



Creative Health & Wellbeing in *the Community*

Summary

	Timeframe	Funding
Strand A Creative Ireland & Healthy Ireland collaboration	<p>Mid 2026 to end 2027</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative Ireland funding in 2026–27 for partnerships of at least two local authorities (aligned with <u>Regional Health Authority</u>) to deliver Arts and Health projects in the community and HSE community and hospital settings• The lead applicants are local authorities. They should work with HSE and local or National Health organisations to deliver these projects• Projects should be developed and delivered by the Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland teams in local authorities, working with cultural and creative partners, and (where appropriate), in cooperation with the relevant HSE Health Promotion and Improvement Officers, HSE Health and Wellbeing teams, Sláintecare Healthy Communities Development Officers and other relevant officers, teams or networks e.g. Age Friendly Ireland	<p>€700,000 funding with a maximum of €70,000 per project*</p> <p>*Further allocations in 2027, subject to budgetary allocations</p>
Strand B Shared Island	<p>Mid 2026 to end 2028</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lead applicant is a local authority in Ireland• Arts and Health Projects with a clear North/South or East/West basis, aligned to the objectives of the Shared Island initiative. The projects should enable quality, in-person, engagement between people from both Ireland and Northern Ireland or the wider UK, with at least one project partner based in each of the relevant jurisdictions	<p>€250,000 funding with a maximum of €90,000 per project</p>





Who is Organising this Grant Call?

The Creative Ireland Programme is an all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme based in the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport with the ambition to inspire and transform people, places and communities through creativity.

We are committed to the vision that every person in Ireland should have the opportunity to realise their full creative potential.

Our strategic goals are to:

- Establish a community of practice and participation
- Promote understanding of the value of creativity
- Measure impact and build evidence
- Embed creativity in public policy

There are 5 Pillars in the Creative Ireland Programme:

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

Participation in creativity and cultural activities has been demonstrated through international research to have a significant positive impact on health and wellbeing outcomes at a population level. Creative and cultural projects are proving to have a clear beneficial impact for health and wellbeing.

This is why Creative Ireland is working with the Department of Health (Healthy Ireland), the HSE and the Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon), in implementing the Strategic Action Plan for Creative Arts & Health by funding projects that support and enable the implementation of relevant 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 this is not an exhaustive list.*

What is Healthy Ireland?

Healthy Ireland is the national Framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. It is also an all-of-government initiative that aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy good physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.

The Healthy Ireland framework aims to create an Ireland where health and wellbeing is on everyone's agenda in a meaningful way by:

- Bringing a concerted focus on life-long wellbeing and prevention of illness
- Reducing health inequalities
- Addressing the settings in which health and wellbeing is impacted
- Emphasising the need to empower people and communities to better look after their own health and wellbeing

Healthy Ireland recognises that health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life. A settings-based approach to health promotion maximises disease prevention by utilising a whole systems approach, thereby addressing the wider determinants of health. This approach enables the support of cohorts that experience health inequalities and addresses the challenges specific to them.

This is why Healthy Ireland and Creative Ireland have forged a partnership to help realise the potential of participation in creative and cultural activity as a positive health behaviour.

As part of Healthy Ireland, a national cross-government mental health promotion plan, Pathways to Wellbeing, was launched in 2024. This plan sets out coordinated actions across government to improve mental health and wellbeing for all, combining universal supports with targeted interventions for those most at risk. A central ambition within this plan is to elevate the role of arts and creativity as powerful tools for promoting mental health and wellbeing, recognising their unique capacity to foster connection, expression and resilience across diverse communities.

One example of this in practice is the expansion of Social Prescribing, which connects individuals to non-clinical supports in their communities – including arts, culture, nature, and physical activity. Within the Pathways to Wellbeing plan, social prescribing is recognised as a key initiative that supports population mental health by addressing social determinants, reducing isolation, and enabling people to engage in meaningful, creative experiences that enhance wellbeing.



Did I Ever Tell You. Kildare, Offaly and Westmeath County Councils. Photo: Julie Spollen.

What are we looking for?

- Strand A projects should be designed to run until end 2027.
- Strand B are to run until no later than end 2028.

