Evaluation of the Arts and Older People Programme
Interim Report
January 2012

Wallace consulting
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1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

In June 2010 the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (the Arts Council) appointed Wallace Consulting to design an evaluation framework and undertake an ongoing evaluation of the Arts and Older People Programme (AOP, the programme) throughout its lifetime.

This document provides an overview of progress towards the AOP’s aims and outcomes as reflected in its Logic Model at Interim stage. It summarises recent research and policy developments and presents an analysis of the work conducted to date. The implications for programme development are also discussed.

1.2 Rationale for the Evaluation

Northern Ireland’s population is ageing and older people are accounting for a greater proportion of the population. Falling birth rates, increased life expectancy and better health are the main factors in this trend that now sees 31% of our population aged over 50 and 19% aged over 60 years. Population projections indicate that 44% of the population could be over the age of 50 by 2058.

Certain aspects of health and wellbeing decrease as people get older, in particular general health and the prevalence of long standing illnesses increases. In particular, the number of people suffering from dementia is predicted to rise substantially over the next fifty years.

Research by Help the Aged in 2007 (now Age NI) revealed that 21% of people in Northern Ireland aged 65 years and over, feel lonely often or always. Sixteen percent do not leave their homes more than once a week and 7% never leave their homes. However those who participated in arts activities reported improvements in overall mood and confidence.¹

Despite identified perceptual and practical barriers to arts engagement, there is a wide range of research relating to the benefits of the arts for older people. For example, the arts have an important role to play in helping older people find their voice, providing the tools to express the issues which affect them on a day to day basis, such as poverty, isolation, loneliness and mental illness.

The evaluation of the AOP will be used to highlight and raise awareness of social justice issues, to inform any future programme and to establish success relative to its outcome indicators.

1.3 The Arts Council of Northern Ireland

The Arts Council is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland. It is the main support for artists and arts organisations, offering a broad range of funding opportunities through its Exchequer and National Lottery funds. The Arts Council believes that the arts have the power to transform lives and communities, creating opportunities for people throughout the country and its mission is ‘to place the arts at the heart of our social, economic and creative life’.

¹ Arts Care research carried out at the Mater Hospital, 2006
Operating as a Non-Departmental Public Body, the Arts Council is sponsored by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL). Funding is also provided by the Department of Education (DE) and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the form of Lottery proceeds. The organisation is charged with four statutory functions under the Arts Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. These are:

- To develop and improve the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts;
- To increase public access to, and participation in the arts;
- To advise DCAL and other government departments, district councils and other bodies on matters relating to the arts; and
- Such other functions as are conferred on the Council by any other statutory provision.

In addition, the Arts Council has statutory functions under the National Lottery Act 1993 as amended by the National Lottery Act 1998 and is charged with the responsibility for distributing Lottery proceeds allocated to the arts in Northern Ireland. The principal function is to fund applications for a broad range of capital and revenue projects in the arts which will make an important and lasting difference to the quality of life of the people in Northern Ireland.

Creative Connections, the Arts Council’s plan for developing the arts in Northern Ireland 2007 – 2012 sets out four main themes:

- Promoting the value of the arts;
- Strengthening the arts;
- Growing audiences and increasing participation; and
- Improving our performance.

The five year strategy addresses the importance of targeting specific groups within society to ensure that opportunities exist for all in accessing and participating in the arts. Such groups include ethnic minorities, children and young people, people living in disadvantage, people living with disabilities and older people.

**Theme Three: Growing audiences and increasing participation** specifically addresses the importance of exploring and developing opportunities for older people to engage with the arts. The objectives of this theme include expanding the range of opportunities for people to enjoy and take part in the arts.

The Arts and Older People Strategy was prepared in recognition of the priorities set out in Creative Connections. In particular it relates to the strategic theme of ‘Growing Audiences and Increasing Participation’ in that it recognises the importance of exploring and developing opportunities for older people to engage with the arts.

The aim of the strategy is to assist older people to overcome barriers and increase access and participation in arts-related projects that address both their creative and social needs. Whilst the strategy sets out a number of measures that will help tackle broad issues and encourage partnership working, the fundamental objective is to increase the number of avenues for older people to become involved in the arts. The strategic themes centre upon the key social justice issues that affect older people on a daily basis and often impede access and participation in the arts.

The Arts Council has a history of funding and supporting work with older people in Northern Ireland. This has included theatre and plays, film and creative writing sessions, poetry, dance and research. Funding is provided through several funding programmes such as Support for the Individual Artist (SIAP), Awards for All (Small Grants Programme) and the Annual Support for Organisations Programme (ASOP).
1.4 The Atlantic Philanthropies

The Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) is a private foundation founded in 1982 by a US businessman. The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of people who are disadvantaged by their economic situation, race, nationality, gender, age, disabilities, immigration status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or religion.

Grants are made through four main programmes of work - one of which is the Ageing Programme. The Ageing Programme in Northern Ireland is committed to addressing the needs of low-income and isolated older people – including lack of financial resources, legacy of conflict, social exclusion and health problems. The Programme is committed to strengthening the voice of older people to advocate for policies to improve their health and economic security. In addition, the Programme supports efforts to provide technical assistance to nongovernmental organisations working on behalf of older adults and continued development of evidence-based approaches to influencing public policy on ageing. The goals for the Ageing Programme in Northern Ireland are to:

- Improve economic and health security through advocacy and policy;
- Strengthen the voice and social action of older people; and
- Build a more enduring capacity of the age sector.

Over the past few years Atlantic has funded a wider range of age related organisations and projects in Northern Ireland as part of the Ageing Programme, including: Age Concern, Help the Aged, Reminiscence Network Northern Ireland, Dementia Services Development Trust, Engage with Age, Workers’ Educational Association, Queen’s University Belfast and the University of Ulster.

1.5 The Arts and Older People’s Programme

The Arts and Older People Programme (delivered under the Arts and Older People Strategy) aims to engage with and stimulate vulnerable and isolated older people around social justice issues both in the community and in residential contexts using the arts as the mechanism for achieving this. The programme is jointly funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies (£350,000) and the Arts Council (£350,000). The programme’s strategic themes and objectives are:

- **Isolation and Loneliness** – To provide opportunities for social interaction through arts-led interventions and projects;
- **Social Inclusion** - Combating social exclusion of older people, through arts interventions that promote inclusion, free movement and sharing;
- **Poverty** - Providing opportunities for older people living in disadvantaged/marginalised rural and urban areas to access and participate in arts activities;
- **Health Issues/Dementia** - Provide opportunities for older people to participate in arts-led activities which may help improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the participants; and
- **Strengthening the Voice of Older People** - Provide opportunities for older people to develop skills which will strengthen their voice on issues that affect them – artistic, professional and personal development skills.

The programme was launched in July 2010 and operates over three years (2010 – 2013). Grants (up to £50,000) are offered to allow for capacity building and project development. Feasibility studies are limited to £15,000.
The programme is primarily aimed at constituted community or voluntary groups who are currently providing a service for older people. The programme is also open to non-governmental organisations and arts organisations who can clearly demonstrate previous partnership working with older people. Due recognition is also given to older people's groups located in or working with groups in identified areas of need (namely the 36 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs) and 26 Areas at Risk).

The Arts Council will implement a process for selecting artists and arts organisations that will facilitate projects in partnership with applicant organisations. A one week festival - ‘Celebration of Age’ - will also be organised to provide all participants with a platform to display their work, as well as providing a valuable opportunity for advocacy through high-profile media coverage.

1.6 Evaluation Methodology

The main objective of the evaluation of the AOP is to measure impact through the life of the programme and to draw out best practice in order to inform and influence programme development. It also aims to provide robust evidence in order to shape future government interventions.

A Logic Model methodology has been applied as it provides a solid basis for strategy development and evaluation planning and can highlight how advocacy tactics connect to interim outcomes that set the stage for policy change. This enables advocates, funders and evaluators to make realistic predictions about potential accomplishments, record information to assess progress toward goals and to use the learning to improve advocacy.

Qualitative and quantitative baseline indicators have been established and the evaluation will measure impact against the outputs and outcomes outlined in the Programme Logic Model (see Table 1.1 overleaf). The methodology comprises of the following:

- **Desk Research**: A review of the research and policy landscape;
- **Database Analysis**: Profile of applications, awards and rejections;
- **Case-studies**: Case-studies of selected projects to include beneficiary discussions;
- **Stakeholder Consultations**: Interviews with the Steering Group and internal and external stakeholders;
- **Pre- and Post-Participant Surveys**: Analysis of participant feedback upon project commencement and closure; and
- **Event Feedback**: Analysis of short-term sessions attended by activity/event attendees;
- **Artist Survey**: Analysis of feedback provided by artists post project; and
- **End of Project Report**: Detailing evidence of needs addressed, activities undertaken, participant benefits, partnership building etc.

Throughout the course of the evaluation, we drew upon the detailed knowledge and understanding of the Evaluation Steering Group which was established as an advisory body for the evaluation, the Steering Group and Arts Council staff.

1.7 Completeness and Availability of Information

For the purposes of this report, we have had to assume that the statistical information provided to us is reliable and complete. The scope of the exercise did not extend to an audit of the data provided.
1.8 Contents of this Document

The remainder of this document contains the following information:

- **Section Two**: Context to the Arts and Older People Programme;
- **Section Three**: Policy Update;
- **Section Four**: Applications and Awards;
- **Section Five**: Beneficiary Feedback;
- **Section Six**: NI Hospice Case Study;
- **Section Seven**: Upper Springfield Development Trust Case Study;
- **Section Eight**: Project Partners;
- **Section Nine**: Programme Governance;
- **Section Ten**: Policy Impact;
- **Section Eleven**: Programme Appraisal; and
- **Section Twelve**: Recommendations.
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<td><strong>Isolation &amp; Loneliness:</strong></td>
<td>Increase social interaction through participatory arts projects</td>
<td>Decrease in participants’ loneliness score (Hughes et al) % of artists who feel participants enjoyed the activities % of artists who feel that participants are now more positive about the arts Participants, artists &amp; stakeholders feel that the project has decreased isolation and improved access &amp; participation in the arts</td>
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<td>To provide opportunities for social interaction through arts-led interventions and projects</td>
<td>% of participants strongly agreeing that they have made good friendships out of this project * cross-community, cross-cultural, intergenerational projects</td>
<td>Increase in the promotion of good relations (e.g. sharing facilities, relationship development, networking &amp; links)</td>
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<td><strong>Social Inclusion:</strong></td>
<td>Positive Relationships developed between people from different backgrounds and experiences, especially of the Troubles</td>
<td>% of participants strongly agreeing that they have made good friendships out of this project * cross-community, cross-cultural, intergenerational projects</td>
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<td>Combating social exclusion of older people through arts interventions that promote inclusion, free movement and sharing</td>
<td>% of participants strongly agreeing that they have made good friendships out of this project * cross-community, cross-cultural, intergenerational projects</td>
<td>Increase in the promotion of good relations (e.g. sharing facilities, relationship development, networking &amp; links)</td>
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<td><strong>Poverty:</strong></td>
<td>Increase opportunity for participation in arts activities at no cost to the older person</td>
<td>Increase in % participants who have been to see an arts event in the last 12 months (*urban/rural &amp; Neighbourhood Renewal areas) Increase in the % of participants who have taken part in an arts activity in the last 12 months (*urban/rural &amp; Neighbourhood Renewal areas) Increase in the % of participants agreeing that there are barriers to the arts (*urban/rural &amp; Neighbourhood Renewal areas) % of participants strongly agreeing that they have made good friendships out of this project (*urban/rural &amp; Neighbourhood Renewal areas) % of participants strongly agreeing that they have taken part in other groups &amp; activities due to this project (*urban/rural &amp; Neighbourhood Renewal areas) % of participants strongly disagreeing that these sessions haven’t made them want to go to arts events (*urban/rural &amp; Neighbourhood Renewal areas) Reduce in participants’ loneliness score (Hughes et al) % of artists who feel participants enjoyed the activities % of artists who feel that participants are now more positive about the arts Participants, artists &amp; stakeholders feel that the project has decreased isolation and improved access &amp; participation in the arts</td>
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<td>Providing opportunities for older people living in disadvantaged/marginalised rural and urban areas to access and participate in arts activities</td>
<td>% of participants strongly agreeing that they have made good friendships out of this project * cross-community, cross-cultural, intergenerational projects</td>
<td>Increase in the promotion of good relations (e.g. sharing facilities, relationship development, networking &amp; links)</td>
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<td><strong>Health Issues/Dementia:</strong></td>
<td>Increased opportunities for participation in arts led activities that help stimulate older people at a physical, mental and societal level</td>
<td>% of participants strongly agreeing that they have made good friendships out of this project * cross-community, cross-cultural, intergenerational projects</td>
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### Strategic Aim

**Strengthening the Voice of Older People:**
Provide opportunities for older people to develop skills which will strengthen their voice on issues that affect them – artistic, professional and personal development skills

### Short-Term Outcome

- Strengthening the Voice of Older People:
  - Awareness of the programme and social justice issues amongst key stakeholders, policy makers, service providers and wider society
  - Increased skills amongst older people – including artistic, capacity building, community development and advocacy skills

### Indicator

- Increase in awareness, understanding & support of older people’s issues by policy makers
- Increase in awareness, understanding & support of older people’s issues by service providers
- Increase in awareness, understanding & support of older people’s issues by wider society
- Increase in the % of participants who have taken action to solve a problem
- % of participants who strongly agree that they have tried & learned new things
- % of participants who strongly agree that they have surprised themselves & others by what they can do
- % of participants who strongly agree that the activities have given them the confidence to try different things
- % of participants who strongly agree that they feel good about what they have achieved
- % of artists stating that participants’ showed a desire to learn
- % of artists stating that they would like to work with older people again
- Participants, artists & stakeholders feel skills have been developed via the project
2 Context to the Arts & Older People Programme

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects upon the initial statistical review undertaken at Baseline stage and highlights existing research on the potential benefits of participating in arts activities for older people.

2.2 Older People and the Arts

The AOP Baseline Report utilises findings from the Arts and Culture in Northern Ireland survey to illustrate that attendance at arts events declines with age, with attendance lowest amongst those aged 65 years and over. Similar to attendance levels, participation levels also appear to decline with age, with those over 65 years least likely to participate in arts activity. However, arts attendance and participation within the 50-64 age category has proportionately increased over the last few years.

Analysis of the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT) also indicates that the amount of free time spent on learning, or developing a new skill declines with age, as does participation in cultural groups.

Crafts, singing or playing a musical instrument are consistently the most popular activities for older participants. ‘Enjoyment/pleasure’ is consistently given as the primary reason for participation, with other important factors being ‘an outlet for creativity’ and ‘contributing to communities’. ‘Improving health and well being’ is also a frequently cited reason for participation, as are ‘meeting new people’ and ‘reducing stress levels’.

2.3 Barriers to Arts Participation

The Right to Participate in artistic and cultural life is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 27(1) states that ‘everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts’.

However, there can be many actual and/or perceived barriers to attendance and participation. Arts Council Research into the actual and perceived barriers to publicly funded arts in Northern Ireland (2005) identifies a number of issues that impede take-up and participation by older people in the arts. These include:

- Longstanding illness or disability which can affect the individual’s access to or enjoyment of art forms;
- Poverty and lack of disposable income which makes the cost of attending cultural events or venues prohibitive to some sections of the older person community;
- Access to transport, particularly in rural areas where there is limited transport available. In urban areas issues such as personal safety (i.e. travelling in the evening) can impede attendance; and
- Older people’s perceptions of the arts as being elitist. Similarly, social stereotyping can also assume a narrower range of interests in arts events and activities, than is actually the case.

Indeed, the main barriers, as identified in the Arts and Culture in Northern Ireland surveys are ‘it’s difficult to find time’, ‘my health’s not good enough’, ‘I prefer to spend
my free time in other ways’ and ‘I’m not really interested’. Cost can also be a significant barrier for some age groups. As a result, the Arts and Older People Strategy’s central purpose:

“...is to assist older people overcome barriers and increase access and participation in arts-related projects that address both their creative and social needs. While this strategy will set out a number of measures that will help tackle broad issues and encourage partnership working, the fundamental objective of this engagement strategy is to increase the number of avenues for older people to become involved in the arts.” [ACNI, p.18]

2.4 Potential Benefits of Engaging with the Arts

In discussing the potential benefits for older people, it is important to distinguish between the use of the arts to address personal and social issues and arts therapy as a discipline.

The latter is a form of psychotherapy that uses art as its primary mode of communication. It is practiced by qualified, registered Art Therapists whose clients may have a wide range of difficulties, disabilities or diagnoses (e.g. emotional, behavioral or mental health problems, learning or physical disabilities, life-limiting conditions, brain-injury or neurological conditions and physical illness). The purpose of art therapy is essentially one of healing and is not considered to be a recreational or educational activity, although enjoyment and learning may be a by-product.

In contrast, there is increasing evidence that participation in creative activities and programmes has a positive effect on the physical and psychological wellbeing of older people. Despite methodological limitations, rigorous evidence-based research on the impact of arts programme participation does exist. For example, one American controlled study into the impact of professionally conducted cultural programmes on older adults found benefits in relation to physical health (e.g. fewer doctor visits, less medication use and fewer falls), increased self-esteem, reduced loneliness and increased activity.2

Research also suggests that community arts programmes which promote active social contact, encourage creativity and use mentoring, are likely to positively affect health and wellbeing. Impacts include reduced depression, increased social support, alertness, social activity, enhanced self-worth and optimism about life.3 Studies also indicate that music programmes that are socially supportive promote cognitive capacity.4

There is also evidence that arts programme participation within care settings can have beneficial impacts on the physical health of patients and on their psychological wellbeing.5 For example, there have been reports of reduced anxiety and depression in patients undergoing chemotherapy, in addition to reduced blood pressure, heart rate and demand for oxygen. Such programmes also enabled enhanced communication between patients and medical staff and there was evidence that music enhanced pain management. There is also evidence that active engagement with the arts has positive effects on patients with mental health difficulties (e.g. patients were calmer, more

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attentive and collaborative, they were better able to express themselves after participating in the creation of work under the guidance of art specialists).\(^6\)

The overall benefits of arts engagement can largely be divided along the interrelated dimensions of health and relationships. Age & Opportunity\(^7\) state that the participation of older people in the arts can assist personal fulfilment, the creation of meaning, lifelong learning, social linkages, celebration of life, generation of new ideas and their expression, dignity and self esteem, empowerment and maintaining and improving health.

The Baring Foundation\(^8\) commissioned a research review to illustrate the impact of participatory arts on older people. This aims to provide evidence to funders about the benefits accrued through art activities and to support arts organisations to improve their work. Twenty-four peer reviewed articles (one review and 23 primary studies) were selected for inclusion and seven unpublished and/or non-peer reviewed studies were also included to cover identified gaps in the evidence base. The 31 studies all included people over the age of 60 years. Whilst most of the studies were of older people who were in generally good health, six of the studies involved people with dementia, usually in a residential or day care setting. Activities spanned music, singing, dance, drama, storytelling, visual arts, festivals and mixed art forms. The researchers summarise the impacts as follows:

- **Mental Wellbeing:** Participants were perceived to benefit from increased confidence and self esteem and there appeared to be particular added value in cases whereby they performed to an audience. It was suggested that older adults can embrace new and positive aspects to their identity and life role through participative arts and that involvement in community arts may be particularly important in counterbalancing low mood, anxiety and social isolation. For older adults with dementia, it was concluded that participatory art can help improve cognitive functioning, communication, self-esteem, musical skills, pleasure, enjoyment of life, memory and creative thinking. On the other hand, participation can cause frustration when individuals find that they are not able to meet their own or others’ expectations. However, many individuals exceed their personal expectations about what they could achieve, which enhances their mental wellbeing;

- **Physical Wellbeing:** It was concluded that particular art forms may lend themselves to significant physical health improvements (e.g. cardiovascular, joint mobility and breathing control), including dance, singing and playing musical instruments. Even engaging in activities which are not obviously physically exerting, can lead to increased levels of general daily activity which should have a positive effect upon physical wellbeing;

- **Communities:** Some research provided evidence that participatory arts programmes provide opportunities for meaningful social contact, friendship and support within the art groups themselves as well as improving relationships between established groups. Indeed, ‘giving something back’ to the community can have a positive impact on other members of the community as well as the direct participants. Participatory art that affords people with dementia increased access to their community or increased interaction with professionals was believed to address age discrimination by raising awareness and helping to break down stereotypes. Additionally, participatory art that involves both people with dementia and their

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\(^7\) Age & Opportunity, (2006). Guidelines for Working with Older People in the Arts: A Resource for Bealtaine Organisers and Others Involved in the Arts and Older People.

\(^8\) The Baring Foundation (2010). An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People.
carers proved to be an effective way of breaking down relationship barriers and in day and residential care settings can foster improved social cohesion; and

- **Society:** The research indicated that large-scale, high profile festivals have the potential to positively transform attitudes to older people, particularly when they include intergenerational events. It was concluded that participatory art can help challenge and break down the societal stigma of being older.

### 2.5 Arts and Social Justice in Practice

The Atlantic Philanthropies invest in campaigns, institutions, movements and individuals that give voice to the people most affected by injustice, in the belief that lasting progress comes from building capacity to advocate on one’s own behalf. The organisation feels that the arts can be a powerful path toward these goals, by elevating and amplifying the voices of those most affected by injustice. The *Farm Life* project in South Africa was an AP sponsored campaign to raise awareness about the living conditions of farm workers and the rural poor. The campaign humanised the statistics by commissioning photographs and personal stories of farm life in the 21st century culminating in a publication and travelling exhibit.

Community arts have been a distinct part of the arts in Northern Ireland for the past 25 years. It is an established sector with a number of component parts, including individual artists working in a community context, community arts provider groups and the former umbrella and networking organisation, Community Arts Forum (CAF).9

Empowerment and skills development are key elements of community arts. The potential benefits of participation include rural and urban regeneration, socio-economic regeneration, capacity building, contribution to peace building and improved self-confidence and life opportunities. However, despite good practice examples (e.g. Big Telly’s Spring Chickens, Age on Stage, Arts Care, Musical Memories, Valuing Heritage, Valuing Memories, Elderflowers) arts practice by and with older people in Northern Ireland, is generally deemed to be fragmented and lacking in public profile, particularly since the demise of the Arts for Older People Network (see Section 2.5.5).10

As highlighted in Section 1.5, the AOP is heavily focused upon tackling and raising awareness of specific social justice issues. A general definition of social justice is hard to arrive at, but is essentially concerned with fairness, equal rights and opportunities in all aspects of society. In order for the AOP to deliver social justice, two core themes run throughout the programme:

- **Social Inclusion:** Social *exclusion*, refers to processes in which individuals and entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities and resources (e.g. housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation) that are normally available to members of society and which are key to social integration;11 and
- **Strengthening the Voice of Older People:** This AOP theme promotes advocacy and social accountability. It is about creating positive change through strategies, actions and solutions that attempt to influence decision-making. Advocacy can be a highly effective tool for drawing public attention to the needs of particular vulnerable groups, including the economically and socially vulnerable older people targeted by

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9 CAF and New Belfast Community Arts Initiative have now merged to the Community Arts Partnership (CAP)


11 [http://www.adler.edu/about/ISE.asp](http://www.adler.edu/about/ISE.asp)
the AOP. The approach has clear links with a rights based approach as it aims to stimulate civic participation and government accountability.

In this respect, the AOP programme will provide financial assistance to projects in order to mitigate against the social exclusion of older people, through involvement in the arts, or utilising the arts to highlight the disadvantage to service providers, policy-makers and wider society.

