

Open call for independent evaluators: evaluation of a creative wellbeing project in Conwy and Denbighshire for children and young and their families

Summary

Arts and Minds is funded by the Arts Council of Wales and The Baring Foundation. In its second phase, Health Boards across Wales are utilising arts and creativity with children and young people engaged with Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Services (CAMHS) with the aim to improve their mental wellbeing. This funding will run for a period of three years (subject to successful application).

In year one, in North Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Arts in Health team are working with Denbighshire Leisure Ltd Arts and the CAMHS Early Help team to focus on early intervention and prevention via schools in reach, working with local schools in the Denbighshire area. We are also working with family centres in the Conwy area, to support parents through creativity for their and their children/ young person(s) wellbeing.

We are seeking to appoint an independent evaluator to evaluate the impact of the project for participants in supporting or potentially improving their wellbeing.

Project briefing

The Baring Foundations' *Creatively Minded and Young* report, found 'there is a consensus that there has been an increase in the prevalence of mental health problems among children and young people over the last 15 to 20 years' (2024: p.6).

There is robust evidence for the efficacy of utilising the arts within healthcare, including with children and young people (e.g., Fancourt, Warran, & Aughterson 2020). Stimulus, focus, distraction, re-assurance, respite, social, enjoyment and pleasure ... all can be cultivated by creativity.

Evidence continues to demonstrate concerns for the mental health and wellbeing of our population, with increasing numbers of children and young people experiencing challenges with their mental health and wellbeing. Across Wales and BCUHB, there is a shift to

preventative and early intervention approaches in the community to ensure care closer to home.

This project aims to focus on children and young people from key stage 3 and 4, with emerging Mental Health needs as defined by CAMHS staff in collaboration with schools. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are specialist services delivered by the NHS which either work with young people up to the age of 16 or 18.

The aim is for children and young people to attend creative workshops with an artist of 1-2 hours in length, for a minimum of 6 sessions up to one full term (approx. 12-14 weeks). The sessions will be supported by a member of CAMHS staff, School Wellbeing Officers, and colleagues from Denbighshire Leisure Limited and the BCUHB Arts in Health team.

The potential project impact and outcomes include:

- Overall improvements in wellbeing (e.g., mood, confidence, social connectivity, learning new skills, engagement, and interest)
- Improving resilience (connecting to Friends Resilience programme where possible Friends Resilience)
- Supporting shifts to ways of working with CAMHS linked to resilience and social-emotional skills building
- School staff can learn skills to support their work through working with the artist and the CAMHS worker
- Supporting children and young people from some of most deprived areas in Wales who may gain the most benefit from engaging with creative workshops

In addition, parents in the Conwy area will be invited to a series of creative workshops, for which they may attend 1 or all 5 sessions, in different creative approaches, designed to support their wellbeing, as well as helping them engage with their children/ young person(s) through creativity at home, to support the family's wellbeing.

This partnership supports the BCUHB Arts in Health Strategic Framework in working in partnership to enhance the health of the population of North Wales through the arts through focus on mental health and wellbeing, particularly with those who may be experiencing health inequalities.

The focus of this project is on the community as a way to reduce pressure on local mental health units and services in engaging those experiencing mental ill health: to prevent worsening of mental wellbeing early in diagnosis or treatment, support those currently experiencing mental health challenges, or to prevent recurrence of illness. Similarly, the project should support overall wellbeing, alongside potential improvement in mood, increased confidence, sense of value and worth, enjoyment and pleasure, social connectivity, distraction and focus, and for the families' groups- family wellbeing and connectivity.



There is national evaluation activity taking place across Health Boards that includes a survey and wellbeing wheels. The local evaluation element should complement, not duplicate, this aspect. The evaluator will need to engage with the CAMHS team to utilise data they are able to collate and share, which may include quantitative measures, to reduce evaluation burden on participants. We are particularly interested in the evaluator using and developing qualitative and creative methods of evaluation, and in opportunities to demonstrate the economic benefits of the project. This is year 1 of a potential 3 year project, although we are unable at this stage to guarantee further work in relation to the project, there will be an evaluation element for each year of the project, and there may be possibilities to develop year 1 evaluation for years 2 and 3 (subject to confirmation of funding/ suitability of evaluation tools and techniques, and the development of the project nationally and locally).