Policy context

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 in Ireland or, in the case of Strand B, also Northern Irish strategies of plans. (see list on p.2 for examples, not an exhaustive list).
- Where possible, leverage the Irish Social Prescribing services to support access and participation. You can access the contact details of HSE-funded social prescribers at this link: <https://www.allirelandsocialprescribing.ie/service-list-by-county>
- Contribute to at least one of the following:
 - the core determinants of health
 - playing a critical role in health promotion and improvement
 - supporting positive mental health, in particular 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

Creative Cafés. Monaghan County Council. Photo: Unknown.

Governance

- Have an embedded evaluator as part of the project team
- Are supported by the relevant HSE Regional Health Authority and have a letter of support document signed by a senior manager.

Co-funded projects

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



What is the Shared Island Initiative?

This Shared Island strand of this call is being funded under the Shared Island initiative. The Government's Shared Island initiative aims to harness the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement to enhance cooperation, connection and mutual understanding on the island and engage with all communities and traditions to build consensus around a shared future.

The objectives of the Shared Island/ Creative Ireland initiative are:

- 1 Connect people-to-people, community-to-community. Deploy culture and creativity – innovatively and collaboratively – as a strategy for wellbeing, social connection, or local economic development;
- 2 Enable communities, working with artists and the wider cultural and creative sectors to experience creativity through the lens of their counterparts, and ensure mobility of people across the island;
- 3 Enhance broader community and civic understanding of the value of consensus amongst communities around a shared future, through the lens of cultural and creative engagement;
- 4 Ensure that initiatives are planned collaboratively on a shared island basis, to generate tangible and sustainable legacies into the future.

Where we have come from – Creative Health and Wellbeing in the Community 2024–2025

The first Creative Health & Wellbeing in the Community Scheme launched in February 2024 to support 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 local authority led projects that aligned with the new HSE Regional Health Authorities. Four of these projects were collaborations between local authorities and stakeholders in Northern Ireland under the Shared Island Initiative.

The projects, implemented over two years, demonstrated innovative and responsive ways of enabling individual and community participation in creative and cultural activity. Preliminary findings of Creative Ireland commissioned reviews of Strand A and Strand B of the 2024/25 scheme have found that these projects have provided hugely valuable learning on how we could embed arts and health in our health and social care services – from health promotion to disease management and acute care – in ways that are sustainable.

The Strategic Context

Based on the premise that participation in creative and cultural activity is a positive health behaviour, the first Strategic Action Plan for Creative Arts & Health was published in June 2025 as a policy partnership between the Department of Communications, Culture & Sport (DCCS), (through its Creative Ireland Programme) and the Department of Health (through its Healthy Ireland Programme), with the vision that:

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

The 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/An Comhairle Ealaíon. The first projects also helped to inform Ireland's input to the EU report [Culture & Health: Time to Act](#), which was published at the end of September 2025 with the vision that:

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

What do we mean by Creativity?

Creativity involves innate human abilities and learned skills. Everyone has the capacity for creative engagement and expression; and this experience is an act of personal fulfilment. The capacity of individuals and organisations to transcend accepted ideas and norms and, by drawing on imagination, to create new ideas that bring additional value to human activity.

Relevant fields of activity may include, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| — Animation | — Digital games |
| — Architecture | — Fashion |
| — Augmented & virtual reality | — Film |
| — Circus | — Literature |
| — Coding | — Multi-disciplinary arts |
| — Creative Digital Technology | — Murals |
| — Creative writing | — Music (all genres) |
| — Comedy | — Podcasting |
| — Cultural heritage | — Street Art & Spectacle |
| — Dance (all genres) | — Storytelling |
| — Design (all disciplines) | — Theatre |
| | — Traditional arts |
| | — Visual arts |

Projects can utilise a range of different creative disciplines/artforms across its lifetime.

Who can apply?

Note: Local authorities can apply to both Strands.

