

Easy Read Version

Creative Health & Wellbeing in the Community

2026–2028

Local Authority Partnerships Grant Call
Information For Applicants



The Main Points to Note

When does this Fund run?	Strand A: Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland collaboration runs from mid 2026 to end 2027 • Creative Ireland has funding in 2026–27 for partnerships of at least two local authorities (aligned with Regional Health Authority) to deliver arts and health projects in the community and HSE community and hospital settings. • The lead applicant must be a local authority. You will work with HSE and local or national arts, cultural or creative organisations to deliver these projects. • Projects should be developed and delivered by the Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland teams in local authorities. This team will work with cultural and creative partners and (if appropriate) with the relevant HSE Health Promotion and Improvement Officers, HSE Health and Wellbeing teams, Sláintecare Healthy Communities Development Officers or other relevant officers, teams or networks, such as Age Friendly Ireland. Strand B: <u>Shared Island</u> runs from mid 2026 to end 2028 • The lead applicant must be a local authority in Ireland.
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	• This is for arts and health projects with a clear north-south or east-west basis, in line with Shared Island initiative objectives. Projects should enable quality in-person connection between people from both Ireland and Northern Ireland or the wider UK. At least one project partner should be based in each of the relevant areas.
What funding is available?	Strand A: €700,000 funding with a maximum of €70,000 per project. Strand B: €250,000 total funding with a maximum of €90,000 per project.
How do I apply for funding?	You can apply online only. The online application portal opens on December 1st and closes at 1pm, Friday 27th.



Who is running the Creative Health & Wellbeing in the Community Grant Call?

Creative Ireland runs this Fund. Creative Ireland is a culture and wellbeing programme supported by the government. We are based in the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport. We inspire and transform people, places and communities through creativity. We believe every person in Ireland should have the chance to realise their full creative potential.

We aim to:

- Set up a community to share skills and information.
- Help people understand the value of creativity.
- Gather information and check the results of our work.
- Make creativity part of public policy.

The Creative Ireland Programme has five pillars:

1. Creative Youth
2. Creative Communities
3. Creative Health & Wellbeing
4. Creative Climate Action
5. Creative Industries

Living Artfully. Carlow and Kilkenny County Councils. © Michael O'Rourke Photography 2024.

Why is Creative Ireland running this fund?

Research shows that taking part in creativity and cultural activities and projects has a major positive impact on health and wellbeing. We work with the Department of Health (Healthy Ireland), the HSE and the Arts Council to carry out the [Strategic Action Plan for Creative Arts & Health](#). We do this by funding projects that support and carry out health strategies such as:

- [The Healthy Ireland Framework](#)
- [Pathways to Wellbeing: The National Mental Health Promotion Plan](#)
- [Stronger Together: The HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan 2022-27](#)
- [National Traveller Health Action Plan 2022-27](#)
- [The National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-30](#)

(Please note that the above is not an exhaustive list.)



Weaving Worlds Together. Kerry County Council. Photo: Rebecca Killen.

What is Healthy Ireland?

Healthy Ireland is the government initiative aimed at improving people's health and wellbeing. It encourages healthy lifestyle behaviours and healthier environments. It aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy good physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported.

Healthy Ireland works to:

- Focus on life-long wellbeing and prevention of illness.
- Reduce health inequalities.
- Address the places in which health and wellbeing is impacted.
- Help people and communities to better look after their own health and wellbeing.

Healthy Ireland recognises that health is experienced by people as part of everyday life. It takes a settings approach to health promotion and disease prevention by targeting the places where people live, work, and play. We work in partnership with Healthy Ireland to use creative and cultural activity as a positive health behaviour.

A national mental health promotion plan, Pathways to Wellbeing, was launched in 2024. It sets out coordinated actions across government to improve mental health and wellbeing for all. It includes targeted supports for those most at risk. The plan raises the role of arts and creativity as powerful tools for promoting mental health and wellbeing. It shows how the arts and creativity can develop connections and strength across all types of communities.

An example is 'social prescribing', which connects people to non-clinical supports in their communities such as arts, culture, nature, and physical activity. In Pathways to Wellbeing, social prescribing is a key action to support population mental health. It looks at social conditions, reducing isolation, and helping people to take part in meaningful creative experiences that enhance wellbeing.

