

The Baring Foundation

# **Older People and the Arts: A Mid-term Programme Review**

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# Older People and the Arts:

## A Mid-term Programme Review

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# 1 SETTING THE SCENE

## 1.1 Baring Foundation, older people and the arts

As a mid-scale foundation, Baring has in recent years adopted a strategic approach to its support for the arts and voluntary sectors in the UK. By focusing on specific areas – often those receiving less attention from other foundations and public policy – Baring has achieved greater outcomes than might be expected of its relatively limited funds.

The Foundation's support for arts work with refugees (2004-2009) was a valuable intervention in a complex field. It had had a lasting impact on both voluntary organisations and wider questions of practice and policy, and the traces can be still be seen, for example in the work of [City Arts](#) in Nottingham.

As that programme drew to a close, the Foundation tested where it could most effectively focus future work. A paper prepared by Kate Organ, Baring's Arts Adviser, explored the value of focusing on the arts in rural areas, in criminal justice and in old age, and the Foundation decided that the last would be its theme for the coming five year period, 2009 to 2014.

A sum of £3 million was allocated for the new programme (subsequently reduced to £2,75 million as a consequence of financial market performance in the current economic climate). The bulk of these funds will be allocated as grants in five annual tranches, with the first being 'core grants' for three years to 10 organisations; some £1 million of the budget is still unallocated.

## 1.2 The purpose and scope of the review

This paper sets out the findings of a short mid-term review of the programme to date, commissioned by the Trustees of the Baring Foundation. Its purpose is to inform a discussion by the Arts Committee in July 2012, about progress to date and the next steps that might be taken in this programme.

The analysis and findings set out here is based on a survey of existing grantees. All the organisations were invited to respond to the following open questions:

- *How has the Baring Foundation grant extended or changed your arts work with older people?*
- *What benefits do you wish older people to gain through being involved in this work?*
- *What are the main difficulties you face in delivering your work with older people?*
- *What – apart from funding – would be most valuable in supporting your work with older people?*
- *What new arts programmes or initiatives would you most want to develop for older people?*
- *What would you wish to see the Foundation do in this field in future?*

It will be clear from these that the review focuses neither on the impact of the work undertaken with Baring grants nor an evaluation of the programme itself. Instead, it aims to understand what difference Baring has made, so far, to the work of individual organisations and, in their informed view, to the wider context of that work. This analysis of what has already been achieved will assist committee members and trustees to decide on their next steps.

Twenty organisations provided answers to the questions. The latest grantees had only just learnt of their awards and many felt, understandably, that they were not yet able to answer. But the thoughtfulness and insight of those who did respond were impressive: many wrote at length and very honestly about their experiences. Collectively, the responses come to about 20,000 words and form a rich resource with further potential. All quotes in *green italics* in this paper are the words of current grantees, anonymised to protect confidentiality.

In addition to this data, the review draws on three publications produced by the programme to date:

- *Ageing Artfully, Older People and Professional Participatory Arts in the UK*, by David Cutler;
- *An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People*, by the Mental Health Foundation;
- *Creative Homes, How the Arts can contribute to quality of life in residential care*, by David Cutler, Des Kelly and Sylvie Silver; edited by Kate Organ;

Other documents, including the *Ageing Artfully Conference Report* by Arts About Manchester, and papers prepared for the Arts Committee were also consulted. I attended the Arts and Health Funding Round Table convened by Baring Foundation in April 2012 and the 'Creating a New Old Conference' in Dublin in May.

These and other meetings enabled informal conversations with grantees and programme stakeholders; I also had more formal interviews with Kate Organ, on the background to the programme, and Dominic Campbell (Director of the [Bealtaine Festival](#) in Ireland) to gain a perspective from beyond the UK.

I am very grateful to all those who took time to provide information, answer questions or otherwise contribute to this review. Naturally, my analysis, conclusions and suggestions are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the people I have spoken to or of Baring Foundation itself.

### 1.3 First steps

In preparation for the Foundation's new emphasis on the arts and older people, David Cutler researched and wrote an introduction to the field. The core of this document, *Ageing Artfully*, is an analysis of the importance of ageing as a social and economic policy issue and the value of art among responses to it. It also includes rich appendices with information about more than 100 organisations active in the field in the UK, Ireland and the United States.

Perhaps surprisingly, *Ageing Artfully* is the only substantial recent document of its kind, as its own bibliography underlines. It is therefore an important resource in itself and a strong signal of intent. It is also hard to disagree with its conclusion that arts work with older people '*has received little in the way of official encouragement or support [and] there is a dearth of policy and funding*'.

