

Case studies: How have culture and creativity been supporting people in health, care and other institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Project: cARTrefu

Organisation: Age Cymru

Region: Wales

“This was so much fun. I thoroughly enjoyed it. We are going to do this activity tomorrow and build on it within the home. Feeling very emotional and relaxed.”



Image credit: cARTrefu

Introduction

cARTrefu, which means to reside in Welsh, is Age Cymru's flagship arts in care homes project that has been running since 2015. The aim of the project is to improve access to quality arts experiences for older people in residential care and, develop artist's and care home workers' skills in running these creative sessions.

We are running regular online workshops to introduce care home staff to cARTrefu, giving practical advice and tips on how to run creative activities in care homes, building staff confidence, and using existing resources.

Our artists are also working with care home staff over four weeks to develop sustainable cARTrefu activity plans, which are accessible and easy to deliver. The workshops and activity plans are both free to care homes.

We are also running free online cARTrefu workshops for artists and creatives in Wales who are interested in learning about the cARTrefu model, and an opportunity to share best practice about working in care homes, with a focus on supporting residents living with dementia. We have a long-term aim of building capacity within the wider arts sector to respond to the needs of the care homes.

Funders

cARTrefu is funded by the Arts Council of Wales and The Baring Foundation.

Are you working in partnership?

No

Who is it for?

We are hoping to reach as many care-home staff across Wales as possible, to offer them practical advice and tips on how to run creative activities in their care homes, enabling them to improve the range of activities for their residents to help improve wellbeing.

We are also working with artists and creatives in Wales who are interested in working with residents within care homes, in line with our long-term aim of building capacity within the wider arts sector to respond to the needs of the care homes.

Are these people you have worked with before, or new participants?

Both

How many people took/are taking part?

Over 150 care homes have applied to be involved in this third phase of cARTrefu. The application process is still open, and we are happy to receive applications from any care home in Wales who would like to receive cARTrefu. We have already worked with more than 50 care homes since September 2019, and we hope to work with each care home who apply for cARTrefu by the end of phase three.

Since our first workshop for artists and creatives, which took place in February 2020, over 50 artists and creatives across Wales have registered for our workshops.

Where is it happening?

cARTrefu works with care homes, and artists and creatives, across the whole of Wales.

For how long has it been happening?

The third phase of cARTrefu began in September 2019 and will run until the end of December 2021.

What were/are the main outputs?

As part of cARTrefu, we use exhibitions to raise public awareness of creative life in care homes, through the artwork created with, and inspired by, the people living in, working in and visiting care homes.

Our cARTrefu Cube, a purpose-built exhibition space, allows us to exhibit throughout Wales, by bringing the work of local artists to the public. We have had to postpone the cARTrefu Cube Tour due to the situation with Covid. We hope to continue the tour when it is safe for us to do so, and as and when venues can open their doors to the public.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

It's estimated that 70% of people in a care home are living with dementia. In 2013 the Alzheimer's Society surveyed relatives of care home residents, and it was found that less than half felt that their family member was being offered opportunities for activities. In April 2015, the cARTrefu programme was developed by Age Cymru to increase opportunities for residents and staff to participate in the arts. Between April 2015 and August 2019, 3217 residential and nursing care home residents, staff, volunteers and family members in 194 care homes have participated in the cARTrefu programme. The evaluation proved that participating in the cARTrefu programme was found to have a significant impact on older people's well-being and staff attitudes towards residents, especially those living with dementia. Staff also gained the confidence to lead creative activities themselves and were more likely to seek out cultural experiences outside of work.

Our aim is to support care homes to be able to offer a wide range of activities for their residents, leading to an improvement in the well-being of the residents living in care homes, and increase the level of hope for people living with dementia.

The focus of cARTrefu phase three is to continue to improve the range and quality of creative provision in care homes, led by care home staff. Secondly, to share the learning from cARTrefu to the wider arts sector and build the sectors capacity to deliver work in care homes. We also continue to raise the public's awareness of creativity in care homes, in line with Age Cymru's goal of creating an Age Friendly Wales, and have a long term aim of influencing the development of well-being in social care standards, to ensure that arts and creativity are considered vital to a person's ability to live well, and creating a sustainable legacy for the cARTrefu approach.

Have you adapted existing work to make this happen? If so, how?

The cARTrefu activity plans and workshops were all delivered in person pre Covid. To enable us to continue with the project, we have had to move the delivery online until a time when it is safe for us to return to our previous way of working. The online platform, Zoom, has enabled us to continue with the project, and engage with the participants, in the best way possible at the present time.

Does your work support people who identify with one or more of the protected characteristics¹?

cARTrefu was developed to help improve the wellbeing of care home residents, with a focus on those living with Dementia. Our artists aim to adapt their workshops to be inclusive for all, so that those living with arthritis, sight loss, hearing loss, loss of mobility or motor skills etc. can all participate in the sessions.

Evaluation & Feedback

At the end of each workshop and activity plan, the participants complete an anonymous feedback form. This feedback is then used as part of the evaluation of this third phase.

cARTrefu has been formally evaluated through each phase of the project, and we are continuing to do so through this third phase. We evaluate through questionnaires, feedback forms and interviews.

A summary of the results of the phase one evaluation, which explored the impact of the art residencies on all involved, are as follows:

Residents

- A statistically significant improvement in wellbeing scores after attending cARTrefu sessions.
- Residents rated 86% of sessions as highly enjoyable (4 or 5 on a 5-point scale).
- Wider impact such as socialising more and regaining skills such as using a knife and fork.

Staff

- A statistically significant improvement in attitudes towards residents, especially those living with dementia.
- A statistically significant increase in confidence to lead a creative arts session in the home.
- Statistically more likely to seek out participatory or spectator cultural experiences (i.e. arts classes, visiting gallery/theatre) outside of work.