What is the Shared Island initiative?

The Good Friday Agreement set up new ways to work together for the good of everyone on the island. The Shared Island initiative comes from the Good Friday Agreement. It encourages people and communities to connect and get to know each other's traditions and culture.

What is the Shared Island initiative?

The Shared Island Creative Ireland initiative encourages people to be creative.

It aims to:

- Connect people and connect communities.
- Use culture and creativity to promote wellbeing, social connection, and local economic development.
- Give communities all over Ireland the opportunity to work with artists and experience different forms of creativity.
- Use arts and culture to help people understand why working together is important for Ireland's shared future.
- Work together on projects which will have positive benefits in the long term.

Has the Creative Health and Wellbeing on a Shared Island initiative been run before?

Yes. The first Creative Health & Wellbeing in the Community Scheme launched in February 2024. It supported collaboration between local authority, Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland teams and their partners in the HSE. Fifteen projects were supported over two years with total funding of €1,021,493. These projects were led by local authorities and were in line with HSE Regional Health Authorities. Four projects were jointly run by local authorities and stakeholders in Northern Ireland under the Shared Island Initiative.

The projects showed new ways to help individual and community participation in creative and cultural activity. Initial reviews of Strand A and Strand B of the 2024/25 scheme found that projects have provided very valuable information on how to include arts and health in health and social care services (from health promotion to disease management and acute care) in sustainable ways.

What is the strategy behind the Scheme?

Based on the idea that taking part in creative and cultural activity is a positive health behaviour, the first Strategic Action Plan for Creative Arts & Health was published in June 2025. This policy partnership between the Department of Communications, Culture & Sport, (through Creative Ireland) and the Department of Health (through Healthy Ireland) has the vision that:

People living in Ireland have access to creative and cultural activity as part of an overall health journey throughout life, supporting better health and wellbeing outcomes and enriching the creative and artistic landscape.

This plan is being implemented by the National Creative Arts & Health Working Group, which is a partnership between Creative Ireland, the Department of Health, the HSE and the Arts Council. The first projects also helped with Ireland's input to the EU report Culture & Health: Time to Act. It was published at the end of September 2025. It has the vision that:

People living in Europe have access to cultural and creative participation as part of a connected health journey throughout life, supporting better health and well-being outcomes and better quality of life for all.

What do we mean by 'creativity'?

At Creative Ireland, we believe that creativity is a mix of natural human talent as well as skills which people can learn. Everyone is able to take part in creative activity and enjoy it. Creativity gives people the freedom to take risks and imagine different things. Using imagination to create new ideas brings extra value to human activity. Projects can use many different creative types or artforms during its life.

Types of creativity may include:

- Animation
- Architecture
- Augmented/Virtual/Mixed Reality
- Circus
- Coding
- Comedy
- Cooking
- Creative Digital Technology
- Creative Writing
- Cultural Heritage
- Dance (all types)
- Design (all kinds)
- Digital Art
- Digital Games
- Fashion
- Film
- Irish Language Arts
- Literature
- Multidisciplinary Arts
- Music (all genres)
- Participatory Arts
- Podcasting
- Street Arts and Spectacle
- Theatre
- Traditional Arts
- Visual Arts
- Storytelling

What sort of proposals is this Fund looking for?

Strand A projects should be designed to run until the end of 2027.

Strand B projects should run no later than the end of 2028.

We are looking for proposals for creative arts and health projects that:

- Support the objectives of the Strategic Action Plan for Creative Arts & Health; the Healthy Ireland Framework; and at least one major health strategy or plan. (The earlier answer to **Why is Creative Ireland running this fund?** has some examples of such plans.) Shared Island proposals should also use Northern Ireland or All-Island strategies or plans.
- Where possible, use the Irish Social Prescribing services to support access and help people take part. Find contact details for HSE-funded social prescribers at: <https://www.allirelandsocialprescribing.ie/service-list-by-county>

- Contribute to at least one of:
 - the core factors which influence health
 - playing a critical role in health promotion and improvement;
 - supporting positive mental health, especially for harder to reach groups such as older men
 - promoting positive ageing
 - building an inclusive society where every disability is understood and supported
 - prevention and management of chronic disease
 - supporting end-of-life and bereavement care for patients and their families.

Can co-funded projects apply?