2.5.1 Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation is defined by a lack of contact and interaction with other people. The AOP aims to provide opportunities for social interaction through arts-led interventions and projects. Loneliness is the perception of being alone and can be experienced even when one is in contact with others. Although older persons can live alone without feeling lonely, living alone is a leading indicator of the potential for social isolation and social integration has been found to be generally beneficial to health across adulthood into old age. The following project examples, illustrate the ability of the arts to address and highlight feelings of loneliness and isolation:

- Newark and Sherwood District Council’s Visible project offers over 50s the chance to discover new interests, make new friendships and discover a sense of belonging in their local community. Visible is designed to appeal to people who’ve had limited access to the arts, live in rural areas or may need help dealing with life-changing experiences like bereavement, divorce or retirement. Funded by Nottinghamshire County Council, the programme is delivered by the Council’s Participatory Arts team in conjunction with Newark Palace Theatre, Boundary Sound, Thoresby Gallery and the Theatre Writing Partnership. Three courses are offered: Broadcasting and Media offers participants the chance to produce or present their own radio show, people taking part in the visual arts project will be introduced to a range of fascinating photographic techniques and in Writing for the Theatre, participants will develop and perform a series of monologues inspired by conversations with friends and family. The programme also offers training for artists and others working with older people and is a stepping stone for further progression. Participants are given the chance to go on to become volunteers or mentors themselves; and

- Westminster Cinematic Arts (WCA) developed a project “The Forgotten” which used documentary film to raise awareness on loneliness, isolation and depression among older people. The project aimed to give voice to older people suffering from loneliness, depression and social exclusion and to encourage a public debate about the isolation of older people. Two events were held at Westminster Academy to screen the documentary. A medical professional was invited to introduce the events with a lecture on the effect of loneliness and depression in older people, including symptoms, precautions treatment available and open discussions took place after the screenings. DVD copies of the film were distributed to a variety of local organisations and community groups, schools and libraries to promote and explore the issues covered in the film.

2.5.2 Social Inclusion

The AOP aims to combat the social exclusion of older people through arts interventions that promote inclusion, free movement and sharing. The arts have the ability to help promote community engagement and develop relationship - fostering a sense of place and belonging. Hence a number of cities hold high profile events that celebrate and showcase the importance of active participation by older people as performers, participants and volunteers to celebrate arts, creativity and ageing (e.g.
London’s Capital Age Festival, Gwanwyn Festival of Arts For Older People, Scottish National Festival). The following examples highlight the use of the arts to address social inclusion and promote cohesion:

- **Bealtaine** has inspired a number of similar festivals – running from 1994, it is one of Ireland’s largest arts festivals, spanning the month of May. Celebrating creativity in older age, it is coordinated by Age & Opportunity in Ireland and includes events organised by hundreds of partner organisations. The festival encourages greater participation in the arts by older people as artists and performers, participating as both event organisers and audiences. The ethos is one of fun, empowerment and exploration. In 2009 Age & Opportunity commissioned an independent evaluation of the festival’s impact. It concluded that there is more interaction between agencies, non-governmental organisations and individuals as a result of the festival. The majority of beneficiaries agreed that participation in Bealtaine also improved their quality of life. Indeed, friendships, networking with other groups and involvement in other community events followed on from Bealtaine, with the majority of participants agreeing that the festival increased their involvement in the community. It was also suggested that the festival has a positive impact for arts practice - attracting new and participatory audiences and changing how arts organisations work with older people;

- **Cultural Companions** is a new Bealtaine Festival initiative. It creates local networks of people interested in arts and culture who will accompany each other to events. By recruiting Volunteer Companions (people who enjoy socialising, have an interest in the arts or regularly attend events themselves), the initiative aims to facilitate a more active social life for older people who wish to broaden their horizons, meet new like-minded people and get out more; and

- **Worchester City Council’s Breaking Down Barriers Intergenerational Art Project** brought volunteers aged between 11-25 and over 50 years together to share skills and to produce artwork to be shown at Worcester Festival 2011. Volunteers choose a variety of art mediums (e.g. poetry, painting, traditional crafts, graffiti) and work together to make joint artwork based upon intergenerational conversations on “My Perfect Day”. The project aimed to promote intergenerational discussion, to find common ground and help break down negative social stereotypes that can otherwise cause animosity and fear between the age groups and to aid community cohesion through connecting older and younger people.

### 2.5.3 Poverty & Disadvantage

The AOP aims to provide opportunities for older people living in disadvantaged/marginalised rural and urban areas to access and participate in arts activities. While the arts cannot eradicate poverty or disadvantage, it can nevertheless create social links, inspire and develop dignity and confidence. The arts can also be used to highlight what it means to live in poverty:

- **“Art Partner”** project was one of the key activities in the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Launched in May 2010, the project aimed to create “duos” made up of art/design students and individuals experiencing poverty. The central “(IN)VISIBLE” theme sets out to use art to make the individuals behind poverty visible and provide those living below the poverty line with a creative means of expression through photographic art. NGO’s working in the poverty sector played a key role as facilitators, helping to create the “duos” and

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building a bridge between the two. The duo then conceptualised their ideas in tandem, getting behind the camera, being creative, and co-producing their photographs. An artistic committee selected fifty photographs which were displayed at an exhibition in Brussels; and

- Worcester City Council and Age Concern’s “Tales of the Credit Crunch” aims to provide a cinematic forum for Worcestershire’s Older and Younger people to discuss the impact of economic downturn on their communities in urban and rural areas. Through film making the project aims to encourage and increase the positive interaction between younger and older people and to reinforce community cohesion. In the course of capturing the historical and educational value of local residents’ experiences and memories, the project aspires to increase individual’s sense of well being and their ability to make a positive contribution to the community.

### 2.5.4 Health & Wellbeing

The AOP aims to provide opportunities for older people to participate in arts-led activities which may help improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the participants. The Department of Health and Arts Council England developed a Prospectus for Arts & Health, which celebrates and promotes the benefits of the arts in improving wellbeing, health and healthcare. This publication stems from the recommendations of the Review of Arts and Health Working Group, commissioned by the Department of Health and the Arts Council England has since published its national framework for arts, health and wellbeing. Illustrations of arts and health partnership projects include:

- **Arts on Prescription** in Stockport has been running for over ten years and is now funded through the NHS and Sefton Creative Alternatives. Research generated during the projects suggests that participation in regular arts activities may have a positive and significant impact on the mental wellbeing of those experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues. The project offers a non drug based alternative (or supplementary) intervention for people experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety. Clients are referred into through project through GPs and other health professionals and are offered a series of arts workshops with expert tuition from practicing artists, as well as mental health support from therapists or counsellors. Whilst the project focuses on using the Arts to promote mental wellbeing, it does not constitute art therapy. Rather, it aims to engage participants in arts activities as part of a weekly group, over a maximum of fifteen weeks. Upon completion, participants are signposted on to other arts and cultural activities that they can access within mainstream provision or mental health services, depending on their ongoing support needs; and

- **Art in Hospital** provides an extensive ongoing programme of visual arts in a variety of health care settings in Scotland. Initially practicing within long term care for older people, Art in Hospital has diversified to include those being cared for within rehabilitation and assessment units, those with life-limiting illnesses, young physically disabled, mental health and outpatients, rheumatology patients, renal dialysis patients and those in need of palliative care. The Hospital and Community project aims to break down barriers to participation in the arts for the most excluded older people over 60 and initiate an ongoing dialogue between older people and the arts in Glasgow. Funded for a number of years by Glasgow City Council Cultural Grants, it has enabled hospital patients, residents from care homes and disabled people living in the community to work with professional artists, students from Glasgow School of Art and pupils from local secondary schools on a wide range of specialist art activities. The project now receives funding from Culture and Sport Glasgow and through the Pathfinder Project, funded by the Scottish Government,
has led to the development of the Art in Hospital programme of visits for participants to Glasgow Museums and Galleries.

2.5.5 Strengthening the Voice

The AOP aims to provide opportunities for older people to develop skills which will strengthen their voice on issues that affect them – artistic, professional and personal development skills. There is an expressed need for ongoing professional development for artists, age sector and health and social care representatives in order to build the capacity and profile of this work. Much of the skills and experience has grown out of professional practice. However, specific initiatives elsewhere focusing upon sectoral development include:

- **Creative Exchanges** is the Arts in Care programme of Age & Opportunity. The aim of which is to make creativity intrinsic to life in care settings by providing Further Education and Training Awards Council accredited training to staff working in care settings. They can then, in turn, run arts programmes on a regular basis with their clients. The training is unique in that it has been tailor-made for staff working with older people in care settings. Workshops aim to enable participants to facilitate creative activity with the older people in their care. So far the training has involved drama, visual arts and dance. They also manage ‘Agewise’, a programme of age equality training for a range of public service organisations, including arts organisations;

- **Equal Arts** aims to improve the quality of people’s lives by helping older people participate in high quality arts activity. The organisation works with professional artists in partnership with residential care homes, sheltered accommodation schemes, GPs and hospitals, community venues, arts and cultural venues, local authorities and a range of older people’s organisations. In response to interest and increasing levels of activity in arts and dementia, Equal Arts developed the **Arts & Dementia Network** to champion the role of the arts in dementia care and support artists and health and social care professionals working in the field;

- The **Baring Foundation** is focusing its funding on the theme of arts and older people. Grants for projects in 2012 will "support work to link different types of residential care settings into the community around them through the creative power of the arts.” Around 15 arts organisations undertaking exemplary projects will be supported from a total fund of at least £300,000 and the maximum single grant will be £30,000; and

- The **Arts for Older People Network** was established in Northern Ireland in 2001, with the support of the CAF (now CAP). Although it is no longer in existence, the group aimed to provide networking activities and an opportunity for the work of older people in the arts to be evaluated and documented. The organisation provided help and advice regarding grants, funding and sponsorship for older people’s work in the arts, a platform for lobbying and profile change and support through education and training for older people and those working with them. The Network appears to have been particularly active between 2006-08 and co-ordinated two celebratory events entitled ‘Over the Hill – But Look at the View’ as part of the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival in Belfast and at the Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart and has supported the development of a short play ‘The Bench’, created with 30 older residents in sheltered accommodation in Belfast and Ballycastle. It also held seminars for older people, policy-makers and practitioners to promote awareness and encourage links across the age and arts sectors.
2.6 Discussion

Although not an in-depth review, this chapter highlights the increasing recognition of the potential benefits of the arts to address personal and social issues. The research suggests that particular art forms such as dance and movement may have both physical as well as mental health benefits. However, regardless of the activity it is important that individuals achieve a positive experience in order to ensure that benefits are maximised.

The project examples highlight how activities funded through the AOP might serve to address the programmes strategic themes of loneliness and isolation, social inclusion, poverty, health and strengthening the voice of older people. The AOP also has a strong emphasis on advocacy and social change for older people through the use of the arts. This is a relatively new concept for both arts organisations and community and voluntary sector partners and as such capacity building and training is likely to be needed in order to ensure that social justice issues are the heart of activities.

Arts Council research reveals that there are barriers to overcome, in order to increase older people’s involvement in arts activities. Whilst there are financial implications, lack of information and lack of interest also need to be tackled. Old age is typically perceived as a time of difficulty and loss which ultimately leads to increased dependency. The AOP is one potential vehicle under which to challenge this stereotype – highlighting the benefits of life-long learning, participation and illustrating a zest for life.
3 Policy Update

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an update on relevant strategic developments in the policy and legislative landscape since the Baseline Evaluation Report, which was submitted in November 2010.

3.2 Removal of the Default Retirement Age

On 24 March 2011, OFMDFM devised the Employment Equality (Repeal of Retirement Age Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011 (S.R. No. 168). These revoke and amend provisions in the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (and amend certain provisions in the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996) which except certain dismissals from employment on the basis of retirement, from constituting direct age discrimination and unfair dismissal. These amendments are intended to remove the Default Retirement Age (DRA) of 65 years. A new provision relating to insurance arranged by an employer for their employees and other persons in connection with that employment is also made.

Pension Credit (a non-contributory, non taxable benefit made up of two components, Guaranteed Credit and Savings Credit) is a means tested benefit for persons of state retirement age. The minimum age to qualify for Guarantee Credit component of Pension Credit for both men and women is also gradually rising from age 60 to 65 years. The minimum age for the Savings Credit component is 65 years. The Pensions Act 2011 will bring forward the increase in the State Pension Age in Great Britain to November 2018. In line with the principle of parity, it is anticipated that corresponding proposals will be introduced in Northern Ireland in early 2012.

3.3 Warmer Healthier Homes: A New Fuel Strategy for NI

Launched in March 2011, this strategy sets out the Vision of:

“...a society in which people live in a warm, comfortable home and need not worry about the effect of the cold on their health.” [p.4]

It provides the following commitments against a backdrop of rising energy costs and the economic downturn:

- Financial investment in the energy efficiency of the public housing stock;
- Bid for additional money from the Social Protection Fund to help people in need;
- Launch a pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme targeted at those in greatest need; and
- Progress energy broking and challenge energy suppliers to drive down energy costs.

Age Sector Platform launched the “Fight the Winter Fuel Cut” campaign in June 2011 after the Westminster Government’s decision to cut the Winter Fuel Payment by £50-£100 this year. Subsequently it was announced that £100 will be paid to thousands of pensioner households eligible for State Pension Credit by the NI Assembly via the Northern Ireland Fuel Allowance Payment. In November 2011 an innovative “pay as you go” option for oil heating for vulnerable households was announced. The pilot scheme to help tackle fuel poverty among the most disadvantaged, will begin early 2012 and its impact will be evaluated.
More recently in December 2011, the Fuel Poverty Coalition launched a petition calling on the NI Executive to use the final Programme for Government 2011-2015 to tackle fuel poverty in a comprehensive and sustained way providing central priority to the issue given its scale and effects.

3.4 The New Northern Ireland Executive

The formation of the new administrations took place after the elections on 5 May 2011. The First Minister Rt. Hon Peter Robinson MLA and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP MLA remain in Office. DUP leader Peter Robinson re-appointed his party's four Ministers, with Sammy Wilson returning to finance, Arlene Foster to Enterprise, Edwin Poots taking up Health and Nelson McCausland now in charge of Social Development.

Sinn Fein has three new Ministers, with John O'Dowd leading Education, Michelle O'Neill in Agriculture and Caral Ni Chuilin leading Culture. The Ulster Unionists have now one less Minister and Danny Kennedy has moved to Regional Development. The SDLP's Alex Attwood returns as the new Environment Minister. The Alliance Party has two Ministers, David Ford remains in Justice and Stephen Farry commences in Employment and Learning.

3.5 The Establishment of the Pensioners Parliament

The structure and process of this new initiative was designed to ensure that everyone could have their say through completing a survey, attending one of the seven local county-based parliaments or attending the two day NI Pensioners Parliament (NIPP) at Stormont which was opened by the Junior Ministers in June 2011. At the latter event delegates voted on motions and key priorities for the year based upon the gathered information.

Organised by Age Sector Platform, the Pensioners Parliament enabled pensioners from across Northern Ireland to voice their opinions and debate the issues that are important to them.

Junior Minister Bell said:

"Today is an ideal opportunity for each of you to make your voice heard – and we as Ministers, are here to assure you that we are interested in your views and your opinion on the issues affecting you the most…We wish to ensure that older people in Northern Ireland have the strong voice and protection they deserve and we believe this Parliament is a significant step forward."

Junior Minister Martina Anderson added:

"We all need to recognise the huge contribution made by older people here. The Pensioners Parliament provides a means whereby older people and their representatives can come together and consider the issues that affect their lives…This is your chance to be heard; to argue, to enter dialogue with politicians and policy makers and others on where our priorities should lie, now and in the coming years."

Twenty-four Motions were passed during the NIPP and the following priority areas were identified:

- **Energy**: Introduction of social tariffs and regulation of the oil industry;
- **Food**: Introduction of "Pensioner Discount Days" by food retailers;
• **Fear of Crime:** More visible policing and increased representation of older people on Community Safety and Policing Partnerships;
• **Health and Social Care:** Increased funding for preventative care and more support for older carers;
• **Pensions and Benefits:** Call for the UK Government to change its plans for up-rating pensions and the automatic payment of pensions credit through a pilot programme; and
• **Age Discrimination:** Bring forward legislation to end unfair discrimination where it adversely affects the opportunities, goods and services available to older people.

### 3.6 Programme for Government

The Programme for Government (PfG) sets the strategic context for the Budget, Investment Strategy and Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland and highlights the key goals and actions the Executive will take to drive forward the priority areas.

On 17 November 2011, the First Minister and deputy First Minister published the draft PfG 2011-2015 for consultation alongside the revised Budget. The document states that the most immediate challenges lie in supporting economic recovery and tackling disadvantage.

"While doing this, we are committed to growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future; tackling disadvantage; improving health and wellbeing; protecting our people and the environment; building a strong and shared community and; delivering high quality services. Equality and sustainability are our underpinning principles." [p.20]

The Executive’s five inter-linked priorities are:

- Growing a Sustainable Economy and Investing in the Future;
- Creating Opportunities, Tackling Disadvantage and Improving Health and Wellbeing;
- Protecting Our People, the Environment and Creating Safer Communities;
- Building a Strong and Shared Community; and
- Delivering High Quality and Efficient Public Services.

Some of the most relevant of the 76 commitments provided in the PfG are listed as follows and are reflective of the issues highlighted via the Pensioners Parliament:

- Introduce and support a range of initiatives aimed at reducing fuel poverty across Northern Ireland including preventative interventions (DSD);
- Extend age discrimination legislation to the provision of goods, facilities and services (OFMDFM);
- Tackle crime against older and vulnerable people by more effective and appropriate sentences and other measures (DOJ);
- Bring forward a £13 million package to tackle rural poverty and isolation in the next three years (DARD); and
- Deliver a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion (OFMDFM will tackle poverty and disadvantage along with other Government Departments through a suite of inter-related programmes including the Social Investment Fund and the Social Protection Fund).

Despite a stated emphasis upon ”unlocking the potential of the culture, arts and leisure sectors as instruments for positive change“ [p46] in advancing social cohesion and integration and the identification of the Arts and Older People Strategy as a “Building
there is no specific commitment to increasing engagement/access to the arts amongst older people through a targeted programme (or otherwise) provided in the PfG.

The majority of responses through the 2011-12 Budget consultation website were in relation to Arts funding (n=5,451). Many of the views expressed related to the economic and social contribution that Arts funding has to our economy and the cultural and tourism sectors. There was a call for Arts funding to be proportionately cut ("Fair Deal for the Arts") in relation to the overall Northern Ireland Budget. Concern was also expressed about over-reliance on Lottery funding, with some sectors making the point that they are ineligible for this. A small minority of respondents called for Arts funding to be reduced or removed in its entirety.

In its response, the Executive stated that it fully recognised the importance of the Arts sector, both in economic and social terms and the Executive agreed to an additional allocation of £0.7 million/£0.95 million/£0.95 million to DCAL for Arts Funding across the budget period.

### Table 3.1
DCAL Non-Capital Expenditure 2010-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
<th>2013/14</th>
<th>2014/15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts £m</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>18.2 (-4.9)</td>
<td>17.1 (-6)</td>
<td>16.7 (-1.9)</td>
<td>16.8 (0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCAL Total £m</td>
<td>113.3</td>
<td>112.1 (-1)</td>
<td>107.4 (-4.2)</td>
<td>107.4 (=)</td>
<td>104.3 (-2.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding to support the running costs of capital projects will be prioritised, in order to protect the substantial public investment already made in these venues. Programmes such as ASOP will continue but the levels of funding available will be reduced.

The revised Budget indicated that the health aspect of the DHSSPS budget would remain protected. However, DHSSPS outlined the financial challenges of delivering care against an increasingly ageing population. It was stated that the only sustainable long-term strategy is one that works with a population which is actively engaged in looking after its own health and wellbeing.

### 3.7 Appointment of the Commissioner for Older People

Age NI in partnership with Age Sector Platform established the 'We Agree' campaign with the aim of ensuring that the needs of older people are at the forefront of the decision making process that will ultimately inform the powers and duties of the Older People’s Commissioner in Northern Ireland. The intention was to develop a coalition of organisations with the shared goal of ensuring that the Commissioner has sufficient powers to protect the interests of older people, uphold their rights and act with urgency in cases of need.

The Final Stage of the Commissioner for Older People Bill took place on 7 December 2010 and was unanimously passed by the Assembly without amendment. The Bill received Royal Assent on 25 January 2011 and is known as The Commissioner for Older People Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. The Act required that the appointment of the Commissioner by the First Minister and deputy First Minister would be made after taking account of the views of older people on the recruitment process and the skills, qualities and criteria required for a Commissioner.
Claire Keatinge, a former Director of the Alzheimer’s Society took up the appointment on 14 November 2011. She will be a dedicated focal point for older citizens and will have the statutory power and authority to challenge and take action on their behalf.

3.8 Improving Dementia Services in NI: A Regional Strategy

The Bamford Action Plan 2009-2010, published in October 2009, included a commitment to develop a Dementia Services Strategy. The final strategy, Improving Dementia Services in Northern Ireland - A Regional Strategy, was published in November 2011. The following Values and Principles are considered key to guiding the future development of services for people with dementia and the people who care for them:

- Dignity and Respect;
- Autonomy;
- Justice and Equality;
- Safe, Effective, Person-centred Care;
- Care for Carers; and
- Skills for Staff.

The key themes of this strategy are:

- Prevention - there is some scope to prevent or delay the onset of dementia through a healthy lifestyle approach and reduction in cardiovascular risk factors;
- Raising awareness and addressing stigma associated with the condition;
- Access to early diagnosis, enhancing existing memory services to agreed commissioning standards to provide assessment, diagnosis, information and support;
- Staged approach to care and support as the condition progresses, with the aim of maintaining daily living and independence as far as possible;
- Improving staff awareness and skills to respond appropriately to people’s needs;
- Redesign of services to shift care as far as possible to people’s own homes and avoid admission to hospital or care home where possible; and
- The need for worldwide research into causes, cure and care for dementia and the part played by NI researchers are also acknowledged.

The Health Minister stated that there is a very strong case for additional funding for dementia services, given increasing needs and he would ideally allocate between £6m and £8m additional funding over the next three years. However, due to financial constraints he urged better use of existing resources and greater efficiency in acute sector provision and care homes.

Although the strategy is welcomed, there is disappointment that no new money was attached for implementation. Campaigners highlight the urgent need to improve services for people with dementia in Northern Ireland and for the implementation of the Dementia Strategy to be made high priority.

3.9 Transforming Your Care: A Review of Health and Social Care

The publication of the Review of Health and Social Care document took place in December 2011. Key points include\(^\text{13}\):

- The proposed model focuses upon the person and supports the individual to care for themselves and make good health choices;

\(^{13}\) Source: Stratagem Grantee Email 13/12/2011
• Integrated Care Partnerships will be established to join together the full range of local Health and Social Care services. Patients will have to deal with fewer professionals and will be at the centre of decision-making about their treatment. Services will regard home as the hub, and be enabled to ensure that people can be supported and cared for at home, including at the end of life;

• Where specialist hospital care is required it will be available, with patients being discharged into the care of local services as soon as their health and care needs permit. The Review proposes that an urgent care model will be implemented in every area to provide 24/7 access to urgent care services; and

• It is envisaged that key changes would include: more care delivered in the home, changing care packages for people in nursing homes, an increased role for the GP, increased role of pharmacy in medicines management and prevention, increased use of community and social care services to meet people's needs and outreach of acute services into the community.

The outworking of this means that there will be a shift of care from hospital settings to the community and in resources, as funds are reallocated in line with service delivery. It is envisaged that by 2014/15 there would be a shift of funding of around £83 million, from the hospital services budget to other services. In this model there would be indicative increases to Personal and Social Services of around £21 million, to Family Health Services and Primary Care of around £21 million and to Community Services of around £41 million by 2014/15. The Review has recommended that implementation and stakeholder engagement plans are drawn up and published by June 2012. The plans will be based on population plans for each area drawn up by each of the Local Commissioning Groups with the HSC Trusts.

Subsequent concerns have been expressed that the Review is aspirational in nature and has the potential to place additional pressure upon family carers. There are worries that the finances are not available to carry out the proposed recommendations and that staff morale is low.

Local concerns echo a letter published in the Daily Telegraph in January 2012, whereby a group of more than 60 government advisers, charity directors and independent experts said failure to meet the challenge of an ageing population was resulting in “terrible examples of abuse and neglect”. The UK experts wrote; “An estimated 800,000 older people are being left without basic care” and “the unavoidable challenge we face is how to support the increasing number of people who need care.” Prime Minister David Cameron’s official spokesperson said a White Paper will be published in the spring and that the government recognised the need for reform in social care.14

3.10 Political Analysis

Brendan Murtagh’s 2011 analysis paper on the political impact of The Atlantic Philanthropies Age Programme highlights that there has been a positive progression of the age agenda in terms of Assembly Questions (AQs) and media coverage of age exclusion. Based on Stratagem’s Political Update series, he illustrates that 165 relevant AQs were asked in 2009 and that this rose to 379 in 2010 (+130%). Media coverage also increased over the period (150 in 2009; 180 in 2010) especially with regards to dementia, crime and social care issues. A sharp increase in sectoral activity was noted in the run up to the 2010 elections.

