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MUSEUM

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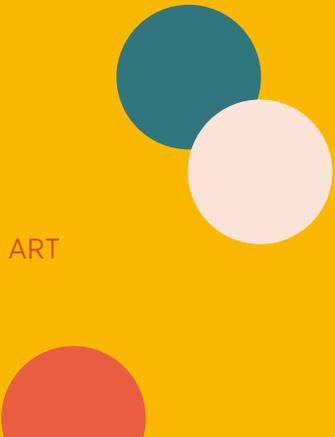
# Museums of the future: Caring for communities as well as collections



Phase Two Evaluation Report  
May 2019 to May 2022



**PATHWAYS TO WELLBEING**  
CHANGING LIVES THROUGH ART



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# Director's Foreword

When I arrived at the Holburne five years ago, Pathways to Wellbeing seemed well-established. Though only a year old, it had developed out of previous work focused on the Gardener's Lodge in Sydney Gardens. It has been an honour to watch it grow and evolve, learning from experience and deepening its impact. I am deeply grateful to the team of staff, freelance artists and volunteers, led by Louise Campion, who have nurtured this programme. I am equally grateful to the many members who overcome all sorts of challenges to come together to engage with the Holburne and its partner museums, and to make art of great quality and humbling honesty and integrity.

This second phase of Pathways culminated with an exhibition and symposium entitled *People Make Museums*. The name could not be more apt: the museum is a place of encounter and only in coming together with people do the exhibits come alive. Without people, a museum is nothing but a receptacle of inanimate objects. We each bring our own experiences and subjectivities and they shape how we view, understand, analyse, and reflect what we see. That is why I always say that we at the Holburne learn as much from the Pathways groups as they might from the Museum.

For some time, our strapline has been 'Changing Lives Through Art', and it is wonderful to see this embodied in the testimony of many of the Pathways to Wellbeing participants. More than that, as this report acknowledges, the ethos and practice of Pathways has shaped

the Holburne. As it has grown, Pathways has involved everybody in the organisation and our shared learning led us to agree a new Vision in 2019, 'to make the Holburne an open, welcoming, inspiring and empowering space for everyone'. At the heart of this vision is the powerful relationship of art, creativity and social and personal wellbeing. This belief will shape every aspect of the Museum: the way we present ourselves to the world, the welcome at the door, our ambitious volunteer programme, and the stories that we tell through our collection and our programme of exhibitions. The Holburne is a small, independent museum with big ambitions, and I am deeply proud of the way we have been able to contribute to and support our local community, developing strong working partnerships, especially after three years that have challenged so many of us individually and collectively. Thank you again to everyone who has contributed: to the funders, The National Lottery Community Fund and the St John's Foundation; to all who have organised, led, and facilitated groups and, of course, to everyone who has engaged with the groups and enriched the Holburne in so many varied ways.



Chris Stephens,  
Director of the Holburne Museum,  
Bath

# Executive Summary

**Pathways to Wellbeing Phase Two** is successful and well established, supporting people with lived experience of mental health issues and social isolation by offering free creative, museum-based opportunities which promote mental health and wellbeing. People living in Bath and a wide surrounding area benefit from the programme with 250 people regularly engaged in Pathways to Wellbeing groups for six weeks or more in the last 3 years. Pathways to Wellbeing has become part of the community support network; professionals and health and community organisations know and understand what it does and how it can improve people's wellbeing.

Phase One (2016-19) explored how to engage people in creative opportunities across five museums in Bath and found the well-known Five Ways to Wellbeing framework<sup>1</sup> useful for improving mental health:

- Connect with others
- Be active
- Take notice
- Learn
- Give back.

It underpins Pathways to Wellbeing updated Theory of Change (see Appendix Three), and works to achieve the Holburne Museum's vision: Changing Lives through Art.

Phase Two (2019-22) built on learning and good practice, consolidating core work and introducing new work streams to engage young people and provide museum outreach. Pathways to Wellbeing groups offer safe, welcoming, non-judgemental spaces where people enjoy creating, learning and working together. Emphasis on high quality art teaching

continues to be a success factor and supports people to develop art skills, and a keen interest in museums and heritage.

Existing partnerships strengthened and deepened making it easier to work together and adapt quickly to changes and especially the pandemic. New partnerships developed and it may be timely to re-start the Advisory Group for Pathways to Wellbeing (faded during the pandemic) to involve new and old partners.

New work reached younger age groups: 11-25-year-olds affected by mental health issues and often loneliness. New partnerships were developed with health, community and youth led organisations, providing support and joint working. This led to the development of different kinds of groups and art projects, and critical views about the museum's collection seen through younger eyes. A younger group now feel part of the museum and enjoy heritage assets whilst having greater representation within the museum through the appointment of a young person on the Learning and Engagement Advisory Committee which reports to the Trustees.

Outreach work took museum inspired creative activities to community groups across Bath and North East Somerset, involving people who may not have visited a museum and removing barriers of location, cost and mobility. People experienced similar but not as intense benefits to museum-based groups.

The pandemic provided both an unexpected challenge and opportunity. Online creative sessions and groups were quickly developed and Create@home art boxes delivered to vulnerable young people and adult group

participants. There was much learning about how to do this well, maintain quality and inspire connections with the museum's collection whilst the building was closed. 50 people a week accessed online activities during lockdowns. A digital strategy for the programme emerged and a popular Instagram '*Changing Lives Through Art*' enabled people's 'made at home' art work to be shared by a wider community. Two virtual art galleries were created and populated.

Feedback from participants was positive, reporting activities helped combat loneliness, provided distraction and enjoyment, and reduced anxiety. From end of project surveys\*, 73% of respondents who attended groups for 6 weeks or more, felt that attending 'had positively affected their wellbeing and quality of life' scoring 5-6 (on a 1-6 scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree with the statement).

Pathways to Wellbeing contributes to the growing evidence base about connections between art, heritage and wellbeing. Sharing learning has been a key part of Phase Two and the team have supported other South West museums to develop creative museum-based programmes promoting wellbeing. Two learning symposiums attracted a wide range of museum, art and heritage professionals. Collaboration with academics and research in this field also continues and the Pathways to Wellbeing programme manager is jointly supervising a PhD student researching museums and wellbeing.

Transitions and endings are difficult. As in Phase One people are reluctant to leave groups, so more focus is needed on supporting participants

to progress on to other groups within and beyond the Pathways to Wellbeing programme. However many people do progress, with 11 Pathways to Wellbeing participants now museum volunteers and some people following further and higher arts education. Participants are encouraged to get involved in local arts networks and activities too.

There is no doubt Pathways to Wellbeing has grown over the last three years and with it the demands placed on the staff team as new work streams developed. A key recommendation is increasing staffing at managerial level and building in 'pauses' in the work programme to allow time for reflection and planning.

