

**Greater
Manchester
Integrated Care
Partnership**



**The Greater Manchester
Creative Health Strategy**



Mr Wilson's Second Liners, Stretford Public Hall. Photo: Phil Hyde.

Executive Summary

Greater Manchester has committed to becoming a creative health city region. This means that GM will be the first city region in the world to realise the power of creativity, culture and heritage in addressing inequities and improving the health and wellbeing of its residents.

Compelling evidence exists that engaging with creativity, culture and heritage helps us to lead longer, healthier, happier lives. Recognition of a relationship between the arts, culture, heritage, health and wellbeing is increasingly referred to as 'creative health'. This takes its name from a parliamentary report that began to consider how engagement with creativity, culture and heritage might improve health and wellbeing while also mitigating the social determinants of health and increasing equity. GM has long recognised that only a small percentage of health is generated via statutory health and care services and that we need to harness all the wider factors that contribute to our health and wellbeing, including access to creativity, culture and heritage.

Consideration of creative health includes both participation in creative activity and engagement with culture and heritage, formally and informally. It is not limited to the visual and performing arts, dance,

film, literature, music and singing but also embraces, for example, crafts, gardening, natural, built and intangible heritage and the culinary and digital arts. Engagement might take place at a concert hall, gallery, library, museum, theatre or park, or it might happen in a health or social care setting, local community space, or at home. Creative health embraces activities that can enhance health and wellbeing in both direct and indirect ways.

This strategy was commissioned by Greater Manchester Integrated Care (NHS GM). It builds on *A Social Glue*, which was commissioned from Dr Clive Parkinson as part of the three-year Great Place programme at Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). That research-informed polemic examined GM's long history of embracing creative health approaches and made a compelling case for GM to become the world's first creative health city region.

This strategy begins by considering some of the ways in which creative health can deliver against the 2022 Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS), helping GM to become a greener, fairer and more prosperous city region. In the process, it looks at the contribution of creative health to meeting some of the priorities identified for GM by the Institute for Health Equity and by the Independent Inequalities Commission – specifically, enhancing wellbeing and equity; focusing on people and communities; and emphasising preventative approaches.

Crucially, this strategy identifies key points at which creative health can help to mitigate the social determinants of health. It shows how creative health can make a significant contribution to GM becoming a Marmot city region. It also illustrates the alignment of creative health with NHS England’s priorities, including Core20PLUS5, and demonstrates how creative health supports the population-health focus of GM’s new Integrated Care Partnership (GM ICP), spanning the city region, which shares the goals of the GMS.

In sections arranged from birth to old age, this strategy illustrates how creative health approaches can contribute to reducing inequities across the life course. In the early years, creative health has a vital part to play in encouraging social, emotional and cognitive development, in preparing children for school and in reducing the attainment gap. Creative approaches can help us into work, improve our working lives, protect us from illness and assist in managing our long-term conditions. As we age, creative, cultural and heritage activities can keep us healthy, living at home and socially connected.

At all ages, creative health approaches can help to restore and maintain our mental health and wellbeing. We present progress on #BeeWell in GM’s schools and colleges, which encourages creative approaches to mental health and wellbeing among children and young people. We look at the prevalence of anxiety, depression and stress among the working-age population (accounting for half of all sick days taken) and point to the excellent GM-based organisations working to support mental health and wellbeing. We provide persuasive evidence of the contribution of creative health to wellbeing and social connectedness in older adults.

Many of the creative health approaches discussed in this strategy take a population-level perspective; others are aimed at particular health conditions and designed to integrate into specific clinical pathways. So, for example, evidence is presented that links creative and cultural activity with healthy life expectancy and enhanced wellbeing; illustrates the contribution singing can make to overcoming breathlessness and anxiety in people with Long COVID; shows dance helping to reduce falls, and therefore emergency hospital admissions, in older adults; and suggests that engagement with creativity, culture and heritage can help to tackle at least half of the known risk factors for dementia. Viewed as part of a broader prevention and early intervention strategy, creative health approaches can help to save money in health and social care and generate a social return on investment.

Taking account of the most fruitful areas in which creative health can help to realise GM’s strategic vision, areas of focus have been drawn up across the life course as follows.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- Early years creative activity in community settings (including nurseries)
- Reading aloud to children in community spaces (including libraries)
- Creative family activities within households experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Participatory arts activities for primary and secondary pupils both within and outside of school
- Promotion of mental health and wellbeing reading lists for children and young people
- Creative, cultural and heritage activities as an integral part of children and young people's mental health services
- Integration of creative health into children and young people's social prescribing services
- Data collection on the engagement of children and young people with creativity, culture and heritage

WORKING-AGE ADULTS

- Volunteering opportunities with the culture and heritage sectors as part of initiatives like GM Works
- Wider population engagement with creative health activities to support health and wellbeing as part of Live Well
- Creative health embedded in clinical pathways using evidence-based approaches, such as singing for Long COVID and dance for Parkinson's disease
- Creative health integrated into While You Wait plans, the While You Wait website and the While You Wait hub
- Creative health integrated into Adult Social Care initiatives that support people to Live Well at Home
- Creative health built into wellbeing initiatives for the health and social care workforce
- Data collection to assess the impact of creative approaches on adult physical and mental health.