Yes. We welcome projects co-funded through other public funds, philanthropy or private sector contribution. If you are awaiting funds from an alternative source, please include this information and the timeframe when you expect to be notified of the outcome, as it may affect your project timeline and budget requirements.

Does a proposal need a lead applicant?

Yes. The Lead Applicant must be a local authority.

Creative Cafés. Monaghan County Council. Photo: Unknown.



What funding is available?

Strand A: Creative Ireland/Healthy Ireland collaborations

Up to €70,000 per project is available in 2026. Subject to budgetary availability, we hope to have a similar level of funding available in 2027.

An application can be made by a partnership between local authorities aligned with the new HSE Health Regions. You must have at least two local authorities in each partnership (see Appendix I), except in Dublin and Cork where the local authorities are larger than other areas. Proposals between two local authorities should not map across two or more HSE Regions.

One local authority must be identified as the lead partner. Local authorities may be a partner in more than one project.

This project is to be developed and delivered by the Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland teams in these local authorities, working with cultural and creative organisations, and (as appropriate), with the relevant HSE Health & Wellbeing Officers, Sláintecare Healthy Communities Development Officer, and relevant officers, teams or networks, such as Age Friendly Ireland.

We strongly encourage you to develop partnerships with local or national arts organisations and work with these organisations to deliver these projects.

When must Strand A projects take place?

These projects can commence in mid 2026 and run until the end of 2027.

Strand B: Shared Island

Up to €90,000 per project is available for 2026. Subject to budgetary availability, we hope to have a similar level of funding available in 2027. Remember to budget for travel and accommodation costs relating to your project at application stage.

An application can be made by a local authority in the Republic of Ireland for a creative project to be delivered in collaboration with an organisation (or organisations) based in Northern Ireland.

Local authorities should work with national cultural and creative organisations to deliver these projects.

The project should involve the Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland teams in these local authorities, working (as appropriate), in cooperation with the relevant HSE Health & Wellbeing Officers, Sláintecare Healthy Communities Development Officer, and other relevant officers, teams or networks such as Age Friendly Ireland and relevant counterparts in Northern Ireland.

The project must relate to the objectives of the Shared Island initiative and have a clear north-south or east-west basis. Projects must develop worthwhile in-person creative activity between people from the relevant areas. At least one project partner must be based in each relevant area.

When must Strand B projects take place?

Because it can take time to build relationships and overcome geographic distances, these projects can commence in mid 2026 and run until the end of 2028.

How does the payment of funding work?

Because the Creative Ireland Programme is administered through the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, the administration of the grant must adhere to [Circular 13/2014 – Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds](#). You must read and be familiar with this information before your project begins.

How are project proposals evaluated?

Shortlisted applications will be assessed using the following criteria. The evaluation process will also consider the requirement for a balanced regional distribution of projects.

Criterion	Marks Available
Quality of the proposal in terms of meeting programme objectives by demonstrably promoting the use of participation in creativity and cultural activities in support of Health and Wellbeing	25
Creativity of Proposal	20
Experience and expertise of the team	25
Potential for scaling and replication	30
Total	100

Please note these important dates

Phase	Details	Date
Fund Opens for Applications	Online application portal opens for submissions.	1st Dec. 2025
In-Person Networking Session	Two in-person networking sessions will be held (Wednesday 14th January at the MAC, Belfast; and Thursday 22nd January at Radisson Blu Royal Hotel, Dublin) to provide an overview of the available funding. This will allow prospective project partner applicants to ask questions. Further details on registration. Belfast Link . Dublin Link .	January 2026
Clarifications	Queries can be submitted by email to creativecommunities@ccs.gov.ie . Please use the subject heading 'Creative Health and Wellbeing in the Community'. We will try to update the FAQ on the application portal as queries come in, however all final clarifications will be made by this date.	12th Feb. 2026

Phase	Details	Date
Fund Closes for Applications	Only applications received before 1pm on this date will be considered.	27th Feb. 2026
Evaluation of Applications	The evaluation panel, including representatives from the Creative Ireland Programme and Shared Island Unit, together with independent experts, will evaluate applications according to the criteria listed in this document.	March 2026
Applicants Notified	All applicants are notified of the outcome of their applications.	April 2026

Important information about your project team, budget and application

Your project team must include an evaluator.