Strand A – Creative Ireland/Healthy Ireland collaborations

- An application proposed and led by a partnership between local authorities aligned with the new HSE Health Regions, with 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, and local authorities may be partner in more than one project.
- The project to be developed and delivered by the Creative Ireland and Healthy Ireland teams in these local authorities, working with cultural and creative organisations, and (where appropriate), in cooperation with the relevant HSE Health & Wellbeing Officers, Sláintecare Healthy Communities Development Officer and other relevant officers, teams or networks e.g. Age Friendly Ireland. **It is strongly encouraged to develop partnerships with local or national arts organisations.**
- Local authorities should work with national cultural and creative organisations to deliver these projects
- These projects can commence in mid 2026 and run until the end of 2027.

Strand B – Shared Island

- Applications may 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 (where appropriate), in cooperation with the relevant HSE Health & Wellbeing Officers, Sláintecare Healthy Communities Development Officer and other relevant officers, teams or networks e.g., 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 enable quality in-person creative engagement between people from the relevant jurisdictions, with at least one project partner based in each relevant jurisdiction.
- Acknowledging that engagement and participation may take time to build relationships and overcome geographic distances, these projects can commence in mid 2026 and run until the end of 2028.

Funding

Strand A

- Funding of up to €70,000 per project will be available in 2026
- It is the intention to make a similar level of funding available in 2027

Strand B – Shared Island

- Funding of up to €90,000 per project will be available for 2026
- It is the intention to make a similar level of funding available in 2027, subject to budgetary availability.
- We recognize that Shared Island projects will incur additional costs for project teams and project participants to travel and stay overnight as part of the project. This needs to be budgeted for at application stage.

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



Budget Considerations

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](#). Grantees should read and familiarise themselves with this circular before commencing.

When creating the project budget, please make sure you have discussed individual fees and project budgets with partners. We expect all members of Project Teams to agree your budget prior to the allocation of funding from Creative Ireland.

We encourage you to consider:

- **Project Management** – This fee should cover administrative staff time (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** – We are looking for a transparent and competitive budget that remunerates individuals and organisations properly for their time. Fees for artists should be in line with recognised industry guidelines ([see information from the Arts Council on the remuneration and contracting of artists](#))
 - **Materials** – We are interested in supporting low carbon solutions and environmentally friendly practice in project planning and delivery, as well as your choices of partners and suppliers.
 - Given the important learning that will emerge from these projects, we recognise project evaluation and reporting will have a cost and can be included.
 - Communication and engagement costs are eligible expenses and should form part of the budget for this funding.
-

Other costs may include

- Costs to appoint a project coordinator with experience in project management
- Costs to convene cross-border community events – e.g. travel and accommodation
- Documentation costs
- Networking and/or showcasing of initiatives awarded funding

Ineligible Costs

Please note that ineligible expenditure includes:

- Costs not directly related to the project
 - Retrospective costs i.e. expenditure which has taken place prior to the project approval date
 - Capital requests for building improvements to workspaces and venues
 - Standalone conferences
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How to Apply Online

- Applications can be made by completing the online application form at submit.com no later than 1pm on Friday 27th February 2026.
- All personal data you submit to us as part of the application process, will be processed in accordance with [Department's Privacy Policy](#).
- NOTE: The below will not be considered:
 - Applications received after the above deadline
 - Application submitted by post, e-mail, hand or courier
 - Applications with a status of 'draft' at the closing date and time

Using the Application Portal

- Clarifications and additional information will be provided on the application portal.
- While completing, your application form can be saved in draft on the online portal and returned to later.
- If you need to navigate away from your current page, please ensure that you have saved your progress.
- Upon submission, you will receive an email advising that your application has been received.

Important Dates

Phase	Details	Date
Fund Opens for Applications	The online application portal will open for submissions.	1st December
In-person Networking Session	Two in-person networking sessions will be held to provide an overview of the available funding. This will allow prospective project partner applicants to ask questions. Belfast: Creative Ireland Grant Information Session Dublin: Creative Ireland Grant Information Session	Belfast: 14th January 2026, The MAC Dublin: 22nd January 2026, Radisson Blu Royal Hotel
Fund Closes for Applications	Only applications received by 1.00pm on this date will be considered.	27th February
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 above.	March 2026
Applicants Notified	All applicants are notified of the outcome of their applications.	April 2026

Criteria For Evaluation Of Applications

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

The evaluation process will also consider the requirement for a balanced regional distribution of projects

