



Age UK Creative and Cultural Participation in Later Life

INSPIRATION PACK FOR PARTNERSHIPS
BETWEEN AGE AND CULTURAL SECTORS

WRITTEN BY

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Introduction

Older people have given us a very clear message that creative and cultural participation in society is important to their wellbeing and social inclusion. It follows that Age UK needs to find ways of stepping up its provision in these areas. In the past, there has been more activity, but dwindling funding and the pressure on other basic services has pushed the issue down the agenda. But that cannot be the last word – we need to re-visit and refresh that important dimension of our work, and to highlight what can work and to provide examples of what has worked.

This pocket sized resource builds on the Age UK Index of Wellbeing in Later Life¹ and Age UK Creative and Cultural Participation and Wellbeing report² showing older people across England believe creative and cultural participation is important to wellbeing. This document is a practical resource for organisations that wish to develop more opportunities in their local area.

Partnership, working across the age and cultural sectors, is the most effective way to develop sustainable opportunities for older people to participate in creative and cultural activities and reach those who experience significant barriers. This toolkit provides useful information to support partnership working, based on real examples of delivery and case studies for guidance. Further information sheets are available for evidence and advocacy at the Age of Creativity³.



Background

A heavyweight report in 2017 from the All-party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing identified an exhaustive list of cultural activity which link creativity and wellbeing. The Select Committee on Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is busy accumulating evidence. The Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care and DCMS have endorsed ‘social prescribing’ and the connection between arts and health. The Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care has drawn attention to the role of the arts in enabling people to live meaningful lives, and the Social Care Institute for Excellence has created a digital resource to support care home staff to engage residents with arts organisations. The concept is mainstream – not a fringe activity and a minority taste.

Local authorities and the Local Government Association are emerging as active players, but infrastructure is important and the trends here are not good. Subsidies for bus services have been cut by £182m in England over the years 2010 – 2018, resulting in nearly 3,500 services being reduced, altered or withdrawn. During the same years, funding for libraries, museums and art galleries has been reduced by £400m, resulting in a 50% cut in grants to cultural organisations in Birmingham, and a third of Essex County Council’s libraries closing.

It is Age UK’s ambition that we can build an impressive body of activity and examples of good practice, and thereby give the work a greater salience and a higher political importance. We are convinced of the benefits of this activity to health, wellbeing, happiness and social inclusion, and that it will make a major contribution to reducing loneliness and mental illness. Let’s get together on this road, and create a formidable force for good.

¹ www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/health--wellbeing/ageuk-wellbeing-index-summary-web.pdf

² www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/health--wellbeing/rb_apr18_creative_and_cultural_activities_wellbeing.pdf

³ www.ageofcreativity.co.uk





Understanding partners: Age UK

An overview of the Age UK network in England

Age UK is a multi-tiered federation with separate organisations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. England has over 150 'local partners', all working to a common set of principals with independent boards of trustees, budgets and programmes of work.

The structure is designed to place Age UK HQ at the heart of national delivery, with a focus on campaigning, influencing, research and service design. The local Age UK's work in partnership with local authorities, health authorities, transport services etc to respond to local needs and opportunities and feed into national objectives.

In practice, this means that there is a shared vision across Age UK, but each area will prioritise and deliver activity in very different ways. Based on research developed by Age UK HQ, we hope to encourage more local Age UK's to develop a local response to creative and cultural participation. In return, we hope to learn from local Age UK's about their grassroots delivery and the practical implications of developing this work across the country.

For more information: www.ageuk.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do



Understanding partners: ACE

An overview of Arts Council England (ACE) networks

‘ACE is a government funded body dedicated to bringing ‘great art and culture for everyone’. ACE is responsible for supporting arts, museums, libraries and archives across England and will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and £860 million from national lottery to support this between 2018-22.

ACE is a development organisation with a remit to champion, develop and invest in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people’s lives. We support activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

In practice, this means that ACE invests in a number of strategic strands of funding for cultural organisations, sector support organisations, strategic touring as well as capital projects. ACE also provide funding for cultural projects through an open application process and publish research on audience data, toolkits and best practice resources to drive high quality cultural experiences for all.’

