Culturally Mindful Wandsworth

Impact Report

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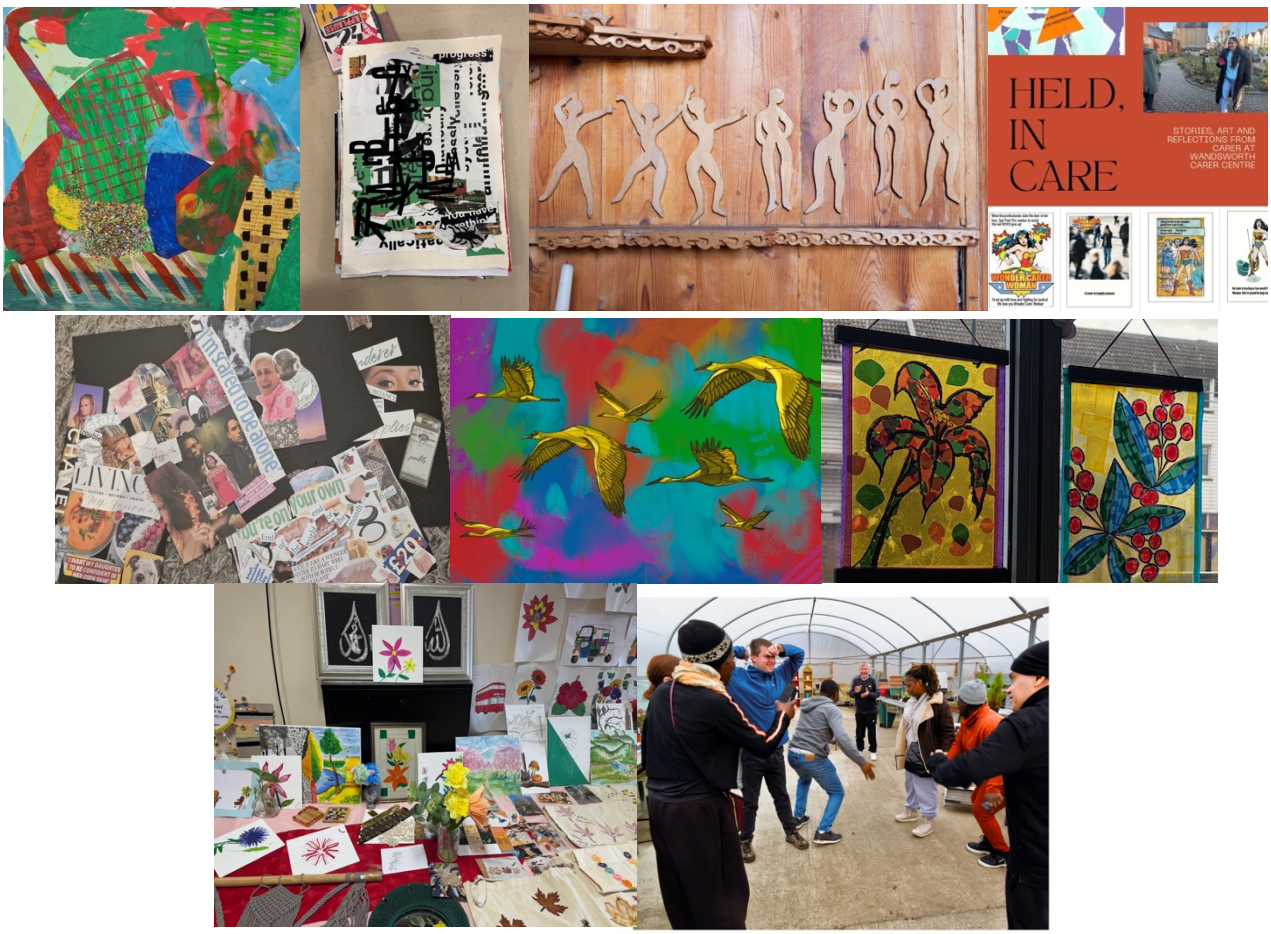


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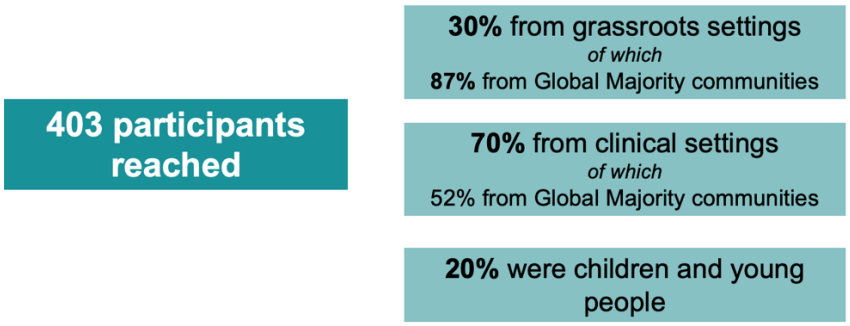
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1. Executive summary

Culturally Mindful is one of the flagship programmes developed by the borough of Wandsworth during their designation as the London Borough of Culture in 2025-26. Culturally Mindful was designed to diversify the cultural social prescribing offer, exploring how creative health can be made more culturally competent, representative, and accessible. A cohort of Global Majority[1] artists was selected to design and deliver residencies across clinical and community settings, including hospitals, mental health services and grassroots organisations. Through creative practices such as embroidery, pottery, zine making, storytelling, poetry, photography and pattern making, the programme created spaces where artists, hosts and participants could explore wellbeing, identity, connection and care through creativity.

The programme engaged Global Majority communities already identified locally in Wandsworth as more likely to face barriers to good health and wellbeing, including inequalities in access to mental health support and wider health outcomes.



Building a more diverse creative health workforce

The programme made a meaningful contribution to artists' confidence, skills and professional identity. Artists described moving from a broad awareness of creative health to a deeper understanding gained through training, mentoring, shadowing and delivering residencies in real clinical and community settings. Many artists felt the programme gave language and structure to work they were already doing intuitively, while others described it as opening up a new professional pathway.

The following impacts on artists were evidenced at the end of the programme:

Confidence in Core Practice: Following the programme, 100% of artists now feel confident or very confident in leading a creative health session, working in community settings, and co-designing with communities. The most significant shift in this area was seen in embedding access and inclusion in creative health, which saw a 133% increase from the baseline.

[1] **Global majority** refers to people who are "black, Asian, brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'" and "represent approximately 80% of the world's population", according to educator and activist Rosemary Campbell-Stephens, who coined the term.

Mental Health First Aid & Trauma Informed Delivery: The programme delivered notable growth in artists' health competencies. Confidence in applying mental health first aid principles more than doubled (107% increase), with 89% of the cohort now also confident in delivering trauma informed principles.

Evaluation & Wellbeing: Artists reported a substantial boost in their ability to measure and maintain their work, with an 81.5% increase in confidence in evaluating creative health activity and a 56% increase in prioritising their own wellbeing.

Value of the Global Majority Cohort: Artists particularly described the value of the Global Majority cohort in supporting them through the journey of delivering their residencies, honest and affirming, offering peer learning, emotional support and shared understanding. **100% of artists agreed that being part of a Global Majority cohort positively impacted their experience.**

Support for Professional Development Pathways: The programme also created early professional development pathways for artists beyond the residencies themselves. **100% of artists agreed that they had developed their career in the cultural sector through Culturally Mindful,** and some artists described the experience as giving them greater clarity, confidence and direction in their future practice. Through the legacy funding provided, artists will be able to continue developing their residencies and collaborations with hosts.

Helping hosts test creative health in practice

For host organisations, Culturally Mindful created a practical opportunity to not only test creative health delivery, but also to work in partnership with Global Majority artists whose lived experience, facilitation style, and cultural reference points brought distinct value to participants and staff. Hosts valued the preparation, training and relationship-building before residencies began, particularly the chance to develop shared understanding with artists around creative health, safeguarding, access and participant-led delivery.

The programme brought additional capacity, specialist creative expertise and new ways of working into settings that would not easily have been able to generate this internally. In some settings, this appears to have challenged more prescriptive institutional assumptions about how support should be delivered, and created greater trust in artist-led, responsive, and culturally grounded approaches.

Key impacts on hosts include:



Confidence in Delivery: As a result of the programme, 100% of hosts now feel confident or very confident in leading a creative health session, co-designing with communities, working in community settings, and collaborating with healthcare professionals. The most significant leap in this area was in leading a creative health session, which saw a 75% increase from the baseline.



Upskilling Technical Skills: The programme drove the most growth in technical competencies. Confidence in applying mental health first aid principles and evaluating creative health activity both saw a substantial 87% increase from baseline, with 80% of hosts now feeling fully confident in these areas.



Inclusive Practice: Hosts reported meaningful progress in operational quality, with confidence in embedding access and inclusion in creative health increasing by 40%. Furthermore, 80% of hosts now feel confident in prioritising their own wellbeing, representing a 40% increase from baseline.



Rethinking Creative Health Delivery: Culturally Mindful also created early signs of change in how host organisations think about creative health delivery and the role of artists within health and community settings. Hosts valued their facilitation skills, lived experience, adaptability, and ability to create safe, engaging environments. This helped strengthen hosts' confidence in working with artists and showed how creative health can be embedded as part of wider organisational practice.

Creating spaces for participants in the residencies to support their wellbeing and community

For participants, the residencies were welcoming spaces where they could learn new skills, reconnect with parts of themselves, express difficult feelings, and build relationships with others. Across the residencies, participants described a sense of accomplishment in completing artwork and engaging with art through the residencies.

A summary of health-related outcomes observed include:

Health outcome area	Key outcomes observed
Mental and emotional wellbeing	• Feeling calmer, relaxed, lighter, and grounded • Reduced stress • Reduction in anxiety and over-thinking behaviours • Emotional release and safer expression of difficult feelings • Greater confidence, self-esteem, self-emotional reassurance
Physical health and rehabilitation	• Increased confidence in physical activity • Improved dexterity, grip, fine motor engagement in clinical settings
Wider wellbeing	• Reduced isolation and stronger social connection • Renewed sense of purpose, routine, motivation • Greater personal agency

The residencies also allowed participants moments where they could engage with cultural-based artistic practices. Some artists on the programme intentionally included cultural forms of art, stories, practices and references. This made participants from a Global Majority background feel more seen and connected to their own cultural identities. The importance of community emerged as a key impact on participants. The small scale and regularity of sessions helped build trust, mutual support and belonging, which were especially important as many of the participants on the programme were experiencing isolation.

Systems-level outcomes

Alongside the immediate outcomes for artists, hosts, and participants, the programme also appears to have made an early contribution to local systems of care.

The programme widened access routes into support, including referrals between creative, community, and health providers. It also supported workforce diversification by creating entry points for Global Majority artists into creative health settings where such representation had previously been limited. This directly responds to the NHS' own strategic priority around workforce diversification[2], seen as a critical mechanism to boost staff retention, expand recruitment pipelines, and improve patient care outcomes.

In addition, the programme helped build a stronger shared language between artists, community organisations, and healthcare professionals, improving understanding of creative health and supporting more confident partnership working. Some artists have used this enhanced understanding to invite relevant health professionals to their cultural activities, which contributes to a more holistic approach to care for participants' health and wellbeing needs.

These early outcomes suggest that Culturally Mindful contributed to a more connected and culturally relevant local ecosystem of care.

Learnings for future practice

The evidence suggests that Culturally Mindful's impact was shaped not only by the creative sessions themselves, but by the wider conditions that enabled safe, responsive and meaningful delivery. Some selected learnings are elaborated on below. Please refer to the learning section to read more of the learnings from this programme.



Artists need ongoing support to deliver with flexibility and confidence. Alongside formal training, mentoring, peer support, and reflective space helped artists build the judgement, adaptability, and responsiveness needed to meet participants where they were, particularly in emotionally demanding settings.



Preparation, co-design, and relationship-building are core to delivery and need resourcing beyond session time. Strong early collaboration between artists and hosts helped create shared understanding around participants' needs, access, safeguarding, and the role of creative health within each setting. This collaboration was made possible

[2] National strategies like the NHS People Plan, the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, and the dedicated NHS Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Improvement Plan formally solidify these goals.

because of the time allocated to planning, adaptation, emotional labour, partnership-building, and reflection. This should be recognised in future commissioning.



Representation was part of how impact was achieved. The programme's Global Majority focus created solidarity and affirmation for artists, increased cultural relevance, trust, and accessibility for participants, and helped hosts learn from more culturally grounded, artist-led approaches. At the same time, the programme showed that representation must be approached with nuance, making space for different identities, lived experiences, and ways of engaging rather than treating Global Majority practitioners as a single group.



Who leads the work matters. Artists from Global Majority backgrounds, and in some cases artists with relevant lived experience, helped participants feel more heard, seen, and able to engage, suggesting that representation can be an important part of the mechanism through which creative health achieves impact.

