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Arts, mental health and well-being Strategy 2006-2008

well-being

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# Foreword

The **ArtFull** initiative has been developed to support artists and arts organisations working in the field of mental health and well-being. **ArtFull** will help all those involved to gain a fuller understanding of how to maximise benefits and learning from this activity. This strategy demonstrates the commitment of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Arts Council in supporting the role arts can play in promoting the positive mental health of people living in Scotland.

Mental health is not an issue only for those with mental illness or mental health problems, it is an issue for us all, both individually and collectively. The arts can play a vital role in helping to build a culture that supports everyone's mental well-being.

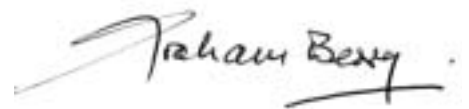
*Scotland's Culture*<sup>1</sup> recognises the positive benefits and value of arts participation in promoting well-being. It states that 'one of the most important things about cultural activity is simply that it is enjoyable and the opportunities it unlocks are quite unique'.

New policy and legislative emphasis on the positive role of the arts in mental health reflects a practice that has already been developed by many organisations and artists across Scotland. These include schools, colleges, local authorities, employers, hospitals, health boards, local arts organisations and the voluntary sector, amongst others, where a range of initiatives are underway demonstrating how vibrant and powerful a force the arts can be in promoting positive mental health and well-being.

Echoing the World Health Organisation's declaration, an editorial in the *British Medical Journal*<sup>2</sup> stated 'there is more to health than physical completeness or the absence of pain'. The *BMJ* then went further to state that spending more money on the arts would probably improve health. The broader public value, power and reach of the arts can certainly inform the new policy context of proactive health promotion. However, potential in this area will clearly not be fulfilled through the

efforts of the Scottish Arts Council alone. Artists, in partnership with those who have the resources to commission and support their work, must continue to build on the faith that has been placed in them by government.

Our goal is to ensure the widest possible opportunities for participation in high quality arts activities to promote positive mental health. The **ArtFull** strategy actively focuses on identifying, developing, and showcasing the work arts organisations in Scotland do in promoting positive mental health. Furthermore, it aims to help those from the arts and other sectors gain a greater understanding of the processes that are involved in supporting community well-being and in exploring ways in which such work can be sustained in the future.



Graham Berry  
Chief Executive

<sup>1</sup> *Scotland's Culture*, Response on the Cultural Review, Scottish Executive 2006

<sup>2</sup> Richard Smith, *British Medical Journal*, December 2002

# ArtFull arts, mental health and well-being in Scotland

**ArtFull** is a distinct arts strategy-in-action. It is a national initiative that makes explicit the links between the arts and mental health, a practical acknowledgement of the intrinsic power of the arts to foster individual, family and community mental health, well-being and participation in society.

The development of **ArtFull** began in February 2005 as a joint initiative between the Scottish Executive's Tourism, Culture and Sport Group, the National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being and the Scottish Arts Council. The National Programme's vision for Scotland is to improve the mental health and well-being of everyone living in Scotland and to improve the quality of life and social inclusion of people who experience mental health problems and/or mental illness.

The establishment of **ArtFull** reflects an explicit understanding by the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Arts Council and their partner agencies of the role played by the arts and creative activity in improving and promoting mental

health and well-being. All are committed to the development of **ArtFull**, a unique and innovative initiative which builds on existing good practice and potential for future development in this field.

**ArtFull** will seek to promote access to arts and mental health activity for people in Scotland particularly for those who have suffered from, or are at high risk of suffering from, mental health problems and/or illness. As such, **ArtFull** will help deliver some of the key aims of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Arts Council as well as reflecting the broader ambitions of cultural policy in Scotland.

## *Mental Health*

The aims of the Scottish Executive's National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being reflect a new overall vision for mental health in Scotland, focusing on promotion and prevention as well as care and treatment, and advocating for the protection and promotion of positive mental health and well-being for all people in Scotland.

In recent times there has been a rethinking about these issues in Scotland and since 2001 the National Programme has supported a number of key developments to promote and develop public awareness, help prevent suicide, support recovery and reduce the stigma often associated with mental ill-health. Details of these developments can be found on [www.wellscotland.info](http://www.wellscotland.info) – the National Programme's website.