Your project must be supported by the relevant HSE Regional Health Authority and have a letter of support document signed by a senior manager.

When putting together your budget, make sure you have discussed individual fees and project budgets as a team. All members of your project team or project partners must agree your budget **before** Creative Ireland allocates funding.

What costs must a budget include?

- **Project Management.** Costs should cover administrative (for example to cover project management and/or financial administration), as well as any contribution towards overheads or other reasonable costs required to deliver the project.
- **Remuneration.** Your transparent and competitive budget must pay individuals and organisations properly for their time. Fees for artists should be in line with recognised industry guidelines. (See: [Paying the Artist: Arts Council policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists](#)).

- **Materials.** We favour low carbon solutions and environmentally friendly practice in project planning and delivery, and in your choices of partners and suppliers.
- **Evaluation.** We expect important learning to emerge from these projects. The cost of project evaluation and reporting should be included.
- **Communication and engagement.** These costs should form part of your budget.
- **Travel and accommodation.** Shared Island projects will incur additional costs for project teams and project participants to travel and stay overnight as part of the project. Include these in your budget.
- **FX rate fluctuations.** Allow for these if you are transacting in multiple currencies.

Other costs you may need to factor in include:

- Costs to convene all island or cross-border community events.
- Documentation costs.
- Evaluation costs.
- Networking/showcasing of initiatives awarded funding.

What costs cannot be included?

You may not include the following in your budget:

- Costs not directly related to the project
- Expenditure which takes place before the project approval date.
- Capital requests for building improvements to workspaces and venues.
- Standalone conferences.

Taipéis. Westmeath and Longford County Councils. Photo: Unknown.



How To Apply

Applications can be made online only.
Please complete the online application form
at: <https://creativeireland.submit.com>
no later than 1pm, Friday 27th February.

All personal data you submit to us as part of the
application process, will be processed in accordance
with the [Department's Data Protection Policy](#).

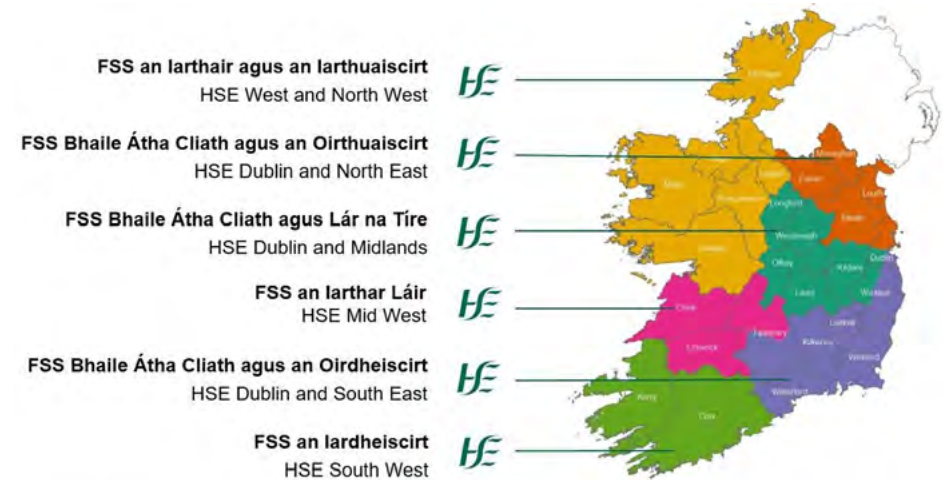
We will not consider:

- Applications received after the above deadline.
- Applications submitted by post, e-mail, hand or courier.
- Applications with a status of 'draft' at the closing date and time.

How to use the application portal

- Clarifications and additional information will be provided on the application portal.
- You can save your application form in draft on the online portal and return to it later.
- If you need to move away from your current page, please make sure you have saved your progress.
- When you submit your application, you will receive an email notification.

Appendix 1: HSE Region Map



Living Artfully. Carlow and Kilkenny County Councils. Photo: Freddie Greenall.

Appendix 2a: Current Creative Health and Wellbeing projects

Creativity Changing Young Lives in the Mid-West

Tipperary County Council in partnership with Clare County Council and Limerick City and County Council

In 2023, Helium Arts worked in partnership with Limerick City and County Council to deliver this teens pilot arts project. This fund enables an extension of this initiative in 2024 and 2025. It supports children aged 8–16 across the Mid-West region with chronic lifelong physical health conditions to participate in creative activities.

Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland departments within Tipperary, Limerick and Clare County Councils and HSE staff are partnering with Helium Arts to provide the programme.

One professional artist is working in Outpatient Paediatric Clinics in University Hospital Limerick, and three artists are delivering workshops via the Community Programme in Limerick, Clare and Tipperary. Ongoing training and supervision is facilitated for all. An artist-led volunteer programme at the Clinics also takes place.

Successful creative camps took place in summer 2024. Activities included making stained glass windows, zines, collages, stamps, kaleidoscopes, animation/flipbooks, and stories. A treasure hunt where offcuts from the stained glass activity and 'grid' paper were used to create a map! These workshops will continue through autumn and winter and across 2025.

Helium Arts is a children's charity committed to improving the wellbeing of children and young people living with lifelong physical health conditions. Creative workshops offer a unique avenue for expression, connection, healing and increased confidence. They give children a safe space to explore their emotions, communicate their experiences, and engage with people who understand their journey. Participating children are expected to have significant improvements in their mental and emotional wellbeing.

The Helium Arts Mid-West Advisory group was put together to continue working on a way to support children with long-term physical health conditions. Project partners support Helium Arts by providing local information and insights.

“Did I Ever Tell You...”

Kildare County Council in partnership with Offaly and Westmeath County Councils

This storytelling project collects the thoughts and memories from older people in HSE healthcare settings in Kildare, Offaly, and Westmeath. In each care setting, creative artists work with older people using a variety of different artforms. Together, they put together a programme of activities running from September 2024 to December 2025.

Co. Offaly: Anam Beo artists’ group ran a programme in residential care settings for advanced age participants.

Co. Westmeath: Fighting Words placed creative practitioners in care settings.

Co. Kildare: John Conway was artist-in-residence at Naas General Hospital. He worked with life limiting diagnosis medical teams and patients. His approach was to work with hospital teams first, then with patients referred to him by their medical teams.

A tri-county publication is being prepared to explore how important and effective approaches to arts and creative intervention are within healthcare settings.

This book will:

- Celebrate the importance of working with people in critical stages of care to express themselves creatively.
- Highlight the unique and necessary role artists play.
- Bring together the different approaches to storytelling and practice in each of the local authority areas.

Exploring Loss and Grief: Healing Through Art with the Compassionate Support of a Hospice Foundation

Cork City Council

This community arts project looks at isolation and makes connections through two strands. Firstly, a Friendly Call Programme will engage those isolated since the pandemic in artistic activities designed to spark creativity and provide good social connection. This hopes to offer comfort and support to those dealing with the challenges of life post-COVID. The second part of the project links generations through creative projects between active retired groups and fifth-class students.

To support those delivering the programme, arts and grief work training will be provided to project leads, collaborators and community leaders. Additional bereavement network training is available for project leads. Training will be available to creative leads and facilitation teams on arts and grief, grief theory, and public models of bereavement.

Results will include artistic works produced by participants, the capturing of personal experiences and stories related to grief and loss, and case studies measuring the impact on participants' understanding of, and thoughts about, grief.

This project aims to:

- grow social interaction and connection for isolated individuals
- help with creative expression
- strengthen relationships between generations and communities
- create empathy
- promote individual and group wellbeing.

It involves local schools, healthcare providers, and community organisations, and is underpinned by a history of partnership and working together. It encourages working together between the Arts, Community, Healthy Ireland, Age Friendly, and Sláintecare teams within Cork City Council, Irish Hospice Foundation, HSE South West and Cork City Partnership.

Training: 2024

Project roll out: early 2025

Good Grief

Waterford City and County Council in partnership with Wexford County Council

Conversation with healthcare professionals and arts-in-health organisations showed a huge gap in the ways people are supported in the second year following a bereavement. This gap was in both formal systems and those made up of family and friends. This project uses creativity to support people through their loss. It also was used for in-depth study, and to provide a way of understanding creative ritual in self-soothing after a bereavement.

An open invitation was sent to people in Waterford and Wexford who were in their second year of loss.