2. Introduction and programme context

2.1 Overview and purpose of Culturally Mindful

Culturally Mindful is one of the flagship programmes developed for the borough of Wandsworth during their designation as the London Borough of Culture. Culturally Mindful was designed to explore how creative health can be made more culturally competent, representative, and accessible. This is especially in response to the evidenced persistent racial and cultural inequalities in health access, experience and outcomes[3]. It aimed to test how creative health could be delivered in ways that were more reflective of, and responsive to, the communities the programme sought to engage, and ultimately improve social prescribing outcomes for communities from a Global Majority background.

Culturally Mindful was shaped by a wider local strategic context as well as by the immediate evidence on health inequalities. Its focus on culturally competent, preventative, and partnership-based creative health aligns with Wandsworth's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–2029, and the Wandsworth Health and Care Plan 2025–2027. It also reflects the borough's Prevention Framework, with its whole-system focus on promoting good health and reducing inequalities, and the Wandsworth Arts and Culture Strategy 2021–2031, particularly its commitments to health and wellbeing and access for all. Across all of these strategies, the programme was designed to respond to these strategic priorities:

- reducing health inequalities
- improving access for underserved groups
- strengthening prevention and early intervention
- addressing mental health and community resilience
- reducing social isolation and loneliness, especially for carers and other at-risk groups
- using arts and culture more strategically to support health and wellbeing through social prescribing and cross-sector partnership.

The programme's overall aims can be understood across five broad areas:

- to diversify the cultural social prescribing offer
- to support more diverse and representative pathways into the creative health workforce, especially for artists from a Global Majority background
- to improve wellbeing and access to meaningful creative activity for communities who may be underserved by mainstream provision, especially communities from a Global Majority background[4]
- to strengthen collaboration between artists, health settings and community organisations
- to contribute to a wider shift in how creative health is understood and valued within services

Health and wellbeing was the central theme of Wandsworth's London Borough of Culture (LBOC) year, with the Culturally Mindful project acting as a flagship initiative within this priority area. Insights

[3] https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/news/2023-news/news-april-2023/hard-hitting-report-tackles-ongoing-health-inequalities-in-mental-health-services/

[4] Many of the participants engaged through Culturally Mindful were from groups that align with the NHS Core20PLUS5 population, including ethnic minority communities, carers, people with learning disabilities, and autistic people. These are groups recognised as more likely to experience barriers to access and poorer health outcomes, and therefore likely to benefit from more targeted and accessible forms of support through creative health programmes.

from the project's dedicated evaluation have played a significant role in informing the wider LBOC evaluation process. Key findings have been shared with members of the Evaluation Oversight Group, particularly to demonstrate the tangible impact of LBOC-funded activity on health and wellbeing outcomes. The project-specific evaluation by The Social Investment Consultancy developed four detailed impact case studies, drawing on in-depth interviews with a range of participants, including an artist, a community beneficiary, and representatives from both community healthcare and hospital settings. These case studies were synthesised into a concise project case study, which will be included in the final public LBOC impact report.

2.2 Programme design

The programme was designed by Wandsworth's Strategic Lead for Creative Health, Lelia Greci, in consultation with Public Health, SouthWest London Integrated Care Board, Southwest London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, St George's Hospital Charity, Sound Minds, Wandsworth Care Alliance, and social prescribing representatives at Enable. Artists and host organisations were recruited through open call outs, with assessment panels involving public health representatives and St George's Hospital Charity. This design and recruitment process helped ensure that the programme was shaped by both strategic partners and delivery stakeholders, and that it reflected the realities of working across health, community and cultural sectors.

The learning phase of the programme was designed by Creative Health Officer Jemilea Wisdom-Baako, who then oversaw delivery of the programme as a whole. Spread over 10 full days, training sessions included Mental Health Awareness (provided by SWLSTG), Trauma-Informed Practice (delivered by Kazzum), Anti-Racism and Inclusive Practice (by Writerz & Scribez), Creative Health Evaluation & Logic Models, Understanding Health Inequalities and Local Health Priorities (delivered by SWLICB's Social Prescribing Manager and Richmond and Wandsworth Public Health Consultant), Access and Inclusion, Wellbeing and Self-Care.

Residencies took place across a range of host settings, including hospitals and grassroots organisations. This gave the programme the opportunity to test how culturally competent creative health could work across different contexts, with different participant groups and with different organisational partners. Participating hosts included:

Clinical hosts	Grassroots organisations
St George's Hospital	Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Girls
Queen Mary's Hospital	Share Community
South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust (SWLSTG)	Youth Battersea
Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability	Wandsworth Carers
	575 Wandsworth Road (National Trust)
	Sound Minds

A cohort of 10 Global Majority artists were selected to undertake the programme:

Artist	Bio (Summary)	Host Organisation
Ken Nwadiogbu	Nigerian-born multidisciplinary artist exploring identity and migration. RCA graduate whose socially engaged work spans murals and mental-health workshops.	St George's Hospital

Asma Istwani	Founder of RIOT SOUP, her collage and photo-montage work explores identity, care, and rebellion, creating inclusive workshops and events that centre Black and Brown voices.	Queen Mary Hospital
Rebecca Olajide	Visual artist exploring domesticity and beauty in everyday life. She's led projects with people experiencing mental-health issues, dementia, and isolation.	Royal Hospital of Neuro-Disability
Tsipora St Clair Knights	Multidisciplinary artist working across poetry, dance, and film. Her creative activism addresses marginalisation, wellbeing, and representation.	575 Wandsworth Road @ Battersea Arts Centre
Tanya Acquaah	Multidisciplinary artist and founder of TIA – The Inner Attitude, combining dance, theatre, and poetry to empower women and girls through creative wellbeing.	Youth Battersea
Francis Augusto	Angolan-born visual artist using film photography to explore memory, identity, and healing. Founder of The Mandem, fostering emotional wellbeing for men.	Wandsworth Carers
Youyang Song	Chinese multidisciplinary artist and facilitator working across acting, writing, clowning and directing; passionate about empathy and empowerment.	Share Community
Saira Niazi	Writer, guide, and founder of Living London. Her place-based creative practice explores belonging, transience, and mental health.	Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Girls
Roopa Basu	Multidisciplinary artist whose work explores belonging, memory, and light. Her accessible, participatory practice builds creative bridges across cultures.	Sound Minds
Shiza Naveed	Artist and researcher exploring migrant justice and collective memory. Co-founder of azl, using storytelling and care as tools for visibility and liberation.	SWLSTG Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Throughout the programme, artists received mentoring, shadowing opportunities and structured support to develop their understanding of creative health, trauma-informed practice and facilitation in complex environments. These included:

- 10 training days over 10 months
- 10 shadowing sessions
- 10 co-creation sessions

2.3 Demographic data and programme reach

Wandsworth's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) highlights the borough's diversity, noting that around 30% of residents are from a "Black and Minority Ethnic" (Global Majority) background. The borough's Start Well report also points to the disproportionate impact of poorer health outcomes on Global Majority communities across areas such as deprivation, language, housing, and wider health inequalities. Alongside this, the Wandsworth Director of Public Health's 2023 annual report identifies "profound inequalities" in Global Majority communities' access to mental health treatment, experience of care, and mental health outcomes, as well as mistrust in services, stigma, and barriers to early support.

Against this backdrop, the demographic profile of participants suggests that Culturally Mindful was engaging communities already identified locally as more likely to face barriers to good health and wellbeing.

In total, Culturally Mindful reached **403 participants**. Further broken down, the participants represented:

403 participants total: • 575 Wandsworth Road - 12 participants • Wandsworth Carers - 7 participants • Share Community - 32 participants • RHN - 207 Participants • SWLSTG - 57 participants • Roehampton Wellbeing - 36 Participants • Youth Battersea - 24 Participants • St Georges - 20 participants • Queen Mary - 10 participants • Sound Minds - 9 participants	• **30%** of participants from grassroots organisations, of which **87%** were from Global Majority communities • **70%** of participants from clinical settings, of which **52%** were from Global Majority communities • **Around 20%** of participants were children and young people

3. Evaluation approach and evidence base

From 2025 to 2026, Wandsworth Council partnered with The Social Investment Consultancy (TSIC) to conduct an impact evaluation of the Culturally Mindful programme. We designed the evaluation to assess how far the Culturally Mindful programme was effective in delivering its intended outcomes, and what difference it made for artists, host organisations and participants. As well as examining programme delivery and early outcomes, the evaluation aimed to generate practical learning to inform future legacy activity and wider sector practice in culturally competent creative health.

The evaluation was guided by an impact framework developed in line with the programme's Theory of Change (please refer to Appendix D in this report). This framework provided the basis for assessing both the extent to which key outcomes were emerging, and the conditions that appeared to support or constrain progress across different settings.

The evaluation explored the following:

- how far the programme supported artists' professional development and confidence in creative health practice
- what difference the residencies made for host organisations, including any learning, changes in practice, or increased confidence in creative health
- what participants' experiences and perceived benefits of the residencies were, including in relation to cultural relevance, engagement, and wellbeing
- what impact did the programme's intentional focus on Global Majority artists have across artist development, participant experience, and host organisations
- what wider learning the programme offers for future delivery, legacy, and wider sector practice

The evidence base combined qualitative, quantitative, and case study evidence in order to assess both the breadth of programme reach and the depth of change experienced.

Evidence type	Data sources
Qualitative evidence	• Training materials • Residency plans • Artists' reflective journals • Residency outputs • Observation notes from training days, residencies

	• Interviews with 1 host, 1 artist, 1 grassroots participant, and 1 hospital participant (an interview was conducted with a hospital staff member as a proxy due to accessibility challenges in engaging a hospital participant) • Reflections from facilitators
Quantitative evidence	• Demographic and participation data collected by the Council • Survey and feedback data from artists and hosts
Case study evidence	• Qualitative interviews with 4 key stakeholders – 1 artist, 2 host staff, and 1 participant in the residency. Case studies were completed on the following artist, hosts, and participant: • Rebecca Olajide- Artist, delivered residency at Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability • Shenade Windebank – Host, Wandsworth Carers • Hajira Bibi – Participant, residency at Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Girls • Sian Cook, Occupational Therapy Art Room Assistant at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability [as a proxy for a hospital participant]

Limitations

As this evaluation was conducted immediately after programme delivery, it is strongest in evidencing immediate and emerging outcomes rather than longer-term impact. The findings therefore demonstrate early and immediate change for artists, hosts, and participants, rather than the long-term sustained changes of the programme. Given the legacy funding now being offered, follow-up data collection in six to twelve months would strengthen understanding of longer-term impact.

The evidence base also relies on reflective and self-reported sources, including interviews, and reflective journals. In addition, the depth and consistency of reflective evidence varied across artists and hosts, meaning some areas of impact are supported by richer evidence than others.
There are also limitations in the quantitative data. Survey findings are based on average responses across the cohort, but not all artists and hosts completed surveys at each stage of the programme.

Survey type	Artist completion rate (%)	Host completion rate (%)
Baseline survey	90%	78%
Midpoint survey	80%	56%
Endline survey	90%	N/A

This limits the strength of comparison across baseline, midpoint, and endline. In particular, hosts were surveyed at baseline and midpoint only, with no endline survey. As such, this evaluation is not able to assess end-of-programme change for this group with the same level of confidence as for artists.

4. Findings

The following section sets out the main findings from the programme across artist development, host organisations, participants and wider communities. Together, the evidence suggests that Culturally Mindful contributed to meaningful change at multiple levels. It strengthened artists' confidence and practice, supported hosts to build knowledge and test new ways of working, and created spaces where participants could connect, express themselves, and experience wellbeing benefits through creative activity.

4.1 Artist development and practice

Culturally Mindful made a meaningful contribution to artists' development, both in terms of practical skills and in how artists understood their own role within creative health. Across the evidence, artists described the programme as providing language, structure, and confidence for work that some had already been doing intuitively but had not previously framed as creative health practice. The programme appears to have supported artists not only to build specific facilitation and wellbeing-related skills, but also to deepen their sense of identity and confidence as creative health practitioners.



Development of key creative health skills

- **100% of artists** now feel confident or very confident in **leading a creative health session** (a 75% increase from baseline)
- **89%** now feel confident or very confident in **applying mental health first aid principles** (a 107% increase from the baseline)
- 89% now feel confident or very confident in **delivering trauma informed principles (a 25% increase from baseline)**
- **79%** now feel confident or very confident **in evaluating creative health activity** (an 81.5% increase from baseline)
- **89%** now feel confident or very confident in **prioritising their own wellbeing** (a 56% increase from baseline)



Working with communities

- **100%** of artists now feel confident or very confident in **co-designing with communities** (a 4% increase from baseline)
- **100%** now feel confident or very confident in **embedding access and inclusion in creative health** (133% increase from baseline)
- **100%** now feel confident or very confident in **working in community settings** (a 17% increase from baseline)

There was one area which showed a decrease, which was collaborating with healthcare professionals, which moved from 85.7% at baseline to 77.8% at endline, a 9.3% decrease.