**ArtFull** aims to demonstrate and support the role the arts and creativity can play in positive mental health promotion.

**ArtFull** is committed to promoting and developing creative spaces that deliver the conditions for the promotion of mental health. Developing creative spaces is believed by **ArtFull** to be mental health promotion *in action*: environments where creativity is flourishing are regarded as environments in which positive mental health is being promoted.

## Participation<sup>3</sup> in the arts is good for mental health and well-being

**'[Culture's] inspirational qualities defy measurement – just as there is no adequate way to define the confidence and pride that culture's myriad works stir up in those who participate and in those who look on in admiration.'**

*(Scotland's Culture, Scottish Executive, 2006)*

<sup>3</sup> Participation in this context focuses on actively participating in the arts rather than being a member of an audience

Factors that have been identified for promoting mental health and well-being

- A safe environment where diversity is respected and celebrated
- A place to experience self-determination, participation and influence
- The opportunity to practise control over one's development and environment
- Training and learning opportunities
- Access to creativity
- Access to supportive networks
- Access to meaningful activity
- A place to imagine and practise hopefulness

(Adapted from *Equal Minds*, National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being, 2005)

### *The Arts*

The **ArtFull** initiative works directly towards the Scottish Arts Council's and the Scottish Executive's aims of increasing participation in high quality arts activity, particularly (but not exclusively) for those people experiencing mental ill-health, social exclusion, or who are at greater risk of developing mental health problems.

In recent times the arts have increasingly become a component of therapy, often as an activity for people suffering from mental illness. The National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being provides new opportunities for exploring the relationship between the arts<sup>4</sup> and mental health, where participation in the arts is regarded as being an inherently positive, health-promoting activity.

This new perspective opens up the potential for partnerships being developed between arts providers and public sector agencies (including the NHS and local authorities), both nationally and locally, that are concerned with promoting and delivering positive mental health and well-being initiatives.

<sup>4</sup> The 'arts' refers to all artforms, including dance, theatre/drama, visual arts, performance arts, crafts, literature, music etc

## Artfull aims

In order for the arts to fulfil their potential in the field of mental health and well-being, the following aims have been identified.

**ArtFull**'s aims are as follows:

1. Promote increased access and **participation** in arts activity, particularly for those suffering from, or at increased risk of experiencing, mental health problems and/or illness.
2. Develop increased mainstream and inter-agency **partnership** commitment for arts and mental health projects.
3. Support, develop and articulate **quality artistic practice** in the field of arts and mental health work.
4. Develop a **research/evidence base** that helps demonstrate and promote the benefits of the arts in relation to mental health and well-being.

The **ArtFull** approach can be summarised in four focus areas:

1. increasing participation
2. building partnerships
3. developing quality artistic practice
4. developing a research/evidence base

## **Aim 1: Promote increased access and participation in arts activity, particularly for those suffering from, or are at increased risk of experiencing, mental health problems and/or mental illness**

A key aim of **ArtFull** is to increase awareness of mental health through targeted arts participation across the whole population. **ArtFull** will also promote, where appropriate, active involvement in arts projects.

Participation in the cultural life of the community and enjoyment of the arts is an established right within Scotland. Each person across the country has a creative ability that can be harnessed and

developed for their own benefit and that of their community. The recognition of the value of such activity in its own right is a fact articulated clearly within the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, sections 25–26, which state that access to cultural activity should be provided for all people who have used mental health services.

A key to successfully promoting participation is to spread

information on current levels of activity, achievement and practice, for example, through seminars, literature and the **ArtFull** website.