*Ageing Artfully* establishes a strong justification for the Foundation's focus on the arts and older people. Its importance is worth restating, as the programme end is in sight. The key questions for this review are therefore:

- **How far have the problems identified in *Ageing Artfully* been alleviated?**
- **What might be the priorities for the programme's remaining time?**

In thinking about both of these, it is difficult to avoid a third question:

- **Would the Foundation's purposes be best served by an extension of its focus on the arts and older people beyond 2014?**

The rest of this paper considers these questions in turn.

## 2 HOW FAR HAVE THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED IN *AGEING ARTFULLY* BEEN ALLEVIATED?

### 2.1 Introduction

This part of the review takes the agenda for action set out as ‘A Way Forward’ in *Ageing Artfully* as a structure within which to ask what the Foundation has achieved to date through grants, commissions and other activities. This is no more than a sketch, particularly given that the most immediate outcomes are the thousands of arts experiences created by grantees with the funds provided. But it should help the Committee to consider what has happened through its work in a wider perspective.

In each area, I briefly say what has occurred, as far as I’ve been able to identify it, before discussing some questions that arise. Since many grants and activities are intended to achieve complex change, this could become repetitive. Readers will be aware that results noted could often be reported under more than one objective.

### 2.2 Research

The Foundation’s key achievement here has been the publications mentioned above. The importance of *Ageing Artfully* has already been touched on, but a word may be said about *An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People*, and *Creative Care Homes*. Both documents have been well received, with the first being seen as particularly important by several grantees.

*‘The recent commission of the Foundation to provide an evidence-based literature review was incredibly useful.’*

The need for a stronger evidence base was often mentioned in grantees’ responses. This focus on research and evidence, which also came up in the Arts and Health Funding Round Table and the London Arts in Health discussion paper prepared for it, has been a constant in this field for many years.

The relationship between age and health has meant that medical research models and standards are often seen as necessary, though the arts profession has neither the knowledge nor the capacity to undertake this type of research.

Several grantees are working to improve their own account of the social and therapeutic value of their work – though others caution against a marginalisation of artistic goals in this process – and this will add to available resources in coming years. The *Guide to Good Practice in the Engagement of Older People in Participatory Arts* being written by Kate Organ for the Foundation will be an important further addition this autumn. Grantees have welcomed the Foundation's engagement in discourse alongside its funding.

*'We have found particularly valuable the level of critical debate and support through research and networking which has happened through the Baring programme.'*

However, there have been several evidence reviews of the impact of the arts in recent years, notably in relation to arts in health, though none has focused exclusively on older people as far as I'm aware.<sup>1</sup> There has also been important work outside the arts field that supports the case for art, notably the [Foresight Report on Mental Capital and Wellbeing](#), which introduced the concept of the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) that has become influential in public health in the UK and in other countries.<sup>2</sup>

More importantly, perhaps, in focussing too narrowly on evidence, the arts may be missing a dialogue with health and care providers with more potential for creating change. As one recent Department of Health report says:

Although many said that the evidence is important in engaging people, it is by no means essential – many senior managers argued that it was common sense and that although some studies were not quantitative or randomised controlled trials, the changes were clear to see and they were satisfied about the value of investing.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, we should ask what influence Baring Foundation can have on this large, complex and evolving field. It has made very useful contributions through its publications, partly because their focus has not been on new research but on giving practitioners and policy makers access to knowledge that

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the work of Reeves (2002), Ruiz (2004), Staricoff & Clift (2004), Clayton (2007) Staricoff (2007) and Galloway (2008) among others.

<sup>2</sup> Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project (2008). *Final Project report – Executive summary*, The Government Office for Science, London

<sup>3</sup> DoH, 2007, *Report of the Review of Arts and Health Working Group*, London, p.14

already exists. Telling the story is an essential but often underestimated task in this field and one to which Baring can contribute strongly: this is considered further in Part 3 below.

**1. Has the Foundation more to contribute in the field of research?**

**2.3 Policy and funding**

Achieving changes in policy, and thus in available funding, is rightly identified in *Ageing Artfully* as being critical to the development and sustainability of this field. As one grantee said, their major difficulty is:

*'A lack of policy to support the field and, partly as a consequence of this, a lack of dedicated funding for arts and older people'.*

Another said:

*'Securing funding for the project has proven particularly difficult with very few funders prioritising this area of work.'*

Although the Foundation has now allocated about two thirds of its budget, much of the resulting work is still under way or, in some cases, has yet to start. While the outcomes of investment are still emerging, it is difficult for either the Foundation or individual grantees to use them in support of a case for policy change: that is a proper focus for the second half of the programme.

*'We wish to see Baring influence policy and provide a forum for debate.'*

There is a challenge, however, in the complexity of the policy world concerned with issues of age and ageing. The professions involved range from social care, and health to education and the arts, while public, private and voluntary sector actors make policy nationally, locally and organisationally.

Baring has more chance of changing the policy of a small body, such as Creative Scotland, than of a local authority or Whitehall department, but the effect of doing so will be less. This may be the right time for the Foundation to review the policy landscape and make choices about precisely where to apply its energy, knowledge, evidence and arguments to bring about the greatest return on its investment.

