



Nottinghamshire  
County Council

# Case Study: Arts on Prescription

The Arts on Prescription (AOP) Programme is primarily for adults experiencing stress, depression, anxiety or other mental health problems. Workshops are run by experienced artists and aim to help participants regain their confidence through the arts, learn about art, broaden opportunities for the future and help people to make new friends and increase social networks. City Arts has been delivering the AOP Programme since 2004 as part of the Art in Mind programme of work, seeking to promote mental health through community arts. AOP has developed strategically over the last few years and has strengthened partnerships between Art in Mind, NHS Nottingham City, NHS Nottinghamshire County (PCT) and University of Nottingham to work together in its delivery. The Executive Committee consists of half arts/health professionals and half service users.

## **Project venues:**

Radford (City Arts venue) and College Street Arts and Education Centre

Hucknall (Under One Roof)

Park House Health and Social Care Centre, Carlton, Gedling

**Art forms:** Visual arts, creative writing, batik, photography, textiles, clay work, print making, sculpture and many more other arts related activities

**Participant Group Size:** 10-15 participants.

**Ratio of Participants to Workers:** Two members of staff to 10-15 participants (artist and arts assistant).

**Frequency:** Once a week – throughout the year. Participants are offered the service for 10 weeks and then receive 1-2-1 support with personal and professional development opportunities

**Duration:** 3 hour weekly session

## **Project Outcomes:**

70 participants attend the programme annually. AOP sessions provide a regular programme of weekly arts workshops within Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire that demonstrate how engagement with the arts can play an important role in the promotion and treatment of mental ill health and wellbeing. The project aims to establish mutually beneficial partnerships with diverse partners within the primary and secondary health services and organisations within the voluntary and statutory sectors. The project creates opportunities for personal development and self determined outcomes for people with mental health needs, leading to accreditation (Open College Network), training, educational opportunities, volunteer work and employment.

## **Participant Comments:**

Veronica is a retired lady who has been attending AOP for around one year. Veronica initially attended AOP to support her grandson who has autism however, after the first session; her grandson noticed beneficial changes in her and encouraged her to attend with him each week. Veronica has arthritis so she can sometimes struggle with some of the Arts activities but has found the sessions to be very accommodating and describes them as being 'free and easy'. Veronica describes the mutual understandings between herself and other individuals within the group as being particularly beneficial and enjoys the group having 'like minded' people. Veronica places an emphasis on 'likeness', 'understanding' and 'flexibility' as being central to defining AOP as being different from other groups she has attended previously with her grandson. Veronica cites that herself and her grandson have never felt that they have 'fitted in' to anywhere in the past, whereas it was a relief to finally find somewhere like AOP.

**Key Partners in the delivery of the programme:**

Art in Mind Executive Committee; University of Nottingham; NHS Nottingham City; Nottinghamshire County Teaching Primary Care Trust; Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

**Partners that engage with the service in the City and County:**

General Practitioners, Occupational Therapists, Community Psychiatric nurses, clinical / practice nurses, Consultant Psychiatrist, Staff Nurses –Queens Medical Centre, psychiatrist – Mandala Centre, Social Workers, Support Workers – Framework, Community Mental Health Workers, Mental Health Service Officers, Tenancy Support Workers, Criminal Justice Intervention Team, Nottinghamshire based housing associations (supporting people who are vulnerable and homeless).

**Cost of project (approx):** Each programme/venue costs around £12,000 to deliver annually.

**Funders:**

NHS Nottingham City, Lloyds TSB, Hardship Fund; The Nottingham North and East Consortium (NNEC) is a group of 21GP practices working together in the Practice Based Commissioning scheme.

**Funding cycle:** Varies with each funding body – the funding is usually annual. Lloyds TSB 3 year funding is ending this year.

**Main contact/web address:** Kate Duncan, Creative Programme Manager [www.city-arts.org.uk](http://www.city-arts.org.uk)