In terms of their understanding of their field of creative health, artists indicated that by the end of the Culturally Mindful programme:



Understanding of creative health as a field of practice

- **100%** of artists now completely or mostly understand **what is meant by creative health**
- **100%** of artists now completely or mostly understand the **impact of creative health activity**
- **100%** of artists now completely or mostly **consider themselves to be creative health practitioners**

4.1.1 Key skills developed by artists

The structure of the programme, which combined training sessions, mentoring and shadowing opportunities, and implementation through the residencies supported artists to build both a theoretical understanding and practical confidence in creative health. Artists described gaining a stronger grounding in trauma-informed practice, accessibility, facilitation, and the realities of working in clinical and community contexts. Artists shared that the programme gave language and structure to ways of working already part of their artistic practice. For other artists, the programme opened up a new way of understanding their practice and its potential role within health and wellbeing settings.

Specialist training for artists delivering residencies in hospitals helped them navigate unfamiliar and challenging environments with confidence. Training on mental health first aid, trauma informed approaches, safeguarding processes also appear to have helped them navigate unfamiliar environments more safely and confidently.

"Through the Culturally Mindful programme, my understanding of creative health has deepened significantly — moving from a conceptual awareness to lived, embodied knowledge gained through delivering a residency. The training in trauma-informed practice, the Creative Health Quality Framework, and the Creative Health Impact Framework gave me a solid theoretical grounding."

- Participating Artist

"I've noticed greater awareness in myself about how to approach facilitation in a culturally mindful way. The training has encouraged me to slow down, listen more carefully, and think about power dynamics within a group. I feel I've gained more confidence in adapting my practice to meet different needs."

- Participating Artist

Above all, the experience of delivering the residences was considered the greatest driver of learning and growth for the artists. Artists described becoming more participant-led, flexible, and responsive in their facilitation. They also reflected on growing confidence in trusting their instincts, holding space for vulnerability, and creating emotionally safe environments. Across the evidence, this practical learning appears to have been central to artists' growth. In the endline survey conducted with artists, they indicated the following outcomes after completing their residencies:

- **88% agree** they felt respected as artists
- **100% agreed** they were inducted into the host organisation well
- **100% agreed** that they were able to challenge themselves in their practice to respond to the needs of the group
- **100% agreed** they were able to connect with their participants
- **100% agreed** that their sessions had a positive impact

Participating artist Rebecca Olajide's residency at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability illustrates how artists applied this learning in practice. The case study[5] produced on her experience of the programme illustrated how she adapted activities to patients working complex cognitive, physical and communication needs, Rebecca adapted pattern-making activities, so they were accessible while still creatively ambitious. For example, she simplified the process by using tiles, while still enabling patients to make decisions, give instructions and create complex visual patterns. This helped her develop confidence in how her artistic practice could indeed be supportive to mental health and wellbeing in a clinical rehabilitation context.

Further artist testimonies also illustrate the value of the residencies in supporting their growth, strengthening their facilitating skills, connecting more deeply with their participants, and developing more layers to their artistic practice:

"I applied my training around choice-based participation and emotional safety when working with participants who were initially unwilling or unable to join. Instead of pushing participation, I offered options to observe or engage at their own pace. Over time, this approach supported increased trust, and several participants who were initially withdrawn began to actively take part in the sessions."

-Participating Artist

"The residency was a valuable opportunity to test and develop my creative facilitation practice in a real community setting. A key highlight was seeing clear progression in participants' confidence and engagement over time. Some individuals who were initially withdrawn or chose to observe began to actively participate, take creative risks, and express enjoyment."

-Participating Artist

[5] See the Appendix section of the report for the full case study.

“I have become more confident and grounded as a facilitator, especially in adapting to different needs and trusting my instincts in the moment. My practice has become more participant-led, flexible, and responsive, with a stronger focus on emotional safety and access.”

-Participating Artist

4.1.2 Experiences of being a part of a Global Majority cohort

Culturally Mindful also contributed to creating a strong peer community for Global Majority artists. This appears to have been one of the programme’s distinctive strengths. Artists described the cohort not only as a space for exchange, reflection, and mutual support, but as a space where they could lower their professional guard, feel understood without explanation, and bring more of their full selves into the work. In sectors such as the arts and healthcare, where Global Majority practitioners can often experience underrepresentation and professional isolation, this appears to have had particular value. Facilitators Jemilea Wisdom-Baako and Arji Manuelpillai were particularly credited with fostering the community within the programme. Artists described the space they created as warm, honest, safe, and well held. Their facilitation appears to have helped artists feel supported both personally and professionally, whether through emotional check-ins, practical guidance, or creating the conditions for trust and openness within the group.

“Jemilea & Arji have been the perfect facilitators and work extremely naturally together. Collectively, they are real, caring, practical and pure vibes!! I have felt held by both in different ways, whether that's been emotional support like a quick check in about how I'm feeling or practical support such as helping me to construct an email.”

-Participating Artist

“I am so immensely grateful for the brilliant space Jemilea and Arji created. It was honest, raw, safe, and kind - so well facilitated. Having such a wonderful Global Majority cohort who also led with these principles was a blessing!”

-Participating Artist

100% of artists strongly agreed or agreed that being part of a Global Majority cohort positively impacted their experience of the programme. Artists reported feeling safe, seen, and able to bring their full selves into the space. There was a strong sense of mutual respect and care within the group, which appears to have helped strengthen both confidence and connection.

“Within the group, I have seen clear growth in confidence, participation, and connection. Participants who were initially hesitant began to engage more actively, take creative risks, and express themselves more freely. There was also a noticeable increase in group cohesion, playfulness, and shared enjoyment over time.”

-Participating Artist

"I would say that above all this project introduced me to some of the sweetest, funniest and brilliant people I never would have got to meet and it is thanks to their generous sharing of their thoughts and ideas and support I was able to take so much away."

-Participating Artist

"I feel like I am in a safe space, where certain things are understood without tedious explanations."

-Participating Artist

4.1.3 Impact on artists' professional development

Culturally Mindful appears to have had a wider influence on artists' professional development. Some artists described the experience as shaping how they intend to work in future, including how they approach collaboration, care, facilitation, and responsiveness to participants. Some artists shared that participating in Culturally Mindful has helped them feel more grounded and more able to make decisions about their future practice, with some artists indicating they intend to build a longer-term career in creative health.

Artist Rebecca Olajide's experience as illustrated through the case study produced also shows how the programme supported artists to reconnect with their professional identity and future direction. She joined Culturally Mindful while on maternity leave, at a point when she had been considering "closing the door" to her artistic practice. Through the programme, she reconnected with the core of her practice, including pattern, colour and paper-based making, while also gaining experience of applying this practice in a creative health setting. By the end of the residency, she described feeling more able to return to her artistic practice with clarity, confidence and momentum, and was interested in continuing to work in creative health.

Immediate impacts of the programme can also be evidenced, with artists already sharing how the programme has already influenced longer-term professional development. Notably, **100% of artists indicated that they believe they have developed their career in the cultural sector as a result of their involvement in Culturally Mindful.**

Culturally Mindful also appears to have created early professional pathways for artists beyond the residencies themselves. One artist has already secured a separate commission with Wandsworth Care Alliance to explore the healthcare experiences of refugee and asylum-seeking women, suggesting that the programme is beginning to generate opportunities beyond the original delivery period. More broadly, 100% of artists reported that Culturally Mindful had supported their career development in the cultural sector.

Additionally, all artists received legacy funding, creating a clearer route for artists to continue building their creative health practice after the programme. This is being taken forward in different ways:

- **Continuing existing collaborations:** some artists are extending work with original hosts or in closely related settings, for example Ken Nwadiogbu's continued work at **St George's Hospital** on sickle cell care, and Saira Niazi's continuation of ***Humarah Mohallah*** with Roehampton Wellbeing, building further on creativity, place, and community.

- **Developing new partnerships:** other artists are using the funding to take their practice into new contexts. Asma Istwani's Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) Creative Health Project and Youyang Song's East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) Storytelling and Audio Project with with Riverside Radio are reaching new underserved communities (Global Majority women and people with PCOS, and members of the East and South-East Asian Community) beyond the first round of Culturally Mindful residencies.

- **Working collaboratively with other Culturally Mindful artists:** some legacy projects are now being delivered jointly between artists. For example, Tsipora St Clair Knights and Shiza Naveed are working with Katherine Low Settlement to deliver a creative, rest and care project with migrant and refugee communities. This suggests that the programme has also created the basis for peer collaboration beyond the original cohort model.

- **Building on themes already evidenced in the programme:** across the legacy projects, there is clear continuity in focus, including identity, belonging, confidence, emotional wellbeing, reduced isolation, and connection, while also expanding into new Global Majority communities and health-related contexts.

Overall, the evidence suggests that Culturally Mindful supported artists to deepen and extend their practice through a combination of structured training, practical delivery, and a strong peer community. The programme has supported artists to build both the language and confidence to locate their work within a creative health context, strengthen key skills in facilitation, trauma-informed and accessible practice, and navigate complex clinical and community settings more confidently. It also fostered a sense of care, connection, and belonging through the Global Majority cohort, while creating early pathways for longer-term professional development within the creative health sector.

4.2 Impact on host organisations

Culturally Mindful has supported hosts organisations in several connected ways to develop their understanding of creative health, their confidence in applying frameworks and approaches in creative health, and contributed to increased capacity within their organisations to implement creative health initiatives for their service users. The programme also gave hosts the opportunity to build new forms of collaboration with artists and with Wandsworth Council, and to test what creative health initiatives and support for their service users could look like in practice.

4.2.1 Impact of early preparation and training

A particularly valuable aspect of the programme appears to have been the early preparation built into the model: part of the selection criteria for host organisations was to put forward a team member (staff or volunteer) from the global majority to attend all the training sessions. All community organisations did so, as well as the Royal Hospital for Neuro-Disability. Other clinical settings felt unable to do so, hence St George's Hospital Charity supported artists residencies at St George's and Queen Mary's, whilst Sound Minds, who have an existing partnership with SWLSTG through the Canerows, supported the artist residency at Springfield Hospital's CAMHS outpatient services. (This partnership also allowed Sound Minds to step in when SWLSTG was unable to host the planned residency in their adult ward).

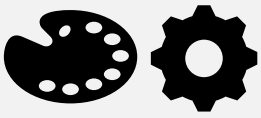
Hosts who were able to put forward a member of their team to attend training sessions found the training, relationship-building, and collaborative planning that took place before residencies very helpful in setting the residencies up for success. Hosts also described the training as helping them think more deeply about how creativity could be embedded throughout the residency, not only in the sessions themselves, but also in how activities were planned, reflected on, and evaluated.

Completing the training sessions alongside the artists helped align the understanding of creative health and safe, participant-led delivery. This allowed hosts to work with artists from a place of shared understanding and collaboration to deliver the residency. The training also appears to have clarified the distinct but connected roles of artists and host staff, helping to build shared understanding and mutual respect.

"I learned from those sessions what the parameters and the boundaries are of the artists and the organisation. I think we were able to develop a shared understanding and mutual respect for each other"

- Shenade Windebank, Deputy CEO, Wandsworth Carers

Hosts indicated that as a result of Culturally Mindful[6]:



Development of key creative health skills

- 100% now feel confident or very confident in **leading a creative health session (a 75% increase from baseline)**
- 80% now feel confident or very confident in **applying mental health first aid principles (an 87% increase from baseline)**
- 80% now feel confident or very confident in **evaluating creative health activity (an 87% increase from baseline)**
- 100% now feel confident or very confident **in collaborating with healthcare professionals (a 17% increase from baseline)**



Working with communities

- 100% now feel confident or very confident in **co-designing with communities (a 17% increase from baseline)**
- 60% now feel confident or very confident in **embedding access and inclusion in creative health (a 40% increase from baseline)**
- 100% now feel **confident or very confident in working in community settings (a 17% increase from baseline)**

[6] At the last point hosts were surveyed about their experience of the programme, which was at the midpoint of the programme.

- 80% now feel confident or very confident in **prioritising their own wellbeing (a 40% increase from baseline**

There was one notable decrease, that was delivering trauma informed principles, from 71.4% at baseline to 40.0% at the last surveyed point for hosts midway through the programme. However, this result could represent an anomaly as only 56% of hosts responded to the midway survey. Additionally, the midway survey results do not represent hosts' self-assessment of abilities at the end of the Culturally Mindful programme.