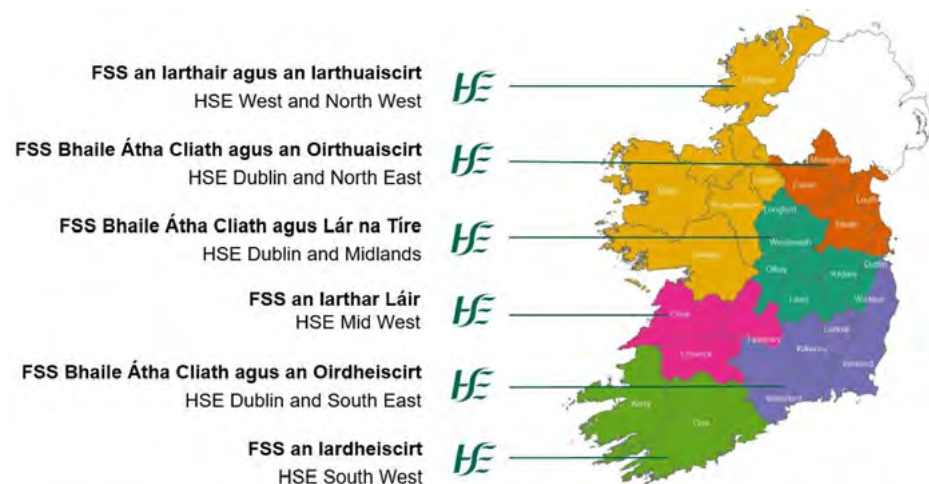
Please direct queries to creativeireland@ccs.gov.ie and include Creative Health and Wellbeing Grant Call in the subject line so we can direct your query.



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

Appendix 1

HSE Regional Authority Map



Appendix 2

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 a pilot of this arts project with teens. This fund enables an extension of this initiative in 2024 and 2025 to support children aged 8–16 across the Mid-West region with chronic lifelong physical health conditions through their participation in creative activities.

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

A professional artist is working in Outpatient Paediatric Clinics in University Hospital Limerick, while three more artists are delivering workshops via the Community Programme in Limerick, Clare and Tipperary. Ongoing training and supervision will be facilitated for all. It is also planned to implement an artist-led volunteer programme at the Clinics.

A number of successful creative camps took place in summer 2024. The activities which were enjoyed through both these and the Outpatients Paediatric Clinics included making stained glass windows, zines, collages, stamps, kaleidoscopes, animation/flipbooks, stories and 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.

Following meetings with the project partners, the Helium Arts Mid-West Advisory group has been formed to engender further collaboration and communication. The intention of this widely represented group is to foster a sustainable model of support to children with long-term physical health conditions. The partners will support Helium Arts by providing local information and insights to enhance the project and reach those most in need.

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

“Did I Ever Tell You...”

*Kildare County Council in partnership with
Offaly and Westmeath County Councils*

“Did I Ever Tell You...” is a storytelling project, focused on collecting the thoughts and memories from older people in HSE healthcare settings across Kildare, Offaly, and Westmeath. Creative practitioners are collaborating with older people in each care setting through a variety of creative artforms to facilitate a bespoke programme of sustained engagement over the period Sept 2024– Dec 2025.

Artists Group Anam Beo has carried out a programme in residential care settings for advanced age participants in Co. Offaly. Fighting Words have placed creative practitioners in care settings in Co. Westmeath. In Co. Kildare artist practitioner John Conway has been integrating as an artist-in-residence in Naas General Hospital where he has been working directly with life limiting diagnosis medical teams and patients. His slow integration approach has focused on collaborative practice, first with the hospital teams, followed by a sensitive and gentle poetic communication centred practice with patients who are now being referred to him directly by their medical teams.