For more information: www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us-0

Opportunities for Partnership

Bringing the cultural sector and age sector together has many benefits including shared:

1. Expertise

To deliver the best creative experiences for older people, you need to know a lot about culture and age. Pooling expertise from both culture and age sectors is the most effective way.

2. Passion

Both sectors are passionate about what they do. Harnessing this energy produces the best creative experience for older people.

3. Support

Knowing that you don't have to be an expert on every aspect of delivery is reassuring.

4. Resources

Having direct access to older people as well as a back catalogue of cultural delivery is a huge shared resource, in addition to building space and in kind resources.

5. Development

Building on from one-off projects into sustainable delivery and growing a replicable model to reach more people is much easier to achieve in partnership.

“There are hundreds of best practice examples of age-friendly cultural partnership projects across the country, but there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach.”

Age UK Creative and Cultural Participation and Wellbeing report



Barriers for Partnership

Cross sector partnership working can be difficult.
Anticipating issues can help:

1. Language

Communication is key, which is difficult when partners use different words for the same thing/ the same words to describe different things. Take the time to become bi-lingual.

2. Structures

Cultural organisations are often small, bringing in additional staff as required for projects. Age organisations often have a long established workforce spread very thin. Establishing consistent contacts (and a back-up plan) is key.

3. Delivery

Culture constantly evolves and changes, whereas the age sector ensures regularity for clients. Establishing a shared 'comfort zone' (and stepping out of it) helps everyone.

4. Processes

Some organisations are used to taking risks, others are not. Talking through procedures from sign off with trustees, to paying new payees need to be clear from the start.

5. Outcomes

Having a joint statement of intent that everyone understands is crucial.



Working together we are so much stronger!

Age UK Oxfordshire have been working in partnership with organisations in the cultural sector for years, but they don't run an arts 'service' – here's why...

"The Index of Wellbeing provides a compelling imperative for us all to do much more to ensure that older people have the opportunity to participate in creative and cultural activities. As an organisation that understands itself predominantly as a service provider, the temptation to respond to this imperative by running an 'arts service' is strong. But if we are to have impact at scale, this approach has real limitations. By switching into influencing mode and going on a learning journey with local artists and art institutions (museums, theatres), enabling them to break down the barriers that prevent so many older people from participating, we are playing to our respective strengths and our combined impact is potentially enormous. There's some 'letting go' to manage, but working together we are so much stronger!"

Penny Thewlis, CEO, Age UK Oxfordshire and Chair of the AEA Influencing Committee





“For the **Age of Creativity Festival 2019**, we worked on a ‘creative pop-up shop’ in a Castle Quay shopping centre, in partnership with a number of organisations across Banbury. Shoppers were encouraged to take part in a wide range of fun, creative activities and staff were on hand to signpost people to more regular activities as well as other support services that were needed. We were able to celebrate creativity in later life and connect with so many new people in partnership with the museum, arts centre and local artists. We are already planning our next one!”

If you are a local Age UK and would like to join the new Age UK Creative and Cultural Network, lead by Age UK Oxfordshire, email farrellcurran@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Ideas for the Cultural Sector

There are already an estimated 49,000 voluntary arts groups across England and over 800 organisations regularly funded by Arts Council England - so why are those aged 65+ the least likely group to take part in creative and cultural activities? The most frequently asked question we are asked by the cultural sector is...we already cater for older people, so why don't they come?

The following sections explore some of the real life examples we have supported the cultural sector to consider in more detail:

1. Communication

How do people know about it?

3. Offer

Do people really want it?

2. Accessibility

How do people get to it?

4. Sustainability

Will it remain available?



1. Communication

Importance

Good communication is the difference between attracting people to activities – or not.

Questions to consider

Do you really know your target audience and the local networks that can support you?

Real life example

Q: We are running an intergenerational arts project. We have young people but how can we connect with older people?

