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Reducing demand for clinical mental health provision through creative learning – City and Hackney CCG’s partnership with Core Arts

Core Arts is a creative learning hub in Hackney, London. It provides professional and educational support to adults with severe and enduring mental health issues through a range of workshops. Professional tutors offer support in arts, music, multimedia, sports and horticulture to allow members to develop their skills through structured and inclusive activities. Core Arts focuses on education as a means to aid recovery and increase social inclusion and mental wellbeing.



Images provided by Core Arts

Key Facts

Core Arts <https://www.corearts.co.uk/> is directly commissioned by City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to partner with East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) to offer recovery pathways for patients in crisis and those with significant support needs. The recent contracts for this work have run since February 2015. Between February and October 2015, the CCG funded service engaged with 114 people.

In addition, Core Arts forms part of the City and Hackney Wellbeing Network, led by City and Hackney Mind. This network focuses on prevention of the onset of mental health problems and moderate needs. Core Arts engages approximately 150 people via this pathway at any one time. It offers a single point of access, with support and activities provided by a number of specialist partners. For more information: <http://chwellbeingnetwork.london/about/>

Developing skills, gaining new experiences

Core Arts operates through a membership model, allowing those using the space to form part of a supportive community. New members are referred through local clinicians and inpatient services under the CCG funded contract, through the Wellbeing Network partners or by self-referral. After an initial assessment, they are offered up to six months of support. All members of Core Arts develop a creative workplan with staff, identifying areas in which they would like to develop their skills. From this, they can identify the workshops that will help them to meet these goals. Their workplan is owned by them and is stored in an open space so they feel part of the Core Arts creative community, able to review their progress at any time. Progress with skills and wellbeing is monitored with staff, and members are encouraged to reflect on their development and their achievements.

Over 70 workshops are held at Core Arts each week offering structure and stability for those attending. There are also social events such as the monthly social night and ongoing partnerships with art galleries and museums. Workshops are led by artists who can offer professional and educational support. Members are encouraged to display their work in the gallery spaces and also to

participate in regular gig nights. Core Arts operates on the basis of professionals and members working together to develop and showcase talent. This complements specialist mental health support that members receive from other providers such as East London Foundation Trust.

"When you're going through it, it's really therapeutic. There isn't (sic) any facilities like this elsewhere in London" (Member, Core Arts Film¹)

Core Sports

Alongside creative arts education, Core Arts offers access to a diverse sports programme, which consists of various sessions catering for all levels and abilities, promoting an active lifestyle. Sessions run in various sporting venues across Hackney with state of the art equipment and access to Olympic facilities. The sports programme promotes physical and mental wellbeing, and helps remove obstacles faced by people with mental health issues in accessing these services, whilst also reducing social isolation. The programme is CCG funded, which is mindful of the reduced life span, inequality of access and comorbidity statistics in the borough.

Measuring change

Upon enrolment, data on each new member is gathered from the referral clinician on their needs, their use of services in the past year (for example, hospitalisation) and other support they are accessing. This allows Core Arts to develop a baseline for each member. Skills development is measured on a self-reported ten-point scale at two time points, allowing members and staff to observe developments in the specific skills needed to become proficient in an artistic area. Data is also collected using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS), which is collated individually and centrally as part of the Wellbeing Network. In addition, there is space in both the creative workplan and the skill set monitoring for members to record qualitative information, such as achievements and any reflections on their health and wellbeing. Data is also collected from referring clinicians on their perceptions of members' wellbeing and support needs on a quarterly basis.



Image provided by Core Arts

Core Arts monitoring data shows some significant success in meeting its targets. The following outcomes were collected during a six-month review of its CCG funded service

- 97% of members were not re-admitted to hospital during their support and members reported a 46% reduction in their use of health services.
- Personally-reported skills development showed an increase in over 10% of all skills in six months. In addition, across all areas of wellbeing, there was an improvement of over 10%, with an almost 50% increase in rates of sense of purpose and adoption of routine. This is mirrored in the assessments made by referring staff.
- 97% reported improved social networks as well as improved quality of life.
- Members achieve high rates of attendance, 65% attended over 50% of the week. This is compared with a target of 50%.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Vs4MgU2HMw&feature=youtu.be>

- 25% of members no longer met the threshold for needing support within six months of support and 27% were discharged from CPA (<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/Pages/care-programme-approach.aspx>)
- 20% were supported to access further education and 15% engaged with work experience or volunteering activities.