Eight creative retreats took place. One per week, with different venues, leaders and mediums each time. A ritual expert provided guidance, and a creative wellbeing expert worked with workshop leaders, the two Creative Communities Engagement Officers from each of the local authorities, and the participants where needed.

Good outcomes so far included:

- increased confidence from everyone working together
- sharing strengths and support
- the reactions from workshop leaders and participants
- the preliminary research findings
- building relationships that might help with future programming

In 2025 follow-on workshops taking place relevant to the findings of a participant-focused and evidence-based plan. These are designed by the project researcher. These findings to be shared at relevant conferences and events.

The intended outcome of this initiative is to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of people in their second year of a bereavement
- develop a plan for a self-management programme that could be delivered with fewer resources by health promotion agencies.
-

Let's Get Social DLR: making creative connections and inspiring inclusivity across the county

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

This programme builds on DLR's current health and wellbeing programmes. It will develop initiatives that combat social isolation for older people, migrants, and those who are living with health challenges.

Activities include an extension of the Creative Cafés programme, with the aim to deliver 62 across 2024 and 2025. Building on the successful partnership with Southside Partnership DLR's Social Prescribing Team, the programme connects participants socially with others and with DLR's community and cultural spaces. A new series of bi-monthly Creative Cafés are being developed over the two years.

The Creative Brainwaves talks/podcast series continues with nine events envisaged. Curated by the Global Brain Health Institute team, this series explores how creative arts can improve brain health. People involved include neuroscientists, researchers and creative artists.

The Arts Office also delivers capacity building professional development sessions. These are workshops for creatives, healthcare professionals. Four pilot creative projects in healthcare/community settings engage with the older community, including those living with dementia.

Two new performing arts clubs are piloted and led by DLR's Age Friendly Programme and Social Inclusion Unit. These will focus on those in active retirement and IPA/migrant communities and are delivered by highly skilled arts professionals.

Let's Get Social DLR supports participants to:

- adopt healthy lifestyles and behaviours
- grow positive ageing across the county
- help improve people's mental and physical wellbeing through arts and culture
- increase the number of experienced creatives/artists who work in healthcare and community contexts
- develop more knowledge in the healthcare sector and wider public about the positive impacts of creativity for our ageing population

Living Artfully

Carlow County Council in partnership with Kilkenny County Council

This programme brings music, song and creativity to communities in order to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life. The partners work together creatively with a wide range of groups and individuals on an outreach basis. They provide workshops to people living in urban and rural areas. Working from the ground up, this programme is led by the community and artists, and designed to build healthy habits and help in a real and long-term way.

Living Artfully connects culture and creativity with the everyday lives of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. It invited service users and staff engaged with Traveller Support Services, Dementia Friendly Services, Mental Health Services, Social Prescribing Services, and HSE Carlow/Kilkenny.

Living Artfully offers an accessible, stimulating, artistic experience. Participants become singers, musicians, movers, listeners, and creators – all working together to express their creativity. This has clear benefits to wellbeing for those taking part and staff.

It is expected that further useful outcomes will include:

- strong interagency collaboration
- increased service provision
- a legacy of sustainable, flexible and adaptable practices

A Project Manager was recruited to engage in active coordination and development with partner groups. An induction day for artists was attended by both Carlow and Kilkenny Creative Community Engagement Officers.

Living Artfully believes in a community where everyone is included and supported and encouraged to enjoy culture and the arts.

- express themselves
- increase confidence
- be comfortable with who they are
- celebrate their skills
- and form new ones

Make or Break

Cork County Council in partnership with Kerry County Council

Make or Break is a creative wellbeing programme available in the workplace at lunchtime. Giving employees the chance to engage in creativity and social interaction encourages a culture of creativity in the workplace with a focus on new ways of working together.

Designed to promote and increase wellbeing, Make or Break will be informed by participant feedback and preference, and tested and evaluated by those taking part. It builds on the learnings of The Council of Creativity, the pilot lunchtime programme of creative engagement activities at Cork County Council's main campus. Make or Break is a bigger version of that project, delivered in partnership with both Cork and Kerry County Councils, Healthy Ireland, the HSE and Crawford Art Gallery.

A project coordinator leads the initiative. It is designed and given by professional creative practitioners with a track record of delivering quality workshops.