14 Source: Stratagem Political Update 06.01.12 - News Letter, 04.01.12
The paper indicates that fuel poverty is reflected in a high proportion of AQs to include the severity of Excess Winter Deaths and the impact of the Warm Homes Scheme. Other high profile issues include pensions, welfare benefits and financial exclusion. Housing and health/dementia related issues were also prominent, as were concerns regarding the implications of reduced public spending on service provision.

However, during 2009/10 there was a decline in political statements on ageing (from 115 to 67; 45%) and a decline in related Plenary Session items (from 37 to 29; 9%). Content analysis of the five main political parties’ Manifestos indicates that the DUP contributed almost half of the total content on ageing (49.42%). Sinn Fein (18.43%), Alliance (16.31%) and the SDLP (12.21%) followed, with the Ulster Unionist Party providing relatively little focus upon ageing (3.63%). However, Murtagh demonstrates that the age associated text of the DUP and Sinn Fein Manifestos “slip back into the rhetoric of care and promote a welfare model of older people as dependents to be managed”[p4].

Murtagh concludes that there is a need to maintain momentum within the sector in terms of partnership development with local, regional and national levels in order to ensure that parties have a rights-based understanding of inclusive policy development for older people.

3.11 Discussion

As illustrated above, there has been significant progress with regards to awareness raising, lobbying and policy development over the last year, as a result of effective campaigning within the age sector. There is also a growing recognition of the need to prepare and provide for our increasingly ageing population. However, the older people’s strategy to supersede Ageing in an Inclusive Society has not yet been published.

Murtagh’s research and our own more recent reviews of the Stratagem Political Updates illustrates that most of the media coverage does tend to highlight the potential vulnerability of older people – serving to reinforce societal stereotypes (e.g. crime against older people, financial difficulties, social care needs).

As such the work undertaken by Age Sector Platform with regards to providing evidence of the issues that matter to older people and establishment of the structures to enable their voices to be heard at political level is much needed and welcomed. This evidence base has much to offer the AOP and the sector as a whole.
4 Programme Applications and Awards

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the first and second round applications to the AOP. Information is taken from the GIFTS database and moderator assessment notes and analyses unsuccessful and successful applications.

4.2 Application Summary

There has been a high level of interest in the AOP programme with 48 organisations applying for funding in the initial round and 33 applications assessed in Round Two. Overall, seventy-four submissions have been made (seven Round One applications were carried over into Round Two). Twenty-six Expressions of Interest were received from community and arts organisations going into Round Two and six individual artists also asked to be kept informed of the application process. At the time of writing, 17 Expressions of Interest have been received in relation to the final call for submissions. Overall, funding of £1,663,056 has been requested to date, with an average request of £22,474.

Arts/Community Arts based organisations accounted for 51% (n38) of lead applicants. This was followed by generic community/voluntary groups (16%; n12). Almost half of the proposed projects concentrated on using combined art forms (41%; n30) – with 19% primarily using visual arts (n14) and 14% using crafts (n10).

Applications were received from each of the six counties in Northern Ireland. The majority of applicant organisations were based in County Antrim (54%; n40), followed by County Derry/Londonderry (19%; n14), County Down (14%; n10), County Tyrone (4%; n3), County Armagh (4%; n3) and County Fermanagh (4%; n3). One applicant was based outside Northern Ireland.

Overall, 56% of applications were unsuccessful. Four applications were deemed ineligible and three were withdrawn by the applicant. However, the primary reason for rejection was insufficient evidence regarding how the specific social justice issues would be addressed through the project.

Unsuccessful applicants were deemed unable to meet the required levels of one or more of the necessary criteria. For example, some projects did not provide evidence of the need for the project and how these needs would subsequently be met. Others were perceived to have failed to illustrate sufficient partnership working or concerns were raised over the quality of beneficiary engagement. In some cases, the applications were deemed to lack challenging activity, whilst others were overly ambitious. There was also apprehension over delivery and/or financial standing of some organisations.

4.3 Successful Applications

Table 4.1 overleaf provides summary information on the 32 successful applicants to the AOP (i.e. name of the lead applicant, sector of interest, proposed art form and financial award). Further detail can be found in Appendix One.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Primary Practice</th>
<th>Art Form</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older People North West</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>£2,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monday Club</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>£2,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£2,429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Thread Gallery</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>£2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughinisland GAC</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£3,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony Community Trust</td>
<td>Peace-building</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Craft</td>
<td>£4,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Belfast Community Arts Initiative</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£5,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carew II Family &amp; Training Centre</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>£7,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis Care Group</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£7,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Munia Tober</td>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£9,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derg Valley Care Ltd</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Health Arts</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£12,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s Society</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>£13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland Hospice</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Cut Productions</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>£17,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Springfield Development Trust</td>
<td>Community/Voluntary</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£19,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Telly</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>£37,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age on Stage</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>£4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance United NI</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>£6,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage with Age</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Reminiscence/Film</td>
<td>£6,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Resource Warehouse</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>£7,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Community Circus School</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Circus/ Variety</td>
<td>£8,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindwise New Vision</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>£9,389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts Care</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Health</td>
<td>Clowning</td>
<td>£9,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Age Partnership</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>£11,342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterside Theatre Company</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>£11,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulster Orchestra</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>£15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Arts Centre</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Digital Media</td>
<td>£15,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ederney Community Development Trust</td>
<td>Community/Voluntary</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Traditional Arts</td>
<td>£16,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Visions</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Digital Media/Film</td>
<td>£17,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Music Now</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Combined</td>
<td>£20,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carn Media Ltd</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Community Arts</td>
<td>Digital Media</td>
<td>£22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Arts</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Health Arts</td>
<td>Performance/Digital Media</td>
<td>£27,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong>: <strong>£374,608</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.3.1 Sector of Interest

On the whole, a wide range of arts and community/voluntary based organisations (e.g. representing age, health, community relations, sports, Irish Traveller and women’s sector) were awarded grants.

The majority of the initial awards were led by community/voluntary based organisations (75%; n12). However, in the subsequent round the majority of awards were lead by arts organisations (69%; n11).

Fifty-three percent (n17) of the successful applicants stated community/amateur arts as their primary practice. The majority proposed the use of combined art forms (n16), whilst the remainder focused upon visual arts (n5), drama (n2), craft (n2), theatre (n1), film (n1), dance (n2) and music (n3).

### 4.3.2 Funding Awarded

Almost £375,000 has been awarded to date. Payments range from £1,977 (to Older People North West) to £37,850 (awarded to Big Telly Theatre Company). Seven organisations received funding amounts up to £4,999, fourteen were awarded £5,000 - £14,999 and the remaining ten organisations received between £15,000 and £40,000. Between them, applicants requested funding totalling £769,339. Forty-nine percent of this figure was awarded (£374,388).

Diagram 4.1 indicates that a total of £173,810 was awarded to projects using combined art forms, followed by drama (£55,350), music (£49,297), visual arts (£45,726), film (£17,750), dance (£10,900) and crafts (£6,555).

#### Diagram 4.1

**Award by Art Form**

![Award by artform](image)

Analysis of average grant by art form indicates that drama projects received the highest average payment (£27,675). This was followed by film (£17,750), music (£16,432),
combined art forms (£10,863), visual arts (£9,145), crafts (£6,555) and dance (£5,450) projects.

4.3.3 Location of Project Activities

It is difficult to ascertain the proportion of activities which will take place in rural/urban locations through the initial application, as some applicants stated specific towns and villages whereas others stated the county within the work would take place. From the information provided, 15 organisations (47%) have reported that they will include rural areas in their activities.

Specifically, project activities will be conducted in locations throughout Northern Ireland, including Omagh (n2), Cookstown (n1), Coalisland (n1), Castlederg (n1), Enniskillen (n1), rural Fermanagh (n3), Dungannon (n1), Draperstown (n1) in the West and Lisburn (n3), Downpatrick (n1), Ards (n1), County Down (n2) and Belfast (n16) and Holywood (n1) in the East. In the North of the province, activities will be situated in Derry (n6), Claudy (n1), Magherafelt (n1), Ballymena (n1), Ballymoney (n1), Ballyclare (n2) and in the South in Armagh (n1), Portadown (n1), Newry (n2), Castlewellan (n1), Kilkeel (n1), Banbridge (n1) and Lurgan (n2).

Additionally, three Round Two projects (i.e. Play Resource Warehouse, Northern Vision, Live Music Now) stated that they will operate in areas throughout Northern Ireland.

Based upon the moderator reports 18 applicants (56%) specified that they will be targeting NRAs (e.g. Alzheimer Society's “Memories are Made of Music” project, An Munia Tober “Traveller Reflections” project). This criterion was added into the Round Two assessment process in order to ensure effective targeting.

4.3.4 Partnership Working

Twenty-four projects stated that they will work in partnership with other organisations (apart from their own membership) in the delivery of their programmes. For example, Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum will form partnerships with Engage with Age, South Belfast Lifestyle Forum, Castlereagh Borough Council and the Community Safety Partnership. Waterside Theatre will forge links with Ally Foyle, an organization that works with over 50 organisations in the Foyle District Council area. Additional contact has been made with the North West Rural Network, Age NI, Sai Pak Chinese Community Project, Volunteer NI, Seven Oaks Nursing Home which specialises in dementia and other local community-based agencies.

Indeed selected partner organisations represent a variety of sectors, to include older people, libraries, Housing Associations, community/voluntary, statutory agencies/Councils, women’s groups, residential care, arts organisations, trade unions, education and health and social care.

The majority of successful applicants had already identified artists to facilitate their activities. However, four Round One organisations requested Arts Council assistance to identify suitable artists (i.e. Alzheimer's Society, Derg Valley Care, Loughinisland GAC and Carew Family Centre). Ederney Community Development Trust was also subsequently provided with advice regarding the lead artist having responsibility for coordinating the project.
4.3.5 Social Justice Issues

The extent to which projects aim to address issues of isolation, social inclusion, poverty, health/dementia and strengthening the voice of older people was a core criteria considered at application evaluation. Nineteen of the successful organisations aim to address all five social justice issues through their activities (59%).

Issues of isolation and loneliness will be addressed by each of the 32 projects. Social inclusion and strengthening the voice of older people will be addressed by 29 of the projects (91%) and 20 projects will include poverty (63%). Twenty-seven projects (84%) will address health/dementia within their strategic aims and 27 will strengthen the voice of older people (84%).

Table 4.2
Proportion of Social Justice Issues per Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Social Justice themes addressed</th>
<th>Number of Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>19 (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>5 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following project aims illustrate relevance to the strategic themes:

- One element of the **Derg Valley Care Ltd** project aims to improve the psychological and physical abilities of older people who have suffered strokes or have Parkinson's disease through a series of art therapy sessions based around pencil drawing. This will culminate in an exhibition of their work;

- **Newtownards Road Womens’ Group** will participate in creative art (i.e. drawing, painting, collage, clay) and photography sessions aimed at improving their mental and physical wellbeing, reducing stress and helping them develop social networks through learning a new skill. Project Lead, Carew Family Centre stated that many older people in the area do not go outside of their own home and have lost the skills and confidence to engage in social conversation as they feel they have nothing to offer. All work will be exhibited upon project completion;

- **Carn Media Ltd** will focus upon addressing issues of social inclusion and social exclusion and will raise awareness of concerns through an inter-generational project based in Draperstown. The medium of arts and multi-media will represent and celebrate old age at a community level and a wall mural will be placed in the local Primary School to celebrate the links made between the two groups. A DVD detailing personal accounts and interviews from the older participants and highlighting super 8 footage of the area will be developed. There will also be a short animated film produced by the local primary school children detailing what they have learned from the elderly people through the project; and

- **Spring Chickens** highlight that older people are increasingly valued because of their memories rather their contribution to the present and the future. Through mentoring the selected participants as facilitators who will initiate and lead their own arts projects, older groups will be supported to use theatrical techniques as a means of exploring solutions to local issues. Facilitators will direct short performances, presenting imaginative thinking around local concerns. Each group will then perform their shows at least twice, once for their peers, families and friends and once for their local school.
To date 24 projects have commenced and twelve projects are completed/due to complete by the end of January 2012. The projects range from two months to three years in duration, with the average project being conducted over a six month period. Three projects (i.e. Golden Thread Gallery, New Belfast Community Arts Initiative and Belfast Circus School) were funded as feasibility studies.

4.4 Discussion

The volume of applications between round one and two indicates that interest in the programme has been sustained and already 17 Expressions of Interest have been received for the third and final funding round (anticipated to be April 2012).

The AOP Community Development Officer, who assessed both rounds feels that the quality of applications has increased from the initial call. Despite increased submissions from Fermanagh in the second round via partnership working with the Rural Enablers Programme and age sector groups, there remains low levels of interest in leading AOP projects outside Belfast and Counties Londonderry and Down. However, groups in many rural areas will be beneficiaries of the programme, as evidenced in the application forms.

It is important to note that 45% of Antrim based applicants were rejected, compared to 100% of those based in County Armagh, 71% of Derry/Londonderry, 70% of Down and 66% of Fermanagh based applicants (all three County Tyrone based applicants were awarded funding). Although overall numbers are low, these figures suggest that further work needs to be undertaken not only to encourage rural applications, but also to increase the standard of their submissions.

When we look at awards by the sector of the lead applicant, 42% of arts/community arts organisations were successful, compared to 33% of generic community/voluntary groups and 33% of age related organisations. All of the six health based organisations received awards. However, successful projects demonstrated evidence of inter-sectoral partnership working - illustrating the potential for relationship development and sharing resources and skills.

Over half of the applications specified that they were targeting NRAs. However, many more projects will recruit vulnerable individuals dealing with mental and physical health problems, life-limiting illness and low confidence and self-esteem.

Those awarded funding clearly highlighted their ability to address the strategic theme of isolation and loneliness. However, although coverage is high (87%) of the strengthening the voice of older people theme, this really should be at the core of each successful project given the programme’s emphasis upon raising the profile of social justice issues.
5 Beneficiary Feedback

5.1 Introduction

AOP programme participants were asked to complete questionnaires upon entering and exiting the project. The "entrance" surveys collected demographic information, level of arts participation, self-rated health and wellbeing, community action and expectations of the project. The exit questionnaires replicated these and additionally collected feedback on participants’ experience of the activities undertaken.

5.2 Beneficiary Numbers

In order to eliminate double-counting, participant numbers have been obtained from the End of Project Reports which are submitted by Grantees upon project completion. Monitoring Reports which are submitted at mid-point have also been used to gauge participant levels. However, this is recognised to be a significant under-estimation of actual activity (although rectified at Final Evaluation stage).

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Event Attendees</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older People North West</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Hospice</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monday Club</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony Community Trust**</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Thread Gallery</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Springfield Development Trust</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum**</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Cut</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Telly**</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Monia Tober**</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carew Family &amp; Training Centre**</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Still to be concluded
**Mid-point Monitoring Report

Table 5.1 indicates that almost 800 participants have been registered as benefiting from sustained AOP project activities. An additional 531 people have attended a one-off end of programme event, typically involving a showcase, exhibition or performance of participants’ work. A total of 240 session hours have been delivered across the five completed projects funded in Round One.

5.3 Data Coverage

At Interim stage, a total of 304 entrance and 158 exit questionnaires had been received. The breakdown is as follows:
Table 5.2

Entrance and Exit Questionnaire Returns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Entrance (n)</th>
<th>Exit (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NI Hospice</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Springfield Community Development Trust</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monday Club</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis Care</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older People North West</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughlin Island GAC</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony Community Trust</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Thread Gallery</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Telly</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAREW</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Cut</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>304</strong></td>
<td><strong>158</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 17 Jan 2012*

Derg Valley Care, Alzheimer’s Society, New Belfast Community Arts Initiative have been delayed in commencing their activities and are the only organisations from the initial awards not to have submitted any information. It was also agreed that An Munia Tober would conduct respondent discussions rather than submit questionnaires, due to literacy issues within the target group.

It is difficult to estimate the overall response rate at this stage, as some of the completed projects have not yet submitted all of their questionnaires. However, despite omitting An Monia Tober and Golden Thread Gallery (a feasibility study consultation), based upon the reported monitoring information it is estimated that 733 entrance questionnaires should have been received from the remaining nine Grantees. In actuality, 265 entrance questionnaires have been received from these Grantees (36% response rate).

5.4 **Respondent Profile**

Analysis of the entrance survey illustrates that the vast majority of the respondents were female (n259; 85%). The majority of respondents were aged between 60-69 years (n124; 41%). Figure 5.1 illustrates the age breakdown of participants.

Most respondents lived in their own home (n207; 67%), whereas 17% (n52) lived in sheltered/warden accommodation and 7% lived in residential care (n21; 7%) – the living circumstances of 9% (n28) were “other/unknown”. Under half the respondents reported that they lived alone (n133; 44%) and the duration of this ranged from three months to 33 years. Forty-three percent of respondents stated that they had a long-term illness, health problem or disability (n21; 7% unknown) and 6% (n19) stated that they were a carer (n35; 12% unknown).
After geo-spatial mapping of valid postcodes (n225; 74% coverage) by the Arts Council, it was identified that 42% of participants lived in NRAs. Almost half of the respondents were located in Belfast NRAs (n45; 48%) and North West NRAs (n41; 44%). Eight percent (n8) were located elsewhere.

Seventy-two percent of participants (n163) were located in Urban areas, whereas 26% (n58) of participants lived in Rural areas. Figure 5.2 provides a breakdown by County.

The spatial analysis indicates that participation levels are highest in Counties Down (n67; 30%), Londonderry (n64; 28%) and Antrim (n65; 29%) and lowest in Armagh (n6; 3%).
Tyrone (n19; 8%) and Fermanagh (no participants recorded). It must be noted that the spatial analysis is based solely upon Round One participant entrance forms and efforts were made to address potential geographical gaps in Fermanagh, Armagh and Tyrone during Round Two.

Table 5.3 illustrates that although the majority of participants live in urban areas and large and medium towns (n159; 71%), around 20% (n45) live in small villages and hamlets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Participants (n)</th>
<th>Participants (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry Urban Area</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large town</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium town</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate settlement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small village, hamlet and open countryside</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>225</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.5 Arts Engagement

Fifty-seven percent of respondents (n172) had attended an arts event within the last 12 months and 56% (n169) had participated in arts activities over the same period. When we analyse the results by age, 65% of respondents aged 50-64 years had attended an arts event, compared to 55% of those aged over 65 years. This follows the trend that attendance in arts events declines with age as highlighted in the 2009 Arts and Culture Survey of the general public.

The analysis indicates that respondents aged 50-64 years were less likely (-5%) to have attended an arts event than their counterparts in the Arts and Culture Survey. However, respondents aged 65+ were more likely (+8%) to have seen an arts event over the past year than the comparative population group.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents aged 50-64 years reported arts participation (31% higher than comparative general population sample) and 57% of respondents aged 65+ years stated that they had been involved in arts activities over the period (40% higher than the comparative general public sample).

Respondents were also asked to describe their own feelings about non-regular attendance/participation in arts activities (see Figure 5.3). The analysis indicates that the primary reasons for non-participation were a lack of information about what’s on (n90; 30%), a feeling that it would be too costly (n72; 24%), lack of confidence (n63; 21%) and a lack of knowledge about the arts (n59; 19%), rather than a lack of interest per se.
These findings are in contrast to the 2009 *Arts and Culture Survey* results, which indicate lack of interest, poor health and a preference to spend time in other ways to be the greatest barriers for older people.

Examination of the comments illustrated that some people felt that they were too busy to participate in activities, whilst others highlighted the prohibitive cost of transport, the lack of someone with whom to attend and a lack of information outside their usual club activities.

5.6 Health & Wellbeing\textsuperscript{15}

Figure 5.4 illustrates that the majority of the sample rated their physical health (n=245; 80%), mental health (n=254; 84%) and enjoyment of life (n=260; 85%) as being *good or fairly good*. However, physical health was rated less favourably in comparison.

\textsuperscript{15} NI Hospice requested for this section to be removed for their project.
Table 5.4 indicates respondents’ rating of how they have been feeling over the last two weeks, upon entrance to the AOP project activities. These are based upon the 7 point Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) which is often used to measure population wellbeing.

**Table 5.4**

**WEMWBS - Entrance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rarely/None of the Time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Often/All the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling useful</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling relaxed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been dealing with problems well</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been thinking clearly</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling close to other people</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been able to make up my own mind about things</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: 304

The findings indicate that respondents were most likely to say that they have been able to make decisions (69%; n211) and feel close to others (60%; n181) *all the time or often* over the last couple of weeks. However, there are a small proportion of respondents who reported that they have been feeling optimistic about the future (11%; n33), feeling useful (10%; n30), or able to deal with their problems (12%; n37) *rarely or none of the time*.

Figure 5.5 illustrates responses to Hughes et.al. (2004) three point Loneliness Scale.
The findings illustrate that feelings of loneliness – at least sometimes is quite widespread amongst participants entering the AOP projects. Further analysis indicates that respondents are most likely to experience loneliness in terms of a lack of companionship (41%; n124), rather than feeling left out (33%; n101) or isolated (31%; n95).16

5.7 Social Action

Respondents were asked to outline any actions that they had undertaken in an attempt to solve a problem affecting people like themselves over the last 12 months. Table 5.5 indicates that respondents were most likely to attend a public meeting or action group (23%; n69) or get involved in a petition or event (20%; n60)17. Ten percent stated that they had not experienced any problems over the period.

Table 5.5
Action on Social Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contacted a local radio station, TV station or newspaper</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted an organisation, Councillor or MP</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a public meeting or action group</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been involved in a petition, performance or event to highlight an issue</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon entering the AOP project, 65% of respondents (n198) wanted to increase their skills and try something different and 62% (n189) wished to improve their social life. Fifty-two percent (n157) wanted to feel better and improve their confidence, 50% (n152) wanted

---

16 around 10% of respondents did not complete these questions.
17 Conforms with NILT (2005) 20% of those aged 55+ had signed a petition in the last 12 months.
to show others what older people could do and 49% (n148) wanted to express themselves through the arts.

“To show ‘old people’ are not useless, are interested in other people and events. Have a sense of fun and adventure.”[Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum]

“Mixing with a mixed community.”[Harmony Community Trust]

"Reason to get up, get showered, get dressed.”[Upper Springfield Development Trust]

5.8 Pre- and Post-Project Comparisons

The entrance and exit evaluation datasets were reconciled on the basis of the submitted postcode and demographic information. This enabled pre- and post-project comparisons to be made using the same sample of people (n92) – see Table 5.6. As numbers are small these are used for illustration purposes, at this stage. Similarly, it must be noted that any pre- and post-project differences cannot be directly attributed to participation in the AOP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Respondents (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golden Thread</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony Community Trust</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughlin Island GAC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Club</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Hospice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older People NW</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis Care</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Springfield Development Trust</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings indicate that there have been overall increases in the proportion of respondents stating that they have attended an arts event (+9%) and participated in arts activities (+21%) over the survey period.

Figure 5.6 illustrates respondents’ reasons for non-participation in the arts before and after participation in AOP projects. Lack of information, knowledge of the arts and confidence were the primary reasons upon entering the project. However, upon project completion, lack of confidence is not as prominent a barrier. In contrast, the proportion citing a desire to spend time in other ways and perceived high financial costs has increased.
Figure 5.6
Pre-/Post- Reasons for Non-Participation in Arts Activities

Figure 5.6 illustrates that there was a small decrease (-3%; n3) in the proportion of people who rated their physical health as good or fairly good at project exit (7 of the 10 people who rated their physical health as not good had a long-term illness). However, mental health and enjoyment of life remained relatively stable over the period.

Figure 5.7
Pre-/Post- Health Rating

Table 5.7 provides a comparison of respondent responses on the WEMWBS upon entry and project completion.
### Table 5.7
**WEMWBS — Pre-/Post (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rarely/None of the Time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Often/All the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been feeling optimistic about the future</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been feeling useful</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been feeling relaxed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been dealing with problems well</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been thinking clearly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been feeling close to other people</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've been able to make up my own mind about things</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: % of those answering question

As can be seen, there has been small positive movements across all of the items and particularly with regards to the proportion of respondents stating that they have been feeling optimistic about the future (+9%) and useful (+9%) all of the time/often (see Figure 5.8).