**2. Where can the Foundation realistically expect to change policy and what steps would it need to take to do so?**



## 2.4 Scaling up of activity

### More activity

The Foundation has had a big impact in this area. The 44 grants made to date have often had a profound effect on the organisations receiving them. Among the key effects mentioned by grantees are:

- **Sustaining and extending existing work:** Some grantees used Baring Foundation support to secure existing programmes – a real value at a time of sharp funding reductions. This was the case with the [Serpentine Trust](#), where existing work was under threat if new funding was not found.
- **Building new capacity:** Several organisations built capacity to respond to local need: for instance the recruitment of a half-time Manager has strengthened Manchester’s [Valuing Older People Cultural Offer Working Group](#).
- **Creating new activity:** More commonly grantees used the funds to create new projects, often putting together ambitious programmes involving many older people. In London, [Spare Tyre](#) has created a new bursary scheme offering professional development to emerging artists from all backgrounds.
- **Developed new resources:** Some organisations have created new training resources, practice guidance, documentation and advocacy materials that will have a long term value, alongside those of the Foundation itself. [Akademi Dance](#) is among those who have produced written guidance materials for artists, supported by workshop programmes and other work.
- **Securing match funding:** Baring Foundation grants have enabled several organisations to secure additional funds, sometimes from sources they had not previously accessed. [Suffolk Artlink](#) has been able to match its Baring grant with other funders on three different programmes.
- **Enabling innovation:** grantees reported using Baring funds to test new ideas or experiment with unproven practice that it would be difficult to persuade other funders, particular public agencies, to support. For example, [Aune Head Arts](#) are exploring radio as a medium for work with older people in Devon

The Foundation’s trustees and staff place a high priority on everyday local delivery of activity that ‘improves the quality of life of people suffering disadvantage and discrimination’. There can be no doubt that its investment has produced a great deal of valuable work that simply would not otherwise have taken place. In this sense, the grants have already done much to achieve the increase in activity called for in *Ageing Artfully*.

### Making more of activity

There is another sense in which the concept of scaling up can be understood. Nabeel Hamdi, professor of architecture at Oxford Brookes University, has developed a practice of 'small change' that enables incremental improvements to take place at community level in the developing world cities where he mostly works. Small change really becomes powerful when an idea working in one neighbourhood is 'scaled up' across a whole city or more widely still.

There will be other concepts and methods of scaling up I am not aware of, but the question is whether there is a need to explore and learn from processes of duplication and mainstreaming that have been shown to work in other fields. If Baring Foundation is to go from increasing scale by paying for more work, to increasing scale by encouraging independent replication of successful activity, it may help to learn from such experiences.

3. **Should the Foundation consider tested processes and methods through which existing activity can be scaled up?**

## 2.5 Festivals

The image of festivals might seem at odds with improving the quality of life of disadvantaged older people through the arts. After all, festivals are short-term, transitory, and often inaccessible to people with limited mobility. However, as *Ageing Artfully* shows in its account of the Bealtaine Festival, the reality can be inspiring, transformational and very accessible.

*'We have just attended the "Creating A New Old" conference in Dublin as part of the Bealtaine Festival and are working [...] to support the launch of a Scottish Creative Ageing Festival [...]. These partnerships the Baring Foundation has made will have a real impact providing the high profile platform needed to get older people on the agenda'.*

The Foundation has given much attention to festivals, both through its grants to London's [Capital Age Festival](#) and in its partnership with Creative Scotland on a [new festival of arts and older people](#), for October 2012. In the case of the Capital Age Festival, the effect of Baring's support has been profound on the organisation's capacity and confidence, with clear benefits for participants. While this work is at a different stage in Scotland than, say, in Ireland, it is reasonable to expect Baring's efforts to produce a real change in awareness of and interest in the arts and older people there.

The position of England as a whole remains open. While some grantees would like to see a national event comparable with Bealtaine, the differences between Ireland (or Scotland) and England are enormous, if only in terms of population size. Without a major organisational partner and government support it may not be possible to envisage a comparable initiative in England.

Are there alternatives, in the form of local flagships like Capital Age? Or perhaps finding ways to ‘festivalise’ for short, intensive moments some aspects of existing work – as [Entelechy Arts](#) have done with informal street parades and dances or [Plantation Productions](#) have done by showing seniors’ comedy at the South Side Film Festival. The Scottish Festival and other grantees can surely provide experiences to learn from here.

4. **What approach should the Foundation take to developing one or more older people’s festivals in England?**

## 2.6 Local authorities and health trusts

There has been little direct partnership with local authorities or health trusts, for understandable reasons. Grants, which remain the Foundation’s principal tool of engagement, go largely to independent arts organisations. The public sector is under huge financial pressure and the health service is being reorganised. Responsibility for public health – a key rationale for past funding of arts programmes in Primary Care Trusts such as Liverpool – is passing to local authorities. This is a difficult environment in which to intervene.