There is a tri-county publication currently being prepared to thoughtfully explore the vital effectiveness of a diverse range of approaches to arts facilitation and creative intervention within healthcare settings. As an art object in its own right, the book will celebrate the importance of empowering individuals in critical stages of care dependence to express themselves creatively, while highlighting the unique and indispensable role that artist practitioners play in the Arts and Health space. It will bring together the different approach to storytelling and reflective practices 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 aims to address isolation and foster connection through two distinct, yet interwoven strands. Firstly, a Friendly Call Programme will engage those isolated since the pandemic in tailored artistic activities designed to spark creativity and provide meaningful social interaction. This part of the initiative hopes to offer solace and support as the challenges of re-emergence post-COVID are navigated. The second element of the project will bridge generations with collaborative 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 with additional bereavement network training for project leads. Specific training will also be available to creative leads and facilitation teams on arts and grief, grief theory, and public models of bereavement.

The project outcomes 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 and processing of grief.

Overall, the initiative aims to foster enhanced social interaction and connection for isolated individuals, facilitate creative expression, strengthen intergenerational relationships and community bonds, foster empathy and promote individual and collective wellbeing

The initiative will see the participation of local schools, healthcare providers, and community organisations in the project activities, and is underpinned by a proven history of partnership, collaboration, and interagency work. It fosters collaboration between the Arts, Community, Healthy Ireland, Age Friendly, and Sláintecare teams within Cork City Council, and the Irish Hospice Foundation, HSE South West and Cork City Partnership.

It was envisaged that training would take place in 2024, after which time the trained artists and practitioners would deliver the facilitated creative workshops with those identified through the Friendly Call Programme, and the primary school students and retired groups. It was planned for these to be rolled out in early 2025.

Good Grief

Waterford City and County Council in partnership with Wexford County Council

Conversation with healthcare professionals and arts-in-health organisations has revealed a huge gap in support systems, both formal and via family and friends, for those in the second year following a bereavement. This initiative, focusing on those in this position, combines creativity with ritual to foster health and wellbeing in the wake of their loss. Through doing so, it also aims to create an in-depth study, and develop a transferable and evidence-based model for the uses of creative ritual in self-soothing post-bereavement.

Participants were recruited in autumn 2024 via an open invitation to those in the Waterford and Wexford communities who were in their second year of loss to explore their grief through creativity.

Eight creative retreats took place, once per week, and with different venues, leaders and mediums used each time. A ritual expert provided guidance at intervals, while a creative wellbeing expert provided mentorship to workshop leaders, the two Creative Communities Engagement Officers in each of the local authorities, and the participants alike, where needed.

Positive outcomes so far have included the increased confidence which has come from everyone working together, pooling their strengths and support; the reactions from workshop leaders and participants; the preliminary research findings; and the building of relationships that might influence future programming.

2025 will see follow-on workshops take place that are relevant to the findings of a participant-focused and evidence-based plan designed by the initiative's researcher. It is also intended for these findings to be disseminated and presented at relevant conferences and events.

The overall intended outcome of this initiative is to improve the health and wellbeing of those who are two-years post-bereavement, and to form the blueprint for a self-management programme that could be delivered in a less resource-heavy manner by various health promotion agencies.

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

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Let's Get Social is an innovative framework that 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 affected adversely by health challenges.

Activities will 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 supports participants by connecting them socially with others and with DLR's community and cultural spaces. In addition, a new series of bi-monthly alumni Creative Cafés will be developed over the two years.

The Creative Brainwaves talks/podcast series will also continue with nine events envisaged. Curated by the Global Brain Health Institute team, the series will explore how creative arts can improve brain health with contributions from neuroscientists, researchers and creative artists.

The Arts Office will also deliver capacity building professional development sessions. These will comprise bespoke workshops for creatives, healthcare professionals, and four pilot creative projects in healthcare/community settings that will engage with the older community, including those living with dementia.

Finally, two new performing arts clubs will be 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. These workshops to be delivered by highly skilled arts professionals.

Through this ambitious programme, Let's Get Social DLR will support participants to adopt healthy lifestyles and behaviours, enable positive ageing across the county, contribute to an improvement in participant's mental and physical wellbeing through arts and culture, increase the number of experienced creatives/artists who work in healthcare and community contexts, and enable greater knowledge within 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*

Living Artfully is an immersive and exploratory participatory arts programme which brings music, song and creativity to communities in order to improve/maintain their health, wellbeing and quality of life. It will enable Carlow and Kilkenny local authorities, who are partnering on the project, to collaborate creatively with a diverse range of targeted groups and individuals on an outreach basis, providing a variety of workshops to those living in urban and rural areas of both counties. Taking a ground-up approach, the initiative is community and artist-led and designed to engage meaningfully and for the long-term.