To increase awareness, **ArtFull** will develop, promote and maintain a website ([www.artfull.org](http://www.artfull.org)). The **ArtFull** website will:

- map the spread of national and local activity and identify funding sources and numbers of artists and participants

**‘...Culture is also central to the well-being of Scotland’s citizens...’**

*(Scotland’s Culture, Scottish Executive, 2006)*

## **Aim 2: Develop increased mainstream and inter-agency partnership commitment for arts and mental health projects**

**Culture cuts across all portfolios of government, it can make a difference to the success of each, and portfolio Ministers have committed to using arts and culture to achieve their policy objectives more effectively.'**

*(Scotland's Culture, Scottish Executive, 2006)*

The Scottish Executive believes both 'the arts' and 'the promotion of mental health and well-being' sit at the heart of public policy. There is potential for their relationship to be acknowledged and brought to bear across a range of local and national government policy areas, such as health, education, justice and social services. Arts and mental health practice can play a central role in service delivery for each sector.

ArtFull will develop and promote arts-centred partnership working between a variety of statutory, voluntary sector, and private agencies. It will help to develop, through practice, a better understanding of the role the arts can play to support organisations charged with the delivery of mental health initiatives.

To promote partnership working ArtFull will develop a regional seminar programme

- Developing and accessing opportunities between potential mainstream funding organisations
- Creating the opportunity for artists, statutory and voluntary agencies to discuss developments in arts, mental health and well-being at a local level, and identifying quality in artistic practice, delivery and evaluation
- Identifying and making use of opportunities to make the case for the arts and mental health with key decision makers at a national and strategic level

## Aim 3: Support, develop and articulate quality artistic practice in the field of arts and mental health work

‘...the excellence we cherish must also represent the vast diversity of culture produced and showcased in Scotland’

(*Scotland’s Culture*, Scottish Executive, 2006)

The Scottish Executive and the Scottish Arts Council clearly recognise that the pursuit of artistic excellence is necessary if the potential benefits to mental health and well-being of participation in the arts are to be fully realised. **ArtFull** will consider ways to support and assist artists to develop their proven skills, and partner bodies will be encouraged to lend their support.

‘Artistic excellence’ in the field of arts and mental health should not only be regarded in terms of aesthetic practice (which is crucial) but also in terms of the skills of making this practice accessible to an inclusive variety of participants, some of whom may be particularly vulnerable.

Examples of artistic excellence are already evident with many artists working collaboratively in community settings and within many artforms across Scotland. **ArtFull** will provide an opportunity to focus on particularly strong examples of participatory arts practice (exemplar projects), helping to gauge and articulate the impact and value of these. This focus will further help to inform, develop and share strong practice with a wider audience, including the field of arts and well-being.

To support quality artistic practice in the field of arts, mental health and well-being work, **ArtFull** will develop an open funding programme of exemplar projects

- Developing criteria and guidelines that **ArtFull** will use as a basis to identify and support projects
- Establishing a peer learning network for funded projects, including development workshops to share skills in the delivery and evaluation of arts, mental health and well-being activities
- Publishing the outcomes and learning from the Exemplar Projects Programme

## **Aim 4: Develop a research/evidence base that helps demonstrate and promote the benefits of the arts in relation to mental health and well-being**

**‘Taking part in culture inspires confidence, and it grows confidence and motivation in those who enjoy it’**

*(Scotland’s Culture, Scottish Executive, 2006)*

The Scottish Executive’s embracing of the relationship between the two fields of arts and mental health and well-being is the focus for ArtFull to promote a better understanding of their inter-connectivity.

Promoting that understanding involves ArtFull working with practitioners, including through funded projects, to learn about, articulate and develop what works, and to inform organisations that are looking to engage and invest in such

projects. ArtFull will do this by promoting and co-ordinating research through its exemplar projects, advising on evaluation, and exploring artistic practice and its effects on mental health and well-being.

A task of ArtFull will be to map existing activity in the field of arts and mental health, to collect data, and to monitor developments, disseminating what it regards as particularly innovative, effective or positive practice.

To evidence the value of the arts in relation to mental health and well-being, and to highlight project work to practitioners and sponsors/funders, ArtFull will work together with relevant agencies including:

- Scottish Executive’s ECSnet (an evidence network on culture and sport set up by the Scottish Executive to liaise, collaborate and plan research with non-departmental public bodies and other agencies involved in cultural and sport research)
- Research groups and organisations that promote and use action-based research methods
- Scottish Arts Council research department

**‘Participation in arts activities... can result in the development of interpersonal skills, new friendships and increased involvement by those participating in the activity, leading to an enhanced sense of well-being’**

*(A Literature Review on the Evidence Base for Culture, the Arts and Sport, Scottish Executive, 2004)*

## Artfull Strategy Action Plan 2006-2008

The following action plan provides a framework showing how the arts, mental health and well-being strategy will be implemented. The strategy will be monitored and reviewed in line with the Scottish Arts Council's commitment to continuous performance management and improvement.