Over the last three years the Holburne Museum has put the Five Ways to Wellbeing into action for itself, caring for and about the community. The resulting cultural shift is benefiting the community and the museum. The ethos of Pathways to Wellbeing – how it works to make people feel safe, respected and welcome – has become embedded in the ethos of the wider museum. People engage more deeply with the museum, and the museum engages more deeply with the community.

**Museums of the future care for their communities as well as their collections and the past.**

1. Aked et al (2008) *Five ways to wellbeing*. London: New Economics Foundation <https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

\* sample of 72

# Pathways to Wellbeing Programme Phase Two

The Pathways to Wellbeing Phase Two Programme (May 2019 to May 2022) at the Holburne Museum in Bath, supports local people with lived experience of mental health issues and social isolation by offering free creative, museum-based opportunities which promote mental health and wellbeing. The programme is made possible by funding from The National Lottery Communities Fund and St John's Foundation, Bath.

Partnership working is a cornerstone of Pathways to Wellbeing and in Phase Two partnerships have strengthened and new partnerships been forged. Museum partners continued to offer their collections and impressive buildings so extending access of Pathways to Wellbeing participants to unique cultural assets across Bath:

- American Museum & Gardens in Bath
- Bath Abbey (new in Phase Two)
- Bath Preservation Trust museums:
  - Beckford's Tower
  - Herschel Museum of Astronomy
  - Museum of Bath Architecture, and
  - No 1 Royal Crescent
  - The Holburne Museum.

Phase One (2016 to 2019) established a successful core 'pathway' of creative groups for adults and is described in the Pathways to Wellbeing Phase One evaluation report<sup>2</sup>.

Pathways to Wellbeing has built on Phase One learning and experience, recruiting a programme assistant and continuing core work with adults offering a 'pathway' of progression routes from supported taught art sessions led by professional artists, to one-to-one mentoring, volunteering

opportunities and pursuing independent art practice. Phase Two development continued this core work and developed new work streams:

- supporting young people's mental health
- developing more outreach work
- sharing knowledge about effective museum based creative practice to promote mental health and wellbeing
- piloting small-scale 'social enterprise' group and consulting on sustainability

This Pathways to Wellbeing Phase Two evaluation is a summary report of progress and learning (except for sustainability which is being addressed separately). It makes recommendations for consideration and records achievements and challenges over the three years based on documentary evidence and end of project interviews.

See Appendix One for information about the evaluation methodology.

See Appendix Two for a list of Pathways to Wellbeing core work and new work streams.

2. Museums: changing lives through art – Evaluation of a partnership project May 2016 to April 2019 <https://www.holburne.org/learning/community-engagement/pathways-to-wellbeing/>

# Five Ways to Wellbeing

The well-known Five Ways to Wellbeing<sup>3</sup>, used by the NHS to promote mental wellbeing, underpinned a theory of change developed during Phase One of Pathways to Wellbeing. It continues to be a practical concept to understand the changes that happen for people and improvement in their wellbeing. An updated theory of change can be found in Appendix Three.

There is good evidence to suggest that the Five Ways to Wellbeing continues to offer positive, achievable steps for participants of Pathways to Wellbeing Phase Two. Evidence from participants (feedback forms, emails and records of comments, case studies), museum staff, partners, artists, volunteers, and professionals supporting people, described how people participated and positive change was noted over time. Three testimony stories from participants in Appendix Four describe the changes people experienced, as do the comments below from people participating in Pathways to Wellbeing.

**1. Connect with others** – meet with others, communicate, makes friends, opportunities for social interaction and to practice social skills

*'After the first week it was easier to interact, and I have exchanged phone numbers with one of the other group members and we now support each other via text which has been very positive.'*

Participant, Creativity for Wellbeing group for NHS staff 2022.

**2. Be active** – get out and about, become more physically active (this may be gradual)

*'The journey of coming to the museum, for some people coming into Bath, and coming into the building is as much part of the experience for people. It's important it's not a clinical environment... it's trying to get back to real life and focusing on the positive, the future.'*

Mentor, Discover Museums 2022.

*'They send a taxi there and back; I couldn't do it otherwise. I can't get to anything at the moment so to visit three inspirational venues that are so rich and multi-faceted is amazing. Ending is tough but I might be more open to joining another group now.'*

Fresh Art@ participant at a final session and experiencing mobility and other health issues 2022.

**3. Take notice** – become more aware of surroundings, enjoy the 'moment', develop interests

*'I've been inspired by quilts and textiles at the American Museum and I'm making mosaics with fabrics. I'm really keen to see everyone's work exhibited.'*

Fresh Art@ participant at a final session 2022.

3. Five ways to mental wellbeing <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

**4. Learn** – learn something new, acquire a skill, develop a new interest and find out about it

*“I’ve found art has helped as a form of distraction and also as something relaxing when I am stressed; it has also taught me useful art skills so that I can apply these to do art in my own time when my mental health isn’t great”*

*‘It’s nice to do something for me – not Uni. It’s something so different from my course (Science).’*

Student feedback Museums Inspire 2021.

*‘Some young people thought they couldn’t do it [making silver rings at a day long jewellery workshop] because it looked really professional. The workshop was well planned, and well resourced, such high quality and young people went away with a tangible product they felt proud of.’*

CEO Mentoring Plus 2022.

**5. Give back** – do something for someone else, work together in a group, be supportive of others

*‘They asked me to be a volunteer at Fresh Art@. I felt pleased to be asked. We have a written volunteer role. I offered a lot of gentle support for a member of the group. Our role is to be welcoming and help people feel safe and respected. I would do it again if they asked me.’*

Ex-participant of, and current volunteer with Fresh Art@ 2022.

*‘Having time to get to know my mentee and sharing the museum with her. Learning how to be a good mentor. Helping people can make you feel good!’*

Museum Mentor from Discover Museums Course, 2019.

Below: Our Creative Community: Group participants, artists and staff outside the People Make Museums exhibition, Holburne Museum, 2022



# Pathways to Wellbeing: Reach and Scope

Between  
May 2019-22  
Pathways  
to Wellbeing  
has supported:

**900** people who have participated in Pathways to Wellbeing activities

**280** face to face artist-led creative sessions in museums

**30** on-line creative sessions with museum staff and artists

**16** socially engaged artists (emerging professionals and established creative practitioners)

**520** Create@Home Art boxes and packs sent out into the community during lockdowns and after

**50** people a week accessing on-line creative activities during lockdowns

**36** museum collection-inspired downloadable creative activities + 13 demonstration films made by artists

250

people who have regularly attended face-to-face groups at the Holburne Museum (or partner museum) for 6 weeks or longer

1

collaborative 'lockdown' film co-created with 50 people from our pathways to Wellbeing creative community 'The House of Spoons' - The House of Spoons - YouTube

70

Heritage/Arts and Creative Facilitators who attended Learning Symposium 'Museums & Care'

2

Mindful May Up Late events - raising awareness of the role of the Arts and Heritage in supporting mental health and wellbeing

9

Exhibitions of participants artwork

11

Pathways to Wellbeing participants who have become museum volunteers



Top Right: Mindful May Up Late, Dancing in Nature, Holburne Museum, 2022

Right: Create@Home art box collected from school bus during lockdown, 2019

# The Museum as a Place of Care

Pathways to Wellbeing has created a cultural shift at the Holburne Museum, moving from thinking about audiences to thinking about community, and refocusing on people's relationships with the collection.