The initiative seeks to entwine culture and creativity with the everyday lives of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. An over-arching programme, it invites service users and staff engaged with Traveller Support Services, Dementia Friendly Services, Mental Health Services, Social Prescribing Services, and HSE Carlow/Kilkenny to participate in this therapeutic intervention that will offer a mechanism to instil creative, healthy, and helpful habits into our lives.

Living Artfully ensures an accessible, stimulating, artistic experience is offered, where participants will engage as singers, musicians, movers, listeners, and creators; as part of a creative collective, with expression, communication, and connection at its heart. In addition to the clear benefits to wellbeing such engagement brings to service users and staff alike, it's expected that further invaluable outcomes will include strong interagency collaboration, enhanced service provision, and a legacy of sustainable, flexible and adaptable practices which will have been developed as part of the initiative.

A Project Manager has been recruited to engage in active coordination and development with partner groups. An induction day was held for recruited artists which was attended by both Carlow and Kilkenny Creative Community Engagement Officers. Living Artfully will offer a means for self-expression, increasing confidence, affirming identity, celebrating existing skills and nurturing new ones. Its vision is one of a diverse and inclusive community who are supported and encouraged to enjoy the

Make or Break

*Cork County Council in partnership
with Kerry County Council*

The aim of Make or Break is to develop and provide a creative wellbeing programme that can be accessed through the workplace at lunchtime. Providing employees with an opportunity to engage in creativity and social interaction, the programme will encourage a culture of creativity in the workplace with a focus on collaboration and innovation.

Designed to promote and increase a sense of wellbeing among staff, Make or Break will be informed by participant feedback and preference, and tested and evaluated through their active participation.

Building on the learnings of The Council of Creativity; a pilot lunchtime programme of creative engagement activities at Cork County Council's main campus, this project will be scaled up and delivered in partnership with both Cork and Kerry County Councils, Healthy Ireland, the HSE and Crawford Art Gallery. A project coordinator will lead the initiative, which will be delivered by, and in consultation with, professional creative practitioners with a track record of delivering quality workshops.

Make or Break will be accessible through the workplace in Cork and Kerry County Councils, the HSE campuses and the private sector, with the aim to deliver 168 workshops for 338 people in 14 locations over two 6 week blocks in each location. In 2025, the project will be scaled up to include privately funded workshops in the private industry.

Mayo Roscommon: Care & Creativity in Context

*Roscommon County Council in
partnership with Mayo County Council*

This project aims to build capacity and deliver training in end-of-life care knowledge, grief support and bereavement for artists, facilitators, project leads and healthcare personnel in Mayo and Roscommon, supporting reach amongst 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 will bring artists and creatives into care settings for residencies, in particular end-of-life care contexts, with Mayo Roscommon Hospice Units and Palliative Care, as well as with older people in nursing homes, where they will develop relationships and practices.

For those living in their own homes, the project will draw on the learnings of the Hearth project, led by artist Breda Mayock, where art is brought to older people who are isolated geographically, or restricted for other reasons.

The overall goal is to help support positive mental health, promote positive ageing, support people to manage their health and wellbeing while living with a chronic disease, and assist in acute and end-of-life care.

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

Mending HeArts

*Galway City Council in partnership
with Galway County Council*

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

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

This project builds on a smaller-scale pilot initiative between Saolta Arts and Croí, which brought the two organisations together to develop a successful arts programme last year, part of a growing recognition of the health and wellbeing benefits the arts can bring.

**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 which will foster wellbeing through creativity for a number of different targeted communities in Dublin city. These include vulnerable groups such as older persons, those in temporary or social accommodation, and at-risk youths. The initiative offers creative quality, a significant and sustained reach, and plenty of variety through its multiple strands.

The Memory Lane Choir for those living and caring for people with Alzheimers and Dementia, and adults with intellectual disabilities, provides a platform for older adults to engage in creative expression while promoting cognitive retention and social interaction. By incorporating elements of reminiscence and nostalgia, the choir fosters a sense of belonging and continuity, contributing to the sustained wellbeing of its members.