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**WEMWBS scores**

![WEMWBS scores chart](chart.png)
Figures 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11 illustrate pre-/post-project ratings on the various elements of the Loneliness Scale.

**Figure 5.9  
Lack of Companionship**

How often do you lack companionship...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardly Ever</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the proportion of respondents stating that they *hardly ever* lack companionship has remained stable, there has been a decrease in the proportion stating that they *often* lack companionship.

**Figure 5.10  
Feelings of Exclusion**

How often do you feel left out...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardly Ever</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wallace Consulting
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Figure 5.10 indicates a decrease in the proportion of respondents who reported that they hardly ever feel left out and the proportion stating that they hardly ever feel isolated has remained relatively stable (-1% see Figure 5.11).

5.9 Project Appraisal

Table 5.8 presents the feedback from respondents at project end. The appraisals are predominately positive and indicate that the majority of respondents (87%) feel a sense of achievement, have learned new skills (86%) and feel that they have played an active role in the sessions (83%). Eighty-two percent of respondents expressed a desire to take part in similar activities. However the findings indicate that respondents are relatively less likely to agree that the activities have encouraged them to attend arts events (67%) or to join other groups (57%).
Table 5.8
Respondents’ Evaluation of the Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These sessions have really made me want to go to arts events</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I played an active part in this project</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have tried and learned new things</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sessions have made me want to take part in more arts activities</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been able to express myself at these sessions</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sessions were not well run</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve surprised myself &amp; others by what I can do</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These activities have given me confidence to try different things</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve made good friendships out of this project</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good about what I have achieved during these sessions</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken part in other groups and activities due to this project</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample: n158

Analysis of the comments indicate that many respondents felt that involvement had met the expectations expressed upon entrance – particularly in terms of improving their social networks, learning something new and having fun.

“I enjoyed everything about the project I got to reflect on my life and what things mean to me.” [Older People North West]

“Enjoyed the fun aspect of the project-exercise is good for a ‘feel good’ factor and the enjoyment made the time fly by. I didn’t like the fact that it is now finished and I’ve nowhere to go.” [Upper Springfield Development Trust]

“I love painting anyway and this is a new skill I now practise at home and often give my glass paintings as gifts to family/grandchildren.” [The Monday Club]

“My confidence grew and I now attend another women’s group.” [Older People North West]

“Will continue with the knitting classes in future.” [Loughlin Island GAC]

However, 15% of respondents (n23) stated that the sessions were not well organised and it appears that there may be issues in terms of session structure and support, in addition to the appropriateness of the chosen activities for some.

“I felt there was little encouragement in having to tackle a new art form which I knew nothing about.” [Harmony Community Trust]

“Didn’t like that I couldn’t participate in the art project because of difficulties with my sight.” [Upper Springfield Development Trust]

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18 Upper Springfield Development Trust (n5; 17%), Praxis (n6; 33%), The Monday Club (n4; 22%), Older People North West (n3; 8%), NI Hospice (n1; 6%), Harmony Community Trust (n4; 15%).
5.10 Event Feedback

Fifty-one event questionnaires have been submitted to date (against an estimated 531\(^{19}\) event attendees recorded in the Monitoring Reports; 10% response rate). These were from four projects:

- **Prime Cut** (n23): "Performances of Still Life", undertaken over a one week period – evening and matinee. Each participant created a “museum of me” to include drawings, poetry and items of significance and audio, written and video recordings were developed and exhibited to the general public;
- **Golden Thread Gallery** (n3): Give & Take participatory consultation event in the Golden Thread Gallery. Participants were invited to bring along an object to gift to another attendee. They were given coloured envelopes with consultation questions and paired with a younger person who would speak to them about their replies. Everyone chose an object to take home with them and older people’s main concerns were identified through the exercise;
- **Older People North West** (n19): The final drama showcase, based on the outputs from a series of drama workshops including music and comedy sketches, was attended by 30 audience members. This was an upbeat performance, for example, incorporating overheard conversations in a doctor’s surgery. However, one participant recited a poem which she had written which reflects upon ageing and the associated loneliness; and
- **Carew Family Centre** (n6): Taster sessions for Art Break to include an introduction to the project, background on the artists and examples of their work, discussion around activities offered and showcase opportunities.

The majority of those completing the event forms were female (n41; 80%) and aged over 55 years (n28; 55%). Fifty-nine percent (n30) had attended an arts event within the last year (n18; 35% had not), 29% (n15) were members of an arts or cultural group (n32; 63% were not) and 63% (n32) had taken part in arts activities over the period (n16; 31% had not).

Respondents stated that they had primarily attended the event because they:

- Like this type of event (n17; 33%);
- Know people who were taking part (n12; 25%);
- Like to support local events (n7; 14%); and
- There’s no cost involved (n2; 4%).

Seventy-five percent (n48) felt that the quality of the event was very good and 73% (n37) reported that they were very satisfied with the event.

Figure 5.11 highlights that the majority of attendees felt that the event (n36; 71%) which they had attended had met the overall aim of the AOP - to engage and stimulate older people through the arts.

\(^{19}\) Omits NI Hospice Live Music Now event
Figure 5.11
Extent that the Event has Engaged & Stimulated Older People in the Arts

Under half of those attending stated that the event had increased their awareness of the issues facing older people (n24; 47%). However, 16% (n8) felt that they were already knowledgeable on these issues.

Figure 5.12
Extent that the Event has Raised Awareness

Forty-five percent of attendees (n23) stated that they felt more positive towards older people as a result of attending. However 35% (n18) stated that they were already positive (n3; 6% don’t know; n7; 14% unknown).
5.11 Discussion

Despite sustained attempts by the AOP Community Development Officer, questionnaire returns have been slow. This has meant that problems with their administration were not readily identified (e.g. some participants were completing entrance and exit questionnaires for each course and some entrance and exit samples were not the same).

Sample analysis indicates that just under half of respondents live alone and a similar proportion has a health related problem. However, it appears that respondents are significantly more likely to have participated in arts activities than is reflected in the general public. Presumably this is because many have an existing relationship with the various partner organisations, or because they have signed up to an AOP arts session. Therefore respondents indicated that lack of information, associated costs, lack of knowledge and confidence were the primary barriers for them to overcome.

Post-project analysis suggests that confidence has become less of a barrier, whereas cost has increased in importance. Feedback suggests that high taxi costs to and from classes can exclude older people who are unable to avail of public transport and therefore this is an important future consideration. Similarly, some of the comments indicated that a few participants had found the activities weren't suited to their interests/ability and as such indicates that careful planning needs to take place in order to maximise enjoyment.

However, there are indications that participants received substantial enjoyment from the sessions – making new friends, learning and refreshing skills and techniques and building their confidence. Although non-attributable, the pre-/post- comparison group analysis shows small, positive movement in terms of the wellbeing indicators. Initial analysis however, doesn’t indicate that there have been significant developments in terms of combating loneliness, propensity to join other groups or attendance at arts events.

Analysis of the Audience evaluations indicate a high level of satisfaction from event attendees. However, it is believed that there may need to be greater emphasis placed upon targeting groups with little or no arts participation and/or understanding of older people’s issues. The final exhibitions and performances are the primary vehicles under which to raise awareness of the AOP’s strategic themes and as such, must convey core messages.
6 Northern Ireland Hospice Case Study

6.1 Introduction

Northern Ireland Hospice has pioneered new approaches in palliative care and creative therapies ranging from creative arts, dance, music, creative writing and drama over the past three years. In 2006 in partnership with Arts Care NI, an Artist in Residence was appointed to work across the day Hospice and Inpatient Unit at the Somerton Road Hospice on a part-time basis. During this time a creative culture has matured and nurtured the growth of the arts throughout Hospice services. Arts for Hospice in managed and coordinated by the Adult Hospice Care Services team who meet regularly to discuss and develop the creative programme and a number of developments have taken place:

- Patients in Day Hospice and in the Inpatient Unit benefit from a programme of arts activities and music therapy;
- Exhibition space "The Somerton Gallery" has been developed and patients and professional artists showcase their work;
- Art mosaic and textile and silk work is displayed throughout the Hospice and the use of digital scanners has enabled patients with low dexterity to participate and achieve professional arts pieces;
- Families have received artwork from their loved ones; and
- The Hospice is forging links with the wider arts community and has a number of Champions who donate work to Hospice and give talks to patients.

However, these activities are dependent upon available financial resources and due to current budget limitations it has been difficult to plan and develop the work.

6.2 Project Aims & Description

The AOP funding aimed to cement and plan an annual programme for patients in Somerton Road Day Hospice and Inpatient Unit and to introduce art mediums to Day Hospice patients in Ballymoney. Proposed outcomes were:

- Improved quality of life: empowering people to be expressive and reducing isolation through social interaction;
- Reduced anxiety levels and loneliness associated with terminal illness: Increasing feelings of control and mastery in order to help reduce anxiety, depression, fear or anger which are often associated with living with a life limiting condition;
- Improved communication and self-esteem: Through learning new skills the patients can feel more confident and "more understood" through self expression; and
- Increased skill and activity: Involvement in Art can help overcome the feeling that they are unable to participate in activities due to their illness. Through visual arts and creative writing patients can voice their concerns and fears about the future.

The Hospice applied to the first round of the AOP and received an award of £15,000 over a period of twelve months. The programme consisted of several elements:

- Creative Writing: Moyra Donaldson a published writer, poet and a founding member of the Creative Writer's Network first worked with Hospice two years ago. She facilitated eight sessions, each lasting one hour (the Artist in Residence facilitated two further sessions in Ballymoney Hospice). It is considered important for people in palliative care to express difficult emotions through visual mediums.
Creative writing can address that need and stimulate the creative process. This particular strand feeds into all aspects of the visual and dance programme;

- **Visual Arts (Ceramic Architectural Installation):** The stories developed through creative writing workshops explored many aspects of the lives of service users and providers. The Hospice Artist in Residence helped patients encapsulate imagery into ceramic decal prints. The patients then applied the prints to various different coloured plates. These will be mounted as a wall piece entitled ‘Plate Spinning’ and the circular plates act as a metaphor for the circle of life and its continuous journey. Each individual piece embodies something personal to the participants involved and expresses feelings they want to project. The work symbolises the fact that Hospice offers all-encompassing support and care to everyone who uses the service;

- **Visual Arts (Print):** Seacourt Print Workshop facilitated a print project with NI Hospice Care (nine, one hour sessions). This medium lends itself to healthcare environments where physical and artistic abilities vary greatly. The visual arts element was also based upon the creative writing, with a range of prints framed and exhibited around the building. Copies were also made for patients to take home, or leave for loved ones. As part of the funding a printing press and materials were purchased and the Artist in Residence conducted around 20 one-on-one print sessions with patients at their beds and two group sessions were also conducted in Ballymoney Hospice. The high quality presentation aimed to give each participant and strong sense of achievement and the work will be presented in a professional manner within the Hospice gallery space and through the different Trusts’ exhibition spaces (e.g. Belfast City Hospital, Musgrave Park Hospital);

- **Multi Media Audio Visual:** Availing of new multimedia kits procured last year, Studio On Creative Learning Centre captured the poetry and stories of patients, staff, volunteers and surrounding building environment. This presented an alternative platform for palliative care patients and, or loved ones, to express creatively how they feel and what they want for the remainder of their time - celebrating creativity, promoting innovation and encouraging a fresh and enthusiastic approach;

- **Dance:** Sheena Kelly facilitated six dance workshops, each lasting one hour over the period. Dance was tentatively introduced to patients last year, but was so successful that Hospice wanted to develop this work further. Staff also participated on the basis of research evidence illustrating that dance can help boost the morale and lower stress levels of those working within difficult health care settings; and

- **Musical Performances:** Live Music Now facilitated three, one hour musical performances over the period.

A professional photographer was commissioned to capture the project and the outputs will be used in Hospice publicity material. An exhibition of the outputs of the project is planned for February 2012.

### 6.3 Beneficiary Feedback

Overall, 149 participants have taken part in arts related workshops and a further 12 have attended a Live Music Now performance at the Hospice. All participants are existing Hospice clients.

In discussion with the Hospice, it was agreed that the pre-/post- participant questionnaires would omit questions regarding health and wellbeing (i.e. Q6, Q7, Q11, Q12, Q13). All Hospice patients have advancing, progressive illness (e.g. cancers, motor neuron disease) and their health and mobility is deteriorating. Individuals are generally referred through community nurses and GPs and they attend Day Hospice or the Inpatient Unit for treatment adjustment or respite care.
Overall, 18 Entrance and 17 Exit questionnaires were completed and represent participants who had sustained involvement in the various elements of the project. However, further examination of the datasets (via postcode matching) indicated that only four participants were represented across both, meaning that direct pre-/post-comparison is restricted.

Analysis of the Entrance Questionnaires illustrates that the average respondent age was 61 years and the majority were female (n11). Thirteen people lived in their own homes, three lived in a residential setting and two lived in sheltered dwellings (1 stated “other”). Only four people reported that they lived alone.

Whilst the majority of respondents stated that they had not been to see an arts event (n13) in the last 12 months, only six people stated that they had not taken part in any arts activities over the same period.

Despite low returns, Figure 6.1 illustrates that respondents embarking on the project primarily felt that their illness inhibited them from regularly participating in arts activities, rather than lack of interest. This was followed by a lack of knowledge of what’s available, lack of confidence and a belief that arts involvement would be expensive.

The respondents who completed the post-project questionnaires also stated poor health (n8) and lack of information (n8) as primary reasons for non-participation. Cost was also cited as a factor but the proportion of respondents reporting lack of confidence as an inhibitor (n2) was low.

Although only four participant evaluations can be tracked over the course of the programme, analysis suggests that respondents are less likely to cite health and lack of confidence as a reason for non-participation post-project. However, lack of information regarding available activities proportionately increased as a barrier to participation.

Those entering the Arts and Hospice Programme were asked what they hoped to gain from involvement. Analysis illustrates that participants were most interested in improving
their mental wellbeing, developing friendships and trying something different as opposed to creative expression or demonstrating their abilities.

Table 6.1
Potential Benefits from the Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Agree (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better Social Life – friendships, company, fun</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Skills – learn something new, try something different</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Better – cheer you up, improve confidence</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Creative – express yourself through the arts</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Heard – show others what older people can do</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon exit participants were asked to evaluate their experience of the programme and the results are displayed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2
Respondents’ Evaluation of the Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These sessions have really made me want to go to arts events</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I played an active part in this project</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have tried and learned new things</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sessions have made me want to take part in more arts activities</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been able to express myself at these sessions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sessions were not well run</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve surprised myself &amp; others by what I can do</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have taken part in other groups and activities due to this project</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicate that, whereas the project has not encouraged large numbers of respondents to attend arts events, a substantial proportion have reported that it has encouraged them to take part in more arts activities. It is apparent that those completing the evaluation felt actively involved in the programme and there have been social benefits, not only with regards to developing friendships but leading to involvement in additional activities. Self-reported evidence of increased confidence, achievement, self-expression and skills development are also clear.

Unfortunately, the research team was unable to discuss the project outcomes with participants due to ethical constraints and the lengthy approval process. However, discussions did take place with a variety of stakeholders and an appraisal of the output from the creative writing sessions highlight the potential for future development this work within the Hospice. Examples are as follows:

*I am a carrier of a burden
Struggling to lighten a load*
Which sometimes is not all of my own
I am a deep quiet pool in a forest glade
I am a snowdrop
Reaching for the elusive ray of sunlight
To warm the winter hard soil
I am a loved one warmed by the sun of love
I am a mace
Trying to dispel many problems
I am myself."

"I am a mother
I loved looking after my home and family
Now the wheels have turned and they look after me
When I tell them to "stop" or to "shush"
I did it for them for years
I am strong – I have to be for my family
If I break they will break along with me
Its very important for all of us to hold each other together
I want them to have the life we always had and to keep up as long as I can."

6.4 Stakeholder Feedback

6.4.1 Artist Experiences

Each of the artists commissioned to work on the project had previous experience of working with older people and with one exception, working within the Hospice. The Artist in Residence coordinated and quality assured the work undertaken and briefed artists upon the clinical setting and potential difficulties that patients may have in terms of participation.

As a result artists were flexible in terms of their delivery and clearly adapted the work to individuals’ circumstances. For example, using soft materials and mechanical print presses or ensuring that work can be anywhere in a room rather than at a table. Artists also commented upon the fact that the Day Hospice is a multi-use space, rather than a dedicated activity/social space and they reported that this also needed to be considered in terms of determining types of activities and equipment utilised. Therefore, adequate pre-project briefing, experience and training is important to the success of the engagement.

Overall, the artists involved felt that the primary benefits for participants were social in nature. The activities were perceived to act as a vehicle for interaction and social cohesion in what would otherwise be a predominately clinical setting. It was pointed out that many individuals learned new skills and techniques (e.g. drag point, release techniques in screen printing, creative movements). As a result it was believed that participants did achieve a sense of accomplishment from the artistic process and were surprised that they do have a "creative side". It was also stated that communication between patients and the artists increased as their confidence grew.

"There's a real benefit in learning a new skill, but it has to be failure proof so that people get something that they can feel good about and share. Many of them took things home to give as presents. That's an essential element to ensure they produce something that they're proud of."
“People were surprised at what they could create and what they could say. It was very valuable for self expression...they weren’t saying it directly. The act of creation gives a sense of control and confidence.”

“You could see their confidence grow. Some people were really up for it and supported others. You’d see them doing a little bit more each time, using their arms, adding in movements.”

Those consulted felt that many people have misperceptions about the arts – feeling that they have to excel at drawing to participate, afraid of being laughed at and a general societal belief that the arts are not worthwhile. Essentially, this means that artists need to be prepared for initial reticence and at times reluctance.

"I think that they have overcome the opinion that dance and exercise are not for them due to age and health and are now more positive and confident to participate in it.”

Whilst the creative writing sessions appeared to have been most successful in providing an emotional outlet for people within a relatively short period, it was generally believed that the short-term nature of the programme and the fact that artists were not working with the same people every week, meant that their work was indicative of what might be achieved in a more sustained environment. Hospice staff were actively involved in the sessions and this was believed to have helped strengthen bonds between themselves and the patients. However, one artist commented upon the fact that some staff members were worried about unearthing hidden feelings and that training should be provided, in order that staff may understand the potential of the arts as a mechanism for emotional release/wellbeing.

"Just due to the extent of engagement that we had it was very difficult to get to the stage of self-expression.”

“There needs to be continuity...give the artist the chance to work through. Trust is a major issue. Sometimes the staff were nervous about what might come out. It can be scary when you hit a deeper emotional level.”

Artists commented that they did increase their understanding of older people’s social issues as a result of this work. All of the artists consulted felt that there was a need for more cross-sectoral collaboration. In several instances, the artist’s involvement in the Hospice project directly influenced subsequent project funding applications and the formation of other social partnerships. It was also believed that these types of partnerships are beneficial to artist’s professional and artistic development as well as providing valuable experience in basic engagement techniques and honing skills in group dynamics.

"I found it very moving...the courage of people, being prepared, getting on with stuff, dealing with the pain.”

"It’s definitely a project that should be pursued. There seems to be a lot of work geared towards younger people. This is important. The arts have so much to give.”

6.4.2 NI Hospice Staff Experiences

Staff stated that pain management is a large part of day-to-day work in the Hospice. However, the charity also offers a support system for the individual, their families and carers. The Artist in Residence works across the Day and Inpatient Unit and although there is a separate Activities Therapist, the Hospice use of arts appears to lean towards
the social as opposed to psychotherapeutic model. It was believed that Hospice patients feel socially isolated due to their illness and loss of independence and, this can negatively impact upon their participation in the arts and wider activities. However, staff commented that during the art sessions the Day Hospice is a lively, light hearted and sociable place to be, with participants and onlookers engaging with the activities. Some participants had past experiences of the dancehalls and particularly enjoyed the dance sessions, others had never seen a printing press and liked trying something different. However, the overall aim was to create a positive experience.

The different elements of the programme were thought to have worked well, with staff and volunteers also taking part and developing relationships. However, it was felt that many people did need active encouragement to participate as many lacked confidence in their physically abilities. Due to the degenerative nature of their illnesses, staff and artists were aware of the need to adapt activities according to individuals’ capabilities. As a result, wheelchair bound patients have taken part in the dance sessions and one-to-one art sessions were conducted at inpatient’s bedsides – these individuals are typically very weak and some do not feel able to work in a group situation.

Staff believed that the arts activities were mood enhancing and had a positive impact upon mental wellbeing. They also felt that individuals valued the fact that they were able to produce art pieces for their loved ones.

"We’ve worked on stencils, silk, ceramics, sketches. They like to take something away. Many feel they’ve lost whatever ability they had, so it’s good for them to produce things. Many family members have no idea that they’ve been working on the pieces."

The Artist in Residence described how one patient had visited the Hospice on his daughter's wedding day, before they went to the church.

"With one of her wedding photographs we developed a black and white intaglio print. The patient was able to give his daughter the unexpected present and you can imagine how emotional it was for both of them. I would say I have worked with about twenty individual patients in the unit with this process."

Although, much of the arts activity is commenced with the aim of increasing interaction and helping to reduce feelings of isolation, some of the work produced has been very powerful in terms of communicating how individuals feel about being terminally ill. Staff stated that although immensely rewarding, their work can negatively impact upon their own mental health. However, the Artist in Residence felt that she had strong support from Arts Care and within the Hospice team.

"There’s a level of honesty at this stage of the game."

"It just comes out of people...arts is a vehicle for expression."

"Sometimes I can’t read them as we are all so emotionally involved."

It was reported that the work undertaken under the AOP has led to discussions regarding end of life planning and that this is an area that Hospice would like to explore further - signalling the potential for utilising the arts to create deeper connections between staff and patients. In the past, the Hospice Music Therapist has worked with patients to develop songs/lyrics as a legacy for family members and there have been discussions around using film to communicate messages. However, this work is dependent upon obtaining funding from grant awards and staff feel that activities are not highly valued by service commissioners.
"One patient recorded a song that she used to sing for their niece...others have made memory boxes for their children."

It was thought that the power of the arts to enable communication and self-expression is extremely important to wellbeing and it was reported that ongoing psychological pain can at times inhibit release from physical pain, even when medication has been administered. Staff felt that they had seen evidence that strength of will, can at times serve to prolong life expectancy.

"We deal with a range of palliative care patients at different stages. When they’re first diagnosed they’re thinking "why am I coming here?” Their thoughts and feelings are about leaving their family behind. "What are they going to do without me?" Others who have known for a while may have come to terms with it to a certain extent."

Through the discussions it appeared that some patients treat the time spent on the arts as "private" time and family members often do not realise the extent of their activities or expertise until the pieces are passed on after death. Hospice staff also stated that they recognise the importance of supporting their carers group and feel that the arts could also assist in this area.

There are plans to extend the Hospice at Somerton Road and to include dedicated arts facilities (at the moment the space is restrictive and multi-use) which reflect the Hospice’s growing recognition of the intrinsic role that the arts has to play in their work. At the moment, the Activities Therapist, Artist in Residence and Music Therapist work closely and deliver group and individual programmes based upon initial assessments of clients’ hobbies and interests. However, it is proposed that there is scope for increased collaboration between clinical and therapeutic arts interventions and that the work now needs to be taken to a different level.

"We can now see a side to patients that we wouldn’t have.

6.5 Conclusions

The following appraisal is made in relation to the AOP’s strategic aims:

**Isolation and Loneliness:** It is considered that the Arts and Hospice programme has complimented the work which the NI Hospice undertakes in providing support to improve the quality of life of people with terminal illness. Loneliness and social isolation is a problem for some older people and consultations with staff highlight the social isolation, worry and fears which people undergoing end of life care regularly feel. There is significant evidence from the artist and staff feedback that the chosen activities served as a bonding mechanism. For example, through sharing life stories and insights during the creative writing sessions, singing favourite songs during the Live Music Now performances and engaging in group work during the dance sessions. Upon entering the project the majority of people hoped that participation would help lift their mood, lead to friendships and fun and enable them to try out something new. It is clear that the sessions have served to lift people out of their immediate situations and have provided stimulus, interest and enjoyment within a clinical setting. The post-project evaluation forms demonstrate that these expectations have been met.