Dr Chris Stephens, Director of the Holburne Museum, reflected that the ethos of care, creativity and wellbeing that has developed out of Pathways to Wellbeing should be at the heart of the Holburne, part of the main story and spirit of the museum. The museum traditionally cares for objects, the collection and buildings and now it is caring for people and communities too.

*'Some of the things that have come out of Pathways to Wellbeing have influenced how we think about the museum, the mood, presentation, and how we decide on exhibitions for our programme.'*

*'We used to think impact was about numbers but now we're thinking about the deeper engagement of people with the museum and collection.'*

Dr Nuala Morse, of Leicester University and author of *The Museum as a Space of Social Care*<sup>4</sup> led a discussion at the 2022 Pathways to Wellbeing Symposium **People Make Museums** about what care in the museum looked like for the Holburne. Responses were wide ranging and interesting:

**A change in attitude across the museum** with everyone feeling it was their role to support Pathways to Wellbeing participants and people who face additional barriers to engaging. Louise Campion said, *'We are aiming at treating everyone with respect and for everyone to feel safe from that first*

*contact or email'*. She described how it is only when people feel safe that they can go on to enjoy and explore their creativity. She described how all staff and volunteers at the Holburne have this awareness now, which benefits everyone who visits, attends Pathways to Wellbeing groups and works or volunteers there.

*'There is no us and them now, there's just us.'*

Ex Pathways to Wellbeing Participant, now a volunteer, support worker and artist.

## Training and support for the Pathways to Wellbeing staff,

front of house team, museum volunteers and mentors, artists, creative facilitators. This includes an accredited Mental Health Aware course, safeguarding work around boundaries and understanding some of the 'hidden' barriers people face. This has helped the whole museum team become more aware of how to welcome and support people to enjoy and get the most out of a visit, this proved to be even more important when the museum re-opened and everyone was anxious about being safe.

**Creative activity sessions for staff and volunteers** to experience 'hands-on' making sessions for themselves. Being involved in creating a response to a museum object gave people a sense of what happens for participants. One volunteer said how vulnerable they felt showing others their artwork and reflected how it must feel for participants exhibiting their work and how far people have come to be able to do that. The same volunteer became intrigued by the material used (high quality clay) and researched it so demonstrating the curiosity that is awakened when people start creative activities.

## A support group for new Pathways to Wellbeing emerging artists

interested in promoting wellbeing through art. Training and reflective practice sessions plus sharing learning and downloadable activities, helped the group grow professionally and feel connected with other freelancers during lockdowns.

## Piloting a social-enterprise group – Pathways Artists Collective (PAC)

A group of former participants wanted to 'give back' to the project and were supported to set up 'PAC', donating their original artwork to be made into cards and sold in the museum shop. Artwork was selected anonymously by the shop manager. The group explored the processes involved in making art into a saleable product (from legal permissions and environmentally friendly wrapping to production issues). They were successful in producing professional cards which have sold in the shop but the profits did not cover staff capacity to continue to support the scaling up of this model.

Below: Staff at the Holburne experiencing a 'hands on' sculpture session, 2021

## Five Ways to Wellbeing for the museum

It's interesting to reflect that the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework underpinning Pathways to Wellbeing was seen in Phase One as something of benefit to participants and which happened to them. Phase Two of Pathways to Wellbeing has seen the Holburne Museum in particular, begin to embody the Five Ways to Wellbeing ethos and put it into action for itself, so benefiting the community and all who have contact with the museum.

*'We have moved away from talking about 'participants' and now think more about 'our creative community' which includes those who come to groups but also those who engaged on-line during lockdowns and the artists, volunteers and staff who are all engaged with Pathways to Wellbeing.'*

Louise Campion, Programme Manager, Pathways to Wellbeing.

4. Morse, N (2020) *The Museum as a Space of Social Care* Leicester: Routledge - an exploration of the new roles of museums as community places for those looking to support their own wellbeing and mental health.



## People Make Museums Exhibition

Exhibiting and showcasing art work has always been important for Pathways to Wellbeing. As well as giving people a sense of pride and achievement, it offers opportunities to share new narratives about museum collections and awareness of mental health with wider audiences.

In 2022 the Holburne mounted a unique exhibition **People Make Museums** which celebrated the creative and imaginative interactions which bring museums to life.

The project pushed boundaries about what museums mean to people who visit them, whose voices are represented and broke down barriers between professional artists, group participants and staff.

Showcasing sculptures made by 24 people, the exhibition highlighted how museums can be spaces of care not only for historical objects but for people and their ideas and creativity.

Each piece responded to the experience of visiting, volunteering, working in and attending supported creative groups as part of the Pathways creative community.

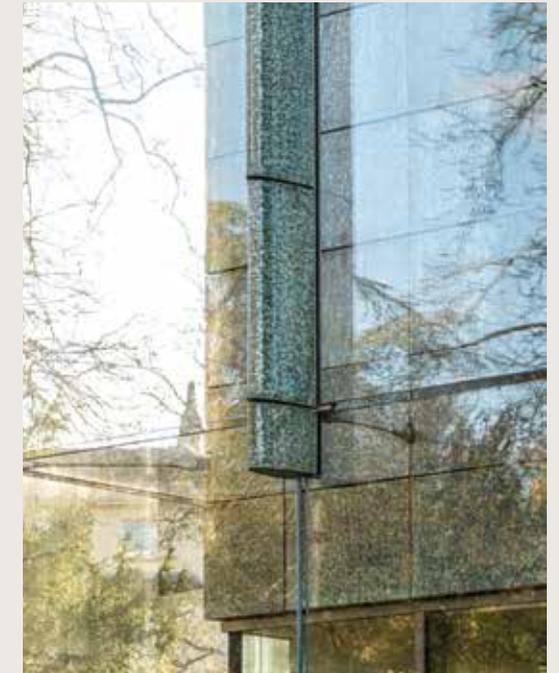
Exploring personal moments of connection, the exhibition sought to capture the fleeting conversations, sudden revelations, unspoken thoughts, sensations and feelings evoked by museum spaces and objects.