Working with Fold Housing Ireland to reach residents aged 55 years and over in sheltered housing, the initiative aims to build collaboration with link workers to offer instrumental tuition and music ensembles to combat loneliness and isolation.

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

Support for the Late Starters Orchestra for adults will see enhanced social involvement, and encourage lifelong learning skills, while the intergenerational Musical Society will benefit from the facilitation of 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.

At its very core, St. Agnes' advocate for equality and inclusion for all, by breaking down barriers of access to meaningful and high quality music programmes so that they can enrich people's lives and empower them, thus ensuring that everyone, in a truly intergenerational way, is both part of and helps build their own community.

The programme saw its first classes commence in September 2024.

Taipéis

*Westmeath County Council in partnership
with Longford County Council*

Taipéis, named after the Irish word for tapestry, is a multidisciplinary exploration of the impact of creativity on the health and wellbeing of Ireland's new communities.

Through a series of workshops across Westmeath and Longford, working through IPAS Centres, and community groups, the project seeks to explore interwoven threads within our communities, to improve integration, and in turn improve the health and mental wellbeing of participants.

The participants are a mix of all ages, from older people to toddlers, and hail from Africa, Asia, South America, from Mexico to Mauritius. The course also includes Irish people, some of them from disadvantaged backgrounds. The only requirement is to be able to have fun.

Taipéis uses the global language of art to explore what unites people – our strengths, hopes, and creativity.

Events hosted by Taipéis have featured:

- A collaborative arts installation at the 2025 Longford Lights festival, where participants created 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 where course participants cooked and exchanged their national dishes and performed an interpretive dance piece based on their childhood memories, which was filmed and displayed at the event.
- The planting of seasonal flower bulbs 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 exploring the creation of a model of programming that can be established beyond the midlands.

Creative HW in the Community projects

Shared Island 2024–2025 Projects

Take 5

*Donegal County Council –
Shared Island Initiative*

The Take 5 creative health and wellbeing project aims for participants to build self-esteem and resilience and develop a creative mindset. The programme will take place over five weeks around five themes: 'give', 'be active', 'keep learning', 'take notice' and 'connect'; culminating in an event bringing 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 including 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*

Creatives play a key role in this project which normalises conversations around death, dying and planning for end of life, using a range of creative approaches to facilitate these sensitive discussions. Participating artists are socially engaged, employing reflective practice and with great sensitivity, and being upskilled to support and develop the incentive's delivery. Participants are encouraged to plan and communicate Advance Care Plans.

Capacity building in Cavan and neighbouring Fermanagh and Tyrone; Death Positive Libraries; Creative Sessions comprising topical creative workshops for people in Cavan and Fermanagh-Omagh local authority areas; and an immersive drama around an Irish wake all feature in a programme developed to maximise reach within communities and build a lasting legacy.

Weaving Worlds Together

*Kerry County Council –
Shared Island Initiative*

Weaving Worlds Together focuses on creative engagement through participation in the traditional Irish crafts in Ireland and helping with their preservation. Highlighting aspects of cultural heritage, and their significant role in bringing communities together, this workshop series includes basket weaving/ willow weaving, ceramics and textiles.

Key to the initiative is providing opportunities for members of communities, North and South of Ireland, to support their health and wellbeing through opportunities to engage with creativity in their community. Taking place at Family Resource Centres and Healthy Living Centres on both sides of the border, the 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. There are several elements to this creative programme, which focuses on connecting, activity, awareness, learning and sharing.

The initiative culminates with the 'Dear Future Me' Festival in 2025, where achievements will be showcased through community gatherings, performances and exhibitions, reinforcing a sense of pride and celebration.

The facilitation of opportunities 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*

Initiated in the summer of 2024, the Creative Cafés initiative brings people together via a series of creative workshops and networking and capacity building 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, individuals experiencing mental health issues, socio-economic disadvantage and rural isolation. The project also provides opportunities for cross-border engagement, collaboration and capacity building between health professionals, community-based support services and creative practitioners.

Creative Café programmes have run in the Monaghan and Fermanagh border region and have seen high levels of engagement.



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

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
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Shared Island
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