Artists

¹Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (Equalities Act 2010).

- A statistically significant improvement in attitudes, including hope and recognition of personhood towards residents.
- Personal development and the development of new skills.

While the evaluation of the first phase provides a strong evidence-base of the impact of cARTrefu it was felt an analysis on the Social Return on Investment would provide additional evidence on the social value generated by the activities.

The SROI analysis, conducted by the Dementia Service Development Centre Wales at Bangor University, found that cARTrefu delivered a Social Return on Investment of £6.48 for every pound invested.

Our evaluation is continuing to be led by the Dementia Services Development Centre Wales, Bangor University. To evaluate this third phase of cARTrefu, we have employed a KESS Masters by Research student, through Bangor university. This KESS project will engage various stakeholders across Wales in Social Care Innovation Labs to explore the ways in which the cARTrefu programme supports older people living with dementia, in care home settings, to achieve personal wellbeing outcomes. Research findings and recommendations will enable us to explore ways of embedding the cARTrefu approach within the social care sector as a way of meeting the well-being needs of care home residents who are living with dementia.

Quotes from attendees of our care home workshops:

- “This was so much fun. I thoroughly enjoyed it. We are going to do this activity tomorrow and build on it within the home. Feeling very emotional and relaxed.”
- “I really enjoyed today, also meeting with other care homes, my confidence has already grown, thank you so much.”
- “Excellent interactive workshop which would benefit all residents with potentially excellent outcomes.”
- “Brilliant activities to introduce to residents to create amazing times and memories.”
- “I thought it was a very good workshop and can see it benefitting our residents in our care home. Can't wait to use the tools I've learnt, thank you.”
- “A huge thank you to you, it really was uplifting and has given me some great tools to grow our sessions. Please pass on how grateful I am for the privilege of being able to be part of the workshop.”

Quotes from attendees of our workshops for artists and creatives:

- “A fantastic insight into creative activities in care homes. Artists and Age Cymru staff were very welcoming, creative and willing to share/help and go on to discuss in depth tangents based on real experience. A great help for me to expand! Diolch yn fawr!”
- “Really useful and insightful. The artists were fab and it was great they showed all their experience and expertise. Thank you.”
- “Fantastic with a huge wealth of information. Lush people thanks x”.
- “Really useful information, skills, ideas and enjoyable.”
- “Thank you for the opportunity to join in the sessions last week, I found them both informative and enjoyable”.

What is your own impression of how it has worked? What have been the challenges and successes for you?

The decision to restart delivery of the project was not taken lightly, and I was apprehensive about approaching care homes at this difficult time. However, through feedback from our fortnightly e-

newsletter, in which we shared ideas for creative activities developed by our cARTrefu artists, and links to some of the wonderful free online creative and cultural resources and events taking place, I became very aware that this support is needed now more than ever. During a time when care homes are having to close their doors to relatives and visitors, we must ensure that residents are offered opportunities to engage in creative activities for enjoyment and interaction, to allow them the freedom to express themselves and feel empowered, and to aid physical and mental wellbeing. Activity coordinators and carers are under immense pressure, and after attending workshops, or working on an activity plan with our artists, we have received wonderful feedback from care home workers thanking us for the ideas and help, and that they will be running these creative workshops with the residents within their home. We have even received photographs of the residents enjoying taking part in the creative workshops suggested by our artists, that the care home workers have then run themselves. For me, this is a huge success, as our aim is for our suggestions for creative activities to improve wellbeing for all involved.

The number of registrations for our workshops for artists and creatives has also been uplifting. There are a huge number of talented individuals across Wales hoping to work with residents in care homes, and through these workshops are drawing from the cARTrefu team's knowledge and experience to help them on their journey. Our aim of having an artist in every care home seems possible through our interactions on these workshops.

Are you reaching more people/fewer people/different people?

Delivering cARTrefu online has enabled rural care homes to attend workshops that time and travel may not have previously allowed.

Some care homes, who hadn't previously applied for cARTrefu have completed the application form since cARTrefu has been taken online due to Covid.

What (if any) new skills have you or your colleagues had to develop to deliver this work?

As a team, we have all had to adapt our way of working to ensure we are delivering the best possible experience when delivering online. We have had internal training and practice sessions in using the online platform for delivery of the project.

The cARTrefu artists have altered their delivery to ensure that the workshops and activity plans are still interactive, and that the participants are engaging in the process in real time. The attendees are offered a list of materials to ensure that they can practice the workshops, and ask questions, while the artist is delivering a step by step guide of the successful sessions they have run with care home residents.

What would you say has made this project possible?

As a team, we are committed to the delivery of the project and we're eager to find a way to enable us to continue to support care homes during this difficult time. With the support of our funders, we were able to adapt the delivery to continue online, until a time when it is safe to continue in person, and our team adapted quickly to this new way of working. Knowing that care homes are unable to have any outside artists or entertainment in their home to work with their residents, we knew it was more important than ever to offer our support to care homes and ensure that residents are offered a wide range of activities

What would have made it easier?

Not all the activity coordinators and carers hoping to take part in our workshops have access to their own device within the home to enable them to connect to the sessions. In an ideal world, all activity coordinators having access to a device to enable them to connect to the workshops would help the delivery of the project and would enable them to access resources whenever needed to run creative

workshops with their residents. We would also normally supply all the materials needed for those attending our workshops, and so we have had to adapt, and we are having to ask the attendees to collect their own materials.

Further information

www.agecymru.org.uk/cartrefu

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-cymru/documents/cartrefu/age-cymru-english---evaluation-report.pdf>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-cymru/documents/cartrefu/cartrefu-infographic---english-14.08.20.pdf>