OLDER ADULTS

- Creative health approaches for and with older adults in partnership with the GM Ageing Hub
- Localities supported to provide age-friendly cultural and heritage opportunities and participatory arts activities for and with older people
- Dance for falls prevention led by dance artists and organisations
- Creative, cultural and heritage activities promoted as part of brain health campaigns across GM
- Dementia United and dementia leads in each of the 10 localities use commissioning budgets to grow their creative health offer, involving people with dementia in developing activities
- Data collection to illustrate the impact of creative health on older adults.

This strategy provides a road map for the integration of creative health approaches into the daily lives of GM residents. It focuses on GM's assets – from excellent participatory arts organisations to world-class cultural venues and the built, natural and intangible heritage that makes up local communities. It argues for the greatest investment in the areas of greatest need.

Becoming a creative health city region will rely on a combination of targeted and universal approaches. Targeted approaches will involve matching GM's strategic goals and health and social care challenges with appropriate organisations and individuals. Universal approaches will rely on organisations and individuals being given 'permission' and the tools to think and act in creative health ways.



Screen printing, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, Lime Art. Photo: Lime Art.

Six immediate areas of work have been identified, through which GM can begin its journey to becoming a creative health city region. These are:

1. LEADERSHIP:

Identify strategic leadership at a GM level and develop leadership in localities, involving local government, health, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) and cultural sectors and communities.

2. KNOWLEDGE:

Facilitate access to information about creative health assets, methodologies and practice.

3. EVIDENCE:

Convene a creative health evidence hub that draws on the expertise of GM's academic institutions, data analysts and health experts and creates capacity to monitor the contribution of creative health approaches against the GMS and ICP strategies.

4. COMMISSIONING:

Create the conditions for investment in co-produced creative health programmes and interventions, particularly with and in deprived and marginalised communities, raising external funding where appropriate.

5. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

Provide networking and professional development and training opportunities for all those engaged with creative health across the health, care, VCFSE and cultural sectors.

6. COMMUNICATION:

Develop and deliver a communications strategy to promote the work taking place in GM under the banner of creative health.

The success of GM as a creative health city region will be measured by the following system outcomes.

- Creative, cultural and heritage opportunities and activities are accessible to GM residents, wherever and wherever they are, playing a part in people's daily lives at all ages and stages
- The demographics of those benefiting from creative health activities have diversified in accordance with a Core20PLUS5 approach
- Place leads, medical directors, directors of public health, general practitioners, link workers, social care and hospital staff are aware of, and regularly advocate for and commission, creative health activities across GM
- Increased and more sustainable funding has been achieved by GM for long-term creative health activities
- Research activity in creative health has increased and diversified
- GM is home to an informed, sustainable and properly remunerated creative health workforce
- GM plays host to an evidence hub that leads the way in evaluating the contribution of creative health approaches to health, wellbeing and equity
- GM is known as a creative health city region, locally, nationally and internationally.

These outcomes will be underpinned by wider population benefits as follows.

- More pre-school children are ready to begin their education
- The attainment gap has been reduced between children at different ends of the socio-economic gradient
- Residents of GM, including children and young people, have greater choice and access to services that can support their mental health and wellbeing in ways that they want
- Creative, cultural and heritage opportunities pave the way for more people to find work
- People are better able to manage their own health conditions
- Referrals to creative social prescribing and other community activities have increased
- Healthy life expectancy has increased across GM.

By adopting the recommendations of this strategy, every locality will be in a better position to offer well-resourced creative health activities across the life course; population health and wellbeing will improve; inequities will be reduced; and the people of GM will be better able to fulfil their potential.



Hula, The Circus House. Photo: Jamie Lowe.

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Sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy from across the health, arts, heritage, education, care, local government and voluntary sectors.

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Cover image: Plate spinning, The Circus House. Photo: Jessica Stewart.

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Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership



If you would like to find out more about Greater Manchester's commitment to becoming a Creative Health City Region, or to discuss potential opportunities, collaborations and challenges, please email ghmscp.pcca@nhs.net.

The work to realise the power of creativity, culture and heritage in increasing equity, health and wellbeing is driven by the Person and Community Centred Approaches team at the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership. You can follow us on Twitter here: @GMPandC

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