone who provides such obvious expertise and knowledge within the realm of arts and health."
Owen Hurcombe, County Arts Development Officer, Staffordshire County Council

"Working with Josie Aston has been brisk, efficient, animated, and an enormous pleasure."
Prof. Mercédès Pavlicevic, PhD, Director of Research, Nordoff Robbins Music Therapy

"The report is excellent Josie. I am sure it will help in securing the continuation of the scheme. Thanks again for helping keep the whole thing on track and delivering great quality reports." Gavin Clayton, Executive Director, Arts & Minds

"I thought last night's celebration event was fantastic. Great fun, lots of participants and wonderful artwork which was really well received." Richard Taylor, Chair, Arts & Minds

"I have had the good fortune to work with Josie on projects when she has required additional or local capacity to deliver a project for her client. Josie is a committed and insightful Arts in Health professional, with a far reaching understanding of the management practices, strategic developments and research associated with this sector."
Niki Holmes, freelance arts & health practitioner and lead artist

"I've read your excellent report and it's already proved to be very useful and thought provoking. Thank you so much for your efforts."
Rachel Johnston, Fine Art department, University of Chichester

"The work was undertaken to meet all deadlines, interim and final reports were of an extremely high and professional standard as were all flyers and communications with our stakeholders." Debbie Moores, Allied Health Professions Lead, South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

"Very inspiring; clarified what arts for health is all about and the types of projects that could be developed. A very useful balance between activities."
Jane Clark, Occupational Therapist, South Staffordshire Healthcare NHS Trust

"I have already found the [strategy] document very useful in passing on to staff members who are interested in developing projects to give them guidance and a context for their work, as well as support in internal fundraising."
Michele Clerc, Lead Community Arts Officer, East Staffordshire Borough Council

Fees

My daily rate is £250, which is negotiable depending on the nature and duration of the project or task. My fees generally include travel and office costs and I will consider undertaking work in any area of the UK or further afield. I am based in London, and have associates across the UK with a range of skills from administration to facilitating focus groups. I am happy to act as primary contractor, bringing in and arranging for payment of other freelancers as needed during the project. I am not registered for VAT. References and evidence of self-employed tax status are available on request.