Arts organisations that have received funds from PCTs in the past are struggling to adapt to (or sometimes understand) personalised budgets and the new commissioning arrangements. The situation has some parallels with EU funding, which is seen as substantial but which very few small arts organisations can access without the knowledge, time and skills. They are keen for support in negotiating this developing landscape and it is unlikely to come from the arts sector itself.

*‘We are working on how we continue to sustain this kind of work in a health context, without necessarily becoming a health service ‘provider’, through commissioning. Knowing more about the practicalities of this on a national scale would be useful. (Although I am aware this information might be out there, but we haven’t accessed it).’*

For the Foundation, this presents some questions. If it is not in a position to intervene directly in this area, is there someone able to help arts organisations

succeed in the new commissioning world? Would the return, in the form of new sustainable investment to arts organisations, be sufficient to reward the effort? Or is the cost, in time and in effect on practice, of accessing these new budgets simply too great to make them a realistic source of funds for arts organisations?

The first answer to these questions might be to commission a short guidance note about changed commissioning or think piece from an expert in the new systems – perhaps an academic or a body such as the King’s Fund.

5. **Might the Foundation play a strategic role in helping arts organisations working with older people to build partnerships with health and care commissioners?**

## 2.7 Partnerships

Many grantees have strengthened existing partnerships or developed new ones as a result of the funds they have received. Thus the work of the Cultural Offer Manager at [Library Theatre Company](#) has led to a strong partnership with [Manchester Museum](#) and the [Whitworth Art Gallery](#), who have made older people a five-year priority in their strategic plans.

*‘These partnerships the Baring Foundation has made will have a real impact providing the high profile platform needed to get older people on the agenda.’*

The Foundation’s activity alongside its grants has been crucial in developing new partnerships between organisations active in the field, notably through the Manchester and Dublin conferences and other meetings it has convened. One gets a strong sense that arts organisations working with older people are more aware of one another than they were: the interest being seen as a ‘sector’, which is discussed further below, may be one sign of this.

The Foundation itself has created new partnerships with Arts Councils, charities, care providers and other organisations with responsibilities or interests in this area, as an inevitable part of implementing its plans. These may not last longer than the programme itself but while they do exist, they create opportunities to shift policy and so help those involved in delivering services.

6. **Does the Foundation need to give particular attention to fostering partnership or can this be considered a by-product of its other work?**

## 2.8 The regulation of care

Baring Foundation's work in the arts with older people does not yet appear to have made any connections with the wider questions of the regulation of care, although *Creative Care Homes* is a step in the direction, if not of regulation at least of practice. This is unsurprising, given the scale and complexity of the questions involved and the limited attention given to the arts in most care homes.

There is a precedent that might be considered in future. *Artsmark* is a school accreditation scheme launched in 2001 by *Arts Council England*, in partnership with the Department for Education, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Ofsted. Schools are assessed on their commitment to and use of the arts in and beyond the curriculum and recognised through an Artsmark Bronze, Silver or Gold award. A key to achieving Artsmark status is having a school arts policy to support the work. More than 10,000 Artsmark awards have been made and 20% of schools now hold one.

Artsmark's success is partly due to its simplicity: it runs alongside other education and arts sector programmes and standards, rather than replacing them. It is within the power of the Arts Council to make the award, while the oversight of DfE, DCMS and Ofsted especially give it additional status.

Baring Foundation has begun exploring several ideas with Arts Council England, including a best practice award scheme. But it might be more effective in changing a culture to focus on awards for care providers rather than arts organisations, especially if the award related to a standard of service that was meaningful to current and prospective residents and their families.

7. **Should Baring Foundation focus its attention on regulation on a single flagship, arts-focused award?**

## 2.9 Networking between arts organisations

*'[The grant] has developed our networks and awareness of other organisations working in this area.'*

Relationships between arts organisations working with older people have been touched on under partnerships already, and there is no need to repeat that here. But the Foundation should be pleased with what it has achieved in this area, both through the visibility afforded by *Ageing Artfully* and through the

emerging sense of collegiality among its grantees. They are interested in knowing more about what others are doing and being part of a wider group.

*'The feeling that we are part of a wider group making interesting work across the country helps us feel like we can sustain our work.'*

Whether any specific action is needed to encourage this networking is an open question. So far it has happened as a by-product of Baring implementing its plans and making grants, and that may be enough, particularly if the Foundation moves away from the idea of an arts and older people sector (see below). If, however, it does wish to place a greater priority on that, it may need to consider supporting one or more organisations to take on a coordinating role in networking.