**Social Inclusion:** It is considered that this project has worked towards combating social exclusion as it has opened the potential of the arts to individuals who believed that they were excluded from the arts due to health grounds - as demonstrated through the majority of individuals’ reports that poor health was the primary reason for non-participation in the arts. Furthermore, the majority of participants reported that the
sessions had made them want to take part in more arts activities and/or that they had actually taken part in other groups/activities as a result, suggesting a potential impact beyond the project itself. The artists’ flexibility and experience meant that sessions have been successfully adapted to suit individual and group capacity and this needs to be central to any AOP project. There have been good communication and support channels between Hospice staff and commissioned artists, in order to ensure that people are able to participate regardless of their physical limitations. The dance sessions in particular, have illustrated that creative movement can be achieved irrespective of mobility and conveys an important message to people in poor health. Similarly, the Artist in Residence has worked across both the Day and Inpatient Units during the course of the project and capital purchases have been made with the grant to ensure that work may be sustained.

**Poverty:** This project was not specifically targeted at NRAs, rather marginalisation and poverty of experience may be more relevant to this group. However, the evaluation questionnaires do suggest that many participants felt that the arts are costly and that this is a barrier to participation. Although, direct pre-/post- comparisons cannot be made, analysis of the Exit questionnaires suggest that cost was also an issue for respondents upon leaving the project. Therefore it is felt that this potential barrier has not been adequately addressed.

**Health Issues/Dementia:** It is felt that the programme of activities did challenge participant perceptions of what they were physically and creatively capable of doing. It is interesting that although poor health as a barrier to arts participation featured highly in the Entrance group, it was not as dominant within the Exit group (substantiated by direct pre-/post- analysis). The majority of participants reported that the sessions had given them more confidence and that they had been surprised by what they could do. Specific health and wellbeing benefits, as reported by staff and artists, included increased confidence, increased physical activity and improved concentration and memory skills as sessions progressed.

With the exception of the dance sessions, participants have been encouraged to produce art pieces and it is apparent that this in itself has fostered a sense of accomplishment and pride. Indeed, the Artist in Residence demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that artist contribution and outputs were of a high quality and this is considered important in ensuring a positive experience – resulting in artwork that people are proud to gift to their family and friends.

**Strengthening the Voice of Older People:** As the creative writing sessions were at the core of the project, artists, participants and Hospice staff listened and learned from the views and life experiences of others. However, the short duration of some of the activities meant that long-term relationships between the commissioned artists and patients were not fully established. At the time of writing, the planned exhibition of participants’ work had not yet taken place. Therefore, it is hoped that this will raise external awareness of the valuable contribution which arts engagement can make to the quality of life of Hospice patients. However, it is suggested that the greatest impact of this project, has stemmed from highlighting the potential benefits of embedding this work within the Hospice. Discussions with staff have illustrated that they are committed to widening the current role of the arts towards more therapeutic outcomes. The creative writing output, in particular has illustrated the value of the arts in assisting communication and self-expression and opening up conversations regarding life-limiting illness. However, although there is a good internal support system, there does appear to be a need to ensure that staff understand the rationale for this work and can cope with the depth of emotions that it may uncover. It is also important that the Hospice does not lose sight of the fact that enjoying the social aspects of arts participation can also lead to
benefits in wellbeing. Not everyone will go down a therapeutic route and therefore a considered balance of activity should be adopted.
7 Upper Springfield Development Trust Case Study

7.1 Introduction

The Upper Springfield Development Trust (USDTrust) is located in West Belfast. The organisation aims to address various social and environmental issues through the imaginative use of art and engagement of marginalised groups, to include older people. The surrounding area is characterised by some of the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation in Northern Ireland. As such, there are a range of associated problems to include high unemployment, poor health, antisocial behaviour and poverty. Table 7.1 illustrates the extent of deprivation within the Upper Springfield Ward.

Table 7.1
Upper Springfield Ward: Relative Deprivation Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Deprivation Measure</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Deprivation &amp; Disability</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Skills &amp; Training</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to Services</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Environment</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime &amp; Disorder</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NISRA, Noble Indicators of Deprivation (2010)

Overall, Upper Springfield is ranked the 11th most deprived ward in terms of multiple deprivation (out of 582 wards in Northern Ireland). It is ranked 6th in terms of health deprivation.

The Upper Springfield/Whiterock NRA consists of three broad geographic areas - Greater New Barnsley, Greater Ballymurphy and Greater Turf Lodge. According to the 2001 Census, within the NRA:

- 29.5% of people had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability (20.4 NI average);
- 30.5% of people of working age had a limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability (17.1% NI Average);
- 12.5% of people noted that they provided unpaid care to family, friends, neighbours or others (11% NI average);
- 62.1% of people stated their general health was good (70% NI average), 18.9% fairly good (19.3% NI average) and 19% not good (10.7% NI average); and
- 4.6% of deaths to those Under 75 years per 1000 of Relevant Population (3.3% NI average).

In areas with high levels of material deprivation, health status is poor and a wide range of social and health related problems are more prevalent. For example, people become ill or disabled at a younger age in deprived areas compared with affluent areas and their life expectancy can be reduced. Indeed, a 2008 Healthy Cities publication 'Divided By Health: A City Profile' brought together statistics on obesity, economic inactivity and smoking and highlighted that a male born in west Belfast is expected to live six years less (71 years) than one from south Belfast (77 years).
USDT has managed a local participatory Public Art in the Community Programme for approximately 13 years. This activity has expanded over the last few years and as a result a West Belfast Public Art Strategy has been developed. Their approach to public art reflects a grassroots approach aligned to economic, social, physical and community regeneration.

The West Belfast Public Art Strategy emphasizes permanent and temporary arts. For example, landmark and iconic pieces of public art, performance based ‘Spectaculars’ at pivotal times of the year, peace wall performance based art interventions, physical regeneration and streetscape improvements.

### 7.2 Project Aims & Description

The Engage in Art Age project was a public art project targeting older people in West Belfast. Five participant groups were involved, three of which were already established (i.e. Forthspring, Bleach Green Sheltered Dwelling, Springfield Charitable Association, Tiermann Fold) and one group (i.e. SVP, Turf Lodge) was developed specifically for the project. Nine artists were commissioned as a result of open tender and 150 artist hours were delivered (+22 hours staff by one artist on a GAP Placement with USDT). Sixty-four individuals participated in the sessions.

The project aimed to increase the quality of life for older people by creatively exploring and addressing what it means to grow old. It explored social history in Belfast throughout the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s with those who lived there. Participants used art to remember personal and collective experiences and to creatively convey the roles of older people during these times. Identified outcomes were to:

- Express concerns in a collective artistic way;
- Educate the wider community;
- Articulate social justice issues;
- Capture oral history;
- Explore loss, isolation, inclusion and health issues such as dementia; and
- Enable older people to have a positive role in community life and challenge perceptions of ageism.

The USDT applied to the first round of the AOP and although they initially requested £47,520 they received an award of £19,410. Therefore the initial proposals were adjusted in order to reflect this and the agreed project comprised of workshops in visual art, storytelling, creative writing and poetry. This meant that fewer residents benefited from artistic sessions.

- **Creative Writing**: For each group, eight creative writing workshops were intermingled with storytelling and visual arts workshops and these will result in a publication of poetry and prose. Participants were encouraged to talk about their feelings about growing older and to identify issues that are important to them. Short writing pieces were then developed from these insights;

- **Visual Arts**: Fifteen workshops took place with each group. These focused upon developing skills in drawing, painting, collage, weaving, knitting sculpture, yarn bombing and wax sculpture. The knitting and crochet conducted by SVP focused upon making a large tree which symbolised growth and the family tree. Participants made the leaves which held written messages and aspirations. The Forthspring group discussed the cost of living and wax tiles were embedded with the imprints of old money, coins and symbols, price tags were attached indicating what could have been bought with the currency years ago. A large teapot and teacups were
constructed to symbolise coming together over conversations and reminiscence. Grey spilling tea illustrated the perceived invisibility associated with going grey, against the vibrancy of people’s memories – an overflowing cup of memories and skills that older people have. Bleach Green participants talked about the memories of their gardens and the Andersonstown Barracks site itself. They made a patchwork of grass to cover the boulders on the site and knitted lawns were laced with knitted crochet flowers. The Tiermann Fold group learned to create sculptures out of plastic bags; and

- **Storytelling**: Each group received eight facilitated storytelling workshops and museum service Loan Boxes were utilised to stimulate discussions. The Springfield Charitable Association group had a significant number of people with dementia and they focused upon developing memory books using photographs from magazines in collaboration with the creative writers. Images were taken from the books and transformed into bank note style graphics. These were used to trade for refreshments on the day of the showcase and were based upon the concept of the Brixton Letts currency which could only be used in the local area.

An outdoor showcase of handcrafted sculpture using the knitting, weaving and visual art produced took place on the former Andersonstown Barracks site in West Belfast and was attended by approximately 100 people (with passing footfall of approximately 500). This was followed by a storytelling session in the Felons Bar. A publication “Me and Money: Portraits in Collage” has been developed in association with participants from the Springfield Charitable Association, West Belfast. USDT have recently commissioned an artist to develop a publication of poetry and creative writing stemming from the sessions in order to creatively convey messages on social issues which affect participants’ lives.

### 7.3 Beneficiary Feedback

A total of 64 West Belfast residents participated in the project over a five month period.

Overall, 43 Entrance and 30 Exit questionnaires were completed and submitted across the five groups. However, further examination of the datasets (via postcode matching) indicated that only eleven participants could be confirmed across both datasets.

Analysis of the Entrance questionnaires illustrated that respondent ages ranged from 57-91 years and the majority were female (n39). Over half lived in their own homes (n24; 56%), one person lived in a residential setting and 37% (n16) lived in sheltered dwellings (2 stated “other”). Fifty-one percent (n22) of respondents stated that they lived alone, 79% (n34) stated that they had a long-term illness, health problem or disability and four individuals were carers.

Less than half the respondents stated that they had been to see an arts event (n38; 46%) in the last 12 months and 53% (n23) stated that they had taken part in arts activities over the same period.

Figure 7.1 illustrates that respondents stated that lack of information regarding arts activities (n24; 56%), lack of knowledge of the arts (n13; 30%) and lack of confidence (n11; 26%) were the main reasons for non-participation.
The respondents who completed the post-project questionnaires also stated lack of information (n10) as the primary reason for non-participation. Cost (n8) and lack of knowledge of the arts (n8) were also cited as factors (n8) but lack of confidence (n5) was ranked 5th, rather than 3rd as in the pre-project group.

Although only eleven participant evaluations can be tracked over the course of the programme, analysis indicated that two respondents (one less than upon entrance) cited lack of confidence as a reason for non-participation post-project.

Aligned to the high proportion of respondents reporting that they have a long-term illness, Figure 7.2 demonstrates that respondents were most likely to rate their enjoyment of life and mental health as “good”, in comparison to their physical health. However, appraisal was positive overall. Although the pre-/post-comparable group numbers are extremely small (n111), analysis suggests that although self-reported physical health deteriorated, mental wellbeing improved slightly (i.e. 8 rated “good” pre- and 9 post-project) and enjoyment of life increased for some (6 rated “good” pre- and 9 rated “good” post-project).

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**Figure 7.2**

**Respondents Health Rating - Entrance**
Table 7.1 illustrates that although the majority of respondents report positively to the WEMBS wellbeing scale statements, just over one quarter reported that they rarely/never feel optimistic about the future, nor feel that they deal with their problems well. This is higher than the wider participant sample.

Table 7.1

**WEMWBS - Entrance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rarely/None of the Time</th>
<th>Some of the Time</th>
<th>Often/All the Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling useful</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling relaxed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been dealing with problems well</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been thinking clearly</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been feeling close to other people</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been able to make up my own mind about things</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were small increases in the number of respondents reporting that they felt optimistic, useful and close to others *often/all the time* amongst the pre-/post-project comparison group. There were also small decreases in the proportion stating that they felt relaxed, able to deal with problems and able to make up their mind *often/all the time*.

Figure 7.3 illustrates that lack of companionship at least sometimes is an issue for more than half of those surveyed.

Figure 7.3

**Loneliness Scale - Entrance**
The pre-/post-project comparison group indicated a minor decrease in the proportion reporting a lack of companionship and feeling left out. However, the proportion stating that they *often* felt isolated, remained stable.

The analysis indicated that the majority of respondents were less likely, than the wider participant sample to act upon social issues. However, despite low numbers, respondents reported that they were most likely to contact local representatives for help (n7), or attend a local meeting (n8) regarding issues that concerned them.

Fifty-eight percent stated that they hoped to achieve a better social life as a result of attending the sessions, with lower proportions stating that they wanted to “Be Heard” and show others what they could achieve.

### Table 7.2

**Potential Benefits from the Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better Social Life – friendships, company, fun</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Skills – learn something new, try something different</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel Better – cheer you up, improve confidence</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Creative – express yourself through the arts</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Heard – show others what older people can do</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon exit participants were asked to evaluate their experience of the programme and the results are displayed in Table 7.3.

### Table 7.3

**Respondents’ Evaluation of the Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>These sessions have really made me want to go to arts events</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I played an active part in this project</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have tried and learned new things</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sessions have made me want to take part in more arts activities</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been able to express myself at these sessions</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sessions were not well run</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve surprised myself &amp; others by what I can do</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These activities have given me confidence to try different things</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve made good friendships out of this project</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel good about what I have achieved during these sessions</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have taken part in other groups and activities due to this project</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with the wider sample, respondents were more likely to say that the sessions have encouraged them to take part in similar activities, rather than to attend other arts events. The feedback indicates that the majority of respondents felt that they had learned new skills and were able to express themselves through the tasks. However, just over half of the respondents reported that they had taken part in other groups and activities as a result of the project. Specific comments around their likes and dislikes include:

"Companionship, laughter, challenge, there were no negatives."

"I enjoyed everything about the project I got to reflect on my life and what things mean to me."

"I loved meeting people and really enjoyed the company as I live alone."

"I loved taking part and being able to tell my story through pictures that meant something to me. Brilliant group of artists love to work with them again."

"Time when not on call, learning new things, meeting new people, having a life during the few hours here."

Seventeen percent of respondents (n=5) stated that the sessions were not well run and examination of the feedback suggests that this may have been due to the fact that some people felt unable to fully participate as a result of the chosen activities.

"Struggled due to health to do as much as you would like."

"Didn't like that I couldn't participate in the art project because of difficulties with my sight."

"Project more for women than men."

7.4 Stakeholder Feedback

7.4.1 Participant Experiences

A discussion was undertaken with a number of female participants from the USDT-Forthspring group, located on the Springfield Road/Shankill interface. They indicated that they had a great deal of experience of art participation and had skills in knitting, crochet.
and lacework. They are members of a weekly Golden Girls group at Forthspring and regularly enjoy crafts activities.

“You can’t do anything wrong. Everyone has their own way of expressing themselves. Even if you have the same things to work with no two art pieces will be the same.”

They felt that taking part in arts activities can lead to increased confidence and self esteem, not only as a result of mastery, but also due to the fact that you are speaking with others in a social situation. However, they felt that lack of confidence and poor experiences of art at school are hurdles that need to be overcome.

Indeed one participant spoke about her reservations regarding the creative writing sessions and her surprise when she found that she enjoyed it and, indeed discovered a hidden talent.

“It really wasn’t what I wanted to do. I’m dyslexic and I have a real fear of writing in front of people, but it all came into place and I wrote really personal things...you know what my dad had said to me. I really have come out of my shell. I really hate to have to write but I could do it with some help. It surprised me the things that came out.”

The participants stated that, although they enjoyed the various elements of the project, the candle making workshops had been a favourite within the group. This had been a totally new art form and also was believed to have had therapeutic qualities.

“[Artist] showed us different methods...making flowers, twisting it round for the stem, our own creativity really came through.”

“The smell of them was amazing. It was very relaxing...soft. I have arthritis and the heat of the wax takes the swelling out...soothed my hands.”

Those consulted also described the symbolism behind their work and the imprinting of wax “money” to highlight the increased cost of living for older people.

“Many of us are living with our head barely above water.”

They believed that the showcase at the Barracks site had been an effective means of bringing the various groups together and highlighting the issues which are important to older people. They also felt that the artwork produced had been of a high quality. However, a number of personal stories regarding how local people had coped during the Troubles had not been showcased at this event and participants had felt that this would have been particularly poignant given the history of the location.

The participants stated that the majority of them will meet as a group, despite the AOP project ending.

“We’ve now got a group together on a Tuesday...knitting sewing embroidery. It’s good to get together and give a bit of support and encouragement. You do things that you wouldn’t do on your own...it opens up a whole new world to you...see other things and together say “come on and give it a go.””

“We do share skills...we don’t have the money. Every now and then we’ll put something in the [shared resource] cupboard but it would be great just to have a wee bit of ongoing money to cover costs, or get someone in to show us how to do something. We don’t want to stop.”
"People do get a bit down. We will text each other “Where are you? Keep each other right.”

Those consulted stated that they do not have experience in completing grant applications and therefore largely rely on other larger organisations to act as lead partners. However, they would like to undertake an intergenerational project with the two local primary schools, perhaps teaching them traditional skills. They believed that the arts was a useful tool in helping cross-community engagement and stated that Fortspring had been used as a basis of a play about the green (interface) gate by Tony McAuley and they expressed a desire to do some arts activity along the interface wall.

7.4.2 Artist Experiences

All of the artists spoken to had previous experience of working with older people and they felt that specific considerations do need to be given to this age group (e.g. physical ability, visual and hearing impairments and potential memory loss). None of the team had specific experience of working with people with dementia and the artists working with Springfield Charitable Association stated that they had adapted their initial objectives significantly upon meeting with the group. Although the sessions worked well, it was suggested that previous training would have been beneficial (two artists subsequently attended the AOP Dementia Awareness training).

Those involved felt that they had learned a lot about the types of issues which older people are facing as a result of the project and its interactive nature. The creative process was also thought to have served as a distraction for many participants and a lot of personal stories of childhood experiences and current family problems were told during the process.

“They were very critical of the way they were being treated...didn’t like the tag of being old. They spoke about being worried about money, going into a home, hospital waiting lists, the price of heating...they felt they had worked all their lives and had nothing at the end.”

“I wasn’t aware of the Barrack’s site and its significance. The men told of being taken to the Barracks and how they couldn’t imagine changing it into something positive as it had been so negative. It was interesting to see the history of the space and the community.”

“It’s really made me understand how important day centres are. They’re meeting points. A lot of their lives seem to be based around routine. It must be so lonely for them.”

It was believed that the project had primarily addressed social isolation and loneliness, particularly the SVP group which had recruited individuals with no previous history of attending group activities. This group consisted of vulnerable older people and it was reported that their confidence and level of social interaction had increased considerably as a result of participation. Similarly, the participants from Bleach Green Sheltered Housing, although they live in the same building had not met socially before entering the project.

“They really improved their confidence, talked to each other. As their skills improved they became more articulate.”

“One of the group was really good at knitting. She started to show other members how to do it. Another showed how she was involved in card making. Before they would have thought “anyone can do that” but now they really did see it as a skill that people were interested in.”
“There’s been huge benefits. They bonded as a group, made something that they could take away. The books have been handed out round the families. The Foreward's by Gerry Adams. It’s amazing. They’re so proud of themselves and each other.”

“Working with wax was something new to them. They made impressions of the old money. They really enjoyed working with that medium...it was warm and scented. I think they found it very therapeutic.”

It was suggested that there are class barriers to arts participation, with many working class residents in West Belfast feeling that they can’t afford arts activities or that they aren’t relevant to them. It was believed that this project’s success was due to the fact that it reflected real issues and lives.

The artists stated that the scale of outputs required (especially the knitting and crocheting groups) within the tight timeframe had been ambitious and it was hard to keep people’s interest when they couldn’t visualise the end product. In hindsight the visual artists felt that it would have been better to start off with smaller items at an earlier stage in order that participants could feel a sense of accomplishment and purpose from the outset. However, engaging in this art form was believed to have helped develop and maintain fine motor activity.

Similarly the artists working on the memory books believed that the visual prompts did help trigger memories and that the storyteller had worked with individuals to glean and capture more information. Memory loss was quite pronounced in this group and the artists reflected that the production of the books each week would obtain recognition. Improvements in some fine motor skills, such as cutting along a line and hand-eye coordination were also noted with this group and the repetitive nature of the tasks seemed to suit their needs.

"The visual prompts really helped with the dementia. They would really just be flicking through the magazines not reading but looking. We would encourage them to talk...”What's this?” Why's it important to you?”

It was also proposed that producing the various pieces of artwork, alongside the storytelling and writing had enabled participants’ voices to be heard. It was believed that the showcase had been well attended by the press, local political representatives and family members. However, the actual showcase location hadn’t been agreed at the outset and the artists felt that it had been difficult to design for the space. Also the event was held in October and some participants were unable to attend due to the cold weather conditions.

"Old people have a huge amount to say. There is a need to create situations for them to talk and write more and to feel they are part of the world, rather than that they’ve dropped off the end of it.”

There were also a number of physical health challenges to overcome as some of the participants had arthritis and eyesight problems and despite the introduction of larger needles and thicker wool a number felt that they were not able to continue. Some of the males also indicated that they weren't interested in taking part in the knitting. It was believed that this may have been avoided with greater pre-project consultation and providing individuals with the choice to attend workshops according to their interests and physical ability, rather than geographical location.

Overall, the artists consulted believed that the project would have benefited from a more generous time-frame as participants were really only beginning to see the value of the
work and their confidence was still growing. It was stated that the creative writing sessions could have extended into a drama project and this might have raised the profile of the work considerably.

### 7.4.3 USDT Staff Experiences

Staff indicated that many participants had never been involved in arts activities prior to this work. However upon exit, each of the groups has expressed a keen interest in continuing and developing further projects. The informal nature of the sessions was believed to have created a supportive and friendly environment within which people felt able to talk about their lives and hopes and fears for the future. The storytelling sessions in particular, were thought to have helped to break the ice and help identify shared experiences. Indeed, although people may have been working on individual pieces they were all part of the larger installation or publication.

The collaborations between the artists was believed to have proven extremely successful in terms of gaining the most out of the participants and there are plans to utilise this approach in other projects. However, it did mean that there was an increased need for coordination and complex scheduling and it was stated that the organisation has learned a great deal in terms of managing a large-scale creative team.

"We adopted so many different approaches with a variety of artists...creative teams. Those dynamics really brought things to life. It really did enhance this programme."

USDT stated that they were delighted with the feedback which the project has received and their End of Project Report and participant evaluations contain many favourable quotes from the beneficiaries.

"They've all asked for more. One of the groups are still meeting. They are doing some art and writing unfacilitated."

Those involved were believed to be isolated and marginalised within their communities and this was believed to have come across in the initial development stages and in subsequent group work sessions. Therefore being with people who understand and share the same feelings was thought to have been extremely important on a social level. It was stated that a variety of skills have been developed (and resurrected) as a result of the project, with many participants embarking on homemade Christmas presents for loved ones. Additionally, it was believed that a number of participants have increased their confidence and improved their communication skills through the group discussions.

"These are people who say "I'm not creative. I was never any good at art in school." But when you get professional artists [working with groups in the community, people] start to realise they are creative. Maybe they don't see writing as being art, but once they get exposed they start getting interested."

"We brought [the] arts to groups who usually wouldn't have had these opportunities. We've engaged new audiences."

The AOP was believed to have complimented the existing community development approach to the arts which the USDT has adopted. Staff felt that they now understand older people’s issues in more depth and as a result wish to develop further work in this area and plan to submit an application for the final round of the AOP.
“They were talking about issues of poverty...no money for heating, going to the shopping centres to keep warm, being frightened of winter, how they sat in one room to keep warm. It [was a learning experience] for the artists also.”

It was suggested that the arts can be a powerful means of highlighting social issues within the public arena – providing a platform to challenge existing stereotypes of older people. Staff believed that the project secured a strong media profile, with the MP for West Belfast launching the Public art Showcase at the Barrack’s site and Olivia Nash (AOP Ambassador) attending the event.

"It did make a difference [Olivia Nash is] a household name. It endorsed the quality and importance of the work. She brought her positivity to the event and put her heart and soul into it."

Follow-up activity is also planned as Paul Maskey has agreed to host a visit to Stormont for the participants to discuss the issues arising. Similarly, it is intended that the proposed creative writing publication will act as a lobbying tool for increased local resources. USDT stated that the art works will be exhibited again and the willow wall of wax tiles is being made into a permanent piece of art.