Source: People Make Museums Display 2022

Below: People Make Museums exhibition, Holburne Museum, 2022

Top right: Onward, Mary Caron-Courtney, exhibited as part of People Make Museums

Right: Steven Edgar, People Make Museums exhibition, sculpture in Cafe window, 2022





**Five Ways to Wellbeing**

**How the museum cared**

**What happened**

**Outcomes**

1.	<b>Connect with Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach sessions for those outside of Bath</li> <li>• Virtual outreach during the pandemic</li> <li>• Make everyone feel safe and welcome at the museum</li> <li>• Work with new parts of the community and new partners to extend reach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people across Bath and beyond access the museum's collection</li> <li>• The museum is an active part of the community rather than a destination for passive visits</li> <li>• Stronger partnerships = more resilient community</li> <li>• New partners = new opportunities</li> </ul>
2.	<b>Be Active</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opened the museum during lockdown via online activity</li> <li>• Provide staff and resources: art boxes, tuition, support to take part</li> <li>• Organised trips to partner museum sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community is supported during difficult times</li> <li>• Core work continues, and new work develops so more people benefit</li> <li>• An online gallery of art made by people interested in the museum</li> <li>• People visit new places</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Take Notice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value high quality artistic practice, specialist skills and materials and promote them</li> <li>• Explore different ways to work</li> <li>• Challenge traditional ideas of what a museum is and who it's for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people benefit from involvement in high quality art</li> <li>• New exhibitions and artwork created with the community</li> <li>• Fresh and challenging views about the museum emerge</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Learn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible approaches and responding to community needs</li> <li>• Training for staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Listen to young people</li> <li>• Listen to partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New groups involved in the museum</li> <li>• Different views shared about the museum and history</li> <li>• Staff and volunteers feel valued and skilled</li> <li>• Partnerships are stronger</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Give Back</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for Pathways to Wellbeing with funders</li> <li>• Learning from Pathways to Wellbeing informs the museums strategic vision and ethos</li> <li>• Share learning from Pathways to Wellbeing more widely</li> <li>• Programme free Wellbeing Events for general public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Museum's ethos led by Pathways to Wellbeing learning about how to respond to and support the community</li> <li>• The museum contributes to wellbeing for individuals and the community</li> <li>• More museums promote wellbeing and successfully deliver programmes</li> </ul>

**Changing Lives Through Art**



# Pathways for young people

New work with young people responded to concern about growing mental health needs, high demand for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), difficulties with transition to adult mental health services for 18 years olds. During lockdowns many young people reported struggling with their mental health plus experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Working with 11-25 year-olds means university students are included (especially first years away from home for the first time) and partnership with a Youth Mentoring organisation enabled engagement with young people at risk of dropping out of education or offending.

New groups were established, partnerships forged with young people's support organisations, including youth led organisations, and successful ways explored to work with young people on museum-based creativity projects. Co-production, with young people being involved in planning projects (such as the Plantation Day Book film) with artists and youth workers, and producing them together, worked well. Lockdowns and restrictions interrupted but didn't stop the work developing.

## Young Futures and Creative Saturday Groups

New partnerships with Mentoring Plus, CAMHS Participation group and Boys In Mind enabled the project to connect with groups of young people from communities who have not traditionally engaged with Bath Museums. Young people were enthusiastic and attendance good, they relished a different kind of experience.

Their feedback shows they were impressed by the professionalism of the art on offer and how 'real' it was, with high quality materials

and professional artists providing tuition and guidance. One young person is doing a photography course at college as a result of the Young Futures group.

Young people were introduced to the Holburne Museum (other museums were not involved due to lack of capacity and impact of Covid-19 restrictions with staff furloughed) in a unique way that captured their interest, and young people seem more likely to visit again as a result. One young person has been recruited to the Learning and Engagement Advisory Committee of the Holburne.

*'It gives young people a positive sense of entitlement to local cultural assets. So young people think "this is my local museum" and would not have felt it was part of their lives before, but now it is.'*

CEO, Mentoring Plus 2022.

**Create@home Art Boxes** were a practical response to support socially isolated young people and those struggling with poor mental health during lockdowns. 480 art boxes were distributed to young people across Bath and North East Somerset by two comprehensive schools (students came to supermarket car parks and school staff gave boxes to students likely to be experiencing difficulties during lockdown), by CAMHS support workers and Mentoring Plus who gave them to young people they thought would benefit from and enjoy them. They were used by young people at home during lockdowns, and a smaller number in youth settings with youth support workers and mentors who made frequent reference to the high-quality materials sparking young people's motivation to use them.



*'The boxes were a big success. We have been using them with our most vulnerable students.'*

Senior Teacher from a comprehensive school 2020.

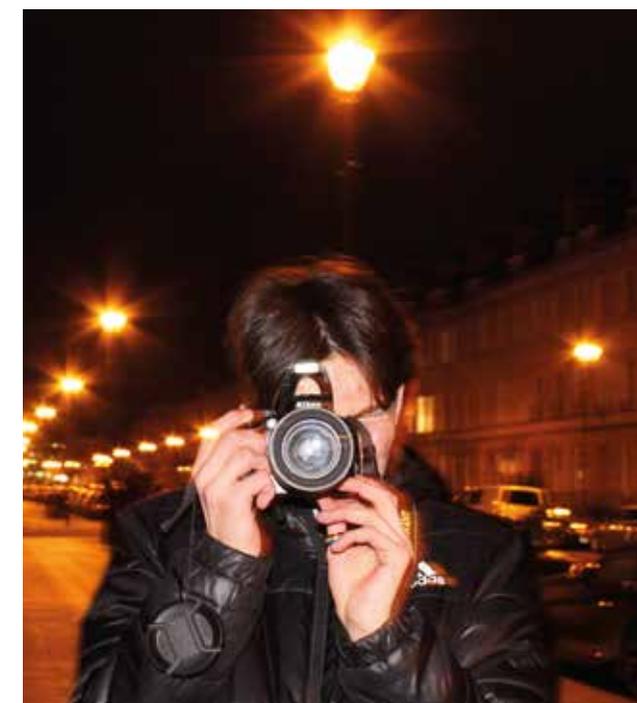
Feedback from young people, CAMHS mental health support workers and mentors reflected how young people had been touched to be given something so wonderful and describing how it helped young people to create art with ready-made ideas and materials and helped reduce anxiety at a very difficult time.

*'It was a lovely, unexpected gift and I'll continue to use it.'* 15-year-old, 2020.

*'It has helped my anxiety and calms me when stressed.'* 17-year-old, 2020.

*'Several parents said how much pleasure and comfort it gave their young people. One parent said when her young person was doing her artwork it made her feel happy and gave her a feeling of calmness'*

CAMHS support worker 2020 **Create@home Art boxes.**



Top Left: Young People's 'Clarence the Sea Serpent' for outdoor theatre production, Holburne garden, 2020

Above: Young Futures (Young Men's Group) Photography project, Holburne Museum, Bath, 2019

Mentoring Plus workers found it a good for welfare checks, even it was a chat and wave from a distance. Photographs of artwork showed that materials were well used as did thanks and comments from people.

*“The art boxes were pretty magic. The quality of the materials amazing and so professional. Young people were touched – “someone gave me something lovely”. We got photos and Instagram’s of what they’d made and lots of thanks.”*

CEO Mentoring Plus.

Below: Contents of a Create@Home Art Pack, including print-outs, acrylic paints and gold-leaf, 2019.