ARTFULL

Aim 1	Promote increased access and participation in arts activity, particularly for those suffering from, or are at increased risk of experiencing, mental health problems and/or mental illness		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
The profile of ArtFull and the arts, mental health and well-being sector is increased within Scotland	Initiate an identifiable national arts and mental health campaign, <b>ArtFull</b>	Develop, promote and maintain <a href="http://www.artfull.org">www.artfull.org</a> , the <b>ArtFull</b> website	2006/07-2007/08
2006/07-2007/08	Develop a communications strategy for the work of <b>ArtFull</b> , including DVD, brochures and web-based information sources		
Aim 2	Develop increased mainstream and inter-agency partnership commitment for arts and mental health projects		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
The case for mainstreaming arts, mental health and well-being activity is evidenced	Develop and access opportunities for partnership development between mainstream funding organisations	Identify and liaise with key decision makers at a national and strategic level	2006/07-2007/08
2006/07	Provide opportunities for artists and statutory and voluntary agencies to discuss developments in arts, mental health and well-being practice on a local level		
2006/07	Develop and undertake regional seminars		
Aim 3	Support, develop and articulate quality artistic practice in the field of arts and mental health work		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
An open-funding programme to support and showcase the work being undertaken in the field of arts, mental health and well-being is developed	Increase the capacity of organisations to effectively evaluate and articulate their practice	Provide peer-learning and training sessions for funded projects	2007/08
Increase the capacity of organisations to improve artistic practice and sustainability in the arts and mental health field	Assist artists and other agencies to work together to share skills and practice	Publish the outcomes of the Exemplar Projects Programme	2008
2007/08	Maintain dialogue with arts projects throughout Scotland, preserving links and learning from 'on the ground' developments and innovations		

Aim 4

Develop a research/evidence base that helps demonstrate and promote the benefits of the arts in relation to mental health and well-being

Outcomes	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Evidence of the benefits of the arts in relation to mental health and well-being is increased	Increase discussion and research on the application of the arts and health in Scotland in relation to wider policy objectives	Liaise with research groups and organisations promoting and using action-based research methods in the field of arts and mental health	2006/07-2007/08
	Promote understanding of the impact on mental health and well-being of quality artistic practice and its delivery	Provide a map of existing activity and projects across Scotland, and advise on project evaluation approaches.	2006/07-2007/08
	Increase the capacity of the arts, mental health and well-being field to evidence the case for the arts in the mental health and well-being sector	Work closely with departmental and non-departmental public bodies and other agencies involved in cultural and sport research	2006/07-2007/08
	Present the case for arts and mental health and well-being through the website, working papers and final report	Provide support and training to funded projects, and use the <b>ArtFull</b> website as a resource for broader dissemination	2006/07
		Publish an evidence and practice report on the benefits of the arts in positive mental health and well-being informed by the evaluation work of the exemplar (and other) projects	2006/07-2007/08

## Acknowledgments

This strategy is the collaborative work of the Scottish Arts Council's Arts and Mental Health team (in alphabetical order):

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The team would like to thank the Arts and Mental Health Steering Group for its input, guidance and support:

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Yvonne Georgeson, Tourism, Culture and Sport, Scottish Executive  
Gregor Henderson, National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being, Scottish Executive  
Janet Ruiz, Tourism, Culture and Sport, Scottish Executive  
Angela Saunders, Tourism, Culture and Sport, Scottish Executive

The ArtFull team also gratefully acknowledges the invaluable guidance and support it has received from artists, arts workers and participants who have informed the development of this strategy.

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ISBN 13: 978 1 85119 147 5

ISBN 10: 1 85119 147 X

September 2006