In terms of hosts' understanding of creative health as a field of practice since participating in Culturally Mindful[7], hosts indicated the following:



Understanding of creative health as a field of practice

- **60%** of hosts surveyed felt that they **completely understood** the meaning of creative health, and 40% felt they mostly did.
- **60%** of hosts surveyed felt that they **completely understood** the creative health sector, and 40% felt they mostly did.
- **80%** felt that they **completely understood** the impact of creative health activity, and 20% feel they mostly did.

4.2.2 Contribution to increased capacity of host organisations

Hosting the artists through the residencies brought capacity and expertise that organisations could not easily generate internally. In the case study produced on Wandsworth Carers' experience of Culturally Mindful[8], Shenade Windebank, Deputy CEO of Wandsworth Carers shared how this capacity positively supported her organisation. She shared she valued the artists' facilitation skills, artistic talent, and responsiveness to service users' needs. She also highlighted the importance of artists' lived experience, noting that this helped create trust with carers participating in the residency

[7] At the last point hosts were surveyed about their experience of the programme, which was at the midpoint of the programme.
[8] See the Appendix section of the report for the full case study.

activities. Shenade reflected that as a result of this trust built, carers were able to engage more deeply and freely with the residency activities that might not have otherwise been possible.

4.2.3 Organisational learning and shifts in practice

There are early signs of organisational learning and shifts in practice as a result of the residencies. For example, Wandsworth Carers described how the programme encouraged a move away from more prescriptive approaches to mental health support towards more responsive and co-created delivery. The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, a clinical host on the programme that a case study was also completed on[9], reflected on the changes they will be making to the structure of their creative health activities, looking to implement longer, structured session blocks. The Hospital saw the sense of accomplishment and pride patients experienced completing a more detailed and complex work of art over a period of time, in comparison to the one-off, session-based activities the occupational art team currently implements. Both hosts are seeking to continue and build on the work through Culturally Mindful, either through further funding or future creative health activities.

Facilitators Arji Manuelpillai and Jemilea Wisdom-Baako also reflected hosting independent Global Majority artists required organisations to loosen more prescriptive ways of working and trust alternative forms of delivery. This appears to have been an important part of the programme's institutional learning. In some cases, it challenged expectations placed on artists and participants, while also demonstrating that responsive, culturally grounded, and less hierarchical approaches could produce strong engagement and meaningful outcomes.

4.3 Impacts on participants and wider communities

Across the residencies delivered by artists, participants have shared that the residencies were spaces where they acquired new creative skills, supported their mental and physical wellbeing, built communities and felt they could express themselves without judgment. Through the facilitation by Global Majority artists, the residencies were not only opportunities to participate in creative activities, but also spaces where they felt more seen, understood, and able to engage because the practice, facilitation, and atmosphere reflected aspects of their identities and lived experience.

4.3.1 Key health outcomes for participants

While the evidence is largely observational, participant's reflections, host observation, and artist account suggest a number of key health outcomes observed across residencies.

Health outcome area	Key outcomes observed
Mental and emotional wellbeing	• Feeling calmer, lighter, or more grounded after sessions • Reduced stress, overthinking, or anxiety during residency • Emotional release and safer expression of difficult feelings • Greater confidence, self-esteem, and emotional reassurance
Physical health and rehabilitation	• Strengthened upper limb strength and grip for participants in clinical settings needing physical rehabilitation • Improved dexterity and grip through tactile activities such as clay, collage making, and sculpture

[9] See the Appendix section of the report for the full case study.

	• Enhanced motor skills through creative activities • Positive exposure to gentle movement and physical exercise, with increased confidence to participate in physical activity
Wider wellbeing linked to health outcome	• Reduced isolation and stronger social connection • Greater sense of belonging and peer support • Renewed sense of purpose, routine, and motivation • Reconnection with personal agency and identity

4.3.2 Developing participants' skills

Through the residencies, participants were also introduced to a wide range of creative practices and mediums. Participants described learning new artistic techniques and practices, such as painting, pottery, embroidery, zine making, and the sense of pride and accomplishment that came with engaging with art.

For some participants, the residencies allowed them to reconnect with previous creative identities. Hajira Bibi, a participant in *Humarah Mohallah* residency, who a case study has been completed on, had previously studied fashion and textiles at university but had not had the opportunity to reconnect with these creative skills since becoming a mother. Through activities such as embroidery, beadwork, pottery and painting, she described remembering that these skills were still part of her. This also opened up future aspirations. Hajira described wanting to return to fashion once her youngest children are in full-time schooling.

"There was so much I learned, literally so many techniques and they're still there. It's just that they're a bit faded away. Holding that needle or doing pottery or painting brought so many memories back. It made myself realise that my skills still exist, it's just a bit faded away".

- Hajira Bibi, Participant on residency held at Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Girls

4.3.3 Creation of safe spaces and community

Participants felt that the environment created through the residencies, due to the facilitation and activities led by artists, contributed to a space in which they could express themselves without judgement. Many of the groups that the residencies were conducted with are from a Global Majority background and are experiencing stress, isolation, caring responsibilities, disability or clinical treatment. Participants appreciated that the residencies meant they were time out of their day to engage in art and intentionally contribute to their own wellbeing. In several residencies, participants described feeling calmer, lighter or more grounded after taking part. The following quotes from participants at the Wandsworth Carers Centre residency shared the following reflections:

"It made me forget my worries and daily struggles. Painting pulled me out of the web of my thoughts and brought me back in the present moment."

-Participant on residency at Wandsworth Carers Centre

"I cried at my daughter getting a wheelchair at this session & although I felt sad & traumatised, it released something. I felt closer to everyone & appreciative of our shared experience."

-Participant on residency at Wandsworth Carers Centre

"I enjoyed the opportunity to express pain & suffering in the storytelling process. Carers feel deep pain & it is largely unheard."

-Participant on residency at Wandsworth Carers Centre

Facilitators Arji Manuelpillai and Jemilea Wisdom-Baako shared a particularly important example of how representation contributed to greater engagement from participants in clinical environments. Reflecting on Ken Nwadiogbu's residency on a sickle cell ward, his identity as a Black man, especially given the disproportionate number of people from a Black African and Caribbean heritage affected by sickle cell anaemia[10], allowed him to develop a greater rapport and connection with patients:

"I think him being a Black man in that space was hugely instrumental to their engagement with him… everybody spoke about Ken's rapport and his presence and the atmosphere that he brings with him to people's bedsides."

-Arji Manuelpillai, Facilitator, Culturally Mindful

In some clinical environments, creative activity also appears to have supported physical rehabilitation or confidence alongside emotional wellbeing, such as this example from a patient at the Royal Hospital of Neuro-disability:

"We have one patient, who has Guillain-Barré syndrome participating in the activities. At the beginning, he was very, very self-deprecating, remarking consistently at the start that he felt he couldn't do the activities. His mum would always join in with his sessions with him and encourage him to go through the activities. We also figured out ways to adapt the processes and the activities to make him feel more encouraged to participate.

As the eight-week programme went on, the strength in his arms grew. We were reducing the amount of aides and adaptations he needed to participate in the activities. You could see a real improvement not only in his strength but also in his confidence.

He got discharged just before Christmas. He actually came back and visited us and wanted to see all the patients he participated in the activities with. We also exhibited all the work from the residency in the hospital, so he also wanted to come and see his own work and how it was displayed, which was really special."

-Sian Cook,
Occupational Therapy Art Room Assistant at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

A further recurring theme is the creation of community. The small scale and regularity of many residencies appear to have supported trust and connection among participants who might otherwise experience isolation. In several settings, the sessions became spaces for mutual support, shared humour and a stronger sense of belonging. Participant Hajira Bibi shared her experience of the community that was built through the *Humarah Mohallah* residency. Having the space to connect outside of the home and the environment of care around them helped the women build strong bonds with one another. The sessions became a space where participants could talk openly about

[10] https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sickle-cell-disease/

motherhood, daily pressures and personal struggles, while also learning from and supporting each other.

"At home, even my tea and my food usually get cold... I'm the last one on my list. But when I went to the sessions, they'll be serving you food, they'll be offering you snacks. So, it made me feel like I can also sit at the table and be fed by somebody else."

-- Hajira Bibi, Participant on residency held at Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Girls

Young people also appear to have derived important benefits from the residencies, particularly in relation to confidence, social anxiety, and connection. The low-pressure and relaxed environments created through the sessions seem to have encouraged participation and given young people space to express themselves more freely. In some cases, the sessions also helped soften the usual power dynamics between young participants and adult staff at the host organisations, creating a different kind of relationship grounded more in trust.

"It's been really special to see how the project has allowed young people to connect with one another, and with us as professionals, in a different way breaking down that usual power dynamic"

-Staff member at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Springfield Hospital, SWLSTG

Finally, participants appear to have connected deeply with the use of culturally resonant references, stories, and practices within the residencies, which were brought in by artists from a Global Majority background. This helped some participants engage more fully with the work and, in some cases, reconnect with their own identity, heritage, or lived experience. This suggests that cultural relevance was not a secondary feature of delivery, but an important part of what made the programme meaningful and accessible for participants.

4.4 System-level outcomes

Culturally Mindful was designed with the health priorities identified in Wandsworth's JSNA, Healthy Minds Public Mental Health Action Plan, and wider Health and Care Plan in mind. Particularly, the programme focused on responding to:

- reducing inequalities,
- improving access,
- strengthening prevention,
- and building more joined-up support across health, community, and cultural settings is reflected in the programme's design.

Alongside the immediate outcomes for artists, hosts and participants, the evidence suggests that Culturally Mindful made an early contribution to local systems of care. This contribution appears most clearly in the way the programme widened access routes into support, strengthened cross-sector working, diversified the local creative health workforce. These system-level outcomes should be understood as early and emerging, but they point to the programme's value beyond the individual residencies.

- **Increased access routes:** participants were referred between creative, community, and health providers, and more organisations are now listed on the Joy app.

- **Workforce diversification:** New practitioners from Global Majority backgrounds entered the sector through Culturally Mindful training and residencies.
- **Cross-sector communication:** the programme helped build shared language between artists, cultural professionals, community organisation leaders, and healthcare professionals. One example of this was Asma Istwani's residency at Queen Mary Hospital, where she reported clinical ward staff started to make direct patient referrals to her residency sessions, indicating the team recognised the value of creative health in their patients' recovery journey.

5. Learning for future practice and legacy

The evidence from Culturally Mindful points to several wider lessons about what it takes to deliver culturally competent creative health well. Taken together, these suggest that the success of the programme was shaped not only by the quality of the residencies themselves, but by the wider conditions that enabled artists, hosts, and participants to engage in ways that were safe, responsive, and meaningful.

- **A creative health lens can strengthen and extend practice that artists may already be bringing.** For some artists, the programme did not introduce a wholly new way of working. Instead, it gave language, structure, and legitimacy to approaches they were already using intuitively in socially engaged or community-based practice. This is particularly important for Global Majority artists, who had so far been under-represented in the Wandsworth Community of Creative Health Practice (now rebranded CHIC for Creative Health Inclusive Community) and the wider sector .This suggests that creative health programmes can play an important role in recognising existing artist practice, helping artists locate it within a wider field, and supporting them to develop it more intentionally and confidently.

- **Artists need to be supported to deliver their creative health interventions with flexibility and judgement.** The evidence suggests that formal input on creative health, trauma-informed practice, accessibility, and safeguarding was valuable, but that the quality of delivery also depended heavily on softer skills such as adaptability, listening, reading the room, and meeting participants where they are. This matters because effective creative health practice appears to rely on a balance of structure and responsiveness, not on rigid delivery.

- **Specialist contexts require specialist support.** Artists working in hospitals, mental health services, and other complex settings needed more than a general creative health introduction. Context-specific induction, clarity on roles and boundaries, and clinical support appear to have been important in helping artists work safely and confidently. This suggests that programmes operating in specialist settings need to treat this support as core infrastructure, rather than optional enhancement.

- **Peer community was a meaningful part of the programme's value.** The cohort model did more than create a space for shared learning, it also offered affirmation, a space to combat isolation (due to the lack of representation of Global Majority artists in creative health work), mutual understanding, and emotional support.

- **Strong delivery depended on preparation and collaboration, not just what happened in the room.** Induction, relationship-building, co-design, and shared reflection between artists and hosts all appear to have shaped the quality of delivery. If the time and resources for partnership building are underdeveloped or under-resourced, it could have a detrimental impact on the efficacy of a creative health intervention.

- **The quality of a creative health intervention depends on the support for resourcing outside of the main delivery.** The evidence suggests that planning, communication, emotional labour, and reflective practice were all integral to delivery. Commissioning models for creative health in the future should not only narrowly focus on the time taken to train and deliver creative health interventions, but also resourcing partnership development, collaboration, emotional labour, and adaptability.