A: It may seem obvious, but attracting older and younger audiences requires different approaches - and not simply due to the digital divide. Motivations for taking part differ, as do expectations around programming, scheduling and accessibility. Understanding what is important to your target audience is the key to communication, as is ensuring that the message is seen by the right people. Connecting with older people individually can be a challenge, but local Age UK's are expert agencies in the same way as schools are key in connecting with young people. Age sector organisations also have regular communication platforms that can help you spread the word, attract new audiences and ensure your artistic offer is the right fit locally.

Resources to help

Age Friendly Standards:

www.familyarts.co.uk/age-friendly-standards

2. Accessibility

Importance

Accessibility is the difference between people being able to take part – or not.

Questions to consider

Is your event accessible in terms of content, programming, location and marketing?

Real life example

Q: How do we increase numbers for our dementia friendly film screenings?

A: Every successful creative activity puts the target audience at the heart of decision making. For best results, talk to your local dementia service and get their expertise on board from the start. Take part in training, become a dementia friend and connect with forums that support people locally. Include individuals you want to connect with in the design and development of your offer by recruiting people living with dementia and their carers as volunteer champions to help co-design your offer. Think through the customer experience from door to door, as well as within your building, and reduce barriers where possible. Think through the possibility of making your programme entirely dementia friendly as well as a monthly specialised offer.

Resources to help

Dementia Friendly Venues Guide:

www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementia-friendly-resources

3. Offer

Importance

Understanding what to offer and what the barriers are to people being inspired by your offer or not.

Questions to consider

You can have a fully accessible activity that is communicated to the right people - but if the offer isn't right then it won't work.

Real life example

Q: My grandma would never want to do playwriting – why would she?

A: Unbelievable as it may seem- this is a real life example. It is curious that people still pool almost half the population into a homogenous group and make assumptions about what 'older people' might want to do. 'Creativity and culture' is an umbrella term for hundreds of possibilities that a wide range of people enjoy. The obvious solution is to consult the people you want to connect with - and better still provide a taster of different opportunities. It can be hard to know if you like playwriting if you've never tried and it can be difficult to pick up a pen if the last time you did wasn't a great experience. Working with communities and individuals to shape your offer and approach is the best way to tailor for such a huge proportion of the population.

Resources to help

Baring Foundation Resources:

<https://baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/towards-the-end>



4. Sustainability

Importance

If you have an offer that people want - it needs to be sustainable.

Questions to consider

Does your offer build on local assets and is it as efficient as it could be?

Real life example

Q: I've got funding for a 6 week intensive arts programme for vulnerable older men, why won't the age sector support it?

A: Because it's not sustainable. Supporting vulnerable older people to take part in new activities is a challenge and when they begin reaping the benefits, it is imperative that this continues in some way, otherwise it puts the individual at risk of having a potentially negative experience. Getting funding for long stretches of activity is hard, but there needs to be a balance in terms of impact and duration, with clear pathways in place for when the activity ends. Building on local assets, by working in partnership to reduce costs and increase the expertise of the staff involved is the key to success. Knowing the local creative offer and avoiding duplication also means a wider range of opportunities are on offer locally.

Resources to help

AHRC Cultural Value Report:

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report>

“The key to long term delivery, as opposed to one off projects, is to build on existing resources and expertise and seek additional funding as required, embedding delivery in the ‘day job’ wherever possible.”

**Age UK Creative and Cultural Participation
and Wellbeing report**



"Yesterday I visited Bristol Museum and Art Gallery. We had intended (my brother, sister-in-law, nephew, nephew's wife and I) to visit The SS Great Britain in Bristol but the car park was completely full, so we visited the Museum & Art Gallery instead. I have lived in Bristol for 50 years and I am ashamed to say this was (I think) my first visit there. I seem to have been missing opportunities."

Age UK, Your Voice Engagement Panel

Ideas for the Age Sector

Just like any other cross-sector partnership working, there are strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in developing projects. Every local Age UK is different and every area has a different creative and cultural sector of venues, networks and artists. The most frequently asked question for the Age Sector is...Where do we start?

The following examples present some of the models you might want to explore locally:

1. Creative Volunteering

4. CCG Commissioning

2. Voluntary Arts

5. Social Prescribing

3. Cultural Venues

6. Other



1. Creative Volunteering

Definition

Volunteers are the backbone of both the age and cultural sector and we rely on this support to deliver most of our programmes of work. Having a volunteer with a creative flair is a great way of enabling older people to experience creative activities in a sustainable way locally.