Bottom: Museums Inspire! Creativity and Wellbeing group for University of Bath students, 2021



## Museums Inspire with University Students

Some students were on their own during lockdowns at the university and some went home. Loneliness was an issue for many especially those in their first year. Artists who delivered an on-line group of 6 creative sessions were surprised when they met students at the end of the course for a chat and coffee at the museum. They found students had engaged much more deeply than they thought.

Online course students were given a bespoke Create@home art box linked to the pre-planned activities, they responded very positively to the quality of the materials and creative activities. Most students were unaware of the museum and all expressed an interest in visiting following the course.

Students completed an online feedback survey and reported feeling calmer, learning new art skills, using art as a form of self-care and allowing themselves time to relax. This mirrors the consistent feedback of participants in other Pathways to Wellbeing groups. Attendance was very good.

After this two more face-to-face Creativity and Wellbeing courses were run to support students struggling with mental health issues and loneliness. These were based in the museum, with some sessions at The Edge art space on campus at The University of Bath.

## What young people did

**Young Futures** – Young men 14-18 years photography group led by Head of Photography at local college. Co-produced project, heavily skills based.

**Young Futures online gallery** created to showcase photographic work.

‘The Wave’ and other creative workshops at the Holburne. Groups met in evenings and weekends, creating life-size cartoon figures inspired by Mick Peter installation, Rossetti inspired silver jewellery making, and giant willow sculpture ‘Clarence the sea monster’ for a Sydney Gardens theatre production. ‘Flash mob’ exhibition of their work in the museum.

**Untold Histories - The Plantation Book** – Five young people of colour were invited for a private view (with extended families) to explore the Plantation Day Book redisplay reflecting Bath’s legacy of slavery and links with the Holburne Family. They shared their responses as part of a film which is now on the Holburne’s website and used in schools across Bath and North East Somerset.

**Museums Inspire** – two six week supported creative art groups for University of Bath students in touch with the Wellbeing support Service and struggling with their mental health. One group ran online during a lockdown.

**Create@home art boxes** including a ‘get stARTed’ booklet with creative projects conceived and designed by young people distributed to 480 young people across Bath and North East Somerset during the first lockdown. Some boxes were used by youth organisations in creative sessions, including mentoring with positive feedback about their impact.

Young person became a member of the **Holburne Museum Learning and Engagement Advisory Committee**. Young person (Student at Bath Spa University) commissioned to deliver Mindful May Up late workshop.

## Who helped it happen with the Pathways to Wellbeing team

Partnership with Boys in Mind, a multi-agency alliance across Bath and North East Somerset to support young people’s mental health. Group supported by a CAMHS worker and Boys in Mind Youth Advisor.

Holburne Museum website created with young people’s permission to show their work.

Mentoring Plus supported young people from their youth clubs to take part. Youth workers attended sessions working alongside young people. Calf2Cow theatre production ‘the Wave’ featured Clarence (now permanently exhibited at Mentoring Plus) and involved young people in performances in Sydney Gardens.

The redisplay Curator, Boys in Mind Youth Advisors and filmmaker worked with Pathways Team to co-produce film and the museum hosted on-line film premier screening with Q&A panel of the young people in the film. Boys in Mind helped to distribute and promote the film to schools in Bath and North East Somerset.

University of Bath Wellbeing Services referred students and partially funded two groups.

CAMHS, two Bath comprehensive schools and Mentoring Plus distributed boxes to young people. Create @home guidebook co-produced with five young people via CAMHS participation group.

Supported by Head of Learning & Engagement And Chair of group (Director of Foundling Museum) Student supported by tutors and Pathways Team.

Five Ways to Wellbeing	Young people's Pathways to Wellbeing experiences	Outcomes for young people
<b>1. Connect with Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people meet socially with a creative purpose</li> <li>• Supportive and safe environment</li> <li>• Well planned sessions so groups achieve their aims</li> <li>• A worker they already know makes it easier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social skills and confidence improve</li> <li>• Social isolation/Loneliness is reduced</li> <li>• Meet new people and make friends</li> <li>• Partnership working develops and strengthens creating more opportunities for similar work with young people</li> </ul>
<b>2. Be Active</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reason to go somewhere and do something</li> <li>• Travel to museums and outdoor projects</li> <li>• Transport costs and arrangements make it easy and safe to get there regardless of where they live</li> <li>• Access public spaces they may never have visited</li> <li>• Some sessions are physically active</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend regularly and think about joining other groups</li> <li>• Young people including university students visit the museum (all have free entry)</li> <li>• Go places</li> <li>• Geographic location and cost are not barriers – good for those living outside of Bath</li> </ul>
<b>3. Take Notice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities inspired by museum collections, buildings and surroundings</li> <li>• Challenged to review museum collections through younger eyes</li> <li>• Encouraged to observe, choose, plan and create</li> <li>• Time to focus on something completely different</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative activity is relaxing, interesting</li> <li>• Anxiety reduces as creative activity takes over</li> <li>• Some are better able to focus</li> <li>• Make choices</li> <li>• Opportunity for self-expression</li> <li>• Critical thinking skills develop for some</li> </ul>
<b>4. Learn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn and use new creative artistic skills</li> <li>• High quality professional art teaching in a supportive environment</li> <li>• Gain knowledge of museums and local heritage</li> <li>• Learn to work in groups and on individual artwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire confidence and skills</li> <li>• Develop an interest in creating art</li> <li>• Some choose art options at school and college</li> <li>• Feel entitled to visit and be welcome in museums</li> <li>• Sense of pride in producing artwork</li> </ul>
<b>5. Give Back</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and respect each other in groups</li> <li>• Re-interpret museum's collections and art through young people's eyes</li> <li>• Artwork and film supports work in schools and elsewhere</li> <li>• Display work in public via exhibitions and social media so reaching a wider audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicly exhibited artwork gives voice to young people's views and creativity</li> <li>• Schools use film to discuss Bath's legacy of slavery</li> <li>• Young people become interested in museums and want to visit</li> </ul>

# Outreach brings museums and art to the community

Pathways to Wellbeing Phase One began as museum-based creative groups inspired by collections, historical buildings and gardens. During Phase Two more creative outreach sessions took place across Bath and North East Somerset (such as Radstock and Keynsham) in older people's care homes, post-natal groups, mental health wards, and with families living in women's refuges, writing groups and The Edge arts venue at the University of Bath.

Outreach group sessions follow the same structure as museum-based sessions:

- A well-planned artistic activity led by an artist specialising in an art form
- objects or images from museums for participants to view and handle
- artists explain the objects history, creation and links to artistic practice
- participants respond to the object with their own creative interpretation, and
- high quality art materials match tuition by professional artists.

## Outreach in mental health hospital wards

Fresh Art@ ran four creative sessions on a dementia assessment hospital ward with participants mostly aged over 80. Occupational therapists and nurses noted patients increased interest, interaction and conversation, enjoyment of sensory activities such as using clay and colours, and pleasure in creating something. Staff were enthused and want to make creative activity sessions a regular weekly feature.