- **Representation was part of how impacts through Culturally Mindful were achieved.** The programme's Global Majority focus added value at multiple levels: for artists, it created solidarity and affirmation; for participants, it increased cultural relevance, trust, and accessibility; and for hosts, it created opportunities to learn from artist-led approaches that challenged more prescriptive ways of working. At system level, the diversification of the workforce is instrumental in reaching communities that might be reluctant to engage with the NHS. At the same time, the programme also showed that representation must be approached with nuance. Global Majority practitioners are not a single, uniform group, and culturally competent practice requires space for different identities, cultural reference points, and ways of engaging.

- **The programme also highlighted the wider importance of representation within institutions.** The visibility of a highly skilled Global Majority cohort across host settings drew attention to the continued underrepresentation of Global Majority practitioners within leadership and management roles. This suggests that the programme's value was not only in supporting individual artists, but also in demonstrating the importance of more representative creative health pathways and institutional cultures.

- **Finally, it is essential for creative health activities, especially with participants from Global Majority artists or with people with lived experience, to be led by artists from Global Majority backgrounds or who have lived experience.** The programme suggests that who leads creative health activity matters. In Culturally Mindful, artists from Global Majority backgrounds, and in some cases artists with relevant lived experience, appear to have helped build trust, safety, and stronger engagement with participants. This was not only because of representation in itself, but because participants could see aspects of their identities, experiences, and cultural reference points reflected in the people leading the work. Across the evidence, this appears to have helped participants feel more heard, seen, and able to express themselves fully. It also suggests that in creative health, representation can be part of the mechanism through which impact is achieved, making interventions feel more culturally relevant, accessible, and psychologically safe for groups who may not feel fully recognised within mainstream provision.

6. Appendix

A. Host Organisation Information

Host organisation	Description
St George's Hospital	St George's Hospital is based in Tooting and is one of south west London's major acute hospitals. It provides a wide range of services, including emergency care, major trauma, maternity, surgery, specialist medicine, and children's services.
Queen Mary Hospital	Queen Mary's Hospital is based on Roehampton Lane in Roehampton. It is part of the St George's, Epsom and St Helier hospital group and provides a range of services including neuro-sciences, rehabilitation, maternity, gastroenterology, and outpatient care.
St George's Hospital Charity	St George's Hospital Charity is based at St George's Hospital in Tooting. It is the official charity supporting the St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and provides funding for a range of initiatives including advanced medical equipment, patient care improvements, staff well-being, and clinical research.
Royal Hospital of Neuro-Disability	The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability is a specialist hospital and medical charity in Putney. It provides rehabilitation and long-term care for people living with acquired brain injury, traumatic brain injury, neuro-disability, and other long-term neurological conditions.
575 Wandsworth Road @ Battersea Arts Centre	575 Wandsworth Road is a National Trust property in south London and the former home of Kenyan-born artist, poet, and civil servant Khadambi Asalache. It is known for its hand-carved interiors and now operates as a heritage and creative space with public programmes and workshops.
Youth Battersea	Youth Battersea is a community interest company focused on strengthening the youth sector in Battersea. Its aim is to create a borough where young people can shape their future through connected organisations, meaningful opportunities, and community support.
Wandsworth Carers	Wandsworth Carers Centre is a registered charity that has supported unpaid carers in Wandsworth since 1995. It is the lead provider of Carers Partnership Wandsworth and offers information, advice, and support for people with caring responsibilities.
Share Community	Share Community is a charity in Wandsworth that provides programmes and activities for adults with learning disabilities and autistic adults. Its work is focused on helping people live happier, healthier, and more independent lives.
Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Girls	Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Children is a local organisation supporting Asian families in Roehampton. It provides a safe and inclusive space for families to connect, take part in activities, share experiences, and build support networks.
SWLSTG Adults Service	South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust provides a range of adult mental health services across south west London, including talking therapies, crisis support, recovery services, and community-based mental health care.
SWLSTG Children and Adolescence Mental Health services	South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust provides child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) for children and young people aged 0 to 18, alongside support for families and specialist services across a range of needs in five SWL boroughs.

B. Artist Residencies

Culturally Mindful

WELCOME TO WANDSWORTH

Culturally Mindful is an innovative creative health programme embedding Global Majority artists within health, care and community settings across Wandsworth. Delivered as part of London Borough of Culture, the programme combined 10-week Creative Health training sessions, Creative clinical supervision, co-production and residency placements to deliver interventions for residents and communities experiencing health inequalities, marginalisation or isolation.

Across the borough artists worked alongside clinicians, frontline organisations and local communities to co design creative activity that was accessible, culturally responsive and trauma informed.

The projects shown here demonstrate how creativity can support wellbeing in many forms - from movement and rest, to storytelling, making and shared joy - and how art can sit alongside care, not as an extra, but as an essential part of everyday life.

Thank You

This programme would not exist without the financial support of our funders The Mayor of London, Arts Council England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Wandsworth Council, plus developmental support from Wandsworth Council's Arts & Culture Service, and the support of facilitators, artists, partners and participants. We are incredibly grateful to all who have contributed to the success of Culturally Mindful.

Project Oversight: Lelia Greci

Programme Co-ordinator: Jemilea Wisdom-Baako

Facilitators: Arji Manuelpillai and Carol Cumberbatch

Artists: Asma Istwani, Francis Augusto, Ken Nwadiogbu, Rebecca Olajide, Roopa Basu, Saira Niazi, Shiza Naveed, Tanya Acquaah, Tsipora St. Clair Knights, Youyang Song

Partner Organisations: 575 Wandsworth Road, Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Children, Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, Share Community, Sound Minds, South West London and St George's Mental Health Trust, St George's Hospital Charity, Wandsworth Carers Centre, Youth Battersea

Thank you to National Lottery players.

> "At home, even my tea and my food usually get cold.
>
> I'm the last one on my list. But when I went to the sessions… it made me feel like I can also sit at the table and be fed by somebody else.
>
> I look forward to every Tuesday… it's just for me.
>
> I've noticed a boost in my mood - the environment is so calming, such a great way to switch off from everyday stress"

Hajira, participant, Humara Mohallah

MAYOR OF LONDON

London Borough of Culture is a Mayor of London initiative.

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Wandsworth Council

Asma Istwani



Host: St George's Hospital Charity/Queen Mary Hospital, Roehampton

Setting: Gwynne Holford Ward (Neuro rehabilitation)

Summary: Over ten weeks, artist Asma Istwani embedded a gentle, trauma informed craft practice within a neuro rehabilitation ward at Queen Mary Hospital.

Working bedside and in shared spaces, she offered clay, collage and weaving sessions designed to support confidence, motor skills and emotional wellbeing

The consistency of weekly sessions allowed trust to grow, creating a familiar creative rhythm within a clinical environment.

Ward staff began referring patients directly, recognising creativity as a meaningful part of holistic care. The residency demonstrated how sustained, low pressure creative engagement can support recovery, dignity and connection within hospital settings.

Asma Istwani is a London-based artist and founder of RIOT SOUP. Her collage and photo montage work explores identity, care, and rebellion. She's worked with TATE and Somerset House, creating inclusive workshops and events that centre Black and Brown voices, challenge dominant narratives, and reimagine equitable artistic landscapes.













Francis Augusto



Host: Wandsworth Carers Centre

Setting: Community venue, Balham

Summary: This residency worked with unpaid adult carers - people whose caring responsibilities often leave little space for self expression.

Through storytelling, painting, photography and zine making, artist Francis Augusto created a space where carers could reconnect with themselves and with one another. What began as creative sessions grew into a genuine peer support community.

Participants shaped the direction of the work, moving from participation to creative ownership and advocacy.

The resulting collaborative zine, Held, In Care, captures carers' voices in their own words and images, reflecting both vulnerability and collective strength.

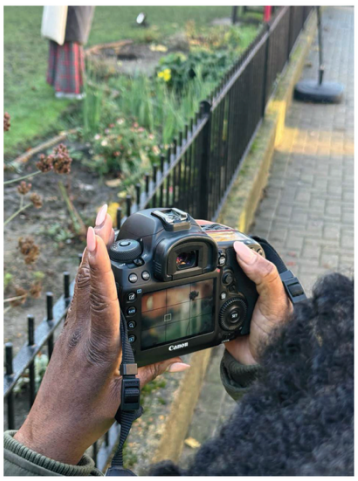
Francis Augusto is an Angolan-born visual artist using film photography to explore memory, identity, and healing. A former youth worker, he captures intimacy through portraiture. Founder of The Mandem, Francis creates emotionally supportive spaces for men and leads projects exploring punk, embodiment, and intergenerational connection across diasporic communities.













Roopa Basu



Host: Sound Minds

Setting: Bridging Minds Visual Arts Studio

Summary: Working within an established mental health arts programme, Roopa Basu introduced a light touch, culturally mindful visual arts framework that balanced structure with autonomy.

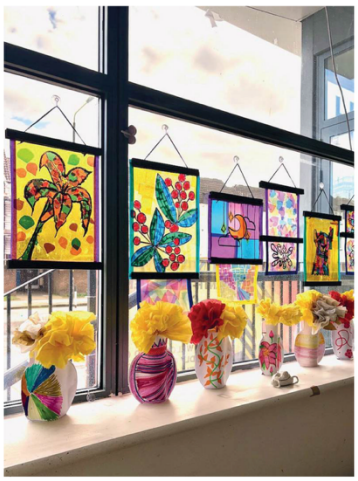
Using prompts, global visual references and accessible materials, the residency supported participants to experiment, build confidence and connect socially. Over time, the studio environment became more collaborative, with participants shaping displays and supporting one another's work.

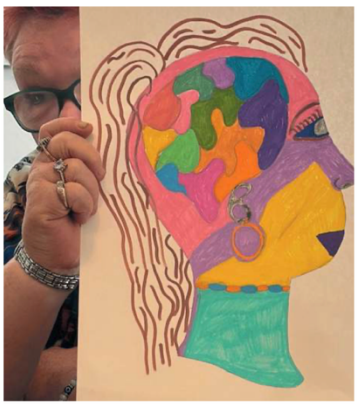
The project strengthened peer connection, visibility and belonging while developing a flexible creative framework that can be sustained beyond the residency.

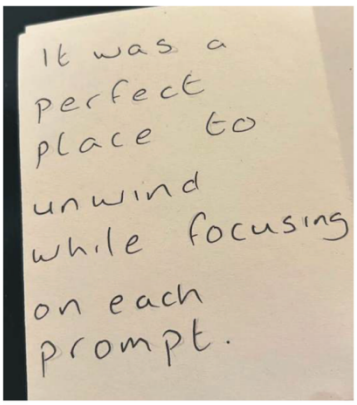
Roopa Basu is a London-based multidisciplinary artist whose layered visual work explores belonging, memory, and light. Raised across three continents, she creates public art and workshops celebrating underrepresented stories. Her practice, rooted in accessibility and connection, builds creative bridges across cultures, partnering with schools, councils, and cultural institutions.



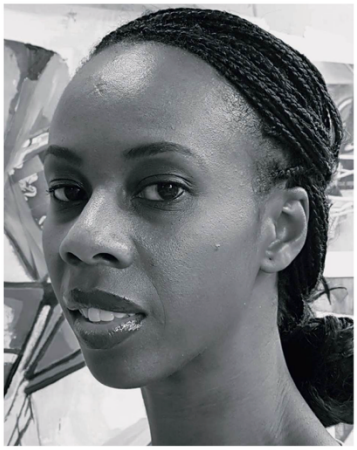








Rebecca Olajide



Host: Royal Hospital of Neuro-disability

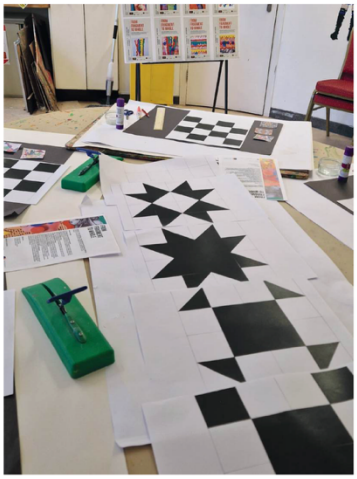
Setting: Hospital wards and public spaces

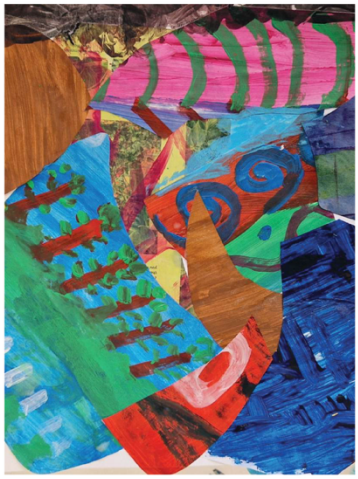
Summary: Rebecca Olajide's creative health residency invited patients, staff and visitors to take part in shared paper based artworks through folding, mark making and collage. Using simple, accessible materials, the project encouraged calm focus, play and collaboration within busy hospital environments.