Make or Break is accessible through the workplace in Cork and Kerry County Councils, the HSE campuses and the private sector. The original aim was to deliver 168 workshops to 338 people in 14 locations over two six-week blocks in each location. For 2025, the aim was to grow the project to include privately funded workshops in the private sector.

Mayo Roscommon: Care & Creativity in Context

Roscommon County Council in partnership with Mayo County Council

This project grows capacity and delivers training in end-of-life care knowledge, grief support and bereavement for artists, facilitators, project leads and healthcare personnel in Mayo and Roscommon. It supports reach in the wider community in these areas. This will develop into more focused training / mentoring with the Irish Hospice Foundation Arts and Cultural Engagement Team to inform and engage artists who are interested in working in this field.

The initiative brings artists and creatives into care settings for residencies (in particular end-of-life care contexts with Mayo Roscommon Hospice Units and Palliative Care) and to meet older people in nursing homes, to develop relationships and practices.

For those living in their own homes, the project draws on the learnings of the Hearth project led by artist Breda Mayock. Hearth brought art to older people who are isolated through where they live or other reasons.

This project aims to:

- support positive mental health
- promote positive ageing
- support people to manage their health and wellbeing while living with a chronic disease
- assist in acute and end-of-life care

Collaborative capacity building and the sharing of experience is at the heart of the initiative. Mayo and Roscommon County Councils, Healthy Ireland, the Irish Hospice Foundation and the HSE worked together on its delivery, and with artists on the development of the Mayo Hearth Programme and Roscommon HSE Nursing Home Artist in Residence Programme.

2024: initial training and residency stages.

2025: continue the residencies and create an evaluation publication to support the dissemination of learnings and practices.

Mending HeArts

**Galway City Council in partnership
with Galway County Council**

This project helps patients in their journey through cardiac care through participating in arts activity. It is led by Galway City Council in partnership with Galway County Council, Saolta Arts, and Croí, the heart and stroke charity.

Through a series of art workshops across Galway City and County, including University Hospital Galway, Merlin Park, and Portiuncula University Hospital, and in rural locations in County Galway, the project grows arts engagement in healthcare. It aims to build capacity through training and upskilling artists to work in healthcare settings. It wants to grow a sustainable model of arts in healthcare which can be extended beyond Galway to the wider West-North West Health Region and beyond.

Recognition of the health and wellbeing benefits the arts can bring is growing. This project builds on the successful smaller-scale pilot initiative between Saolta Arts and Croí.

St Agnes' Community Centre for Music and the Arts Harmony Hub

Dublin City Council

Music is at the core of this wide-ranging, inclusive programme to grow wellbeing through creativity for communities in Dublin city. Communities include vulnerable groups such as older persons, those in temporary or social accommodation, and at-risk youths.

The project offers creative quality, a significant and sustained reach, and lots of variety through its multiple strands.

The Memory Lane Choir for those living and caring for people with Alzheimer's and Dementia, and adults with intellectual disabilities, provides a way for older adults to express themselves creatively while also promoting cognitive retention and social connection. By using memories and recollections, the choir grows a sense of belonging, continuity and wellbeing.

Working with Fold Housing Ireland to reach residents aged 55 years and over in sheltered housing, the project builds collaboration with link workers to offer lessons in learning instruments and with music groups to combat loneliness and isolation.

Similarly, music programmes without financial burden will be offered to families, including lone parents, at Respond Housing support. These focus on early years inclusion.

The Late Starters Orchestra for adults sees greater social involvement and encourages lifelong learning skills, while the intergenerational Musical Society benefits from a greater enhanced community spirit through music and drama.

Throughout this programme, St. Agnes' will collaborate with social prescribing professionals in Dublin South Central Partnership; the Health Promotion and Improvement Team, HSE Health and Wellbeing, Dublin South, Kildare and West Wicklow; HSE Older Persons Services; and local community groups.

St. Agnes' advocates for equality and inclusion for all, by breaking down barriers of access to good, quality music programmes. These programmes make people's lives richer and help them grow their own community.

First classes commenced September 2024.

Taipéis

Westmeath County Council in partnership with Longford County Council

Taipéis is named after the Irish word for tapestry. It explores the impact of creativity on the health and wellbeing of Ireland's new communities.