*'Their [Fresh Art@] approach developed a relaxed creative environment and patients were at ease. This enabled trust and a therapeutic bond between therapists and patients within a non-threatening environment.'*

*'Different medium was available throughout allowing for individual choices. Our budget is very limited re purchasing equipment, so such variety again enabled engagement with patients being inquisitive.'*

NHS Occupational Therapist,  
Dementia Assessment Ward,  
Royal University Hospital 2021.

Final art works were used to enliven clinical settings in the hospital and wards.

## Object Handling sessions in the community

During a creative outreach session with a community group 'Writing Space', Japanese netsuke from the museum's handling collection were shared as inspiration. The creative facilitator shared the historical context and participants produced creative writing as a result of the opportunity to touch and hold these objects.

*'Writing lifts, a cloak and allows you to be free.'*

Writing about the small, carved netsuke –

*'They are transcendent, otherworldly and organic.'*

*'Some of them look alien. I feel they are surreal, fantastic, imaginative carvings.'*

*'The Netsuke give every single garment the pulse like a beating drum.'*

## Exhibitions and wider networks

Pathways to Wellbeing has always linked with arts and community organisations to exhibit work created by participants. This 'outreach into the community' supports participants to get to involved in community arts networks and events, enhancing opportunities for people to pursue art interests independently, extend places to visit and things to do outside of Pathways groups. This is an important part of the transition journey or 'pathway' to being more independent. It also informs the wider public about Pathways to Wellbeing.

Below: Writing about and drawing Netsuke

*'I had to go for an appointment at the hospital and to see our groups prints exhibited there was really affirming! They were hung alongside professional artists' work and were so beautifully framed. I felt really proud.'*

IMAGE group member talking about Canaletto inspired prints at the Royal United Hospital.

**9 Exhibitions of participants' artwork including People Make Museums a major exhibition at the Holburne Museum and Canaletto inspired prints at The Royal United Hospital.**



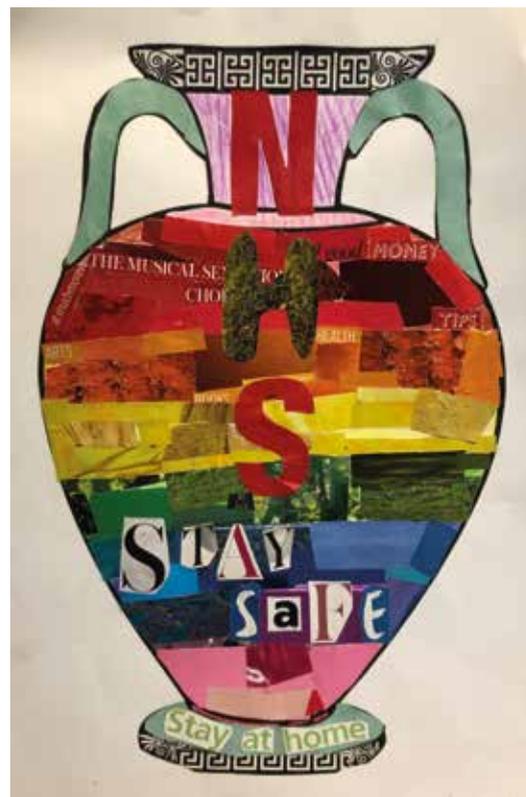
# Virtual outreach through the pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions were very challenging for Pathways to Wellbeing, museums and partners, as well as established participants and those newly referred/joining. Overnight, groups and activities ceased and museums closed. The Pathways team were aware some participants were living alone, already experiencing fragile mental health, some shielding many frightened, and all facing a lonelier existence with no regular activities or contact with others.

Despite this Pathways to Wellbeing found new ways to reach even more participants, including new groups such as young people across Bath, surrounding areas, and beyond. Virtual activities, while not as intense or person-centred as face-to-face groups, helped people use creative activity at home to get through a difficult time, and kept the team in touch with participants and volunteers.

It took time to work out a response: understand how to use technology to reach people, what technology people could access and how they preferred to use it. Using text messaging, Instagram and putting the Pathways to Wellbeing application form online so people can refer themselves as well as via a support worker or GP, made the programme more accessible especially during the pandemic.

It was a sharp learning curve that led to opening the museum up in a way it had never been in the past. A legacy of the lockdowns is a developing digital strategy for the museum, a growing hub of downloadable creative resources as well as an Instagram community and website gallery for art ideas.



Above: Made at home and shared Creativity4Wellbeing activity inspired by Wedgwood vases, 2019

## Virtual activities across 2020 and 2021

- Keeping in touch with participants by phone and email especially in the first lockdown
- Regular Wednesday texts and emails to tell/remind participants and volunteers about virtual art sessions (same time each week)
- Pilot Gardeners Lodge art group delivered online, learning informed future online activities
- **36 downloadable collection-inspired creative activities to do at home** (and now offer a bank of potential creative activities for re-use with new participants)
- 13 video 'artist demonstrations' to accompany downloadable activities – 'how to get started' to spark creative process at home
- A co-created 'lockdown' film 'The House of Spoons' showcasing 50 people's 'made at home' spoons, premiered at the Fringe Arts Bath Festival 2020
- Activity instructions printed and delivered to participants with no internet access
- Create@home art packs of quality art materials delivered to Pathways participants at home
- **480 young peoples' Create@home packs with a guide to activities** co-produced by young people, and delivered to vulnerable young people via local comprehensive schools, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Mentoring Plus
- A Fresh Art@ group successfully delivered online
- Weekly wellbeing check in phone calls offered to Fresh Art@ (people just starting mental health recovery) by partners Bath Mind during the online group and beyond if needed
- Zoom coffee mornings and creative socials for Pathways participants, artists and volunteers
- A newsletter for Pathways to Wellbeing
- An Instagram gallery to share artwork created at home now includes work from Pathways to Wellbeing groups meeting face to face
- Use of Instagram and texts worked well for people who only had access via mobile phones
- 'Spoonful of Kindness' pottery/sculpture project held under a gazebo in the garden after the first lockdown based on a Holburne Museum Grayson Perry exhibition
- **50 people a week accessed on-line creative activities during lockdowns**



*'The project has been great for my mental health; a God send with lockdown. It has given me an interest in art I never knew I had. Loved it so much. The team were outstanding.'*

*'It was fabulous, a miracle in my life. The fact it was online didn't bother me; I could still be part of the community but not leave home. I did it on my iPad.'*

*'I've been personally so boosted by doing this especially in lockdown with family so far away and missing them, and my mental health not so good.'*

*'Lockdown has been hard for all of us but especially the vulnerable. For me, knowing that on Wednesday morning I have a reason to greet the day with enthusiasm has been wonderful. I have tried to just get inside my own space and imagination using the practical activity sheets and ENJOY! And I did'. I now feel I have a relationship with the Holburne that I didn't have before and I've learnt a lot.*

Fresh Art@ participants and Creativity4Wellbeing 'regular' comments about online courses and activities

Above: Lockdown Creativity4Wellbeing artwork displayed in cafe window exhibition, 2020 (whilst museum was closed)

## Working through challenges

People adapted surprisingly well to online activities, some preferred it as they didn't have to leave home. Some chose to have camera's off for zoom sessions but photographs of work they produced showed they were engaging. People were invited to send photos of finished artwork by email to be shared on the Changing Lives Through Art Instagram platform. This allowed people to feel a sense of connection with everyone that had been joining in the activities at home and people commented positively on each other's work.