The work emphasised process over outcome, showing how small creative acts can shift atmosphere, support wellbeing and bring moments of connection into clinical spaces.

The residency demonstrated how creativity can be inclusive, visible and welcoming within healthcare settings.

Rebecca Olajide is a London-based visual artist exploring domesticity and beauty in everyday life. Working with charcoal, print, and paint, her home studio practice is deeply community-rooted. She's led creative projects with people experiencing mental health issues, dementia, and isolation, centring empathy, care, and art as social connection.











Ken Nwadiogbu



Host: St George's Hospital Charity, St George's Hospital

Setting: Gordon Smith Ward (Sickle Cell Unit)

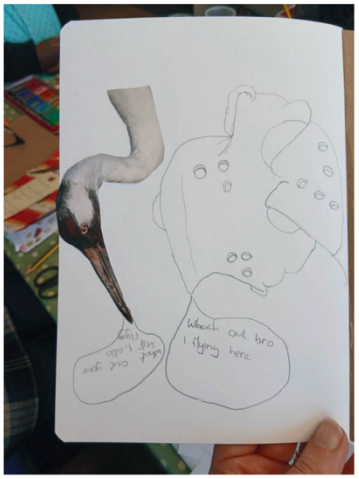
Summary: Ken Nwadiogbu worked bedside and with outpatients in the Gordon Smith Ward, using painting and conversation to support reflection, comfort and connection. His residency centred lived experience, representation and visibility, particularly for patients living with sickle cell disease.

Alongside workshops, Ken developed a final artwork inspired by participants' stories, intended as a lasting presence within the ward.

The work explored resilience, migration and being seen, demonstrating how creative practice can humanise healthcare spaces and leave an enduring legacy.

Ken Nwadiogbu is a Nigerian-born, London-based multidisciplinary artist exploring identity and migration. A Royal College of Art graduate, his socially engaged work spans murals and mental health workshops. Ken has exhibited at the Royal Academy and co-founded Artists Connect Africa to amplify cultural representation and challenge perception through empathy.









Saira Niazi



Host: Roehampton Wellbeing for Women & Children

Setting: Alton Estate, Manresa Clubroom

Summary: Humara Mohallah was a place based creative programme designed with and for older South Asian women experiencing social isolation and limited mobility.

Through arts, movement, storytelling and neighbourhood walks, participants built confidence, friendships and a stronger sense of belonging. Sessions were well attended and sustained, transforming a local community space into a lively creative hub.

The project demonstrated how culturally specific, neighbourhood led creative health work can reduce isolation, improve wellbeing and strengthen community connection.

Saira Niazi is a London-based writer, guide, and founder of Living London. Her place-based practice explores belonging, transience, and mental health. Published in Huck and the New Statesman, she's led creative programmes with Tate and the Museum of London, using inclusive storytelling to uncover hidden stories and spark wonder.











Tanya Acquaah



Host: Providence House Youth Club & Katherine Low Settlement

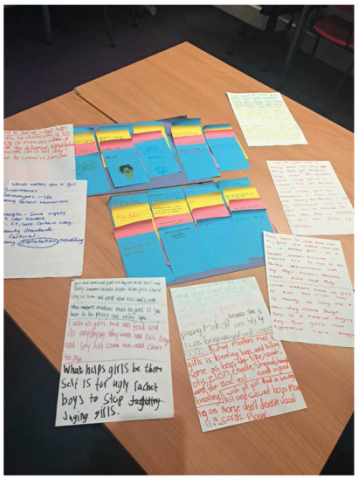
Setting: Youth and community spaces in Battersea

Summary: This residency engaged girls and young women through drama, creative writing, discussion and collaborative making.

Designed to support confidence, safety and emotional expression, the sessions created dedicated spaces where participants could reflect on identity and self esteem. Over time, young people became more confident, connected and expressive, forming new friendships and peer support networks.

The work led to sustained creative wellbeing activity continuing beyond the residency, embedding creative health practice within youth provision.

Tanya Acquaah is a multidisciplinary artist and founder of TIA – The Inner Attitude. Combining dance, theatre, and poetry, she delivers transformative arts programmes for women and girls. Tanya leads youth innovation projects and helped establish Black Minds Matter, using creativity as a tool for healing, justice, and empowerment.









Youyang Song



Host: Share Community

Setting: Adult learning

Summary: Using movement, physical theatre and play, Youyang Song worked with adults with learning disabilities, autistic adults and people with mental health support needs.

Sessions were sensory aware, choice based and inclusive, allowing participants to engage verbally or non verbally at their own pace. Participants who were initially withdrawn grew in confidence, motivation and social connection.

Staff observed wider benefits beyond the sessions, including increased openness to movement based wellbeing activities. The residency highlighted the power of embodied creativity to support joy, expression and connection.

Youyang Song is a Chinese multidisciplinary artist and facilitator working across theatre, clowning, and writing. She's performed at Donmar Warehouse and Southbank Centre. Trained in facilitation, her workshops centre empathy and empowerment. Passionate about creative wellbeing, she believes in the arts as a tool for social connection and change.











Tsipora St. Clair Knights



Host: 575 Wandsworth Road/National Trust

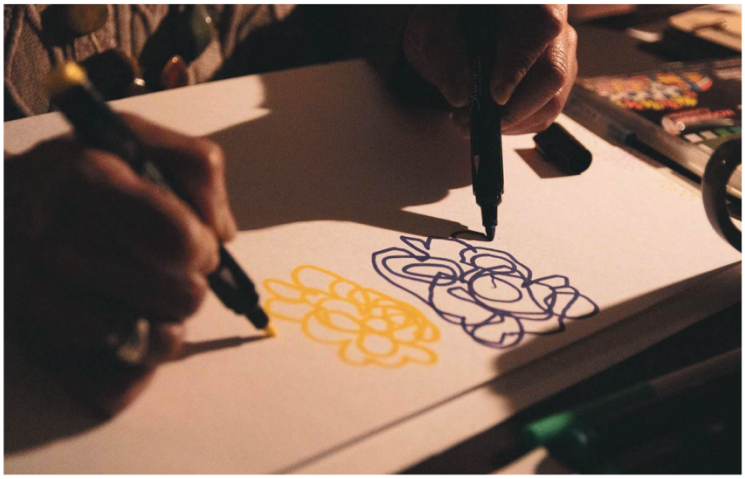
Setting: Historic house and cultural spaces

Summary: Tsipora St. Clair Knights' residency re imagined 575 Wandsworth Road as a site of rest, care and cultural repair. Working with local artists and activists of the Global Majority, the project explored the theme Rest is Resistance through somatic practice, creative mapping, zine making and herbal care.

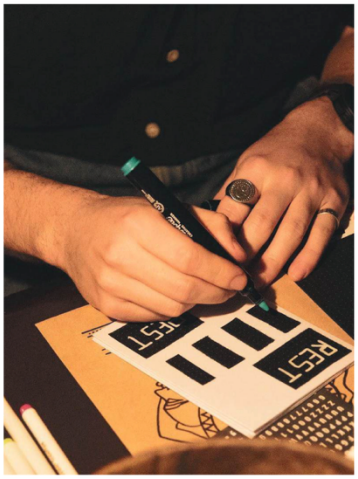
Rooted in an African centred wellbeing approach, the residency created non hierarchical spaces for reflection and collective care.

It demonstrated how heritage spaces can be reclaimed as places of healing, creativity and belonging.

Tsipora is a South London-based multidisciplinary artist working across poetry, dance, and film. Her creative activism addresses marginalisation, wellbeing, and representation. A Pointe Black ballet student and breathwork practitioner, she sits on boards including Rising Arts Agency, using art to create healing spaces and amplify lived experience.











Shiza Naveed



Host: CAMHS, Springfield Hospital (South West London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust)

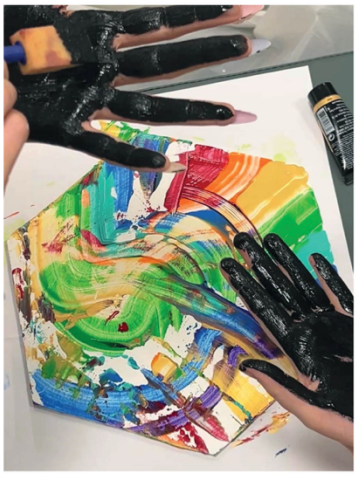
Programme title: Journeys

Summary: Journeys was a creative health residency delivered at CAMHS, Springfield Hospital, working with adolescents, young people, clinical staff, and families with children under five.

Through co designed creative sessions, participants explored their mental health journeys - reflecting on what has supported them, what they are proud of, and their hopes for the future. Activities included somatic grounding, storytelling, painting and collective making, designed to be inclusive and non judgemental.

The project culminated in a permanent art installation within CAMHS, created from participants' work, helping to transform clinical corridors into more welcoming, human spaces and fostering connection, visibility and community.

Shiza Naveed is an artist, researcher, and facilitator using creativity to explore migrant justice and collective memory. She's created murals across Wandsworth and co-founded azl, a knowledge-sharing platform. Her work nurtures counter-narratives and challenges hierarchies, using storytelling and care as tools for visibility, liberation, and community transformation.