Pros

Creative volunteers are passionate individuals who only require reasonable expenses to deliver activities locally. Volunteers come from a wide range of creative backgrounds and many are building up experience to develop their own ideas and projects. Volunteers have a long period of time to get to know groups and individuals very well and build up trust.

Cons

Creative volunteers are volunteers and the pleasure of this role comes from delivering what you enjoy on the days you are available. This can have an impact on the quality, range and flexibility of the activities on offer. When you find a good creative volunteer, it is important to provide training and support to ensure volunteers have the chance to develop their own creative practice and avoid burn out. It is also wise to identify a 'plan b' to ensure creativity doesn't leave the group with your volunteer if they decide to move on.

Resources to help

Volunteering in the Arts Toolkit:

www.voluntaryarts.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=35c9f36d-2c2b-4810-8ad8-88c0b6f01442

2. Voluntary Arts

Definition

The voluntary arts are defined as ‘creative cultural activities that people undertake for self-improvement, social networking, leisure and fun - but not primarily for payment’. So this includes choirs, crafts, book clubs, art groups, dance troupes up and down the country meeting regularly in pubs, community centres and village halls to name a few of the estimated 49,000 across England.

Pros

Groups and clubs run by volunteers account for a huge proportion of the creative activity that goes on across the country. It is low cost, built on shared enthusiasm and sustainable in the community. Members are required to contribute little financially, but often take a role in various aspects of the delivery. Connecting to local groups with shared interests can be an invaluable way of enabling more older people to get creative.

Cons

Voluntary arts groups are led by volunteers and the skills of each group varies tremendously. There will be groups that are keen to become dementia friendly and embrace new members and for others it can feel like a step too far with the resources and skills they have. Connecting with groups that are willing and able to expand or share their offer can be hugely rewarding, even if it is for one off occasions.

Resources to help

Voluntary arts are often found by using local searches or through umbrella organisations

www.voluntaryarts.org

3. Cultural Venues

Definition

Arts Council England (ACE) funds 829 organisations as well as hundreds of museums and libraries. Thousands of cultural venues exist without this core investment and the heritage sector includes National Trust and Heritage England. Local councils also deliver cultural programmes; all of which have huge potential for partnership working.

Pros

Working with a cultural venue to deliver creative activities for older people means paid cultural professionals are involved. Whatever the cultural activity, those who are employed will have specialist knowledge and experience in delivery. The venue is also likely to have resources in terms of physical space and materials; many are entirely free to visit. If the venue is funded by ACE then they will have a remit to 'make great culture for everyone' - and this includes older people. Venues often want to make contact with new audiences and connect with those who are harder to reach - and this is where the experience of the age sector comes in.

Cons

In some cases, cultural venues can be hard to access or intimidating, particularly if you have significant support needs. Some venues have outreach staff that are trained to provide additional support and many are interested in partnership projects that draw in additional funds for specific activity with new audiences.

Resources to help

Cultural venues are increasingly programming more for older people www.royalexchange.co.uk/the-elders



4. CCG Commissioning

Definition

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are the 200+ local agencies funded in England to deliver local health services as defined in the Health and Social Care Act of 2012. CCGs promote better health and wellbeing by funding the General Practices and have significant budgets to commission local health services.

Pros

Being commissioned by a CCG to provide services that offer local health outcomes provides a potentially large income stream for new activity. CCGs commissioning rounds mean that investment will last years rather than months, which provides a sustainable model for delivery.

Cons

CCGs have very specific targets in relation to health outcomes for the population they serve and this brings significant requirements in terms of accountability, monitoring and evaluation. In many cases, CCGs will need to decommission a service in order to free up funds to commission an alternative service - which means they require rigorous data and significant evidence to show that a service can deliver the outcomes they want before they will invest. CCGs are not always the funders to pilot innovative new approaches, as they need guaranteed returns on investment, but many are increasingly investing in creative activities and cultural providers as the evidence base grows.