7.5 Conclusions

The following appraisal is made in relation to the AOP’s strategic aims:

**Isolation and Loneliness:** Analysis of the participant forms illustrate that a significant proportion of the people taking part in this project feel lonely at least sometimes. The evaluations do indicate that people have found the sessions, not only an outlet for creativity, but for increased companionship and social interaction. The analysis indicates that a lack of information about available arts activities is a significant barrier for uptake and many feel they find out about things by chance. The project has assisted the establishment of a new group, who continue to meet up post-project. It has also served to increase bonding within existing groups through reminiscence and storytelling. The fact that the staff in the partner organisations (and participant carers in Springfield Charitable Association) also joined in the sessions has enabled shared learning and experiences to take place.

**Social Inclusion:** The conversations illustrate that participants do feel that society discriminates against them due to their age. They spoke about labels (“old biddies”, “duffies”), made to feel useless, not being listened to and not being respected. The social history aspect of this project, enabled exploration of what life was like through the decades. However, it is a stark contrast to the way in which people now feel. It is considered that the project has succeeded in highlighting these issues through the two publications. The work with the Springfield Charitable Association group which had a high proportion of people with dementia is a poignant reflection of the individual behind the illness. However, it is believed that more pre-planning could have taken place to ensure that the art forms themselves were inclusive as some people weren’t able to participate due to their physical health.

**Poverty:** This project was conducted within an area of significant socio-economic disadvantage and this was reflected in the group discussions about the difficulty they have living on pension credits, the increased cost of fuel and children asking about their wills. These concerns were effectively reflected in the overall art work, with the “currency” conveying the increasing cost of living. The project also incorporated a good relations element and explored issues relating to shared space through utilising Forthspring cross-community group and holding the showcase at the previously contested
Anderstown Barracks site. Additionally, Andersonstown has been targeted for development as an economic hub and gateway to West Belfast.

**Health Issues/Dementia:** As noted previously a significant proportion of respondents reported that they suffered from poor health. Whereas the analysis is limited in terms of sample size, there is an indication that there were slight improvements in self-rated mental health and enjoyment of life for some people upon project completion. Confidence levels do seem to have improved and participants state that they have enjoyed the companionship and trying something different. Artists also reported that some individuals demonstrated improvements in their fine motor skills as a result of the tasks. Similarly, the memory books worked really well and triggered recognition amongst the participants with dementia.

**Strengthening the Voice of Older People:** The project has served to highlight the issues which are important to older people at community level. USDT, the project partners and artists do feel that they have a greater understanding about what it’s like to be older and the importance of lobbying to meet these needs. The planned publication will leave a legacy on paper. However, it is important that the issues uncovered are raised at political level. The showcase at the iconic Andersonstown Barrack’s site was extremely successful, in that it was covered in the mediums of print, film and radio broadcast – widening the audience beyond family members and the West Belfast community. The work of the project secured the support of both Paul Maskey and Gerry Adams and most importantly has led to an invitation to Stormont to discuss local issues. It is crucial that the group receive support to achieve the maximum outcomes from this opportunity. USDT also plan to exhibit the art work and/or include it in a public arts trail and this will be an important factor in raising awareness of what older people can achieve and contribute to their communities.
8 Project Partners

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the analysis of the Artist Reports and Lead Applicant End of Project Reports. Information from one-to-one discussions is also used to provide additional insights.

8.2 Report Coverage

Each artist involved in the AOP projects is required to submit an Artist Report when their involvement ends. These explore feelings on project delivery, personal development, training, beneficiary impact and progress towards meeting the AOP strategic aims. Similarly, grantees complete an End of Project Report upon project completion. This provides a project summary to include activities, perceived impact and further development potential. Table 8.1 illustrates the number of reports received at Interim stage.

Table 8.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Artist Reports</th>
<th>End Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older People North West</td>
<td>n2</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI Hospice</td>
<td>n4</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monday Club</td>
<td>n1</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony Community Trust</td>
<td>n3</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Thread Gallery</td>
<td>n1</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Springfield Development Trust</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum</td>
<td>n1</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Cut</td>
<td>n4</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Telly</td>
<td>n1</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Mona Tober</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carew Family &amp; Training Centre</td>
<td>n1</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praxis Care</td>
<td>n2</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughlin Island GAC</td>
<td>n1</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.3 Artist Perspectives

Twenty-one Artist Reports have been received across 11 projects. The majority of artists (n19) reported that they had worked with older people prior to the AOP project. Two artists had not (i.e. Older People North West drama facilitator and Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum), but stated that this had not been a problem.
8.3.1 Project Delivery

Table 8.2 illustrates artist responses regarding their experiences regarding AOP project delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No, but it wasn’t a problem</th>
<th>No, and it was a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were the objectives of the project clear from the start?</td>
<td>n19</td>
<td>n2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In retrospect, did you get all the information you needed during the planning process?</td>
<td>n17</td>
<td>n3</td>
<td>n1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you feel you had a good working relationship with the partner organisation(s)?</td>
<td>n21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you receive the support you needed from the partner organisation(s)?</td>
<td>n19</td>
<td>n2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you receive the support you needed from the AOP Community Development Officer?</td>
<td>n13</td>
<td>n3</td>
<td>n5 N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the space available suit your needs?</td>
<td>n18</td>
<td>n2</td>
<td>n1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you find the older people easy to engage?</td>
<td>n20</td>
<td>n1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the older people contribute to the planning of the sessions?</td>
<td>n9</td>
<td>n9</td>
<td>n3 N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas the majority of artists reported smooth delivery, specific issues were highlighted in a small number of instances. For example, the artist working on the older people’s consultation for Golden Thread Gallery stated that she had found it difficult to get access to a specific target group and that this had put time pressures upon project delivery. Also, a number of artists stated that there had been confusion regarding the specific art forms advertised and those which had been agreed.

"Confusion was caused when the project discussed was a ceramics course, the course advertised was actually mosaic." [Harmony Community Trust]

"Better clarity of style/type of dance provision required by artist to organise in advance as publicity material also inaccurate. After week 1 this was not a problem." [Loughlin Island GAC]

Difficulties with the available work space were commented upon by a small number of artists. This mainly related to noise and distraction within an open/public area.

Although 13 artists stated that they’d received support from the AOP Community Development Officer, for the remaining they had felt that support was not required. Each of the artists reported that a good working relationship between the project partners had formed.

"The support provided on this project was excellent, the staff were enthusiastic and helpful...The workshops were adapted throughout as the group offered ideas or wanted to explore movements more." [NI Hospice, Dance]
“The Carew Project were unfamiliar with running/delivering an ACNI project, so in preliminary meetings I gave some ideas and planning advice and suggested showcasing the work created during the project in an exhibition or public display...From feedback I received the ACNI were very helpful and supportive to the Carew Project.” [Carew]

However, quite a large proportion of artists stated that older people had not contributed to the planning of the sessions.

### 8.3.2 Artist Development

Table 8.3 illustrates that the majority of artists felt that their involvement had contributed at least a *little* to their knowledge and understanding of older people’s need and issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
<th>A Little</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the project contribute to your artistic development?</td>
<td>n9</td>
<td>n9</td>
<td>n3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the project increase your knowledge of older people’s artistic needs?</td>
<td>n10</td>
<td>n7</td>
<td>n4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you learn about ways to link your art form to participant ability?</td>
<td>n10</td>
<td>n7</td>
<td>n4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the project increase your knowledge of the social issues affecting older people?</td>
<td>n6</td>
<td>n11</td>
<td>n4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although some artists indicated that they had extensive experience working with older people and therefore learning was limited, others felt that they had developed through creative interchanges with the participants and learned how to adjust their practice to suit needs and abilities. Only one artist (Prime Cut) reported that they had attended external training through the project. This had incorporated reminiscence training with Reminiscence Network Northern Ireland (RNNI) and training on developing an archive, creating a podcast and video editing.

"Storytelling and oral history is something that I don’t have a lot of experience with and through this project I have seen how personal stories can be transformed into performance.” [Prime Cut]

"This group didn’t require any special needs and perhaps resented the fact that they were being treated as “older people” so in a sense I learned that you don’t always have to make concessions and shouldn’t assume they need to be made.” [Carew]

"Raised awareness of people living alone in rural areas suffering from loneliness and depression.” [Harmony Community Trust, Woodturning]

"There was a very open and relaxed atmosphere in which participants were comfortable to share personal experiences and difficulties of old age.” [Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum, Photography]

"As contact with each group was only 2 sessions I think that learning about social issues was limited in comparison to other factors. However certain issues were highlighted to me in relation to different health matters.” [NI Hospice, Dance]
“Their needs and alienation became more obvious...they were happy as a group.” [Big Telly]

8.3.3 Perceived Impact on Participants

A number of the artists indicated that it initially took a while to build up people’s confidence, but once they became more involved in the work and enjoyed the sessions their concentration and listening skills clearly improved. The artist working with Praxis Care commented that some people were more enthusiastic and engaged than others. There were also memory difficulties which had to be facilitated within this group.

However, many artists believed that individuals became more expressive and confident as they settled into their work. This was demonstrated through discussions regarding the artwork with other participants and with the artist in relation to developing and improving their skills. However, some participants did it challenging.

“They seemed to really enjoy talking to each other about their projects...many did show improvement in self esteem, for others it was too hard.” [The Monday Club]

One artist mentioned that enabling participants to take a completed piece away on the first session was central to keeping enthusiasm and concentration levels high. Artists also felt that involvement had helped to widen participants’ understanding and knowledge of the arts and its many aspects and a number of practitioners stated that they had personally encouraged people to attend other local events/sessions.

“As the project grew the women became more confident. They were eager to share ideas for all aspects of the project...I think that this theatre project helped the participants see theatre in a new way. On this project participants used and incorporated personal stories to create an art piece and for all of them this was a new exciting approach. There was definitely a feeling throughout this project the participants had contributed to the Arts Scene in NI and so as a result felt more part of a community that can sometimes feel alienating to the people who contributed to this project.” [Prime Cut]

“I think they have overcome the opinion that dance and exercise are not for them due to age and health and are now more positive and confident to participate.” [NI Hospice, Dance]

8.4 Lead Applicant Perspective

There were few difficulties reported in terms of project delivery. However, The Monday Club stated that they had worked with a large and enthusiastic group and as such, it was difficult to meet everyone’s personal needs within the sessions. The group was subsequently split into two which helped to some extent and the organisation stated that they will now take this into account when conducting other work. Upper Springfield stated that the project, being an artistic collaboration with 12 artistic positions and 4 groups, demanded complex co-ordination and timetabling, another project had experienced governance issues within their own organisation and the project had been conducted during a period of immense uncertainty.

Each of the grantees reported a positive experience overall. For example, Prime Cut spoke about partner organisations commitment to the project and how workers and participants went “over and above what was expected of them.” Indeed, the majority of organisations stated that they had developed new contacts and deepened existing
relationships with partner organisations as a result of the work. Table 8.4 highlights the number of partners involved within each project.

Table 8.4
Project Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Total Partners</th>
<th>Artists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Older People North West</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Monday Club</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Thread Gallery</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Springfield Development Trust</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Cut</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on submitted End of Project Reports

Older People North West felt that the project illustrated the potential of their facilities as a work space. In addition, promotion through the local press was believed to have raised the profile of the organisation.

Some of the artist project leads reported that the AOP had reinforced the importance of community engagement and outreach activity. Golden Thread Gallery felt that the consultation activity had helped towards informing their corporate objective of increasing public access and participation in the arts. They also stated that they appreciated the Arts Council's flexibility around the evaluation process (i.e. as it was a short consultation which they would report on there was no need for pre-/post- evaluations).

"One unexpected and very positive outcome of Give and Take was that it fed into another project the Gallery were working on...as both these experiences were quite different, the group now realise that the Gallery is a living space and changes according to the audiences that are in as well as when the exhibitions change." [Golden Thread Gallery]

8.5 Project’s Perceived Contribution to Programme Aims

This section is based upon the output from the Artist and Lead Applicant Reports:

- **Increase social interaction:** Grantees stated that the group nature of the sessions had meant that people had opportunities to socialise and get to know others – either as a result of conversations during the activities or through the creative process of writing, storytelling etc. Many of the reports highlighted increased social interaction as being a central component of the project. In a number of projects (e.g. Upper Springfield, The Monday Club, Prime Cut) individuals worked upon collective group art pieces and this was believed to have developed the bonding process. Similarly, the performance based projects reported that they were flexible in their approach and enabled individuals to engage at whatever level they felt confident and comfortable.

- **Social inclusion:** Some grantees stated that they had specifically targeted people with little arts experience living in NRAs (e.g. Upper Springfield, Prime Cut), marginalised groups (e.g. An Monia Tober), isolated older people who live alone and/or live in rural areas (e.g. The Monday Club) and interface communities (e.g. Upper Springfield, Prime Cut). They believed that the group work enabled discussions around discrimination to take place. However, it was noted that males
had proved difficult to engage (with exception of Harmony Community Trust, Woodturning).

The Monday Club emphasised the fact that the ability to offer free drama classes and transport had helped people living on low incomes to access the arts. Prime Cut also reported that there was subsidised ticketing available for participants to enable them to attend a professional theatre performance over the course of the project. Organisations stated that new participants had engaged with their organisation and had attended other classes/activities as a result of the AOP sessions. Additionally, participants gifted many of the art pieces to friends and family and illustrated that creating bespoke artwork doesn't need to be expensive.

"The cost of making hand-made crafts as gifts is minimal, thus preserving the dignity of the ladies while still being able to contribute to their family and friends." [Older People North West]

- **Health/dementia:** Project partners largely felt that visible increases in confidence, personal achievement and social interaction had positively impacted upon participant wellbeing. It was noted that social skills (e.g. speaking in public, forming friendships) have also improved alongside creative development. The Monday Club and Upper Springfield stated that some participants also began to share their skills and liked to help others in the class with their work.

  "The challenge of learning lines and performing scenes was mentally beneficial and in achieving this, the participants were clearly thrilled at achieving things that they had initially felt above them." [Prime Cut]

  "One participant who had previously never taken part in a drama activity, greatly enjoyed the classes and played a central role in the various sketches delivered in the final show." [Older People North West]

- **Strengthening the voice:** Overall, partners felt that the AOP had provided a platform to bring people together and challenge each other’s views of older people and their capacity and capability to contribute to the wider community, in addition to the public via media coverage, public exhibition and/or performance.

  "One of the most poignant moments of the project was having an older lady describe how she loved the fact that she now had all these younger girls to talk to in her community...In sharing their stories and having them treated with such respect and reverence by the younger women, there was a real sense of pride from the older women." [Prime Cut]

Prime Cut had incorporated exercises regarding consultation and listening skills into the project and they believed that there was a clear improvement in participants’ confidence and ability to absorb information as a result. They indicated that the women began to take a more active role in their communities as a result and were more vocal in their beliefs.

### 8.6 Discussion

A number of Round One awards have been granted extensions to their original end date and a few completed projects have not yet submitted their End of Project Reports. Therefore the information presented in this chapter is only a snapshot of ongoing work. However, there do appear to be clear development benefits for the project partners in addition to participants.
Grantees from an arts background have described the value of conducting arts activity outside the sector and strong community-based links have formed. With the exception of Prime Cut and Upper Springfield Development Trust, artists have not availed of formal training opportunities. However, many artists have conveyed that they have gained informal learning as a result of the process. Although each of the artists stated that they adapt their work according to each new project and individual needs, less experienced artists reflected upon the importance of communicating clearly, providing encouragement and taking physical and mental health needs into account. The conversations during the sessions have provided artists with a greater insight into older people’s lives. However, in some cases this may have been incidental rather than targeted discussions.

Community partners, such as Older People North West and The Monday Club, reported that the sessions had attracted new people to their groups and had permeated into other areas of service delivery. They felt that the arts had proven to be a valuable tool for self and collective expression, as well as skills development.

Project partners felt that the AOP had particularly addressed the strategic aims of isolation, loneliness and social inclusion. However, they did point to the positive impact which increased social interaction, achievement and mastery had upon participants’ self esteem and confidence. Some artists also felt that particular activities (i.e. drama, dance) had led to visible physical health differences over the course of the project (e.g. breathing, stamina). However, others felt that their contact with participants had not been of sufficient duration for them to make an informed judgement. The majority of project partners felt that the exhibitions and performances associated with the project had enabled older people’s voices to be heard within a wider arena. Although some projects actively tackled stereotypes and misperceptions throughout and this was portrayed in their artwork (e.g. Prime Cut’s intergenerational work).
9 Programme Governance

9.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the associated AOP governance structures, provides a brief activity update and media report based upon information and discussion with the AOP Community Development Officer, Arts Council Communications Officer and selected Steering Group members.

9.2 Governance Structures

An AOP Steering Group has been established with representatives from the Arts Council, Age NI, WEA, Age Sector Platform, Engage with Age, Rural Community Network (RCN), Changing Age Partnership, Institute for Conflict Research (ICR), Changing Age Partnership, an independent health research consultancy and Reminiscence Network NI. The Steering Group aims to ensure that the direction of the programme firmly focuses upon social justice issues, in addition to identifying opportunities for advocacy and PR. Members have met five times since its inception.

A communications budget of £20,000 has been established to support the AOP Communications Plan. A Communications Sub-Committee advises ACNI’s Communication Department with regards to programme promotion within the age sector and the public. Membership consists of the Arts Council Head of Community and Participatory Arts, AOP Community Development Officer, Arts Council Communications Officer and representation from Age Sector Platform, RCN and Age NI. The over-riding aim is to obtain the maximum positive PR coverage for the AOP and the individual awards, across its target audience as well as key stakeholders, policy makers, service providers and wider society. Specific objectives are to:

- Highlight social justice issues affecting older people;
- Increase awareness of the AOP, its projects and highlight opportunities for participation in arts-led activities that help stimulate older people at a physical, mental and social level;
- Raise awareness of older people’s issues and encourage more positive attitudes towards ageing in our society; and
- Increase awareness of the health benefits of participation in artistic activities.

The group has met twice to date – in December 2010 and June 2011. A list of AOP Ambassadors has been compiled and the following individuals were appointed in 2011:

- **Olivia Nash** MBE is an Irish actress and performer on the Northern Ireland arts scene for over 40 years. She performs on stage, TV and radio and has toured the United States and Canada with the Charabanc Theatre Company. Olivia is probably best-known for her role as ‘Ma’ in the television series *Give My Head Peace*;
- Originally a musician, **Gerry Anderson** toured Scotland, England and Canada. He is a Sony Award-winning radio and television broadcaster from Derry, who works for BBC Radio Ulster and has a popular weekday radio show;
- **Baroness May Blood** of Blackwatertown MBE is a Labour member of the House of Lords. She was born and raised in Belfast and worked in a linen mill from 1952-90 where she soon became an active member of the trade union and a shop steward. She was involved in creating the women’s committee in the Trade Union and promoting equality for women at work. She is a founding member of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition; and

Wallace Consulting
Bangor poet, **Myra Vennard** was born in Belfast in 1929. After working in various secretarial posts, she graduated as a mature student at the University of Ulster in the 1990s with an Honours BA in literature and an MA in Anglo-Irish literature and a post-graduate diploma from the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College, Dublin. She was awarded BT Woman of the Year in the Arts in 2010.

The Ambassador role gives the AOP a human identity and each individual is a high profile figure with strong media links. To date Olivia Nash has attended two AOP showcase events (Upper Springfield’s Engage in Art Age and Big Telly’s Spring Chicken’s performances as part of International Older People’s Day in October 2010) and Gerry Anderson attended the launch of Carn Media’s Draperstown based project.

An Evaluation Sub-Committee has also been established to provide quality assurance and guidance to the external evaluators. This group has met five times since the programme commenced.

### 9.3 Activity Update

The Arts Council had originally intended to award 20 artist-led, older people directed projects over the lifetime of the programme. However, in the planning stages it was agreed to model the AOP on its Re-Imaging Communities Programme and Small Grants Programme, enabling communities, voluntary groups and arts organisations to make applications to the programme. As such, almost £375,000 has been awarded across the two funding rounds to date (with £200,000 remaining).

Based upon comparatively low levels of applications from Armagh and Fermanagh in Round One, Age NI agreed to work with the AOP Community Development Officer to promote the programme across its sub-regional networks and to publicise Round Two in the organisation’s quarterly magazine. The Community Development Officer also worked with RCN and the Rural Enablers Programme in these areas in order to increase programme awareness. An information session was held for potential applicants in the Arts Council in February 2011 to promote the second round of awards and this was attended by 35 people from community and arts organisations.

The decision-making structure for AOP awards outlines that Arts Council Development Officers assess applications and make recommendations for Heads of Department at Moderation Meetings on applications under £25,000 and the Grants and Lottery Committee make decisions on applications over £25,000. During the second round the AOP Development Officer assessed all of the applications in liaison with ACNI Artform Officers and Head of Departments. The procedure was largely the same for Round One and Two, although after a review of the application process and criteria for assessment, an additional five marks were awarded to projects targeted at NRAs in Round Two.

As noted in Chapter Four, the AOP Community Development Officer felt that the standard of awards in Round Two was higher than that of the opening round. Seven projects could not be supported because the ceiling budget allocation had been reached. Indeed budget pressures meant that awards were significantly lower than the requested funding. Reductions were based upon scaling down time-scales, ineligible costs, or declining costs which were not considered central to programme delivery.

An information session was held for Round One and Round Two grantees (n23) in September 2011. This provided an overview of the programme aims and financial reporting requirements, monitoring and evaluation obligations and the types of publicity support available from ACNI. For example, an AOP Media Pack has been developed by the Arts Council Communications Department. This provides advice regarding...
acknowledgement of funding, guidance for writing news releases and selected quotes alongside contact details for key NI press.

The AOP Community Development Officer has provided a number of grantees with advice on commissioning artists post-award (e.g. Alzheimers Society, Derg Valley Care, Loughinisland GAC, Carew and Ederney Community Development Trust) and there is considerable support provided with regards to financial monitoring and fulfilling the terms and conditions of grant. Unsuccessful applicants have been provided with feedback and a number have availed with developmental support for subsequent applications. Others have been signposted to Big Lottery, Baring Foundation and the Turkington Fund as alternative funding streams.

The AOP Community Development Officer and Head of Participatory Arts met with the Bealtaine Festival Director to explore opportunities to connect with the festival in May 2012 which will also include a conference with European partners. This networking has proven fruitful and the Arts Council’s Arts Development Fund supported four dance artists to participate in the Dance Exchange residency (Washington DC) in Dublin during December 2011. The residency is the first phase of a collaboration leading to a performance next May as part of the Bealtaine Festival. The following artists were selected:

- **Elisabeth Zeindlinger, Dancer in residence with Arts Care** and currently working on AOP funded programme with NI Hospice in Belfast;
- **Breda McNulty, Community Dance artist with Dylan Quinn Dance Theatre in Fermanagh** and currently working on the Golden Years project, an AOP funded programme through Ederney Community Association;
- **Mags Byrne, Artistic Director of Dance United NI** who in January 2012 will commence Alternative Energies, an Inter-generational dance project (also funded through AOP) in Ballymena, Ballymoney and Belfast; and
- **Anthea McWilliams, Artistic Director of Age on Stage** which has also received an AOP award. Anthea is also working on other AOP funded programmes in Loughinisland, Newtownards and NI-wide with Praxis Care.

Coinciding with the EU Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations, **Creating a New Old** is Bealtaine’s theme for 2012. The core themes are:

- To maximise the ability of all individuals to maintain dignity and independent living throughout older age; and
- To harness the creativity powers of older people to make a positive contribution to society.

Twenty-two grantees attended the AOP Dementia Awareness training, facilitated by Reminiscence Network NI in December 2011. This was targeted at artists in order to inform good practice in this specialist area. The training covered ageing and dementia, session planning, Life Story Book work and dealing with difficult memories.

Nineteen feedback forms were received from attendees. Ten had some previous experience of undertaking reminiscence with people with dementia prior to the course, although experience was limited. The content of the training was mostly rated as very good and attendees stated that learning about the different types of dementia and practical tips on working with people with dementia and ideas for sessions were the most useful aspects.

“Information regarding using triggers and how to develop memory boxes and use life stories was very useful.”
“Practical tips, where to get loan boxes etc.”

“Feel much better prepared to work and engage with people with dementia.”

“Factual information about different types of dementia, examples of successful workshops, abundance of info relevant to dealing with people with real problems, storybook examples.”

However, a small number of people felt that there was too much focus on the different types of dementia, or the storybooks and memory boxes.