## 8. Does the Foundation need to do any more to encourage networking?

### 2.10 Practice development, training and standards

#### Practice, innovation and taking risks

According to many of the grantees, the Foundation's grant was valuable not only in cash terms but also in the way it was handled. They felt trusted by a grantmaking process that respected their judgement and integrity, as symbolised by a light touch, 'grown up' approach to monitoring and evaluation. Those who received core funding saw the longer horizon as very valuable.

*'Core funding for three years has enabled us to work with a wide stretch of time and to have the confidence to take risks.'*

For at least one organisation, it meant they could establish themselves on a secure professional footing that had not previously been possible. That security opened further doors, allowing some to build new partnerships (or renegotiate existing ones) and others to experiment or innovate in their practice.

*'It is only Baring Foundation and other trusts that can enable us to try out these ideas to start with.'*

#### Training

Many grants have contributed to funding new training for artists, including some older artists, to enable them to deliver workshops or take on other leadership roles. Training for care staff has also been delivered, both formally and in the context of project delivery. However, the high staff turnover in some care settings means that this effort can be wasted, with practitioners finding

themselves starting afresh with new staff. Professional development for managers has had more lasting effects, and this is an area where some people suggest Baring could help by supporting:

*'Better, affordable, dedicated peer-led training for administrators, managers and leaders in the field'.*

There is an interest in professional development among arts organisation staff as well. Baring grantees are some of the most experienced people working in the arts with older people. They have a lot of knowledge and are keen to share it with one another. They have common problems, for instance about evaluation or legacy, which some felt they could help one another with: peer exchanges, online discussion, artists' retreats and conferences were all proposed.

*'Continue and even expand [the] flow of information and research about new work in this area, and further enable connections between Baring-funded projects – even between Baring and other foundations' projects? – for the most effective sharing and application of organisations' expertise.'*

At the same time, some people feel they are hearing the same stories and ideas that they had heard 10 or more years ago: in the words of one participant in the Dublin conference, *'I want to go to the Advanced Class for this topic'.*

There is always, especially in a marginalised practice, a need for introductory training and discussion capable of drawing in new people. The risk is that a sector that feels it is forever making the case to sceptical outsiders feeds its own development insufficiently. So there must be room for the more complex discourse of experts with 15, 20 or 30 years' work in the field. The answer to this problem may be as simple as acknowledging it, and so planning conferences, seminars and training events suited to different and mixed audiences.

### Standards

The respondents did not refer to standards or accreditation directly, and it may be that these questions are both too large and too distant from immediate priorities for most arts organisations involved in delivery. I have generally felt that the disadvantages of formal standards or accreditation of artists outweighed any benefits. There is a risk of turning what should be a human relationship into yet another professional transaction and so undermining the distinctive gifts that artists can bring to people whose lives may be almost entirely governed by such transactions.

9. **What priority should the Foundation place on training and standards in future?**

## 2.11 Major venues

Major venues have not been a central concern of the programme so far. Most grantees are smallish organisations, often without a building of their own. They have influenced the attitudes of the venues they work with (as in the case of the Manchester museums already mentioned), but this tends to be as a result of their partnerships or cooperation rather than a core purpose.

Although many venues do serve active older people very well as a substantial part of their audience, they do not always do more than this, limiting their attention to this age group mainly to concessionary fees. There is a case for saying that this is as it should be. Most of us, including older people, do not want our problems to be made a fuss of: we simply want to be able to do what we wish, without thoughtless or unnecessary obstacles.

It may be that what major venues offer older people best is just normality and the focus should be on ensuring that they do that very well, rather than developing 'special' programmes that make older visitors and audiences feel they have somehow moved beyond the zone of everyday autonomy.

### 10. How should Baring Foundation engage major venues in its work?

## 2.12 Public profile

### Profile of arts work with older people

Baring Foundation has, in a short time, drawn attention to a group of people who tend not to receive much attention from an arts world focused on young people – although they make up a large part of its audience. It has raised awareness of the artistic gifts and needs, interests and pleasures, of older people, both through its own publications, meetings, and conferences and by supporting much new work.

That process is still in train and there is much more that will be done, both through publications such as Kate Organ's Guide and my own *Winter Fires*, and through the website on arts and older people being made by Age UK Oxfordshire. The Scottish Festival and other new work will further add to that. It is unclear at this stage whether more effort is needed to raise public awareness or how far a special effort in this direction would offer value for money.



### Public profile of a sector

There is an emerging question, however, around whether there is – or should be – a sector identified as being ‘arts and older people’. The Foundation has suggested that recognition of such a sector could be a goal of its work (for instance at the ‘Creating a new old’ conference in Dublin in May 2012). Subsequent conversations with people suggest that there is no consensus about this. While some like the idea, others are sceptical.

