

# Speech to Arts in Care Contexts Seminar on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at Perth Concert Hall

## Arts in Care; a UK Perspective

### *Introduction*

I am really delighted to return after four years to the very place where the Luminate festival and our partnership with Creative Scotland was launched and to think how much has been achieved since then. The Baring Foundation is honoured to be supporting this event and the Luminate Festival more generally.

I have been asked to talk about work across the UK on arts in care settings. Before going further an essential remark to make is that both arts and older people services and policy are devolved matters and I hope that my speech will respect those distinctions. I will introduce the work of the Baring Foundation in general before moving to our support for arts and older people, and in particular arts in care homes. I will describe this as part of a broader picture of arts work in care homes. Finally, it would seem the waste of a good pulpit not to use this as an opportunity to make a few, probably impertinent, recommendations for future work in Scotland.

For those of you who don't know us, the Baring Foundation was established in 1969 by Barings Bank, a major Merchant Bank tracing its history back to 1762. The Bank's generosity meant that the Foundation became one of the largest non- Government funders of the voluntary sector. Sadly the collapse of the Bank meant that our resources reduced by 87%. But fortunately the remaining endowment and with the generosity of ING, which after taking over Barings allowed us free accommodation, all meant that we have continued as an independent Foundation.

The reduction in our resources has meant both a tighter focus and a belief that we need to use our limited resources boldly and flexibly to create the maximum impact. All our work is concerned with overcoming discrimination and disadvantage. The Foundation has three grants programmes; one on social justice in the UK called Strengthening the Voluntary Sector, an International Development programme funding civil society in Africa and an Arts programme, mainly funding participatory arts organisations in the UK.

### *Baring Foundation's Arts and Older People Programme*

Our trustees decided in 2009 to focus our Arts programme on Arts and Older People. I think that that is one of the best decisions we have ever made.

You will notice that this is broader than arts in social care. There are around 10 million people over 65 in the UK, of whom less than 5 per cent (400,000) live in care homes. However the lion's share of our funding has gone into work in residential care. This balance is something that we have discussed a lot. On the one hand there is an important preventative element to participatory arts activity, which helps enable older people to live independent fulfilled lives in the community. Also there are, for instance, isolated older people in the community who may benefit greatly from what the arts have to offer. On the other hand, it seems to me that older people living in care homes may, as a group, have the least arts access of any part of the population. And the people serving them as care workers themselves often have little involvement in the arts due to lack of income and other barriers.

This is not an audience which I need to persuade about the benefits of the arts to older people in care homes and you have already heard Dr Hendry give some of the scientific evidence in terms of mental and physical well being. I would just like to make two different points. Even if the arts had no positive effect on someone's health or on community relations, I passionately believe that they should be available to all as a right and an entitlement. They are fundamental to our humanity and to be deprived of them is to die from within. And we should never forget the needs of all the people that are to be found in care homes, staff as well as older people. They do essential jobs, which many of us would find impossibly demanding and yet are not accorded the respect they deserve by society and are poorly paid in to the bargain.

It would be wrong to go on without acknowledging the context for arts work in care homes. The residential care system is in something approaching a crisis. Cuts in public financing have hit hard an already beleaguered sector. This combines with a lack of confidence in some providers, itself compounded by a toxic mix of scandals and rising expectations. Not to mention older people with more severe and complex needs. Therefore, even given my strong views about older people's rights to the arts, we must also construct the business case for this by using our evidence of health benefits including reduced medication for residents and increased job satisfaction and performance by care staff.

One of the first things which the Foundation did in this area was a programme suggested by our brilliant Arts Adviser Kate Organ. Called Creative Homes, it was a programme of grants across the UK to arts organisations. The principle behind it was that arts organisations are very effective at bridging the gap between care homes and their surrounding communities. We made 22 grants, including to the Scottish Poetry Library for the excellent Living Voices project which has already been mentioned. Much of this has been written up by Kate Organ in a report on our website *After Your Are Two; exemplary practice in participatory arts with older people*.

In 2011, we published a guide called *Creative Homes; how the arts can contribute to quality of life in care homes* with NAPA and the National Care Forum and recently funded new awards for arts in care homes, the first of which will be announced on 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

The central plank of our arts programme currently though is a unique set of four partnerships with each of the Arts Councils in England. Each has an emphasis on arts and in care homes and the English and Welsh projects are exclusively concerned with this. And it pleases me no end to say that it was Creative Scotland which blazed the trail in this regard. I had visited the excellent Bealtine national festival of creative ageing in 2009 in the Republic of Ireland and felt that this would transfer well to Scotland. Creative Scotland responded enthusiastically and I well remember Maggie Maxwell who led this saying ‘our Festival will need to be the best!’ Well five years later Maggie you have got your wish! Luminare, of which this seminar is a part, has become a regular and key part of the already burgeoning Scottish arts calendar with events from the borders to the Western Isles. And all in the space of three years. It is hosted and supported by Age Scotland and perhaps most important of all it has Anne Gallacher as its supremely able Director.