Project aims

The project has two components to achieve its aims:

1. Creative activities in school and community settings in Conwy and Denbighshire in partnership to support a wide remit of children and young people experiencing mental health difficulties. This community element aims to support Healthcare by reducing pressure on services by supporting those with mental health difficulties sooner as well as for those experiencing ongoing challenges, to support their mental wellbeing to reduce the need to access primary and secondary healthcare provision.
2. Supporting families to utilise creative approaches to support their wellbeing, and nourish connection and engagement within the family unit, with benefits to the parent(s) and children and young people involved.

Anticipated outputs

Activities will be carried out by externally contracted artists. The project will be delivered by Denbighshire Leisure Limited, with BCUHB CAMHS Early Help and Schools In Reach providing support to the project, and BCUHB Arts in Health providing overarching project management/ support. Activities will take place as follows:

- Approximately 6-week blocks (or similar) of art making activity in schools in Denbighshire (x 4 schools)
- 5 x sessions in 5 Family Centres in Conwy

Progress will be reported to funders and the Charitable Funds Committee

Location

The project will be taking place at various locations in Conwy and Denbighshire

This may include: schools, family centres, community spaces, as examples



Total evaluation budget

£3'500 (including VAT) and all costs for design, delivery and reporting

Responses to this call out should include accurate pricing, inclusive of expenses, and provide a detailed breakdown of proposed evaluation plan. Please note that assessment of responses to this invitation will be on perceived quality of service and demonstrable ability to meet the brief, rather than the lowest cost, however, value for money is a selection criterion. We invite all applicants to put forward their most cost-efficient proposals.

Methods/ approaches

We welcome multi-methods approaches including quantitative and qualitative such as observations, standard wellbeing measures, interviews and focus groups, as well as visual and creative methods of evaluation that can be embedded within the project activities. We are particularly keen to hear from providers who work with 'Most Significant Change'. Any evaluation will need to be suitable for people experiencing a range of mental health conditions to participate in. This could include:

- Changes for participants across the course of engaging with the project
- In session impacts and experiences
- Artist and delivery partner observations

Measures will be agreed and may include: self-reporting and observed changes to overall feelings of wellbeing.

There is also the potential to look at engagement with healthcare teams and services, or participation in other activities.

Measures should also address feelings related to taking part on: relief, stimulation, new skills and confidence, improve mood, provide distraction, increased social ability, and staff/ participant engagement, family support and engagement, as examples.

For staff, partners and artists, evaluation should consider staff/participant engagement, their own wellbeing, and new skills and confidence, barriers or opportunities to creative engagement within their respective role, as examples.

Evaluators may wish to work with a creative practitioner or artist to explore the development of creative evaluation tools or methods in response to the project data/ evaluation tools. (This should be costed into the proposal).



Requirements for the independent evaluator

The independent evaluator will work on this project from April 2026 (when appointed) to September 2026 (when final reports are due).

The independent evaluator will work closely with Denbighshire Leisure Ltd Arts teams to deliver the evaluation as outlined in this brief. Interim updates should be provided to BCUHB and Denbighshire Leisure Limited. The evaluator will be invited to attend the monthly project meetings to provide updates and to easily connect with all project partners, planned for the second Thursday of each month.

Data protection, ethics, and safeguarding

The project will comply with BCUHB ethics procedures for service evaluation.

The chosen evaluator will manage and organise any evaluation data collected, in agreement with partners for data protection, collection, and sharing. The chosen evaluator will provide a data protection statement for assurance for how data is stored and kept. An agreement will be in place in order for the appropriate sharing of data for evaluation as required from partners, to be undertaken. The chosen evaluator will provide quality assurance to the project team that the highest quality standards for the methods undertaken have been met, providing interim updates and draft copies of key deliverables.

The evaluator will need to provide proof of ID using a visual ID method (e.g. passport or driving licence), proof of current and clear DBS check, and proof of public liability or other relevant insurance for conducting their work. Please have this ready to present, should you be selected, to allow for a smooth and efficient process for on boarding. If you have not worked with the Health Board previously, we will need to complete a new supplier form with you.

Data Collection and design

The evaluator will be responsible for the collection of data, working with partners to ensure they are able to regularly attend sessions as required, engage in meetings and discussion for the development of the evaluation, and will be responsible for the design, data analysis and reporting. The evaluator will also share interim results and key updates with the providers and partners.