The difficulty is that, in comparison, say, with arts and health, the boundaries of arts work with older people are hard to define. Arts and health practice is diverse but it unites around a core goal of improving health. There is no single common purpose among organisations working in the arts with older people: indeed, from some perspectives, this group could include all arts organisations that do not exclusively serve younger people.

While the arts and health sector has a single profession (medicine) and a clear institutional and policy sector to engage with (health), the same cannot be said for older people, who have neither a department nor even a minister. Their needs are complex and engage a wide spectrum of policy.

Furthermore, there is a strong view against anything that seems to segregate older people – for example as expressed by Malcolm Fisk, of the Age Research Centre at Coventry University, who was recently quoted as saying:

‘We need to replace policy and practice frameworks that separate and often denigrate older people.’<sup>4</sup>

This echoes the strong advice from one grantee that Baring should:

*‘Avoid colluding in the establishment of an “Arts and Older People’s Sector” – we must be in the business of removing barriers and separations rather than creating them’.*

The Foundation might reflect on whether the advantages of visibility arising from recognition of arts work with older people as a sector, even within the arts world, would be outweighed by the barriers and perceptions that might develop.

### 11. Does the Foundation need to do more to raise the public profile of this work and, if so, how?

<sup>4</sup> *The Guardian* 14 June 2012

## 2.13 Leadership of older people

Many of the grantees are strongly committed to the ideals of older leadership, whether formally in governance or informally through the quality of their relationships. The conception of participatory projects and workshop practice itself offer opportunities for leadership in varying degrees, though there is at least a general commitment to autonomy and empowerment.

An increasing number of arts organisations working with older people are recognising the gifts and needs of older artists, not least because their own staff are in some cases reaching the third age. For instance, one reported that:

*'Our Baring Foundation grant has also enabled us to extend our capacity to support a number of senior artists on a more intensive level through one-to-one support and training.'*

At the same time, some argued that there was a good deal to be done before older people were truly central to the conception, planning and delivery of this work.

*'[We must] have voices of older people more deeply involved in project development.'*

It was suggested that there should be symposia led by older artists and participants. People welcomed the conferences and other events, but also pointed out that:

*'What has not yet happened is the significant involvement of emerging older artists and non-paid participants in such events.'*

If these views are a fair assessment, it is sad that the belief that older people having so much to offer is not yet fully translating into making use of that offer, even perhaps among those activists who are best placed to know.

### Nothing about me without me

Perhaps it is now time for Baring Foundation to take the work to a point where older people really are active participants at every stage of the work, finding ways of enacting the slogan of participatory medicine. It might, for example, require grant applicants to show how they will involve intended beneficiaries throughout their planning, management and evaluation.

12. **Should Baring Foundation make older people's leadership a defining priority in the next phase of the programme?**

## 2.14 Coordination and sector advocacy

*Ageing Artfully* recognises that the arts and older people are marginal in both arts and social policy. While there are a surprising number of arts organisations active in the field, there is no national presence or coordination. Baring has come to fill the gap and grantees warmly welcomed its engagement. There is a hunger not just for networking, but also for a body that can speak authoritatively at a national level, supported by good resources and endorsed by those working in the field.

*‘Stick with it! Arts for older people is still not widely recognised as an important area of work, and needs continuing financial support and advocacy.’*

The three main publications to date are seen by many grantees as beginning to provide them the kind of written resources they need to support their work, but, as touched on in relation to research, advocacy demands much more than publications. It is also about presence, contacts and personal relationships, compelling stories, human interest, experiences and visibility.

In some sectors, this role has been filled by a membership organisation such as the [Foundation for Community Dance](#). But there are other models, notably from within the field of arts and older people. While those involved might not see it in this way, Ireland’s Bealtaine Festival is both coordinator and advocate. Indeed, it might be argued that its advocacy is effective because it is rooted in experiences and practice – things people can, feel, see and enjoy – rather than more abstract concepts of persuasion.

*‘Since arts in care settings for older people is a rapidly-expanding area, with many new projects appearing and potentially competing rather than collaborating, we also need to let others know where and how we will be working.’*

Baring Foundation will move on from the arts and older people, so it should consider its legacy in coordination and sector advocacy. Is there an organisation willing and able to play such a role? Would it have the support of others in the field? Or perhaps the idea of a networked leadership, with different organisations sharing roles and responsibilities is a more appropriate and contemporary model, though it might be harder to finance. The [National Rural Touring Forum](#), a membership body of about 40 rural touring groups, is one successful example that might be imitated. Whatever the answer, this is one issue that is unlikely to resolve itself without assistance from the Foundation.