Resources to help

CCGs funded projects are increasing across the country

**[www.creategloucestershire.co.uk/
cultural-commissioning](http://www.creategloucestershire.co.uk/cultural-commissioning)**

“I go to the theatre regularly... sing in a church choir and attend social events. I feel fortunate that I can access information on all sorts of creative and cultural activities and choose what I want to do.”

Age UK, Your Voice Engagement Panel

5. Social Prescribing

Definition

When a medical professional produces a prescription, it is most commonly used for drugs to treat or prevent a health related issue. However there is a growing appreciation that non-medical ‘social’ interventions can also have a beneficial impact on health. Both the Secretary for Health and Social Care and for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport have publicly supported examples of dance lessons being used to combat early signs of psychosis, connecting school choirs with care homes, and music lessons to improve patients’ recovery after a stroke.

Pros

Prescribed arts activities are now widely acknowledged as having a positive role to play in supporting traditional medical interventions to improve the health and wellbeing of people with a number of conditions. This body of evidence is growing significantly and more medical professionals are routinely prescribing social activities and cultural delivery in local areas.

Cons

The NHS long term plan announced 1,000 social prescribing ‘link workers’ to support GPs to prescribe a wider range of social activities, however, no specific resource was identified to help support activities that patients could be referred to. We are yet to learn how local delivery will be supported in the long term to respond to increased demand.

Resources to help

Many ‘arts on prescription’ projects support older people

www.ahsw.org.uk/userfiles/files/AHSW_Arts_on_Prescription_Fact_Sheet.pdf

6. Other

There are so many other types of partnership models between those in the age sector and cultural sector, not least the individual artists and freelance professionals that make up a huge proportion of the workforce. The age sector has multiple entry points for partnership too, from regular group sessions to a one off fundraising events and everything in between.

Taking an asset based approach to developing partnerships means that local needs are met by local solutions and tailored for very specific needs. Often just sharing existing resources, expertise and local knowledge is enough to generate the beginnings of a partnership and this can develop further when more time resource is available.

Finding the time to meet with prospective partners when there isn't a specific outcome or service to focus on can also be difficult to prioritise, but it isn't often that exploratory meetings are a waste of time. When building your creative offer in partnership, it is often best to sow seeds of development with a number of partners and wait to see what blossoms naturally over a longer period of time than picking one large project and taking a service style approach.

Resources to help

Read our introduction to Age Friendly Creative projects

www.ageofcreativity.co.uk/assets/pdfs/Age%20

[Friendly%20Creativity%20-%20An%20](http://www.ageofcreativity.co.uk/assets/pdfs/Age%20)

[Introduction.pdf](http://www.ageofcreativity.co.uk/assets/pdfs/Age%20)

“The best models engage older people in the decision making at all levels, as co-producers and artists, as well as audiences, participants and volunteers.”

Age UK Creative and Cultural Participation and Wellbeing report



“There are many thousands of us 1930/40’s babies, who are as fit as fishmongers cats, with the ability to fulfil [and] we need something to do. Tick Box is OK for statistics, people NEED empathy. I hope I have given you some food for thought!”

**Age UK,
Your Voice Engagement Panel**

Next steps

Both the **Age Sector** and **Cultural Sector** can do a lot more in supporting older people to enjoy creative and cultural activities and the associated benefits. These are our first steps:

Nationally

1. Popularise and publicise the findings of national research;
As often as possible, describe the Wellbeing Index.
Increase understanding of the 38% older non-attenders.
2. Map existing activity across the country;
To mark the progress and development of the process.
Routinely report NPO delivery for the over 65's.
3. Use influencing and campaigning channels;
Build a network of demonstrator projects.
Work strategically with Age Sector campaigning channels.
4. Provide advice and guidance where possible;
Encouraging self-confidence in local partners.
Improve support for creative ageing professionals specialists.
5. Sharing best practice.
Ensuring that standards and benchmarks are adhered to.
Raise visibility of older artists and the emerging field.