Online sessions became popular with Pathways to Wellbeing participants and people across the wider area and the country. It will never be known who some of those people were as there was no information other than how many downloaded the activities. One teacher said they were using Creativity4Wellbeing activities with their primary school class or online learning.

Artists found it was not possible to offer the individual hands-on support and tuition that happens in face-to-face groups no matter how good online sessions were.

Despite this an online community was created, and some people engaged enthusiastically with it, however the sense of doing things *together* was missing from online sessions. Creating art, viewing and handling museum objects (and getting a sense of size and scale of buildings and objects) is an embodied, sensory experience. It's hard to recreate that impact via a screen.

Much thought and planning went into how to re-start groups safely and manage people's anxieties. Some people were unable to

return as they were shielding or found it overwhelming. Due to stop-start nature of lockdowns and changing restrictions contingency planning was needed too. A blended approach continued for a time with online activities as well as face to face groups.

Gardeners Lodge Art Group re-started under a large gazebo in Sydney Gardens by the Holburne (whatever the summer weather). The artist chose an activity suited for outdoors. People were socially distanced at separate tables with a strict sanitation routine before and after sessions.

*'It was a very gentle activity as people were so anxious, we were in a quiet spot and clay is a good activity for outdoors, it won't blow away and OK to make a mess. It was designed so people could make a spoon in one session.'*

Ceramic Artist, Gardner's Lodge Art Group 2020.

*'Slowly people began smiling and laughing, it took about a month for people to relax and feel safe. They looked visibly happier, and conversations became lighter (less Covid related) as artwork started.'*

Support Worker, Gardeners Lodge Art Group 2020.

# Partnerships strengthened

Pathways to Wellbeing could not happen without strong partnerships. The programme is based on partnership working – between the different museums, community, health and arts organisations; the teams of artists, support workers and volunteers who deliver groups, and museum staff who welcome and engage visitors including Pathways to Wellbeing participants.

Partnerships have strengthened in Phase Two. Partners described how longevity of the partnerships, knowledge of and respect for each other's organisations and ways of working contribute to working together more effectively and responding to challenges such as the pandemic. GP prescribing was in its early stages in Phase one of Pathways to Wellbeing and is now well established among mental health professionals and community organisations, they know what is on offer and refer people regularly.

A key partner, **Creativity Works**, who work with communities to provide creative activities for people living with mental health challenges and experiencing difficulties in their lives, were involved since the beginning. Philippa Forsey, Creative Wellbeing Manager, described how the partnership developed and deepened:

*'We know each other and trust each other, and we feel confident with what we each do. As long as museums are up for it, so are we. When funding ended for Fresh Art@ from one source in 2019, we kept the group going (Pathways to Wellbeing and Creativity Works). We are all connected and good relationships mean we can adapt and make things possible.'*

People move across groups in both organisations as staff sign post people to relevant opportunities; people participating in Pathways to Wellbeing groups are kept informed of opportunities offered by Creativity Works and vice versa. It is a good example of how networks are extended across partnerships benefiting participants of both.

Similarly, partnership with **Bath Mind** supports people to access their services as well as working with groups such as Fresh Art@ to provide support within the group, and they provide Mental Health First Aid training for museum volunteers and staff. It emphasises how much added value effective partnerships bring to all partners.

**Museums in the partnership** experienced change over the three years as staff left and others joined, and the pandemic closed museums followed by uncertainty about how to re-open safely. While some museums have been less involved than others during the pandemic years the partnership remains strong, with museum partners meeting regularly to share plans.

**New partnerships developed around working with young people.** These were crucial to support Pathways to Wellbeing to reach and recruit underrepresented young people, learn how to work with them and listen to what young people want.

A new partner, **Mentoring Plus**, described what made the partnership effective with an example of timing for young people's groups. Early evening was best for young people but the museum was closed then so groups were held in the separate Gardener's Lodge



Top: Discover Museums - Mentor training day partnering with Mentoring Plus, 2022

Above: Young People's responses to Mick Peter 'Old Ghosts' exhibition, Holburne Museum, 2022

building. Saturdays were an option, but the young people's organisation didn't have funding for youth workers on Saturdays. In response Pathways to Wellbeing found the funding and the new partner supplied the youth worker and result was a very successful group.

*'Louise, [Pathways to Wellbeing Programme Manager] really understood what we can do and what we can't.'*  
CEO of Mentoring Plus.

Mentoring Plus also provided expert training on mentoring for the Discover Museums volunteer mentors so demonstrating another partnership synergy. Volunteer mentors rated the training highly as practical and useful.

### Unlocking assets

Partners appreciated working with museums and described them as providing access to cultural assets with fantastic venues and unique collections, and high-quality artistic teaching and experiences. It gives people who may not visit museums the opportunity to explore and feel that they are entitled to be part of the museum. The young people's Untold Histories project about the legacy of slavery gave voice to different views of museums' collections with a critical and contemporary eye. Mentoring Plus commented that large scale projects such as Clarence the sea monster sculpture is just not possible in most venues so to have that opportunity and professional artists was amazing.

Unlocking assets works both ways as Pathways to Wellbeing becomes more integrated within networks and can link people with other support organisations such as Bath Mind. Museum staff have benefitted from working with staff from support organisations, developing new skills in engaging with young people and supporting vulnerable adults.

## Sharing the learning

Connections between art, heritage and wellbeing are becoming more widely researched and recognised, evidence is growing about the impact of arts on health and potential to help with challenges such as loneliness and mental health needs. The contribution of museums to the evidence base is growing too. Learning from Pathways to Wellbeing is adding to understanding of 'good practice' and how to work safely and effectively to promote wellbeing through museum-based art activities.

Sharing learning has been a key element of Phase Two of Pathways to Wellbeing There were always demands for information about the programme from museum professionals, academics and students but little time to respond adequately. Despite the pandemic a lot was achieved.

**Two learning symposiums** for museum and health professionals, socially engaged arts practitioners and those interested in creative health were organised and hosted. These included contributions from national organisations, academics and mental health professionals as well as shared learning from Pathways to Wellbeing and other Arts & Heritage programmes in the South West. They included contributions from group participants. Both were well attended.

**Why Museums Matter...for Mental Health 2019**  
**People Make Museums – Museums & Care 2022**  
**70 Heritage/Arts and Creative Facilitators attended the symposium exploring the concept of 'Museums & Care'**



Above: Museums and Care Symposium, Holburne Museum, 2022



Right: Discover Museums – Mentees and Mentors at celebration evening, Holburne Museum, 2022

## Presentations at conferences and learning events

Louise Champion, Pathways to Wellbeing Programme Manager, addressed a wide range of national, regional, and local events sharing learning.