Since then we have joined forces with the Arts Council Northern Ireland giving support to a bigger and better phase two of their Arts and Older People Programme. This now involves a community grants programme as well as an annual national festival and training for artists working with people with dementia. It is significant that it has attracted the support of the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland.

In England we created a joint pot of £1 million with the Arts Council England, and out of 44 applications made four £250k grants to some extremely

interesting projects. The Abbeyfield Society is working with arts organisations across Nottingham. Arts and Health in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has engaged a whole range of arts organisations in work in care homes across the South West. The Courtyard Theatre in Hereford is working with a major care home provider to train a series of artists to undertake residencies in care homes whereby they will also train staff. Lastly We Do in Huddersfield is running 'Culture Club' to take residents out to a variety of high quality arts experiences and to take some of these into care homes too.

Most recently we have entered into a partnership with the Arts Council Wales and, using the Herford model, Age Cymru (which already runs the Gwanwyn creative ageing festival) will work in one fifth of Welsh care homes.

Securing the support of all the Arts Councils of the UK has been a critical success as far as we are concerned. As we all know, along with local authorities, the Arts Councils are by far the most important funders of the arts and their engagement in this issue is a major leap forward.

#### *Other Arts Work in Care Homes*

Arts organisations were of course already working in care homes long before our programme and other funders have also taken an interest in this field. So, for instance, a small but increasing number of care home providers are employing their own specialist arts staff such as Central and Cecil, Barchester and Methodist Care Homes. It is worth noting here how much provision in care homes uses volunteers and this is something we have begun to explore with partners around the specific notion of a campaign to have a choir in every care home.

The Skills Councils for Care and for the Arts and Creative Industries have published a good mapping survey of arts in care homes, focusing on training issues, undertaken by Consilium.

I would like to say a word here about the use of digital technology and the arts in care homes which I think has the potential to make an enormous impact in the very near future. Just a few years ago people would say that the technology in care homes was limited and old fashioned. But the advent of hand held devices and their much better intuitive feel has changed all that, as has their plummeting costs. There is an increasing number of applications for use in care homes, many of which have been developed specifically with people with

dementia in mind, given that up to 80% of residents will be living with dementia. One example of this is Clare Ford's Ipad Engage work and a paper by Joe Randall on our website explores this issue further.

And one of my favourite developments recently isn't strictly an arts project, but it does come from an arts organisation and has cocktails in its title. Cocktails in care homes by Magic Me is great for two reasons. It gives a much needed sense of glamour and fun to care homes and, perhaps because of this, has been great at involving younger volunteers (over the legal age for drinking, though in fact very little alcohol is consumed!)

### *The Way Forward – A Modest Proposal*

There is a great opportunity for Scotland to take the lead on the issue of arts in care homes. You have world class arts and a world beating national festival of creative ageing in Luminate. You have already heard Ranald Mair from Scottish Care speaking with passion as the CE about his commitment to this issue. The partnership which Luminate has forged with the Care Inspectorate to hold today's event has shown the strength of relationships between the key players.

So here are three simple recommendations.

Firstly I would suggest there needs to be a baseline survey of the quality and quantity of arts activity in Scottish care homes. I realise that these are difficult exercises to undertake, and no one hates filling in a survey form more than me, but without this I am not sure how we can make an honest assessment of how much progress is being made.

Secondly, there should be a minimum standard for arts or cultural activity to take place in a care home – no care home should be able to operate with no consideration for this vital part of making life meaningful. Again a tough thing to do. We have been told that we should be thinking about aspirational standards not minimum ones. Personally I think first things first and the worst performing care homes need greater encouragement to get going. What would be in a minimum standard? Another point that will need a lot of consideration but it certainly needs to include a menu of the arts – we all have preferences for different arts and it should include both being an audience member and a participant. Quality in the arts is very hard to assess, but Creative Scotland has great expertise in this area.

Thirdly, and I think Scotland is already a long way down the road on this, there needs to be a central repository of resources. This would include a directory of arts organisations with a track record of work in care homes; training for artists to work in care homes and for care workers to use the arts in their work; and tool kits for the latter to use to inspire and guide them. This could be brought to life by regular events such as today's.

### *Conclusion*

The Baring Foundation is just a small part of a growing movement of arts and older people. This is expanding across a large part of the developed world and you are about to hear about it from its leading exponent, my friend Margaret Meagher from Australia. When, as inevitably will be the case, the Baring Foundation turns its attention to new issues in the arts, our only wish is to have left the field a stronger one than when we joined.

Certainly I hope that we can all come back here in four years' time and celebrate Scotland exceeding my modest proposals in the same way as Luminate has already exceeded my high hopes.

Thank you for listening.

David Cutler

Director

Baring Foundation