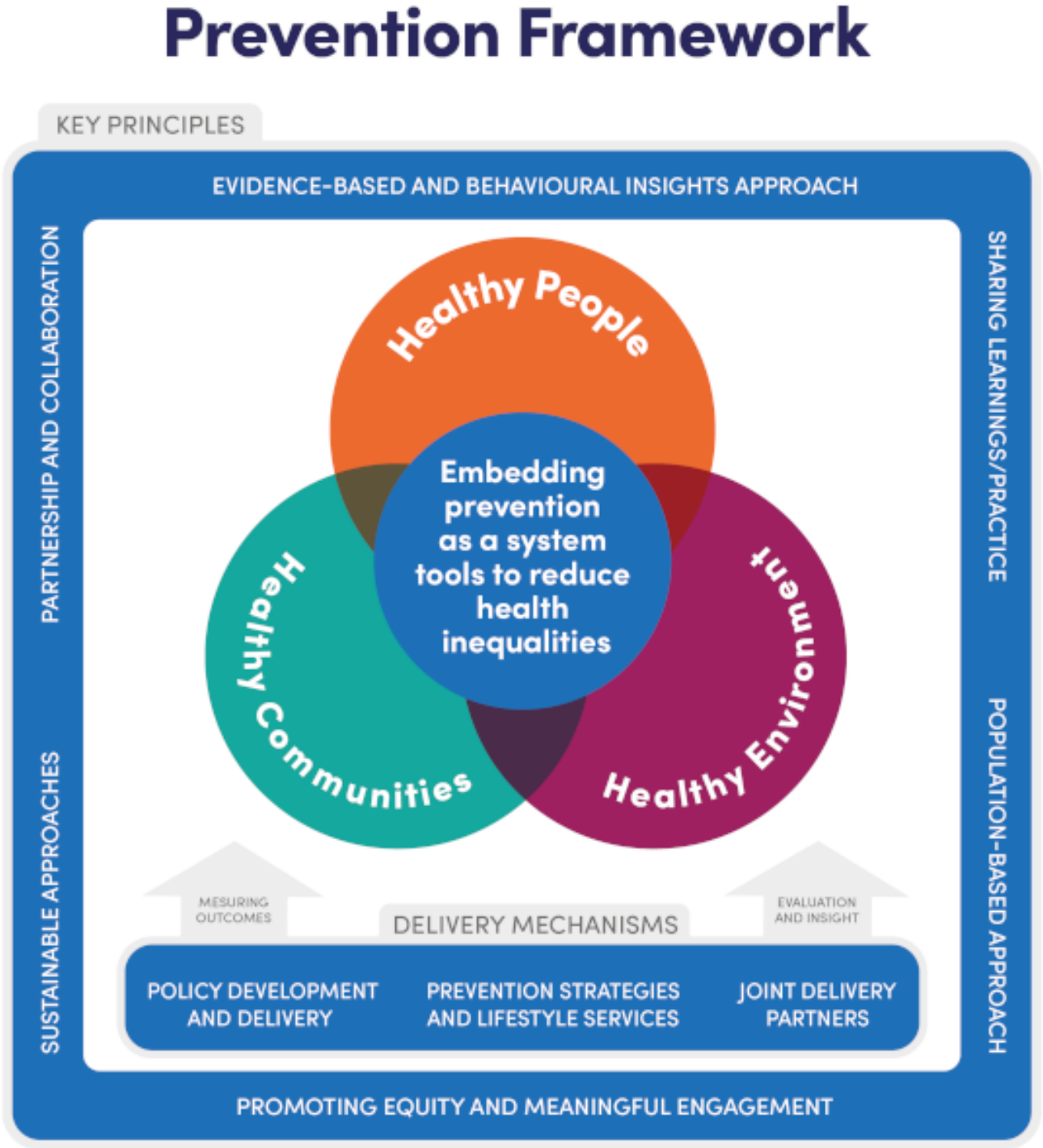






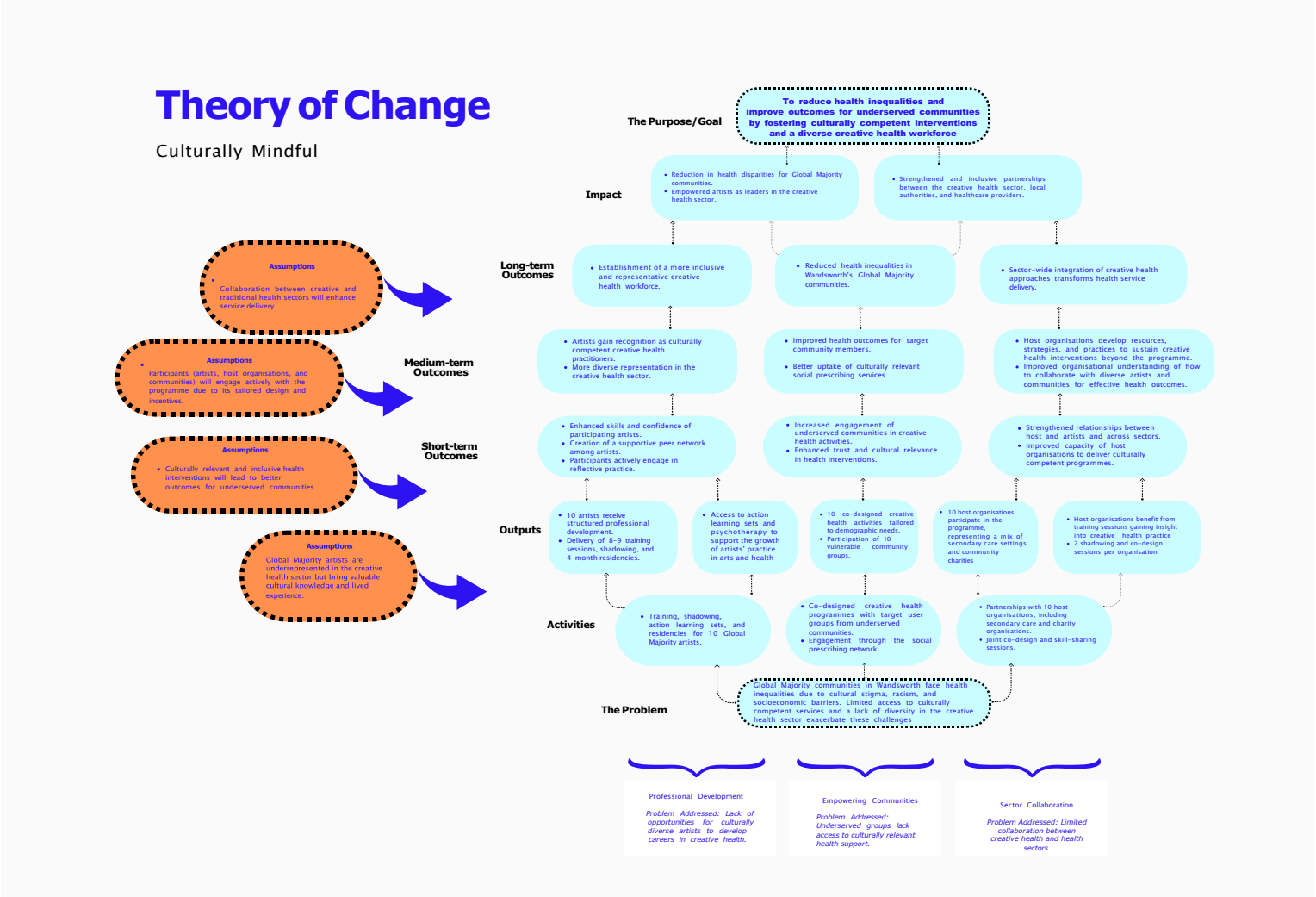


C. Wandsworth Prevention Framework[11]



[11] Authored by Dr Nike Arowobusoye

D. Culturally Mindful Theory of Change



F. Impact Framework

Impact area	Outcome type	Outcome	Indicator	Data collection tool								
				Case study	Artists' reflective journal	Residency outputs/plans and relevant documentation	Artist survey data	Host survey data	Demographic data	Participant data	Observation notes	LBOC Data
1. Artist's professional development	**Short term**	1.1 Enhanced skills and confidence of artists	1.1.1 % of artists reporting the CM programme as a whole (including training sessions, shadowing opportunities, mentoring, informal support) effectively equipped them to design and deliver creative health sessions				X					
			1.1.2. % of artists reporting the CM programme as a whole (including training sessions, shadowing opportunities, mentoring, informal support) effectively equipped them to apply inclusive and trauma-informed principles				X					
			1.1.3. % of artists reporting the CM programme as a whole (including training sessions, shadowing opportunities, mentoring, informal support) effectively equipped them to collaborate with communities and healthcare professionals				X					
			1.1.4. % of artists reporting the CM programme as a whole (including training sessions, shadowing opportunities, mentoring, informal support) effectively equipped them to evaluate creative health activities				X					
			1.1.5 % of artists reporting the CM programme as a whole (including training sessions, shadowing opportunities, mentoring, informal support) effectively equipped them to prioritise their wellbeing				X					
			1.1.6 % of artists indicating that they believe they have developed their career in the cultural sector as a result of their involvement in CM									X
			1.1.7. Qualitative feedback indicating artists' enhanced skills and confidence as a result of CMI's training, learning spaces, and residencies	X	X		X				X	

		1.2 Creation of a supportive peer network of artists	1.2.1 % of artists reporting stronger connections with peers on CM				X					
			1.2.2. % of artists agreeing they feel safe, seen, and supported in the CM cohort.				X					
			1.2.3. % of artists agreeing that being in a Global Majority cohort positively impacted their experience of the programme				X					
			1.2.4. Qualitative reflections on peer learning, support, and community on the CM programme	X	X		X				X	
		1.3 Participants actively engage in reflective practise	1.3.1. Evidence of artist reflections (written/verbal/visual)	X	X						X	
			1.3.2. Qualitative reflections on the impact of using reflective practise on artists' work and engagement	X	X						X	
	Medium term	1.4 Artists gain recognition as culturally competent creative health practitioners.	1.4.1 Artist reflections on visibility and recognition of their creative health work (e.g. sharing opportunities, feedback)	X	X						X	
			1.4.2. Anectodes on increased demand or interest in artists' creative health practise	X	X						X	
		1.5 More diverse representation in the creative health sector	1.5.1. Anecdotes from artists indicating that they will continue to work in the creative health sector	X							X	
2. Empowering communities	**Short term**	2.1 Increased engagement of underserved communities in creative health activities.	2.1.1. % of participants from underserved communities engaged across sessions							X		X
			2.1.2. % of sessions or activities co-designed or co-led with community members			X						
		2.2 Enhanced trust and cultural relevance in mental health (creative health) interventions.	2.2.1 . % of hosts who agree that the programme improved the cultural relevance of their mental health support for participants	X				X				
			2.2.2. Qualitative feedback indicating participants have an increased comfort with engaging in creative health interventions	X	X		X	X			X	X
			2.2.3. Observations from artists and hosts indicated increased comfort and trust within participants with creative health initiatives	X	X						X	

	Medium term	2.3 Improved mental health outcomes for target community members.	2.3.1. Qualitative feedback/ observations from/of participants indicating improved wellbeing as a result of participating in creative health initiatives	X	X						X	X
		2.4 Better uptake of culturally relevant social prescribing services.	2.4.1 Qualitative feedback/observations indicating better update of culturally relevant social prescribing services	X	X			X			X	
3. Sector collaboration	**Short term**	3.1 Strengthened relationships between host and artists and across sectors.	3.1.1. % of artists indicating they have cross-sector collaboration or partners to deliver their creative health initiatives									X
			3.1.2. % of artists reporting new cross-sector collaborations or partnerships									X
			3.1.3. % of artists expecting cross-sector collaborations to continue beyond the programme									X
			3.1.4. Qualitative feedback from artists and hosts on the nature of strengthened relationships	X	X						X	
		3.2 Improved capacity of host organisations to deliver culturally competent programmes.	3.2.1. % of hosts reporting increased understanding of culturally competent creative health inteventions					X				
			3.2.2 % of hosts reporting increased confidence to deliver culturally competent creative health interventions					X				
			3.2.3 % of hosts reporting increased confidence in embedding access and inclusion					X				
			3.2.4. Qualitative feedback indicating increased capacity to deliver culturally competent programmes	X	X						X	
	Medium term	3.3 Host organisations develop resources,strategies, and practices to sustain creative health interventions beyond the programme.	3.3.1 Feedback from hosts indicating planned or implemented culturally competent creative health programmes	X				X			X	
		3.4 Improved organisational understanding of how to collaborate with diverse artists	3.4.1 % of hosts who feel more confident co-designing with communities					X				

		and communities for effective health outcomes.	3.4.2. Reflections/examples indicating hosts have a new or deepened understanding of how to collaborate effectively with diverse artists and communities	X	X			X			X	

G. Case studies

(F1) Host Case Study

About Wandsworth Carers Centre

Wandsworth Carers Centre (WCC) supports unpaid carers across the borough, people who are often juggling intense responsibility, limited time, and high emotional load.

Shenade Windebank, Deputy CEO of Wandsworth Carers Centre came across the opportunity to participate in the Culturally Mindful programme. She felt that the Culturally Mindful programme would offer WCC the chance to offer carers something they regularly ask for - which was more creative activities along with a space away from caring responsibilities. Moreover, the funding, training, and matching with an artist reduced the practical barriers in launching creative health activities within WCC.

Providing a safe space and community for carers through art

Through the sessions, carers had the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities, including storytelling, visual arts, photography, and creating zines.

At the start of each session, carers often arrived stressed, exhausted, burnt out, and carrying the weight of their day to day lives. By the end of the sessions, Shenade consistently saw people leave calmer and lighter. Carers described feeling heard, feeling grateful for the space, and sharing things they might not otherwise have shared.

"*It's been so joyful. It's been so joyous seeing carers come to the session that we're offering, feeling stressed and burnt out and tired and exhausted and leaving an hour and a half, two hours later, lifted, lighter, happy, having connected, having felt heard. It's just been such a pleasure being part of that.*"

Shenade shared that the process of engaging in art and creativity offered carers a different way to speak about their experiences, not just through talking, but through the art they were creating. The creative process helped people open up, reflect, share their experiences in a way that they might not have been able to before, and also in a way that felt non-judgmental.

"Everyone's feeling so much more relaxed. They feel heard. They feel like they've had the space to express themselves. They feel like they've been able to share things that they might not have otherwise shared and they feel grateful, for the session, for that space."

Some reflections from the carers on what they enjoyed the most include:

"Learning something new, being creative, getting to know everyone better, being heard, being myself, being real."

“Listening to others and getting close to them. Feeling safe and opening up. Expressing what needed to be expressed.”

“It’s the first time I felt heard.”

From the outset, the approach was shaped by carers themselves. Carers joined an early session where they talked about what they wanted from the space with the artist working with them. Shenade remarks that the co-creation was the reason carers kept returning, as they were a part of a space that was designed for them by them. As the weeks went on, the programme brought the same carers back again and again. They made friends, connected with each other, and did not want the sessions to end.



Participant on residency at Wandsworth Carers Centre

The importance of relationship building for successful collaborations

Shenade places a lot of emphasis on what made delivery successful, the relationship between the host organisation and the artist. The programme training created an early space for them to meet, build rapport, and develop a shared understanding of what they want the activities to achieve. Shenade also felt the training clarified roles and boundaries, what the host is responsible for, what the artist is responsible for, and how to hold mutual respect.

The artist was embedded into WCC’s context. He was introduced to the organisation, shadowed sessions, and learned directly about carers’ needs. Shenade describes his approach as flexible, open, and deeply aligned with what carers had asked for. After every session, Shenade and the artist checked in, reflected, and adjusted the next plan.

How Culturally Mindful supported WCC’s confidence in creative health

For WCC, Culturally Mindful strengthened confidence in using creative approaches to support mental health and wellbeing. Shenade describes how the training helped the organisation understand creative health more clearly.

"The creative health training introduction to what is creative health really helped us to understand what we were trying to achieve. The trauma-informed practice helped prepare us for supporting subjects, topics, conversations that would come up in our sessions that may be linked to trauma for carers. We were able to hold a space that we felt was safe for people and were confident in our abilities to be able to manage and respond to people's expression of their experiences."