Locally

1. Consider your local creative offer for older people;
Map existing creative opportunities locally.
Explore how you currently engage with older people.
2. Identify 'quick wins' within existing resources;
Use free creative resources available for your existing groups.
Book 'Dementia Friends' training for your staff and volunteers.
3. Reflect on the needs of your local population;
Ask your groups and networks about their creative interests.
Identify who you are not reaching and consider why.
4. Explore your local cultural sector assets;
Connect with your local Arts Officer at the council.
Find out who is already delivering creative ageing projects.
5. Connect with one potential partner and take it from there.
Make contact with a cultural partner that has a natural fit.
Approach a group that have barriers to creative engagement.

To connect with other people across the Age UK network exploring creative and cultural work contact:
farrellcurran@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

Free Resources

There are a lot of free toolkits and guides to support you on the Age of Creativity website, a resource dedicated to Creative Ageing. Members from across the world upload information to share with a small selection include:

64 Million Artists

This website contains dozens of free bite-sized creative activities for anyone and everyone to try. Sign up for daily creative challenges or download resource packs, including one specifically designed for local Age UKs. **www.dothinkshare.com**

Armchair Gallery

This free app transports you into a number of the world's most interesting art galleries, from the comfort of your own home. Specifically designed for older people, the content comes to life with interactive features.

<http://imaginearts.org.uk/programme/armchair-gallery>

House of Memories

You can create your own house of memories using this free app by selecting museum objects and telling stories. Developed specifically for those living with dementia and their carers, the features are easy for everyone to enjoy.

<https://houseofmemories.co.uk/things-to-do/my-house-of-memories-app>

Become a member of the Age of Creativity network and sign up for free email updates on the topics of your interest.
www.ageofcreativity.co.uk

Funding

There is so much you can offer by using existing resources creatively and working in local partnerships, but additional funding is also helpful. To get free regular updates of general, as well as specialist funding, sign up to the Age of Creativity network. www.ageofcreativity.co.uk

Thank you

We would like to thank the following companies, who provide creative events, for with and by older people for the use of their photos in this booklet.

Front cover: Meet me at the Museum © Gareth Jones. Courtesy of National Museums Liverpool.

p2-3: Cocktails in Care Homes © Roxene Anderson for Magic Me – www.magicme.co.uk

p4-5: © South East Creative Arts – www.southeastcreativearts.co.uk

p6-7: Age of Creativity Festival Conference 2019

p8: © Paul Starr, Essex County Council: Creative Journeys project with Orchestras Live and Sinfonia Viva as featured in “From Bingo to Bartok”: Creative and Innovative Approaches to involving older people with orchestras. Read more at www.orchestraslive.org.uk/news/bingo-to-bartok

p9: Age Friendly Banbury, Age UK Oxfordshire – www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire

p10-11: Mind the Gap © Bryon Gallagher, Wiltshire Creative www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk/take-part/community-projects

p12-13: Remember to Dance, Green Candle Dance – www.greencandledance.com

p15: Turtle Key Song – www.turtlekeyarts

p16: Growing Together, Green Candle Dance – www.greencandledance.com

p19: The Big Sing, © Rob Townsend Musical Memories www.musicalmemoriescic.org.uk

p23: Meet me at the Museum © Gareth Jones. Courtesy of National Museums Liverpool.

p25: Emily Hall Potter and Art Facilitator © Marc Morris Photography – www.emily-hall.co.uk

Useful Contacts

THE AGE OF CREATIVITY

This free network is for professionals interested in creativity in later life. Join to receive regular updates on funding, training, best practice as well as toolkits and events

www.ageofcreativity.co.uk  @ageofcreativity

AGE UK

Find your local Age UK and further information about creative and cultural delivery

www.ageuk.org.uk  @age_uk

FAMILY ARTS CAMPAIGN

Sign up for Age Friendly Standards and search for local Age Friendly arts events

www.familyarts.co.uk  @familyarts1

ARTS COUNCIL

Explore funding, research and best practice for the culture sector

www.artscouncil.org.uk  @ace_national

BARING FOUNDATION

Find resources developed within their arts and older people programme

www.baringfoundation.org.uk  @baring_found

CULTURE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Join the alliance and connect with organisations dedicated to this specialist field

www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk

 @CHWalliance