### 13. How can Baring secure a forum for advocacy and coordination?

### **3 WHAT ARE BARING'S PRIORITIES FOR THE REMAINING PERIOD OF THE PROGRAMME?**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Baring Foundation has achieved a lot in the quite short time it has been working in the field of arts and older people, both in selecting excellent projects to support and in its publications, conferences, meetings and advocacy. There is, indeed, so much happening that it may sometimes be hard to see the wood for the trees. This may be especially true for outsiders, including those on whose understanding and support the future of the work depends. I therefore make a distinction in the following discussion of priorities for the remaining period of the programme between further work ('Extending reach') and further promotion ('Extending knowledge').

#### **3.2 Extending reach**

##### **Grant programmes**

Making grants is the Foundation's core business. It is how it achieves, albeit through others, improvements in the lives of those it seeks to benefit. It is also how it exercises influence, on and through grantees, with the good practice and learning it can use to support the case for policy change, and through the relationships that are developed in the grant making process.

For all these reasons, it is wise to continue project grants and two further cycles are anticipated. What should their focus be? The answer to that depends partly on how trustees respond to the questions in this paper. For instance, it might be felt that an incentive fund for venues, designed to stimulate some new thinking and interest in the needs of older people, might be appropriate. Equally, the focus could be on professional development of older artists. That is for them to decide.

One general point may need to be considered in this context though: whether past grantees will be able to apply for further support, either to extend their current work or to do something else. Given the number of the organisations identified in *Ageing Artfully*, it may be that there are few leading organisations working in the arts with older people that have not yet had support.

### A major programme in residential care

The Foundation has identified the 400,000 older people who live in residential care as a key concern. Within their age group, they are certainly those with the least access to the arts (or, in many cases, to much else beyond necessary care services). They are also likely to be among the most disadvantaged older people, and those whose daily experience is capable of substantial improvement.

*'I want to be part of a national movement to make care homes more humane, more creative environments and more valuing of our elders.'*

Baring has discussed opportunities for partnership with Arts Council England (ACE) that might parallel that already made with Creative Scotland and these have focused, though not exclusively, around the needs of people in care homes. Despite a 30% reduction in its grant in ACE still has very substantial resources at its disposal through its National Lottery revenues.

To put this in context, this spring ACE launched the Creative People and Places programme to increase engagement in the arts, focusing on the 20% of local authority areas that are (statistically) weakest in this respect. The budget for this work, over three years, is £37 million: over 10 times Baring Foundation's resources for work with older people. This may be an opportunity for partnership around the needs of people in care homes.

CCP is based on a consortium model. One can envisage a network of arts and older people organisations working together to deliver a national programme with local sensitivity. They could act as brokers, connecting care homes with artists and arts organisations able to deliver a range of arts programming, including performances, workshops and longer term creative projects.

The advantages of such a partnership include:

- A strategic, large scale arts intervention in the residential care sector;
- A three year programme with time to establish its value and demand;
- A strengthening leading arts and older people organisations;
- Increased visibility within and beyond the arts and care professions;
- The possibility of linking with an Artsmark-type award scheme;
- Opportunities to test standards and accreditation of artists;
- The opportunity to undertake a major, quantitative research programme.

The research opportunity is significant here and this may be the one area where the Foundation should engage in evaluation. One theory underpinning most arts work with older people is that it contributes to wellbeing. There is substantial theoretical and research work to support this, notably through the

Government's work on mental health. In this context, it would be reasonable to suggest that, if the arts do contribute to wellbeing among older people, the effects would be apparent in simple indicators such as reduced levels of medication (especially drugs associated with mental health), fewer doctor's visits and increased perceptions of satisfaction. It should be feasible to design a research programme to identify such indicators across a large population with broadly comparable characteristics.

If Baring were able, with the Arts Council, to establish a large scale arts in residential care programme, it could commission an epidemiological study comparing four or five simple outcomes across a large population. Undertaken by suitably experienced social scientists or health researchers it might be a truly important research programme in the field because it could identify the *probability* of improved health and wellbeing in a statistically significant sample.

Clearly, there is much to consider in relation to the conception, operation, management, evaluation and financing of the ideas outlined here. However, the chance to deliver life enhancing experiences to tens of thousands of the most disadvantaged of older people and by doing so to achieve a major change in policy within the arts and, perhaps more profoundly, the care sector, is a realistic prospect.

### 3.3 Extending knowledge

#### Practice development

People working in the arts with older people have a wide range of approaches and practices. Likewise, they work in all sorts of situations with widely differing groups and individuals. But one area of almost universal agreement is the need for more and better knowledge about their work and its value.

*'[Baring should] continue to develop and disseminate its detailed understanding of the subject, which is extremely impressive for a funding body and from which many of its funded organisations can learn.'*

That feeling often coalesces around the importance of a 'robust' evaluation seen as credible in the medical environments in which they often work. The problems associated with this have been touched on already (see 2.1). If there is a contribution for Baring Foundation to make in this area, it is in the context of a major programme such as that just outlined.