9.4 Media Monitoring

The Arts Council Communications Officer provided a media report for the programme which covers the period June 2010 – December 2011. Five news releases have been issued by the Arts Council communications department since the AOP launch as follows:

- July 2010: News release issued to all NI regional papers and key broadcast contacts. News release also circulated to steering group partners and stakeholder groups for inclusion in e-newsletters, printed mail outs etc. A PR photo was set up with the Elderflowers, a performance group which meets in the Crescent Arts Centre, Ken Logue from Atlantic Philanthropies and Arts Council board member Brian Sore;
- February 2010: News release issued announcing first 16 awards through the programme. The news release (including seven regional variations) was sent to all regional papers and broadcast contacts, including information on projects awarded funding within their geographic area. A news release was also circulated to steering group partners and stakeholder groups for inclusion e-newsletters, mail outs etc.;
- October 2011: Media invitation and news release issued in reference to Upper Springfield Development Trust’s final showcase event. Arts and Older People’s Ambassador Olivia Nash attended and spoke at the event. Pictures from the event and the news release were sent to Belfast print and broadcast media list, including arts correspondents;
- October 2011: Media invitation and news release issued to publicise Spring Chicken’s flashmob events to highlight their forthcoming shows and to raise awareness of International Older People’s Day. Arts and Older People’s Ambassador Olivia Nash attended and spoke at the event. Pictures from the event and the news release was sent to Belfast print and broadcast media list, including arts correspondents; and
- Oct 2011 – News release issued to broadcast and print media contacts in Derry highlighting the beginning of Carn media’s project in Draperstown. Gerry Anderson, Arts and Older People’s Ambassador, met with some of those involved and took part in a PR photo.

A total of 74 articles referring to AOP have appeared in print media (total column centimetres: 3,056). There have been seven interview opportunities to talk about the AOP during the period under review. The total airtime was 39.5 minutes, all of which were radio opportunities (see Table 9.1).
### Table 9.1

**AOP Airtime Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interview opportunity</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Duration (mins)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/07/2010</td>
<td>Radio Ulster Arts Extra</td>
<td>Fionnuala Walsh, ACNI</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/07/2010</td>
<td>U105 Carolyn Stewart show</td>
<td>Fionnuala Walsh, ACNI</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/08/2010</td>
<td>Peninsula Radio</td>
<td>Fionnuala Walsh, ACNI</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/03/2011</td>
<td>Eileen Walsh Show</td>
<td>Fionnuala Walsh, ACNI</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10/2011</td>
<td>Radio Ulster Saturday Magazine</td>
<td>Olivia Nash, AOP Ambassador</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/10/2011</td>
<td>Radio Ulster Evening Extra</td>
<td>Olivia Nash, AOP Ambassador</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/10/2011</td>
<td>Radio Foyle, Gerry Anderson show</td>
<td>Gerry Anderson, AOP Ambassador</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Online references to the Arts Council were captured on 19 arts and media websites (based on Google Alert tracking only). Websites included Arts Professional, AGE UK, Creativity Boom and Visual Arts Ireland.

An AOP promotional flyer was printed for programme launch in July 2010 and work on first AOP newsletter and website is ongoing. The newsletter will be circulated in late January/early February 2012 and it is anticipated that a profile of the AOP Ambassadors will be included, in addition to project case studies. The newsletter will also provide an opening for isolated older people to find out about arts activities which are happening in their locality.

#### 9.5 Discussion

Despite the fact that the number and reach of Round Two applications to the programme have been promising, it is believed that there is further scope to raise the profile of the AOP outside Belfast. Unfortunately, the part-time nature of the AOP Community Development Officer post alongside administrative pressures has meant that the desired outreach road shows and information sessions have not taken place (although one-to-one meetings have been facilitated).

There has been significant emphasis placed upon maximizing existing Steering Group contacts and ensuring that quality awards are made which address the strategic aims of the AOP. Indeed, as a result of budgetary pressures the Arts Council has been rigorous in terms of ensuring that the awards provide value for money. However it was believed that some groups were more experienced and progressive than others in using the arts to get specific messages across.

"...though not everyone wants to be an advocate, maybe they’ve learnt as new skill, got out of the house, made new friends...we can’t underestimate that either."

It was suggested that there needs to be increased opportunities for artist training and development in this area. The AOP Community Development Officer stressed the need to ensure that the activities under the programme are participatory and of a high artistic quality. The Bealtaine dance exchange partnership and initial dementia training was believed to have been an initial step towards establishing a forum for artists working with older people. It was believed that working on AOP projects could be emotionally
challenging and therefore information on ethical practice and support needs to be available to artists in parallel.

The use of AOP Ambassadors was thought to have increased the media coverage of the programme and the Ambassadors themselves spoke positively about the camaraderie within the groups that they had come into contact with. However, it was thought that there is limited awareness of the AOP amongst the general public despite the publicity surrounding the launch, funding rounds and project awards.

The Steering Group were supportive of the AOP and the work of the Community Development Officer and members commented that they have received positive feedback from groups who have requested support. It was reported that the Arts Council have taken on board suggestions made by the Steering group and have acted accordingly. Indeed, members felt that there were kept informed of progress and that they had played an active role in shaping the programme. They believed that arts was traditionally seen as being “outside” the sector and that it would take a while for awareness of the fund to bed in. Although they were pleased with the range of projects covered via the awards, Steering Group members also wanted to ensure that the programme tackled social justice issues as well as increasing levels of arts participation.

There were queries around the future sustainability of the AOP post 2013 and it was suggested that there is scope for developing future capacity through small scale projects/feasibility studies and linking groups with other local activities and Council based Arts Development Officers.
10 Policy Impact

10.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses upon determining the profile of older people’s issues and the AOP in terms of the wider policy agenda. It presents the findings from Policy Maker Ratings with the AOP Steering Group, interviews with selected policymakers and stakeholders and a survey of MLAs regarding the perceived value of the arts in addressing social justice issues.

10.2 Policy Maker Ratings

Policy Maker Ratings and related discussions regarding the profile of older people’s issues at policy level were conducted with Steering Group members at Baseline (29 September 2010 Steering Group meeting) and Interim Stage (29 November 2011 Steering Group meeting).

A range of leading voluntary sector organisations were represented at one or both of these Steering Group meetings, in addition to the Arts Council’s Director of Strategic Development. Each have a strong advocacy and campaigning role, working both individually and jointly for positive strategic and operational change. For example:

- Age Sector Platform’s works to be a strong unified voice for older people in Northern Ireland. It aims to engage with older people, allowing them to make their voice heard, to enable older people to advocate on their own behalf and to empower older people so they can change their lives for the better. Active lobbyists, recent successes include organisation and management of the first Pensioner’s Parliament and the Fight the Fuel Cut campaign;
- Age Concern NI and Help the Aged in NI joined together in April 2009 to become Age NI and create a powerful new voice for older people. In addition to service delivery and developing and strengthening local groups, Age NI educates and lobbies the NI Executive, Assembly and Authorities to ensure that older people’s issues are represented;
- Engage with Age are a partnership of older people’s organisations, statutory and voluntary organisations working together to support individual older people, groups and representative forums in East Belfast, South Belfast and Castlereagh. There is emphasis upon influencing decision-makers, lobbying and campaigning, developing leaders and achieving representation on public bodies; and
- Workers’ Educational Association (WEA) is the UK’s largest voluntary-sector provider of adult education. It aims to influence and campaign on behalf of adult learners, remove barriers to learning, creating equality and opportunity, and challenging discrimination and enriching lives and communities through learning. WEA’s mission is to tackle all forms of social disadvantage through adult education.

Recent joint campaigns amongst age sector partners represented on the AOP Steering Group include securing 80,000 additional fuel payments (worth £12.5 million) for older people, and lobbying for the Older People’s Commissioner. Age NI and Age Sector Platform also ran a joint campaign during the six weeks running up to the May 2011 elections for the Northern Ireland Assembly and local councils. The "High 5" priorities for ageing well formed the focus of the campaign (i.e. tackle fuel poverty, maximise pensioner income, fundamentally review social care, end age discrimination and tackle fear of crime).
10.2.1 Perceived Headline Issues

In September 2010, attendees felt that there was a lot of uncertainty around imminent Ministerial changes and much of the discussions around the policy landscape in Northern Ireland emphasised the looming budgetary constraints. Recent discussions in 2011 remained centred around the economy. However, the following issues were also highlighted as being particularly visible in terms of media coverage:

- Employment and the economy, linking to skills, education and employability;
- Review of the Health service and the transfer of services from the acute to the community sector;
- The publication of the Dementia Strategy and lack of resources;
- Reduction in post-primary school budgets and associated redundancies;
- Fuel poverty; and
- Review of Public Administration and associated efficiencies.

More specifically, in 2010 the following issues were identified as being pertinent to the lobbying of the age sector:

- Poverty - cost of living and rising energy costs and the implications upon health and quality of life;
- Loneliness and isolation, to include transport;
- Community safety issues; and
- Health and social care – keeping active and mental health, quality of care and adequacy of service provision and staff training.

At Interim stage, these issues remained high on organisations’ agendas. The appointment of the Older People’s Commissioner was believed to have been a positive step for the sector and the fact that fuel poverty has experienced an increased profile in Great Britain was believed to have raised awareness of the issue in Northern Ireland. Welfare cuts in general were believed to have a high public profile and this was believed to make it easier for campaigners to obtain support. Indeed, it was believed that older people’s issues have been moving up the political agenda for a few years. Steering Group members stated that people’s attitudes towards ageing and our dependence on the state to provide for us will see a decline. There were additional fears regarding the overall sustainability of the sector, in light of planned funding cuts and completion of The Atlantic Philanthropies resources and support.

10.2.2 Policy Maker Ratings

Three prominent positions were chosen by the Steering Group – the Minister for Social Development, the First Minister and the Health Minister. These specific Departments were chosen as they’re policy developments were believed to have the greatest impact upon older people’s lives. The chosen post holders changed after the Assembly elections in 2011 and Steering group members rating considers both individual and party support for older people’s issues in terms of tangible outcomes and messaging.

Advocates rated each policymaker as a group (arriving at a consensus group rating) on a series of three scales that assess:

- **Policymaker level of support**—Individual policymaker support for an issue based on his or her public behaviours or actions on behalf of the issue (1=not supportive, 2=somewhat supportive, 3=supportive, 4=extremely supportive);
• **Policymaker level of influence**—Policymaker influence on the policy issue of interest. Ratings are based on criteria that research shows relate to policymaker influence (1=not very influential, 2=somewhat influential, 3=influential, 4=very influential); and

• **Rater level of confidence**—Confidence in the accuracy of ratings on the first two scales (1=not very confident, 2=somewhat confident, 3=extremely confident).

Table 10.1 compares ratings across the period.

Table 10.1

Policy Maker Ratings: 2010 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DSD Minister</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Alex Attwood [SDLP]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Nelson McCausland [DUP]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFMDFM First Minister</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Peter Robinson [DUP]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Peter Robinson [DUP]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DHSSPS Minister</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Michael McGimpsey [UUP]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Edwin Poots [DUP]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the Steering Group members present, reported that they found it difficult to distance the “person from their politics”, it was generally felt that the DUP Ministers were in touch with bread and butter issues within their constituencies. It was additionally suggested that the SDLP and the UUP are currently struggling to get their voices heard at Executive level. Overall it was thought that the DUP officials recognise the strength in obtaining older people’s vote and that this could lead to positive opportunities for the age sector.

The new DSD Minister was believed to have made favourable policy decisions early in his tenure (e.g. fuel poverty strategy and disregard for Westminster winter allowance cuts, commitment for double glazing in social housing). Members felt that the fact that he had returned to the Executive on the first count indicated his popularity and credibility with the public. He has also previously held the position of Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure. First Minister Peter Robinson was also believed to be in an extremely powerful position, having overcome difficulties in his personal life and successfully returned to office. Issues of poverty, social inclusion and isolation were believed to be high on the agenda and it was suggested that the AOP needs to tap into this and provide a voice for older people.

Edwin Poots was thought to have more interest in older people’s issues than his predecessor and is open to the connections between health and other policy areas – taking a more long-term stance. It was suggested that the policy focus upon prevention and the promotion of healthy lifestyles is beneficial, given the arts positive role in the Healthy Cities initiatives. It was believed that the age sector should focus on aligning with Public Health Agency objectives in addition to other commissioning bodies such as Belfast Healthy Ageing Strategic Partnership (which is currently focusing upon combating social isolation within its objectives).

It was suggested that arts and cultural services are often the first to be cut in times of austerity. However, some members felt that there was growing recognition of how the
arts can be used as a means of achieving a range of objectives. For example, obtaining community relations and physical regenerations outcomes through the Re-Imaging Communities Programme and achieving economic growth through the creative industries. Even the recent hosting of the MTV awards in Belfast was believed to have illustrated how the arts can contribute to the economy. The fact that the PfG and Economic Development Strategy place emphasis upon cultural tourism and the creative industries was believed to be evidence of attitudinal change.

"The idea of learning for older people is so far down the list, but it can end isolation through connections with others. That’s the power of the arts...gives you confidence to do other things.”

Steering Group members spoke of the potential value of arts based programmes which raise awareness of older people’s issues amongst the public. They believed that there is a need to illustrate the relevance of these concerns for society and to work constructively with policymakers and Government to achieve solutions. It was recognised that participants would personally benefit from AOP involvement. However, the ultimate aim should be to highlight social justice issues and promotion of active ageing, to include the social and economic contribution of older people to society.

"[Older people] do feel a bit alienated from [the arts], but it’s the way it’s put across to them. They're active participants in their own lives. They need to look at this point of their lives as a new opportunity, rather than the end.”

Steering Group members felt that AOP projects should not be primarily based in the past, but rather should make links with current and future issues. It was suggested that the most effective lobbying tool is to utilise the experiences and voices of older people themselves – and to highlight the potential financial savings for Government in terms of preserving independence, wellbeing and potentially reduced access to health and social care services.

"I think MLAs are aware of the issues. Real people are more powerful and hard to argue against. It means more than an organisational facade, when they talk about their own experiences.”

10.3 Bellwether Interviews

We undertook structured interviews with “bellwethers” or influential people in the public and private sectors whose positions require that they are politically informed and that they track a broad range of policy issues. These interviews aimed to determine:

- Where the policy issue is positioned on the policy agenda;
- How decision makers and other people of influence view it; and
- How likely policy makers are to act upon it.

Table 10.2 indicates the interviews undertaken at Baseline and Interim stages.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Interim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy Division, NICVA</td>
<td>Professor of Public Policy, UU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Older People’s Advocate</td>
<td>Public Affairs Consultant, Stratagem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture Division, DCAL</td>
<td>Culture Division, DCAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly &amp; Community Care Unit, DHSSPS</td>
<td>Equality, Rights &amp; Social Needs Division, OFMDFM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality, Rights &amp; Social Needs Division, OFMDFM</td>
<td>Elderly &amp; Community Care Unit, DHSSPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy Division, DSD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.2
**Baseline and Interim Bellwether Interviews**

As with the Steering Group Policy Maker rating interviews, Baseline discussions with stakeholders identified issues concerning economic policy, welfare reform, unemployment and poverty as dominating the media. However, older people’s issues were also raised. These included the proposed appointment of the Older People’s Commissioner and the spotlight on fuel poverty. The age sector was thought to be extremely effective in lobbying MLAs and the establishment of the Pensioner’s Parliament was believed to have been an important step in raising awareness at political level. Age NI, Age Sector Platform and Engage with Age were named as prominent advocates.

One bellwether criticised MLAs as being largely reactive, following Westminster’s lead and being too focused on detail as opposed to taking a more strategic overview. It was suggested that MLAs lack confidence and are chasing populist votes, rather than making tough decisions. It was believed that the Crompton Review’s propositions for acute services would be a stern test for politicians over the coming years.

The potential use of the arts to address social justice issues had a relatively low profile overall. The DHSSPS representative stated that the outworking of the Dementia Services Strategy and Review of Health and Social Care were core priorities and the Department is working on a discussion document to raise the profile of care for older people. This will incorporate public discussions to identify what the issues for older people are, with the aim to continue to provide appropriate care in the community for as long as possible. The Head of the Elderly & Community Care Unit has a history of working with the arts through previous roles (e.g. Arts Care) and is supportive and personally knowledgeable about the benefits. However it was believed that awareness of the use of the arts relating to health issues is not high within the Department - it has sometimes been mentioned in relation to health but not very often. Given the funding climate, the Department is only funding key and front line services and as such it would be difficult to establish new funding areas (e.g. arts). Therefore it was stated that there will not be a movement towards increased investment in this area until the funding climate changes.

The DCAL representative felt that there was a political will to understand the benefits (e.g. contribution to health, social inclusion) of the arts mainly through CAL committee. However, DCAL’s main focus has been on increasing access to the arts (of which older people are one group and increasing access to the arts in rural areas). DCAL reported that they had limited contact with the Arts Council about AOP but there is a broad awareness of the programme within the Department and the CAL committee are aware of AOP. It was stated that politicians are increasingly interested in the programme, but it would likely only continue if it can be privately funded.
It was generally believed that the arts sector find it difficult to win public support as it is often "considered an unaffordable luxury", despite being powerful lobbyists. Those interviewed felt that the public's perception of the arts meant that it was difficult to convince older working class people to engage, as they may not feel comfortable entering an arts venue or may be worried about affordability.

It was stated that the PfG provides a number of commitments relevant to older people (e.g. legislation to end discrimination in goods, facilities and services, tackling fear of crime and fuel poverty, community based health and social care) and therefore the AOP should be illustrating their ability to also meet objectives in these areas. However, this means establishing an evidence base and linking with other partners and initiatives such as UK City of Culture, Titanic Quarter in order to raise awareness. DSD suggested that the AOP could be promoted via the NR partnerships. If there is a demonstrated role for the arts at a local level this might help secure future investment and widen awareness.

10.4 MLA Panel Survey

Between 21 October and 13 December 2011, Stratagem in conjunction with ComRes, a London-based polling and research company, surveyed over 60 MLAs on the MLA Research Panel using self-completion postal questionnaires. The full questionnaire consisted of 40 questions from a range of organisations. Included were four questions submitted by Stratagem on behalf of all AP Ageing Programme grantees.

Membership of the MLA Research Panel includes:

- All community designations (nationalist, unionist and other);
- All main political parties represented in the Assembly;
- All 18 constituencies;
- Party Leaders;
- MPs;
- Men and women ranging in age from mid-20s to mid-70s; and
- New and returning MLAs since 2011 Assembly elections.

In total, 40 MLAs completed the questionnaire anonymously. This consisted of 16 MLAs completing an online version and 24 completing the postal questionnaire. Data was weighted to reflect the exact composition of the Assembly in terms of party representation and constituency distribution.

AOP submitted a question for inclusion in the MLA Research Panel Survey as follows:

Thinking about social justice issues for older people, in your opinion, how effective or otherwise are arts and crafts activities for older people at addressing each of the following? (5=very effective and 1=not at all effective)

- Loneliness and isolation;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Poverty;
- Social inclusion; and
- Giving older people a voice.

MLAs were also asked to outline the reasons for their answers.
Figure 10.1 illustrates that MLAs rated arts and crafts activities for older people to be most effective at addressing issues regarding *social inclusion*, followed by *loneliness and isolation* and *health and well being*. MLAs rated arts and crafts activities for older people as least effective at *giving older people a voice* and addressing issues concerning *poverty*.

Table 10.3 illustrates effectiveness rating by party membership. The DUP and Sinn Fein both rated arts and crafts activities as being most effective in addressing *social inclusion*, whereas the UUP and SDLP felt it was most effective at addressing issues concerning *loneliness and isolation*. Alliance party members felt that arts and crafts activities were most effective at addressing *health and wellbeing*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Theme</th>
<th>DUP</th>
<th>SF</th>
<th>UUP</th>
<th>SDLP</th>
<th>Alliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness &amp; Isolation</td>
<td>3.77 (2)</td>
<td>4.05 (3)</td>
<td>4.80 (1)</td>
<td>4.25 (1)</td>
<td>3.87 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Wellbeing</td>
<td>3.65 (3)</td>
<td>4.35 (2)</td>
<td>4.53 (2)</td>
<td>3.78 (4)</td>
<td>3.94 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>2.22 (5)</td>
<td>3.16 (5)</td>
<td>3.06 (5)</td>
<td>3.17 (5)</td>
<td>2.29 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Inclusion</td>
<td>3.82 (1)</td>
<td>4.60 (1)</td>
<td>4.26 (3)</td>
<td>4.18 (2)</td>
<td>3.42 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Older People a Voice</td>
<td>2.65 (4)</td>
<td>3.56 (4)</td>
<td>3.51 (4)</td>
<td>3.97 (3)</td>
<td>2.00 (5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the parties (with the exception of the SDLP) felt that arts and crafts activities were least effective in addressing issues of *poverty* and *giving older people a voice*, in comparison to the other issues.

Members from three political parties provided comments (i.e. DUP, Sinn Fein and the UUP) and these are presented in Table 10.4. The feedback typically illustrated the perceived value of arts and crafts activities in combating loneliness via social interaction. However, the comments made by Sinn Fein MLAs recognised opportunities for developing and sharing skills.
Table 10.4
MLA Research Panel Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Gives them an opportunity to meet with other people and provides a platform and voice for them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Good for social meetings but policy issues need strong advocates e.g. Commissioner for Older People.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Gets them out and about but doesn’t address poverty or give them a voice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Can’t see how arts and crafts could help older people fight poverty or give them a voice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Arts and crafts activities cannot resolve all the issues named above.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A lot of elderly live alone and therefore interaction at day centres or Tuesday clubs or in residential homes is vital for them to help their mood and esteem.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sinn Fein</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Any activity which can address issues facing the elderly is important.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Older people want to be included and recognised for their talent and contribution.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Brings older people together for group activity, thus helping social inclusion. Pass on craft skills to young.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Arts and crafts provision encourages participation with other people perhaps similarly isolated. But involvement with arts and crafts stimulates the mind and body.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I know quite a few groups who involve in this type of activity - the arts and crafts do work but to some it is the meeting of getting out that is important.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Arts and craft are often carried out in groups/classes. This brings individuals into contact with peers. Meeting in groups encourages a stronger voice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The activities provide a purpose and structure to the day, offer social contact and cohesion but do not necessarily generate wealth or attract attention.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Arts &amp; crafts no direct effect to any extent to poverty.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10.5 Discussion

Discussions with the Steering Group and the Bellwether sample illustrate that issues concerning the economy and health and social care are most visible on the policy landscape. However, it is evident that related older people’s issues (particularly those connected to regarding poverty, social isolation, independent living and quality of care) are high on the political agenda. The age sector is believed to be strong advocates and have secured commitments within the PfG as a result of ongoing campaigns.

However, the potential partnership between the arts and age sector on selected social issues has not greatly infiltrated political consciousness. There is a general understanding of how arts engagement can help alleviate isolation and improve wellbeing via social contact. However, this has not yet been reflected in financial commitment. With some exceptions it is considered that there is limited understanding of the power of the arts to assist with self expression, communication and lifelong learning.

The discussions and survey results indicate that there are some potential ambassadors for the increased use of the arts to meet policy objectives (e.g. CAL Committee, DUP, Sinn Fein, Elderly & Community Care Unit). However further work needs to take place to
build the profile of the AOP through increased collaboration between the age and arts sectors. During Baseline and Interim stage senior representatives of the Arts Council have focused upon building relationships with the CAL Committee members. However, the AOP and its relationship with and, emphasis upon delivering core social justice issues does not appear to have a sufficiently high enough profile at Departmental level.

It has been suggested that the AOP could learn from Féile. This community festival originated as a direct response to the conflict in the north of Ireland. Its purpose was to celebrate the positive side of the community in west Belfast in terms of its creativity and its passion for the arts and for sport. Féile is clear about its aims - to demonstrate, promote and celebrate the experiences, culture, creativity, skills and potential of West Belfast and its people, to promote social inclusion and the celebration of diversity, to actively participate in the economic regeneration of West Belfast and to provide a diverse range of opportunities for community participation and the expression of self-esteem and identity through arts.
11 Programme Appraisal

11.1 Introduction

The AOP has very specific strategic themes which the arts Council aim to deliver through the commissioned projects. Overall, the AOP aims to utilise the arts to influence attitudes towards older people, the delivery of services and policy development. Active ageing, civic engagement, participation and advocacy are at the core of the programme and there is clear alignment with current research and strategy.