Value for Money

Core Arts has developed a value for money analysis of its service: using data on readmission trends, it has calculated the potential resource efficiencies that its service can offer. For example, ELFT trend data shows that one in three patients are readmitted to hospital within six months. Core Arts has estimated that by reducing readmissions by their members (97% were not readmitted whilst receiving support), it could free up NHS resources. Over six months, 43 members were discharged from support. If the ELFT trends continued, 14 would have ended up being readmitted. This would require between £35,000 and £147,000² of ELFT resources, as a result of these individuals requiring in-patient support. This potential resource saving increases to £84,000-£355,000 for these 14 people when taking into account that prior to support over 80% of Core Arts members had been re-admitted within the last year³.

As with any preventative service, it is not possible to state causality in the absence of a control group. However, Core Arts' target group is acknowledged by funders to be challenging to engage. Consequently, this analysis provides compelling data on the potential for financial savings for local mental health services through the work which Core Arts does to enable people with acute mental health problems to remain within the community.

Alongside the analysis of data, a book of members' stories has been produced illustrating their creative journeys and the way in which this influenced their emotional wellbeing. These stories highlight the participative nature of Core Arts' approach, one where each member is treated as part of a community, learning together.

Developing an offer in changing local context

Core Arts has been operating since 1992, when it began offering arts activities to psychiatric patients. From a single life drawing class, its offer has grown to over 50 workshops per week in a dedicated local studio. During this time, it has developed and evolved its practice in line with local funding models: moving from an initial grant to working with health commissioners and in cross-borough partnerships.



² These figures show the low to high range of costs associated with 7 - 28 days of in-hospital support, which costs an average of £350 per day

³ <https://indd.adobe.com/view/02a6460c-8da9-462d-a2a7-82f77c333495>

The need for mental health support in Hackney is increasing. A 2014 report⁴ stated that Hackney has high levels of need compared to other areas. This demand is expected to increase as the population is projected to increase by 10% by 2021. The report emphasised the role of longer term support beyond health and social care interventions to support with recovery. There is a strong commitment from commissioners to support preventative activity and manage demand.

Images provided by Core Arts

Core Arts has a remit to target specific groups with high need, such as BME males. “We support people with few options who don’t engage with other services” states director, Paul Monks. Paul believes that Core Arts’ focus on social inclusion and community underpins its success. Core Arts also engages with those with severe and enduring conditions. For example, 68% of new referrals have a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia.

Paul believes that good relationships with commissioners have helped Core Arts to evolve its approach and offer effective services. The combination of funding from the local authority, health funders and, increasingly, personal budgets has allowed it to meet the needs of members as these change. Paul says “We want to demonstrate new models of support”, including pathways so that members can continue to engage as they need to as their six-month support ends. The focus on developing and maintaining its community is at the heart of all of Core Arts’ work.

Meeting the needs of commissioners

Core Arts works within the wider mental health services in Hackney. David Maher, Deputy Chief Officer and Programme Director at NHS City and Hackney CCG, says that the aim of Core Arts’ support is to help members “get on their feet, become independent and recover... this is important for managing demand across the borough”. Local public health targets also focus on demand management, reducing the number of people needing acute services.

David says that the CCG recognises the value of community providers, although there are challenges for the way services are commissioned in a context of increasing demand and reduced budgets. For example, the local acute provider, East London Foundation Trust (ELFT), has been set 4% savings targets each year. David states that evidence to support investments outside of acute provision increasingly needs to “draw a straight line between work and a reduced number of beds” (i.e. demonstrate impact on reducing hospital admissions). This provides challenges for both commissioner and commissioned organisations, as it requires a high level of evidence of service use from clients, and at a level which allows the commissioning organisation to divert acute funding.

From the provider perspective, Core Arts has found having a direct relationship with the commissioner to be preferable, as it allows it to be more responsive to the needs of the commissioner and align its services to best meet their needs. “It’s challenging for smaller or specialist organisations to be a partner in a commissioning process, as it works best for us when we can be responsive to local need and have a dialogue about clinical needs and appropriate support” says Paul. Core Arts is trying to build a critical mass of members who are supported by personal budgets. This approach requires a good link to local authorities and discharge teams in order for discussion of people’s needs on discharge to take place, something which can take time. As Paul says, “You need 3-6 months to develop relationships with the hope that people move to personal budgets. You can’t wait until they are being discharged”. However, when it works well moving people onto personal budgets allows them to directly access support that they deem to be best for their personal needs. It also offers a potential sustainable source of funding for organisations like Core Arts.

For more information and resources on Cultural Commissioning visit <http://www.ncvo.org/CCProg>

Case study research undertaken and written by Rosemary Maguire

⁴ <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/Assets/Documents/Mental-health-needs-assessment.pdf>