

November 2014



Heywood, Middleton & Rochdale Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Cartwheel Arts

Why a Clinical Commissioning Group is funding innovation to build resilient communities

Finding innovative ways to improve health and wellbeing is the ambition of many commissioners. In Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has set aside a portion of its budget to invest in local voluntary and community groups delivering projects with health benefits, driven by a desire to seek innovation and build strong communities. In the past two years, the CCG's social investment fund has awarded £2.5m in grants to a huge range of organisations; many use art to improve health and wellbeing. Although the CCG is using a grant aid mechanism, the outcomes and evidence required are the same as in commissioning arrangements.

'We fund a circus, a Carers' Choir, boxing clubs, angling clubs, DJ schools—a whole host of different things,' explains Ian Mello, the CCG's Head of Commissioning and Provider Management. As long as a project can demonstrate its effect on community health and wellbeing, contributing to at least one of the CCG's seven key outcomes, it can apply to the fund.

Building stronger communities

The CCG is keen that the fund attracts many different groups, growing Rochdale's voluntary sector and filling gaps in services: Ian explains its remit is broad *'in the hope that we get some innovation and real community assets springing up that we could develop.'* Making the fund open and accessible, and keeping the application process simple, is key—there is just one form to be filled for grants of £5,000; two for grants of £25,000.

As well as promoting health and reducing health inequalities, the CCG hopes the fund will help determine what local communities want, improve the range of voluntary and community organisations, and strengthen their accountability. The CCG tries to make its funding go as far as possible: all projects must 'buddy up' to share expertise and resources, and each year grantees come together at an event, almost like speed dating, to do so. Projects are also encouraged to use volunteers. *'We try to make sure a pound becomes more than a pound,'* Ian explains. *'We want to maximise our investment by growing a social movement, people interacting and volunteering with others in the community.'*

Key outcomes

Projects seeking grants through the fund must show health and community benefits to the borough through:

- Promoting and supporting a healthy lifestyle and independence
- Supporting new mothers and families around breastfeeding
- Supporting women around breast cancer screening
- Supporting people with dementia including carers and families
- Supporting people with learning disabilities including carers and families
- Supporting people to manage their own health and wellbeing
- Promoting mental wellbeing



*Purani Yaadein/Old Memories.
Image: Cartwheel Arts.*

Art for wellbeing

Cartwheel Arts is funded to deliver health outcomes through its *Art for Wellbeing* programme. The charity's business is *'art for a reason'*—using creative activities to reach out to different communities and achieve positive change. It has a strong track record of successful mental health projects and was recently Highly Commended in the National Positive Practice in Mental Health Awards, in the Art, Mental Health and Wellbeing category. *Art for Wellbeing* is a three-year programme in Rochdale and Wigan that delivers courses, workshops and projects to improve mental health.

The CCG funds three *Art for Wellbeing* projects. *Purani Yaadein*—'old memories' in Urdu—brings together people with dementia for shared reminiscing sessions, often with afternoon tea. Cartwheel has created and is currently trialing a game, *Wellbeing Dominos*, which centres on personal development, journaling and mindfulness—it plans to provide training to other groups and health practitioners to use the game to support improvements in mental wellbeing. The final project is a user-led group, *Art and Soul*, originally a course run by Cartwheel. When funding ran out Cartwheel supported the group to become constituted and continue independently. It is now funded directly by the CCG, and pays Cartwheel to manage its projects—its most recent was an exhibition at a Rochdale gallery.

Cartwheel's mental health projects are run by professional artists, and work towards a tangible final outcome—an exhibition or publication. Each course has a dedicated

Emotional Support Worker with a therapeutic background who works alongside the artist. *'They support the group dynamic, and help manage any crises,'* explains Kerry Bertram, who leads this work, *'but their main role is to help people feel that coming to a session doesn't depend on them being in a good mood or feeling well that day—they can feel safe and confident to come along even if they are feeling down.'* Currently Cartwheel's projects cost approximately £70 per head for a 10-week course of 15 participants—including artist tuition, an Emotional Support Worker, wellbeing assessments and production of an exhibition or publication.