The Mental Capital and Wellbeing\textsuperscript{20} Foresight report identifies mental ill health and the wellbeing of older adults and the under-utilisation of their mental capital (i.e. ability to learn, think and use of emotional resources) as two important future challenges for Government. These two factors are believed to be related and strongly linked to the negative stereotyping of old people – both within their own age group and in wider society. The report recommends a number of interventions:

- Promoting social networking through group interventions involving educational and social activity, targeting social isolation and loneliness, volunteering and interventions that promote trusting relationships, frequent contacts with friends and activities which seek to improve the quality of social relationships;\textsuperscript{21}
- Reducing age-related mental decline by adopting a healthy lifestyle to protect against natural cognitive decline (e.g. increased physical activity and engagement and managing stress);
- Promoting learning for older adults via different approaches to acquiring new skills;
- Valued and valuable engagement through helping and supporting other older adults and young people by transferring and sharing skills; and
- Combating negative societal attitudes.

The report concludes that the best people to demonstrate the potential of older adults are older adults themselves – via raising the profile of older adults who continue to demonstrate high levels of achievement, showcasing the potential of older adults to help and connect across generations and tackling negative attitudes in Government. There is a call for a greater focus on the positive potential of older people, to address the stigma associated with "old age".

This chapter discusses the impact of the programme according to the overarching objectives and outcomes presented within the AOP evaluation framework and the objectives outlined in ACNI’s Creative Connections objectives. It also proposes a number of development considerations upon entering the final phase of the programme.

11.2 Impact: Isolation and Loneliness

Table 11.1 illustrates the AOP objective and desired outcome in relation to combating isolation and loneliness.

Table 11.1
Outcomes: Isolation and Loneliness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| To provide opportunities for social interaction through arts-led interventions and projects | • Increase social interaction through participatory arts projects;  
  • Positive relationships developed between people from different backgrounds and experiences, especially of The Troubles;  
  • Older people who have participated in the programme lifted out of isolation and loneliness. |

The short-term outcome depicted in the AOP Logic Model relates to increased opportunities for social interaction through engagement in arts based activities. It is considered that the initial projects funded under the AOP have successfully demonstrated their ability to combat isolation and loneliness through increased social interaction and at least 800 people have benefited from activities. Overall, a high proportion of respondents stated that they lived alone and this in itself is correlated with feelings of loneliness. Indeed, analysis of the 3-point Loneliness Scale scores illustrated that almost half of the sample lacked companionship at least sometimes, with nearly one third feeling left out and/or isolated at times. This not only illustrates that loneliness is an issue for older people in general, but that the programme has been successful in its reach.

A number of grantees targeted groups who are particularly vulnerable to social isolation as a result of their personal circumstances. For example, participants in the NI Hospice combined arts project have been diagnosed as being terminally ill. Hospice staff reported that during the arts activities the Day Hospice had become a noisy and social space, as patients discussed their work, engaged in dance and movement and enjoyed the distraction from their illness. The exhibited ceramic structure created by patients communicates the role the Hospice has played in people's lives over the years and as such demonstrates the value of the service to others. Derg Valley Care’s “CLIPART”, although in its initial stages, will work with older people with dementia to develop a memory book in conjunction with a local school and this will be circulated to Day Centres in order to stimulate further reminiscence work. The organisation will also work with older adults with physical disabilities to develop a comedy which will be performed and documented in a film.

The pre-/post- comparison group scores did show some positive movement with regards to the decreased number of people stating that they often lack companionship. However, feelings of isolation remained comparatively stable over the period, suggesting the need for sustained activities that enable people to connect with others and which provide an opportunity for relationships to develop.

It is important that staff actively participate and become involved in the spirit of the projects and a number of grantees reported that they had deepened their relationships with participants as a result of the informal sessions. Another benefit of the AOP has been to enable older people to engage with others who are of a similar age and experiencing common life experiences/struggles. Some projects utilised reminiscence and storytelling as a vehicle for group bonding and this seems to have provided social benefits in terms of learning about others and establishing common ground. Despite the recruitment of artists with considerable experience in working with older people, feedback suggests that the work has provided them with a greater insight and appreciation of the
types of problems currently affecting older people – stressing the need for services which can help lift people out of isolation.

The participant survey suggests that the majority of individuals have had a positive experience of the arts and feel that they played an active role in their specific project. This really is important to the success of the AOP, as engagement and creative outputs must be based upon participants’ individual and collective experience and needs. Three quarters of survey respondents stated that they had developed good friendships as a result of participation.

The Monday Club facilitators reported increased numbers at sessions and further referrals to other classes as a result of the AOP and over half the respondents reported that they had taken part in other groups and activities as a result of the AOP project. This is also an important aspect of the programme and could be further developed in light of the fact that the primary barrier to arts participation is a lack of information about local activities.

To date, a small number of End of Project Reports have been received - with each grantee outlining that their work has been cross-community in nature. However, although an obvious benefit, in the majority of cases contact and relationship development between people from different religious backgrounds has not been the primary focus of the activities.

For example, in Round One Upper Springfield Development Trust targeted individuals living on the Shankill/Springfield Road interface in West Belfast through Forthspring. Although the activities were more focused upon uniting older people in highlighting current social issues, some poems developed during creative writing sessions did highlight the struggles of both communities during The Troubles. Similarly issues of contested space were explored through choosing the former Andersonstown Barracks site as a showcase venue. The high profile showcase assisted to help a number of Shankill residents to greater understand the symbolism of the site to local people and effectively highlighted the ability of the arts to transform and animate space. Another benefit of this project was that it partially targeted vulnerable people who did not belong to an established group and led to the development of a circle of friends who continue to meet.

Despite, illustrating the positive social impact of the AOP for older people who are at risk of loneliness, it is considered that the projects completed to date have not fully demonstrated the value of the arts in raising public awareness of loneliness, nor assisting self-reflection and debate on the issue. This needs to be addressed if the AOP is to reach beyond the social aspect of the activities towards increasing understanding of the need to nurture older people’s social networks. Furthermore, the long-term desire that AOP participants are “lifted out of isolation and loneliness” is difficult to gauge and it is suggested that more efforts need to be placed upon signposting and sustaining relationships outside the programme’s lifetime.

11.3 Impact: Social Inclusion

Table 11.2 illustrates the AOP outcomes in relation to addressing social inclusion.
### Table 11.2

**Outcomes: Social Inclusion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Combating social exclusion of older people through arts interventions that promote inclusion, free movement and sharing | • Improved access to services and participation in arts programmes;  
• Increased opportunity for new relationships with people of a similar age and on an intergenerational basis focusing on learning a new creative skill;  
• Decreased feelings of exclusion amongst older people in society and increasing awareness of age discrimination amongst those who have participated in the programme. |

AOP outcomes stress improved access to services, relationship building between older people and other groupings and decreased feelings of exclusion. Many of the AOP projects do target marginalised groups – particularly, those living in residential homes, or individuals dealing with mental health illness and life limiting illness.

For example, Age on Stage’s “Join-Along-A-Sing-Along” is a partnership between Age on Stage, Woodvale and Rosevale Care Homes and Lisburn Stroke Scheme. Mindwise New Vision’s “Our Voices” targets older people with mental illness and involves the production of a film which will voice people’s experiences of both ageing and mental illness.

Four of the 32 projects target minority ethnic groups. These include Waterside Theatre Company’s “Sharing Voices Through Different Artforms” which incorporates Sai Pak Chinese Community Project. The latter involves a drama and storytelling project focusing on ageing, cultural traditions and personal life expectations and experiences. Northern Visions’ “Grand Visions” also partners with Chinese Welfare Association, the Polish Community Association and South Belfast Roundtable on Racism. An Monia Tober’s “Traveller Reflections” is the only such project which is completed. This aimed to introduce the arts to older Traveller women and to provide creative opportunities to express their culture and engage in a range of artforms. The women’s lack of confidence and familiarity with the arts was a barrier which initially needed to be overcome. However, the women have been inspired to complete their work and to develop skills in clay and glazes at the Island Arts Centre in Lisburn.

Seven AOP projects have an intergenerational aspect and aim to promote increased contact and understanding between people of different ages. For example, Big Telly will facilitate intergenerational workshops and performances and post-show discussions will be held in post-primary schools. The Demeter Project brought young and older women from Ardoyne and Dee Street together to collectively explore women’s roles over the last one hundred years.

Project feedback does illustrate that some older people feel that they are discriminated against because of their age – a feeling that they are perceived as a burden to society, rather than active players. Grantees and participants have detailed that a natural sharing of creative skills, enthusiasm and motivation has occurred during the sessions. Mutual learning has also occurred between the young and the old and between participants, family members and the wider community – highlighting that older people have a wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise to contribute to society.
It is suggested that the AOP needs to continue to target marginalised groups. However, the issue of societal stereotyping and discrimination against older people as a whole needs to be provided with a higher profile in order to meet the programmes longer-term objectives of widespread attitudinal change.

11.4 Impact: Poverty

Table 11.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing opportunities for older people living in disadvantaged/marginalised rural and urban areas to access and participate in arts activities</td>
<td>Increase opportunity for participation in arts activities at no cost to the older person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After low levels of applications in Fermanagh and Armagh during the opening round, the AOP Community Development Officer developed partnerships with relevant organisations in order to raise awareness of the programme. Geo-spatial mapping of respondent addresses from Round One projects revealed that the majority were located in Counties Antrim, Down and Londonderry, with only a small proportion based in County Tyrone and Armagh (and none in County Fermanagh). Overall, around one quarter of respondents lived in rural areas. Awards to applicants based in Tyrone Armagh and Fermanagh remained low in Round Two. However, organisations such as Mindwise New Vision, South West Age Partnership, Ulster Orchestra, Ederney Community Development Trust and Carn Media will recruit within these areas, so any gaps in activity should be addressed as the programme rolls out.

The AOP has actively encouraged organisations to recruit individuals from disadvantaged areas and this has been proactively promoted in Round Two through revising the evaluation criteria to incorporate an NRA indicator. Indeed, analysis indicated that almost half of survey respondents lived in NRAs and this proportion should at least be sustained going forward due to the additional evaluation weighting (seven Round Two projects target NRAs).

Respondents reported high levels of arts event attendance and engagement in arts activities, in comparison with general population surveys of older people. However, almost half of the respondents had not been engaged in arts activity within the last year and as such the programme has succeeded in attracting new audiences and there is evidence that participants’ perception of what constitutes “the arts” has widened as a result.

Grantees believed that people were initially attracted by the fact that the AOP activities were free and had transport included. Indeed, Engage with Age’s "Travelling On” highlighted to Translink the importance of accessible and affordable transport to older people’s independence, mobility and quality of life. Final showcases, performances and exhibitions have all been free of charge and some projects have attempted to increase audiences and arts experiences through the AOP. For example, Prime Cut enabled people living in disadvantaged areas to attend subsidised theatrical performances and Ulster Orchestra will distribute 1,000 complimentary tickets to older people’s groups during the Celebration of Age festival. Golden Thread Gallery also invited participants to attend other workshop sessions free of charge.
Perceived affordability of arts activities is a barrier to engaging older people, particularly those who have a low income and poor access to transport. Concern regarding the cost of the arts activities increased within the pre-/post comparison group and, this is an issue which needs further exploration.

11.5 Impact: Health Issues/Dementia

Table 11.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities for older people to participate in arts led activities which may help improve the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the participants</td>
<td>• Increased opportunities for participation in arts led activities that help stimulate older people at a physical, mental and social level; • Awareness of the health benefits of increased participation in creative and artistic activity; • Health and well-being and quality of life for older people participating in the programme improved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven AOP projects were led by organisations specialising in health and/or arts and health (i.e. Praxis Care, Derg Valley Care, Alzheimer’s Society, NI Hospice, Mindwise New Vision, Arts Care and Open Arts). However, at application stage 27 out of the 32 successful projects stated that they aimed to address health/dementia related issues.

Indeed, a significant proportion of survey respondents stated that they had a long-term illness health problem or disability. Although, the majority rated their physical health as *good* or *fairly good* – mental health and enjoyment of life was more likely to be rated as *good*, compared to physical health. However AOP respondents perceived health problems as being less of a barrier to arts participation, than did their counterparts in an Arts Council public survey of older people.

There were small improvements in physical health reported anecdotally, particularly with regards to fine motor movements through crafts activities, improved mobility through dance and breathing and voice control through drama related exercises. A number of artists also reported improved concentration and memory as a result of participants’ learning movement sequences or text. Similarly, although only one project working with older people with dementia has completed, it provides anecdotal evidence of recognition and stimulation through Life Story Book work. Overall, ten Round One and Two projects will facilitate arts activities for people and dementia.

For example in a one year pilot programme, the Alzheimer’s Society will work through Praxis Dementia Cafe/Activity Clubs based in Coalisland, Downpatrick, Lurgan, Enniskillen, Omagh and Derry utilising the medium of music. Reminiscence Network NI will provide training for artists and volunteers, focusing upon reminiscence and recall and effective non-verbal communication. A DVD and you-tube broadcast will share resultant good practice. A further pilot programme involving a partnership between Arts Care, Hearts and Minds Scotland and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust will see the adaption of the successful Clown Doctors programme for the benefit of older people with dementia. This will result in a training programme and a 16 week programme in two health care facilities, whereby two Skylark Clown Doctors will visit on a weekly basis to provide
tailored participative sessions for older people. The intention is to establish Skylark programmes across Northern Ireland.

In addition to interventions with target groups, the research suggests that the AOP participants have experienced small quality of life improvements. Initial responses on the WEMWBS indicated that 69% of respondents always or often felt able to make up their own minds about things, 60% always or often felt close to other people and 57% stated that they always or often were thinking clearly. To a lesser extent individuals reported always or often feeling useful, relaxed, able to deal with their problems well and optimistic about the future.

Pre-/post- comparator analysis indicated that a small number of people rated their physical health less positively over the period, although mental health and enjoyment of life remained stable. However, the proportion of respondents feeling optimistic, useful and thinking clearly always or often increased upon exiting the programme. Although the sample size is small and direct inferences with regards to the health benefits of AOP participation can’t be substantiated, the results do appear to conform to wider and more robust research evidence. However, there is a need to build a stronger evidence base if post-programme impact upon wellbeing is to be gauged.

Indeed, participant feedback and anecdotal evidence from grantees and artists suggests that participation in the AOP has had a positive impact upon wellbeing. This appears to be related to social interaction, learning and skills development. The AOP survey respondents were most likely to agree that they felt good about what they had achieved during sessions, they had tried and learned new things and had played an active role. Around three quarters of the respondents reported that they felt able to express themselves, gained confidence and surprised themselves and others with their achievements.

Only a small proportion of the survey sample reported caring responsibilities. However, a number of projects will include this group alongside those whom they care for (e.g. Ulster Orchestra’s Respond to Music and Alzheimer’s Society). Feedback from carers additionally suggests that involvement in the AOP has also been valuable with regards to enabling social interaction and respite.

11.6 Impact: Strengthening the Voice of Older People

The majority of the AOP outcomes relate to the need to “strengthen the voice of older people”, via artistic expression, capacity building and advocacy. Table 11.5 highlights the relevant AOP outcomes.
### Table 11.5

**Outcomes: Strengthening the Voice of Older People**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Provide opportunities for older people to develop skills which will strengthen their voice on issues that affect them – artistic, professional and personal development skills. | • Increased skills amongst older people – including artistic, capacity building, community development and advocacy skills;  
• Awareness of the programme and social justice issues amongst key stakeholders, policy makers, service providers and wider society;  
• Awareness of older people’s issues raised and more positive attitudes to ageing within wider society;  
• Older people able to artistically express their negative feelings of loneliness, social exclusion and positive feelings of empowerment and celebration;  
• Government policy on older people issues positively influenced. |

Participants reported that they valued the opportunity to develop new skills and indeed to familiarise themselves with former past-times such as crocheting and knitting. The use of professional artists has been important – both in illustrating the value put on the programme and in ensuring that the process and end-products have been of a high artistic quality. As noted previously, the majority of participants felt proud of what they had achieved through the project and as a result the AOP highlights that physical and mental health problems do not necessarily restrict creative expression. However, it is important that individual needs are considered during project development. Some participants reported feeling excluded from activities due to visual or physical impairments and this needs to be addressed going forward.

The use of the arts to highlight and address social justice issues is a relatively new concept and many applicants have needed assistance from the Community Development Officer in order to develop this aspect of their projects. Hence, Round One awards are not considered to be as strong in meeting the strengthening the voice strategic aim, in comparison to those awarded in the second round. However, the projects do support capacity and confidence building amongst participants – helping others to see them and their skills in a new light as a result of the AOP activities.

It is believed that grantees need to be more direct in enabling participants to express and highlight current social issues through the art forms – raising their profile amongst service providers and local and central government. A number of projects have achieved this (or have to potential to). For example, as a result of Round One activities Upper Springfield Development Trust will discuss current social issues for older people living in West Belfast at Stormont, Engage with Age will inform Translink of older people’s transport needs, Big Telly will facilitate theatrical performances on local issues and organise post-show discussions.

It is suggested that the Strengthening the Voice strategic aim should be considered of utmost importance to the AOP. At an individual level, it is apparent that participants do feel more confident in their abilities and in some cases interpersonal communication has
improved. However, as a pilot programme the AOP needs to illustrate its worth to the public and policy makers.

Although the event survey response is currently low, the results indicate that whilst the majority of attendees felt that the event had indicated that older people were engaged and stimulated in the arts, under half reported that they had substantially increased their own awareness of older people’s issues. Just under half of the event attendees reported more positive feelings towards older people as a result (many were already positive). It is suggested that more emphasis is placed upon the need for end of project showcases and exhibitions to clearly communicate the core social justice messages of the AOP.

Again, awareness of the AOP appears to be low amongst key policy makers and although MLAs are appreciative of the arts ability to combat issues such as social inclusion and loneliness, they are less convinced of its benefits for health, strengthening the voice of older people and highlighting poverty and disadvantage.

11.7 Growing Audiences and Increasing Participation

Theme Three of the Arts Council’s five year strategy Creative Connections (Growing Audiences and Increasing Participation) emphasises the importance of exploring and developing opportunities for older people to engage with the arts. One of the objectives for the Arts and Health policy is to “develop a strategic approach towards addressing the inclusion of older people and other marginalised groups in the arts” and with these objectives in mind, the arts Council’s Arts and Older People Strategy was developed.

Under the Growing Audiences theme, it is considered that the development of the AOP has succeeded in both expanding opportunities to enjoy the arts and to participate in arts activities. However, analysis of the AOP survey responses does suggest a higher level of arts engagement amongst participants, than the general population. Similarly event attendees also demonstrated prior engagement with the arts. Despite this, a significant proportion of participants live in disadvantaged areas and/or belong to marginalised groups (e.g. people with dementia, those living in residential settings, people living alone, minority ethnic groups).

Participant feedback suggests that AOP sessions have led to a desire to become more involved in arts activities and there is evidence that people have joined other groups as a result. However, increased likelihood of attending arts events was reported by 57% of survey respondents.

An array of art forms have featured in the programme to include dance and movement, ceramics, textiles and felt work, willow sculptures, candle making, printing, poetry, storytelling, visual arts, drama and performance, music, singing, glass painting, photography, film making, calligraphy, jewellery making, woodturning and digital media. As a result there is evidence that participants’ perceptions of “the arts” have been challenged and activities are believed to be more accessible. However, the research has highlighted that the Arts Council still needs to address certain barriers which may prevent some older people from embracing arts activity. These include affordability (and transport), information provision and perceived lack of knowledge of the arts.

The Interim findings also illustrate that the AOP also meets Theme Two of Creative Connections (Strengthening the Arts) through supporting artist and community partnerships. Although many of the commissioned artists have experience of working with older people, lesser numbers have expertise in arts and social justice and the experience has provided learning and understanding in terms of artistic development and
Theme One of Creative Connections involves promoting the value of the arts. This theme involves improving recognition of the contribution which the arts can make to society and influencing Government regarding the role of the arts in achieving policy objectives. Whilst the AOP projects have succeeded in obtaining significant local media coverage, its profile and value is still relatively undiscovered. The planned AOP newsletter, recent partnership with Bealtaine and the planned celebratory AOP event should assist in raising programme awareness in the coming year. However, the current economic climate means that securing Government funding may be difficult.

11.8 Recommendations

The aim of the AOP evaluation is to highlight the impact of the programme over its lifetime and to make formative recommendations with regards to its operation and development. The following suggestions are made, in line with the outcomes outlined in the Logic Model:

11.8.1 Application Stage

- Despite the time commitment involved in organising and facilitating outreach events, it is considered that the Arts Council should invest in raising the profile of the AOP in regional areas such as Counties Tyrone, Fermanagh and Armagh, tied in with the final round applications. Despite, increased numbers of submissions from these areas in Round Two, a low percentage received awards and as such there is a need to develop capacity and experience in rural areas. This could be achieved through promoting and encouraging partnership working between established arts and community based organisations;

- Analysis of the participant surveys and feedback from artists suggests that few men have been attracted to AOP activities. Therefore it is suggested that the AOP attempts to address this imbalance during the final application phase;

- As well as supporting the work of existing groups, it is important that vulnerable and isolated older people are recruited into new social settings. It is suggested that consideration should be given to ensuring that applicants do not merely recruit from existing networks and are aware of the potential benefits of targeting via alternative means (e.g. GPs, social workers); and

- Sustainability is a primary concern, especially in light of current funding constraints. Therefore, organisations should outline how they will attempt to ensure that arts engagement may be continued in the future. This might be achieved through developing links with arts networks, Council Arts Development Officers, providing training for care workers and/or signposting to similar activities within the community. The overriding aim would be to increase information provision and to convey that arts involvement does not have to be expensive. Some groups such as Loughlin Island GAC, The Monday Club and Castlereagh Lifestyle Forum have illustrated that relatively small amounts of money (£2,000-3,000) can stretch a long way.
11.8.2 Professional Development

- The Arts Council has delivered information and training sessions to grantees in Round One and Two. This developmental aspect is crucial to the successful embedding of the AOP. Although many artists have experience in working with older people, fewer have expertise in facilitating discussions around personal social issues. Therefore it is suggested that an Induction Programme should be developed as an integral part of the AOP. This would cover programme aims and objectives, evaluation and monitoring requirements, financial reporting and publicity. However, it is recommended that additional training sessions are offered. For example, continuing the Dementia Awareness training, intergenerational practice, ethical issues when working with vulnerable groups. There must also be increased emphasis upon fulfilling the data collection element of the grant as poor response rates has negatively impacted the quality of the analysis and strength of the conclusions drawn at Interim stage;

- It is also recommended that emphasis is placed upon building age awareness (to include application of art form for those with physical and mental health problems). This aspect would focus upon supporting grantees to bring out and highlight the social justice elements of their work. Steering Group members such as Engage with Age, WEA, Age NI and Age Sector Platform have vast experience in lobbying on behalf of older people and have a raft of experience to impart. Similarly, the survey conducted on behalf of the Pensioner’s Parliament illustrates social issues at local County level. It is considered that support may be needed to enable grantees to draw out some of the difficult issues; and

- Feedback from project partners illustrates that organisations and individuals would benefit from informal networking opportunities. Therefore the proposition of an AOP Newsletter and website is welcomed. It is believed that project case studies are an excellent way of highlighting the potential benefits of arts activities and inspiring others to push the creative boundaries. A dedicated website would be a substantial step towards establishing the discipline.

11.8.3 Strategic Development

- The Arts Council’s partnership with the Bealtaine Festival will undoubtedly assist with promoting and raising the profile of the AOP. However, upon entering into the final stage of funding, efforts also need to be directed at ensuring the social justice aspects permeate the consciousness of policymakers and relevant service providers. For example, the AOP could help make the connection between quality of life and the need for activity therapists in residential care settings, or the impact of creative partnerships between older people’s groups and schools upon social cohesion and inclusion. There is increased potential for the outputs of the AOP to link more strongly to big policy issues such as welfare cuts and health and social care reform – through targeted messaging to key individuals and alignment with age sector campaigns;

- Upon recommendation of the Steering Group membership, it is considered that older people and/or experienced arts practitioners could add value to the existing Steering Group expertise and represent the views of older people; and

- Although at an early stage, in light of the above recommendations the Arts Council may wish to explore the potential of reinvigorating the Arts for Older People Network in the longer term, as a means for sustaining and developing the work of the AOP.
Appendix One
Project Descriptions