Through workshops across Westmeath and Longford with IPAS Centres and community groups, the project explores connections within our communities. It aims to improve integration and improve the health and mental wellbeing of participants.

The participants are a mix of all ages. They come from Africa to Asia and South America; and Mexico to Mauritius. The course also includes Irish people, some coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. The only requirement is to be able to have fun! Taipéis uses the global language of art to explore how our strengths, hopes and creativity unite people.

Taipéis events include:

- A collaborative arts installation at the 2025 Longford Lights festival. Those taking part make a tree-like structure blending traditional Celtic designs and the art styles of their home countries.
- A day out at the Shawbrook Residential creative space in Legan, Co Longford. Those taking part cooked and exchanged their national dishes. An interpretive dance piece based on their childhood memories was filmed and displayed at the event.
- Seasonal flower bulbs were planted in public spaces in Longford and Westmeath.

Taipéis collaborates with established artists and creative professionals, as well as mentoring those who are starting in their creative journey.

The project is looking at how to develop a programme beyond the midlands.



Mending HeARTS. Galway City and County
Councils. Photo: Tom Flannagan.

Appendix 2b: Current Creative Health and Wellbeing in the Community Shared Island 2024-2025 Projects

Take 5

Donegal County Council – Shared Island Initiative

This project wants those taking part to build self-esteem and resilience and develop a creative mindset. It runs over five weeks around five themes: 'give', 'be active', 'keep learning', 'take notice' and 'connect'. It ends with an event which brings all participants together.

The project connects partners and participants in Donegal and Derry City & Strabane District Council areas with creative activities and cultural practitioners, to creatively explore a broad range of activities. These include visual and performing arts, heritage experiences, music, dance, drama, creative writing, storytelling, crafts, digital arts and gardening.

The Art of Life

Cavan County Council – Shared Island Initiative

This project is about having conversations around death, dying and planning for end of life. It uses a range of creative approaches to have these sensitive discussions. Artists taking part are socially engaged, thoughtful and use great sensitivity. They are learning extra skills to support and develop the delivery of the project. Participants are encouraged to plan and communicate Advance Care Plans.

Designed to reach as many people as possible in communities, the programme featured:

- Capacity building in Cavan and neighbouring Fermanagh and Tyrone
- Death Positive Libraries
- Creative Sessions make up of creative workshops for people in Cavan and Fermanagh-Omagh local authority areas
- an immersive drama around an Irish wake

Weaving Worlds Together

Kerry County Council – Shared Island Initiative

Weaving Worlds Together is about taking part in Irish traditional Irish crafts and helping to preserve them. It shows aspects of cultural heritage, and how well they bring communities together to express their creativity. This workshop series includes basket weaving/willow weaving, ceramics and textiles.

This project helps members of communities, North and South of Ireland, to support their health and wellbeing and engage with creativity in their community.

Taking place at Family Resource Centres and Healthy Living Centres on both sides of the border, activities are available through Social Prescribing Services.

‘Dear Future Me’ – Promoting Positive Mental Health Through Creative Expression On Our Shared Island

Louth County Council – Shared Island Initiative

This cross-border initiative is designed for young people aged 10–18 in Louth and Newry, Mourne, and Down who are facing loneliness, isolation, and poor mental health. It is a creative programme focusing on connecting, activity, awareness, learning and sharing.

It finishes with the Dear Future Me Festival in 2025, showcasing achievements through community gatherings, performances and exhibitions, and reinforcing a sense of pride and celebration.

Creating chances for hands-on learning and skill-building contributing to personal growth and self-expression is at the heart of the initiative.

Creative Cafés

Monaghan County Council – Shared Island Initiative

Launched in summer 2024, Creative Cafés bring people together through creative workshops, networking and events that foster their health and wellbeing, and promote their social inclusion.

Target groups include:

- members of new communities/
minority groups
- older adults
- people with disabilities;
- people with mental health issues,
socio-economic disadvantage or
living in rural isolation.

The project provides opportunities for cross-border engagement, collaboration and capacity building between health professionals, community-based support services and creative practitioners.

Creative Café programmes in the Monaghan and Fermanagh border region saw high levels of engagement.

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
Communications and Sport



Shared Island
Initiative

Creative Ireland Programme

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Cover Image: Exploring Grief
and Loss: Healing Through Art.
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