Deputy CEO of Wandsworth Carers Centre Shenade Windebank, Culturally Mindful artist Francis Augusto, residency participants

WCC would like to continue offering more creative health programmes for carers, especially with the knowledge and training received from the Culturally Mindful programme. In particular, they would like to continue working with the artist that was placed with them:

"[The artist's] whole approach to the sessions, his flexibility, his ability to stay focused, but also work with what the participants are bringing and what their needs are has been amazing. That's been key, really, to the success of the sessions."

A message for funders and the wider sector

Shenade's strongest learning is that creative health needs to be shaped with the people it is meant to serve. Evidence that creative health works is not enough on its own. What matters is what creative health looks like for a specific group, and whether the approach matches their circumstances and needs.

She also highlights resourcing as critical. The model worked because it was properly set up, with training, staff time, and materials built in. Shenade stresses that future programmes should follow Culturally Mindful's lead, having the preparation and delivery as part of the programme funding.

(F2) Hospital Participant Case Study

About The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability in Putney is a specialist hospital supporting patients with complex neurological conditions. Some of the patients the hospital provides care for include those recovering from stroke, acquired brain injury, motor neurone disease, and other neuro-disabilities. The hospital already offers a range of arts activities through its art room, which supports patients' rehabilitation goals, particularly upper limb movement, speech, and confidence.



The arts space at the hospital

Through Culturally Mindful, the hospital hosted an eight-week residency delivered by artist Rebecca Olajide. The project delivered in the residency was closely aligned with patients' therapeutic goals. Rebecca worked alongside staff from the hospital's Leisure and Family Services team to adapt materials and tools, ensuring that activities were accessible to patients with varying physical and cognitive needs. Rebecca hosted sessions for patients that focused on pattern making using various materials, mediums, and tools that were adapted for accessibility needs.

Sessions were delivered in a public family space within the hospital called The View, which was a departure from arts therapy sessions that were usually delivered in the hospital's art room. Staff observed that several patients first encountered the project in The View, then later asked their therapists to refer them to participate in the project's activities.
Families of long-term residents also encountered the activities while they would access The View. Some families were not aware of the hospital's creative offer. As such, the visibility of the sessions reintroduced arts as part of the holistic care offered to patients. Staff members also joined in, returning week after week, highlighting the wider wellbeing benefit beyond patients alone.

Across the eight weeks, staff estimated that 60 to 80 patients participated, in addition to families and staff.

From the outset, the residency provided a different approach to how arts-based therapy had been done prior in the hospital. Compared to one-off sessions held in the art-room, the residency followed a structured eight-week arc. In the first weeks, patients created paper textures and simple painted pieces. As confidence grew, these were transformed into larger collages and collective works. This gradual progression allowed patients to build skills over time and work towards a shared end goal. Moreover, the eight-week structure gave patients a clearer sense of purpose and

continuity. Seeing their artwork evolve and contribute to a collective outcome appeared to strengthen engagement and motivation:

"I feel like for a lot of our patients it's nice to have an end goal they can see that the whole way through".

-Sian Cook,
Occupational Therapy Art Room Assistant at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

Support for physical rehabilitation

The residency was a key part of patients' rehabilitation.

Artist Rebecca Olajide shared the following stories about patients' experiences:

"I was hesitant about introducing pattern making to the patients as it requires a lot of cognitive capacity to complete, which may have been tough for patients who were recovering from brain injuries for example. I adapted the activity to use simple tiles but still including complex patterns so it would be easier for them to participate. One of the participants, who was recovering from a brain injury produced a wonderful, complex pattern. This required using her cognitive thinking, decision making, and agency to produce the pattern. If she couldn't put the pattern together herself, she would ask the hospital staff to put the pattern together based on her instructions. The participant's husband was also equally amazed by her work, even remarking that she could sell it!

Another participant, who was experiencing a lot of pain due to her condition was not very enthusiastic about participating. I showed her a lot of care, created a very welcoming space, and ensured that she knew she could participate in whatever way she felt comfortable with. At the end of the session, she was smiling, showing off her artwork to the rest of the patients. Even the staff members were surprised at her change in attitude!"

Hospital staff shared a particularly notable story of a patient who was able to experience meaningful benefits through the project in relation to his mental and physical wellbeing:

"We have one patient, who has Guillain-Barré syndrome participating in the activities. At the beginning, he was very, very self-deprecating, remarking consistently at the start that he felt he couldn't do the activities. His mum would always join in with his sessions with him and encourage him to go through the activities. We also figured out ways to adapt the processes and the activities to make him feel more encouraged to participate.

As the eight-week programme went on, the strength in his arms grew. We were reducing the amount of aides and adaptations he needed to participate in the activities. You could see a real improvement not only in his strength but also his confidence.

He got discharged just before Christmas. He actually came back and visited us and wanted to see all the patients he participated in the activities with. We also exhibited all the work from the



Artwork produced by patient

residency in the hospital, so he also wanted to come and see his own work and how it was displayed, which was really special.

-Sian Cook,
Occupational Therapy Art Room Assistant at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

Strengthening wellbeing and social connection

Beyond physical rehabilitation, staff felt the residency had a positive impact on patients' mental health and wellbeing.

The collaborative nature of the sessions brought together patients from different parts of the hospital, including long-term residents and those in short-term rehabilitation. This mixing created opportunities for new relationships and informal interaction. Engaging in a shared creative task provided a gentle way to connect, particularly for patients who may find direct conversation challenging.

"Everyone from the whole hospital could kind of sit down together. A lot of them met new faces. [They were] just a lot more engaged in chatting and seeing each other week after week. Particularly for the ones in the specialist nursing homes, it's a really lovely way for them to meet new people".

-Sian Cook,
Occupational Therapy Art Room Assistant at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability

Patients also responded positively to Rebecca's presence as a visiting artist. As someone not part of the regular staff team, she brought a different dynamic into the space. After the residency ended, patients asked about her and continued elements of the project in her absence, demonstrating the strong connection they built with her through the project.

The artworks produced by patients were not only displayed as part of an exhibit within the hospital, it was also part of the wider We Art Wandsworth exhibit at the Battersea Arts Centre. The hospital staff have been taking patients to visit to see this exhibit. For them, seeing their work displayed in a public space outside of the hospital created a deeper sense of accomplishment in what they were able to produce.

Lasting impact on hospital practice

The residency has influenced how the hospital approaches its arts-based therapy and rehabilitation support. Inspired by the benefits of the eight-week format, the Leisure and Family Services Team has begun trialling longer themed blocks of sessions, with the goal of producing a collective piece of artwork.

Staff appreciated the space to experiment with arts-based therapy provided by Culturally Mindful. They were able to explore new art themes, materials, and extend art therapy to a variety of patient groups. The hospital has applied for further funding to continue similar creative health residencies and expressed strong interest in hosting another eight-week programme in future.

Culturally Mindful's impact on Rebecca Olajide's practice going forward

For Rebecca, the programme provided a structure and motivation to return to her creative practice. Rebecca credits the facilitation and experience provided by programme leaders Jemilea Wisdom-Baako and Arji Manuelpillai was key to building her confidence and helped her see herself as a practising artist again.

Rebecca also credits the culture of warmth and friendliness within the cohort, made entirely up of artists from a Global Majority background. She leaned on the community, especially as she was delivering her residency in a challenging context, to share ideas, feelings, and emotions.

"It just became a nice safe space, really, to be honest. It was an opportunity to share what's going great and then the things we found challenging as well. There was this sense of support and we cheered each other on."

Culturally Mindful helped Rebecca reconnect to what sits at the centre of her practice, pattern, colour, and paper-based making, and a focus on processes that are accessible and can be done with simple materials In terms of practical skills, Rebecca also learned about branding and using social media as an artist, valuable skills for her going forward.

Through the programme's training but even more so through the experience of delivering the residency in the hospital, Rebecca developed valuable experience and skills working with patients who had challenging medical, cognitive, and verbal needs. Rebecca also learned how to use her skillset as an artist to positively contribute to their rehabilitation.

Rebecca now feels she is able to return to her artistic practice with more clarity, confidence, and momentum after her participation in the Culturally Mindful programme. Rebecca plans to document and share her work more intentionally, using social media to build more visibility of her creative work. Rebecca is also keen to continue working in creative health initiatives. She feels the programme provided her a direction on how to connect parts of her working life that previously felt separate. Rebecca also works part-time as a Learning Resources Producer at the Science Museum, and she looks forward to bringing her experience and learnings from the programme to her role at the Science Museum as well.

(F3) Participant Case Study

About Hajira Bibi

Hajira is a mother of four children, all under the age of 10, living in Roehampton. As a mother, her caring responsibilities take up most of her time. She felt that she did not have much time to herself and most of her energy was dedicated to her children. Hajira studied fashion and textiles in university, however since becoming a mother, she has not had the opportunity to return to fashion and creativity.

She first heard about the Culturally Mindful residency project *Humarah Mohallah* through a close friend. *Humarah Mohallah* ('Our Neighbourhood') is an art school centred around place led by artist Saira Niazi. The programme is based at Manresa Clubroom, in the heart of the Alton Estate. The programme was co-designed with Roehampton Wellbeing for Women and Children, mostly serving older South Asian women, many of whom are socially isolated and mostly housebound. The programme seeks to give participants a sense of connection and belonging to themselves, each other and place.

What initially drew Hajira to *Humarah Mohallah* was not a desire to learn new creative skills, but something more basic, she wanted a reason to step outside her routine, meet other women, and have a small pocket of time for her own wellbeing.

Building community through *Humarah Mohallah*



A group activity on the programme

Hajira describes the sessions as relaxed, friendly, and welcoming. She felt she could show up however she felt comfortable without the pressure to participate in the arts activities. Hajira felt cared for through the environment created in small thoughtful ways, such as through the food and refreshments provided. Hajira described this as a reversal of daily life at home, where she is usually the person meeting everyone else's' needs.

"At home, even my tea and my food usually get cold [before I can consume them]. I'm the last one on my list. But when I went to the sessions, they'll be serving you food, they'll be offering you snacks. So, it made me feel like I can also sit on the table and be fed by somebody else. That's why I look forward to every Tuesday to go and enjoy some free time, which is just for me. I'm not needed, nobody's telling me to do anything".

Through this sense of community created, she felt that herself and the women who took part in *Humarah Mohallah* developed a strong bond and connection. They had a space where they could speak about their lives and struggles as mothers. An intergenerational community was also formed, where Hajira found that she was learning from older mothers and supporting younger mothers in the programme with motherhood, life, and any other struggles they might have.



The group gatherings within the community centre

Hajira also brought others to the programme. For example, she encouraged a neighbour who was going through a difficult time to join the sessions. She describes that her neighbour saw a large impact on her mental health through joining the community of women, also became more aware of avenues to seek help with her personal issues.

Hajira's reconnection with her former creative education and background



Pottery painting

While Hajira joined *Humarah Mohallah* for the community, the creative activities helped her reconnect with her previous identity before she had children. She studied textiles, art, and fashion at university. However, after years of raising children, she felt that she did not have as strong of a grasp on these skills anymore:

"When I started going to the sessions and I saw those techniques again, like embroidery, beadwork, it just made me feel like I used to do all of this, but staying at home for so long made kind of made me feel like I can't even hold a pen anymore"

Through the activities, and the simple acts of picking up a needle again for example, trying embroidery, painting, and pottery brought back fond memories and reminded her that she still had those abilities. She realised that that part of her identity was still inside her, which gave her a lot of confidence.

"There was so much I learned, literally so many techniques and they're still there. It's just that they're a bit faded away. Holding that needle or doing pottery or painting brought so many memories back. It made myself realise that my skills still exist, it's just a bit faded away".

Since reconnecting with this part of her identity, Hajira now has plans to return to fashion in the future once her youngest children are in full-time schooling. Hajira also describes some of her fellow participants have similar plans and want to start businesses using the skills they gained from the programme.

"These kind of sessions, even just once a week, it kind of makes you remember all those things. Though at the moment, I'm a homemaker and I've devoted my attention and my time to the kids because they need me at the moment. But this is what I want to do after they go to school full time."

Impact on Hajira's mental health and wellbeing beyond the sessions

Hajira expressed that the *Humarah Mohallah* programme had a great impact on her mental health. After sessions she noticed a boost in mood and consequently felt more relaxed and present with her children. She describes how sessions sometimes brought her back to memories of Pakistan, and how she then carried these experiences home, sharing what she had made and talked about this with her children. This helped her feel more connected to her roots and gave her new stories to bring into family life.

She felt she had something positive to look forward to each week, which helped her get through her caring responsibilities. She also felt a reduction in the guilt she felt if she could not provide equal attention to all her children. She also recognised that she had more patience at home with her children and was able to get through challenges better.



Tote bag making

"I've noticed a boost in my mood after the session. I'm always looking forward to the next session, because I know I'm going to come here again and it'll be something new. The environment in those sessions is so calming, which is very great way to switch off from everyday stress".