However, there is much that the Foundation could do to extend knowledge without undertaking new research of its own, largely by building on what it is already doing; the possibilities include:

- A **national seminar exchange programme** around arts and older people, connecting arts practitioners, health and care professionals and local policy makers;
- Support for **exchange visits and practice development** between arts practitioners to help overcome isolation and raise standards;
- Further **national conferences**, to build on the foundations laid in Manchester and Dublin.

Some of this activity shades into the category of dissemination, which is considered further below.

### Telling the story

A website has been commissioned as a lasting online home for Baring's work in this field. Nowadays, this is an essential way of raising awareness of the programme's work and disseminating its results.

But a website is a shop window: it simply makes material available. It doesn't, in itself, ensure that people find, read, use or engage with what is there. That requires effective marketing and promotion to draw in passing customers, as well as adding elements such as news, social media functions and networking. A website also needs to be kept fresh, something that Baring Foundation is not best placed to take on. Some thought should be given to this in the context of the network discussion in 2.14 above.

At the same time, while it is important to have an online home, the work produced through the programme – whether by Baring or others – needs to be shared as widely as possible. Documents such as *Ageing Artfully* or *Creative Care Homes* should be available on grantees' and partners' websites, or digital publishing sites such as [Issuu](#) and [Scribd](#). Publications like the evidence review could also be on sites such as [Academia](#). The underlying strategy should be to seed material – publications, video, images – as widely as possible.

Similarly, it would be worth creating one or more pages on [Wikipedia](#), about the subject of art and older people, or adding to existing ones about [Successful Ageing](#) or [Participatory Art](#). The coverage of community and participatory arts on this site is very weak but a little time from people active in the field (including the growing number of 'silver surfers'), perhaps coordinated by an experi-

enced editor or Wikipedia contributor, could change that and make much good work visible to the increasing numbers who turn here first for information.

As the projects funded by Baring come to fruition, it would be appropriate to look at how the lessons from them might be disseminated. One suggestion is to create a simple template or some guidance for people on how to produce an effective project summary that can be printed, distributed online and otherwise circulated. Learning how to describe a project in two sides of A4 (or at most A3) is a useful skill and the creation of such accessible resources could be very helpful.

Baring might also consider offering dissemination grants comparable to those sometimes made by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) at the end of a research project. A small grant of up to £5,000 might enable an organisation to produce a booklet, organise a seminar, make a video or otherwise share knowledge of their work and its outcomes.

Baring Foundation itself might look at developing a small programme of occasional briefing notes, similar to *JRF Findings* or *Voluntary Arts Briefings*, distributed widely (for instance within other publications such as *Animated* or *Arts Professional*) and via email. These might focus on policy issues emerging from its work, or promote good practice by reporting on the outcomes of key projects. The aim would be to build up over time a small college of people who were interested in what Baring has to say about arts and older people (and, eventually, other subjects).

One final thought: does the Foundation's current approach to publication do justice to the content? There is a wide diversity in the visual style of the publications produced within the arts and older people programme. This is not simply an aesthetic matter. It signals an uncertainty about audience and purpose, which is also sometimes evident in the content. Baring Foundation has a distinctive and important place within the charity world. A review of its publications, a more rigorous approach to editing and a consistent visual identity expressing Baring's values might bring substantial returns in readership, credibility and influence.



## 4 BEYOND 2014?

Baring Foundation's focus on arts and older people has been very successful – perhaps even more so than its work on the arts and refugees, if only because ageing is so important to life in Britain today. Much has been achieved but, as many of the grantees have said in this review, much more remains to be done.

*'I think Baring Foundation need to support projects that inspire and empower people in their third and fourth age and choose initiatives that reach out beyond the life of one off projects.'*

Almost without exception, grantees were strongly in favour of Baring continuing its work in this field beyond 2014. Such a view is of course to be expected, but that does not mean it should be discounted. The grantees do not generally hope for further support for their own projects, though the struggle to finance their work is real. Rather there is a degree of relief that an organisation with some authority and with an ability to be heard in influential places is providing leadership in a field that often feels marginalised, fragmented and underestimated.

Baring's focus on the arts and older people has already had a significant impact on the confidence, work and sustainability of the 44 organisations that have received support. It has begun to have a wider impact on bodies such as the national Arts Councils, care providers and others whose attitude to the engagement of older people in the arts will be of fundamental importance to its future.

**14. So the question for the Foundation is whether, after five years, it can be confident of having produced the full extent of potential change in this field.**

The risk for a relatively small foundation of being drawn into a pattern of long-term provision is real, but that can be mitigated. It is balanced by the possibility of having further influence on those who *are* responsible for long-term provision and thus bringing about lasting improvements in the quality of life of many thousands of disadvantaged older people in future. While a decision on whether to extend the current commitment need not be made now, it would be wise to begin considering the question, especially if an extension was not simply a continuation of the existing means but a new phase with a focus on influencing policy and service delivery.