These projects reflect a wider national trend emphasising care in communities, rather than clinical settings. *'It's our general strategic vision to do more in the community,'* explains Ian, *'for communities to provide more local services for local people themselves that aren't—that don't need to be—statutory.'*

The right approach to measurement

Working with so many small organisations can be challenging: the CCG has its own targets to meet and must demonstrate that each project it funds contributes to health outcomes. The fund is administered by The Charity Service, which, as well as advertising and managing applications, visits projects quarterly and helps them monitor outcomes. Some groups are new, or have no experience of speaking to commissioners—*'creating a shared language'* to connect the CCG and voluntary and community groups has been one of The Charity Service's key roles. Many groups need support to measure what they're achieving in a way that fits with the NHS's monitoring system.

For Cartwheel, a lack of commissioner-friendly data has been a barrier in the past. *'We've been trying to get commissioned to deliver services for a while,'* says Kerry, *'but because what we offer is a bit different we didn't have the kind of statistics commissioners were after. Working with the NHS has helped us improve our*



Patterns inspired by memories of favourite clothes as part of Purani Yaadein/Old Memories. Image: Cartwheel Arts.

approach to evidence. Art for Wellbeing projects use two standardised, widely available approaches to track improvement in wellbeing, and identify where people need extra support: the **Mental Health Recovery Star**, and the **Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale** (WEMWBS).

Fitting with commissioners' measurement needs

Using the same tools and measures that commissioners use in other projects is important, particularly for health outcomes. As Ian explains, *'WEMWBS is one of the tools we look for because it's clinically validated nationally. Our GPs use it as a tool, and people tend to use it for well-being projects.'* Because it is so widely used in the NHS, it allows easy comparison between project results.

'We use WEMWBS because that's what the NHS uses,' Kerry explains, but it is used alongside the Mental Health Recovery Star, which Cartwheel feels allows a more personal approach and fits better with its work. Measurement is integrated into project delivery, and part of the Emotional Support Worker's role is to assess wellbeing at the start, middle and end of each project. *'She takes participants through the star before we decide if they're suitable, or if their needs are more complex,'* says Kerry. *'We encourage people to take ownership of their assessments themselves, and that's worked well.'*

As well as statistics, other forms of evaluation add depth to Cartwheel's discussions of impact. *'We try to balance statistical data and case studies, photographs of exhibitions and physical books. We call it 3D statistics: it's a richer resource with the numbers and headline figures as well as the emotional side and impact on people lives.'*

Looking ahead

Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale's social investment fund reflects the CCG's commitment to community support, independent living and social participation as valuable components of healthcare, as well as more traditional clinical interventions. Following successful outcomes in the first year, £1.5m has been committed to its second year, with many projects refunded. *'The CCG has seen the value of building relationships with people they've funded and getting a clearer picture of what is available in the community,'* says Kerry. *'The fund has increased partnership working—organisations have tried to work together and share resources.'*

This isn't the only CCG pioneering such a scheme, but it has made a major financial commitment—a move that suggests confidence in the potential of voluntary and community groups to innovate, build on strong community networks, and add value to the CCG's investment. Others are now following suit, and the fund itself is innovating in the way it works. This year it opened up applications from consortia, so organisations can join together to bid for far more than the £25,000 cap for individual projects. *'We have two big bids for about £150,000, with a prime, lead group working with six or seven federated groups,'* says Ian. *'There's a big counselling service, for example, that includes lots of individual cultural groups offering specialist provision, with one prime contractor running the programme.'*

The fund has also brought organisations doing great work to the CCG's attention, and shown that often small community groups can get you 'more bang for your buck.' *'Sometimes a smaller, £4,800 project had better outcomes and achieved more'* than larger counterparts, explains Ian. *'Perhaps they do more in more diverse, flexible ways—and they often have stronger networks locally to mobilise resources.'*

*Reminiscing exercises as part of Purani
Yaadein/Old Memories.
Image: Cartwheel Arts.*

Find out more...

Cartwheel Arts

www.cartwheelarts.org.uk @CartwheelArts
www.artforwellbeing.wordpress.com

Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale CCG

<http://www.hmr.nhs.uk/index.php/services/local-health-grants>

The Charity Service

<http://www.charityservice.org.uk/>

For more information and resources on Cultural Commissioning visit

<http://www.ncvo.org/CCProg>

Case study researched and written by Matilda Macduff

The Cultural Commissioning Programme (www.ncvo.org/CCProg), funded by Arts Council England, works to strengthen relationships between the arts and cultural sector and public service commissioners. It is delivered by a partnership of [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) (lead), [New Economics Foundation](#) and [New Philanthropy Capital](#).