Deliverables



- An evaluation protocol including brief description of evaluation design, proposed methods and approaches, description of interventions, sample size, details of data to be collected and timelines for data collection
- A detailed project evaluation report including:
 - an executive summary outlining key findings from the report
 - Introduction – providing a background and outlining the content of the report
 - Intervention description
 - Methodology – description of the research strategy adopted
 - Findings
 - Discussion – of results, limitations of trial and future research directions
 - Harvard style references provided for the evidence cited
 - Any relevant supplementary information (e.g., tables, charts, summary data)

This can be visually and creatively dynamic in its presentation

- The final report to be provided in a format which is ready for external publication including partner logos, and agreed formatting
- Provide timely information as to the progress of the evaluation so that project partners can fulfil reporting requirements to its funders

Project timeline

An indicative timeline for the application process and a tentative project timeline, is provided below

Application and project timeline:

Milestone	Date
Open call out shared	18 March 2026
Deadline for submitting to callout	31 st March 4pm BST
Shortlisting and decision	1 -2 April 2026
Contracting	7 – 10 April 2026
Project commences	13 April 2026



Interim updates/ reporting	End of May 2026, End of July 2026
Final project report	25 September 2026

Eligibility

This call is open to evaluators who are able to meet the project brief, deliverables, and timeline. The ability to speak Welsh is essential for this role.

How to apply

- Please send your expression of interest to: BCU.ArtsInHealth@wales.nhs.uk by 4pm BST on Tuesday 31st March 2026
- You will be informed of the outcome of your submission by Tuesday 7th April 2026

If you have any questions regarding the open call, please get in touch over email via BCU.ArtsInHealth@wales.nhs.uk BCUHB Arts in Health team will endeavour to circulate a response to these queries within 3-4 working days

Your EOI should include:

- A brief statement on why you are interested in this opportunity (600 words max), and your initial approach
- 2 examples of relevant evaluation work in this field
- Your individual or company CV
- A fully costed quotation (inclusive of VAT)
- You may include links to online examples

Application assessment

Your application will be assessed by the project partner team. The strength of applications will be assessed on the below criteria:

The application – meeting the project brief

- How well the application answers the brief
- How well it articulates the ability to deliver all requirements and deliverables
- Ability to evidence a range of appropriate measures and tools



Budget

- Feasibility based on the budget submitted
- Value for money

The project team

- Ability of the evaluator to provide assurance on their stability and viability for the duration of the project
- Ability of the evaluator to demonstrate their ability to work in partnership and to work with participants experiencing a range of mental health and other health challenges that impact their mental health and wellbeing

Data Protection and ethics compliance

- Ability of the evaluator to ensure data compliance
- Ability of the evaluator to ensure ethical processes (e.g., risk)

Additional guidance

The project team reserves the right, acting reasonably, to:

- Discontinue the award procedure in the absence of appropriate applications;
- Change the timetable for the procurement of the supply of this role, and in such circumstances BCUHB Arts in Health will notify all applicants of any change by the fastest means possible;
- Terminate discussions with organisations which apply;
- Discontinue the procedure leading to the award of the role;
- Not to award any supplier at all as a result of this process

After award of role/ supply:

- To ask for two rounds of revisions on any reporting/ presentation drafts
- To discontinue working with a supplier if the work is not completed satisfactorily in line with the brief
- To provide payment in line with work completed/ undertaken to a satisfactory level

Under no circumstances shall BCUHB Arts in Health incur any liability in respect of any of these actions.

- No publicity regarding the project will be permitted until BCUHB Arts in Health has given express written consent to the relevant communication. No statements may be made to any part of the media regarding the nature of this application, its



contents or any proposals relating to it without the prior written consent of the project partners.

- BCUHB Arts in Health will not reimburse any costs incurred by organisations in connection with preparation of their applications.
- If you are unsure of the meaning of a question or anything in this invitation to tender then it is the applicant's responsibility to ask BCUHB Arts in Health to clarify in writing via email.
- BCUHB will endeavour to circulate a response to any queries within 3-4 working days. BCUHB Arts in Health may also decline to answer a question if it deems the question to be inappropriate. If BCUHB Arts in Health is unable to answer a question, this will be communicated.