### 2019 presentation at Royal Society for Public Health conference on Pathways to Wellbeing and Fresh Art@ with a colleague from Avon and Wiltshire NHS Mental Health Trust

## Consultancy, training and mentoring for other museums

Training developed 'in-house' for Discover Museums mentors has been opened up to other organisations interested in developing similar programmes. The programme manager continued to provide support and information to professionals in other museums, for example supporting Wells and Mendip Museum to develop their work, and Well City, Salisbury who presented learning from their work at the People make Museums symposium.

Exploration of a suite of resources to support museums interested in the work has begun. Pathways to Wellbeing developed tried and tested policies, procedures to support safe creative groups, templates for forms (such as participants' agreements and permission for displaying work) and training for volunteers, artists and mentors. There is the potential to package information and training to be more easily available, and possibly generate income.

*"The Pathways to Wellbeing Manager has been extraordinarily generous in sharing her knowledge around creativity and mental health and well-being, and our discussions informed a successful National Lottery Heritage Fund 2019 application. Two members of our team to participate in Pathways mentor training day and we shared our project progress at a recent Symposium event. The Pathways team will share their expertise with our museum at our own volunteer mentor training later this year."*

'Search and Learn' Project Manager, Wells and Mendip Museum, 2022.

## Academic Collaboration

Academics, researchers and students on master's courses have continued to be interested in the progress and learning of Pathways to Wellbeing, this of course mirrors the growing interest in connections between art, heritage and health. Academics presented on their work at both learning symposiums.

Partnerships have formed with two universities specialising in arts, heritage and health.

**University College London**, Helen Jury, Doctoral Researcher and Psychotherapist, provides clinical supervision for the programme manager and facilitated a workshop on handling objects with Pathways group members.

**University of Leicester, School of Museum Studies**, Jane Hardstaff, Doctoral researcher with a background in psychotherapy, began a four-year PhD in 2019 funded through the Midlands 4 Cities Doctoral Training Programme, working collaboratively with the Holburne. It aims to bring a deeper understanding to the impact of Pathways to Wellbeing and is researching the role of museums in supporting mental wellbeing with three key questions:

1. What role does museum participation play in contributing to improved mental health? This will explore museum participation; intentions driving wellbeing programmes in museums, and how Pathways to Wellbeing impacts participants' mental health and wellbeing.
2. What contributions can the spatial or geographic qualities of museums make to improved mental health and wellbeing? This will explore how physical spaces and locations of the Holburne Museums' Pathways to Wellbeing programme impact the mental health and wellbeing of participants.
3. What can the concept of the 'non-therapy' therapeutic intervention bring to understanding of museum-led mental wellbeing programmes? This will explore how creative wellbeing programmes in museums compare with other current mental health interventions.

# Key Learning

## 1. Strategic issues

**Pathways to Wellbeing has grown** new groups, new partners, new ways of working in response to the challenges of the pandemic. This meant more demands on the staff team. The administrator made a significant difference but was always needed in Phase One for behind the scenes support so it is not really 'extra'. More resourcing is needed at a senior, programme manager level to maintain the programme.

**Partnerships are the cornerstone of Pathways to Wellbeing.** As new partnerships have developed and existing ones strengthened it may be useful to re-start the Pathways to Wellbeing Advisory Group to share learning, reflect and plan.

## 2. Transitions and Endings

**More focus is needed to support transitions and endings.** Consistently, across all Pathways to Wellbeing groups in Phases One and Two, people express sadness when their time in a group finishes and don't want it to end. Groups are nurturing, safe and welcoming places where people flourish and grow so it is not surprising they are reluctant to leave. Yet if people do not progress along the 'pathway' there is no space for new participants and a risk of creating dependency and possibly limiting development of more independent learning and activity.

People need more support around the transition journey and perhaps practice with occasionally doing things on their own (visit a museum as part of a project, do an activity at home) so that moving from one group to another is easier and less daunting.

## 3. Working with Young People

**New partners, including youth led organisations,** understand young people's needs and already have contact and relationships with young people who may benefit from museum based creative groups. Partners worked alongside artists and support workers, bringing youth work, mentoring and mental health skills. This helped groups get off the ground quickly and work effectively with young people.

**Funding for travel is essential** to enable those living outside Bath to participate. Travel arrangements needed to be safe and cover a wide area so in practice this meant taxis, some young people shared them which helped with creating relationships across the group.

**Timing needs consideration** as museums close at 5pm but evenings are the best time for school age young people to meet. Groups ran on Saturdays and during school holidays which solved the problem to some extent but needs further thought for future groups.

**Co-production**, where young people and staff plan projects together, and everyone brings strengths and interests, worked really well and resulted in very different projects such as the night time photography sessions, a flash mob of cartoon characters left around the museum and The Plantation Book project capturing young people's responses to records of enslaved people.

**Length of projects enable connections to be made.** Museums Inspire course ran online for six weeks initially but artists thought an eight-week group would be more effective in the future and were keen to offer more museum-based activity.

## 4. Outreach in the community

**Community groups achieve similar although less intense opportunities and outcomes** than those based in museums. However, museum-based groups have more opportunities to make new friends, go places and benefit from increased exposure to museum collections and buildings (see more so more to be inspired by).

**Outreach groups in the community remove barriers of travel, location, cost,** and mobility and health issues whilst enabling people to experience the wellbeing benefits of creating art inspired by museums with high quality art tuition.

**Time needs to be invested working with new partners** so they understand how best to support the work, for example in care homes offering activities to people who can participate rather than seeing it as an activity for everyone (some are unable to participate due to advanced illness and disability but can disrupt the session for those who can participate).

## 5. Virtual Outreach

**Creative activities at home** delivered virtually and with downloadable paper-based instructions gave people a good experience with some of the benefits of face-to-face groups and suggests at home activities have the potential to offer wellbeing benefits too, although not as intense or focused.

Online activities although successful had limitations:

- **people tried something new**, curiosity and interest were aroused, and people found making art pleasurable and relaxing
- **it wasn't possible to provide one to one, hands on support** about artwork and techniques, so limiting the artistic experience
- **the physical experience of visiting a museum**, handling objects and opportunities for learning that provides was obviously missing
- **It wasn't possible to respond to the nuances** of how people were feeling and create the sense of a nurturing group
- **the sense of a group sharing** and doing something together and opportunities to practice face to face social interaction were lessened.

**The online community was well used** such as the Instagram gallery of art made by people. People were respectful, it helped people keep in touch and maintain their interest in art created.

**Instagram is a practical platform** as it can be accessed by mobile phones with photograph capability.

**Online activities can offer a stepping stone to face to face groups** as people got a sense of what would be on offer. This was an unexpected outcome.

**Create@home art boxes made activities more interesting and practical** as being provided with the right, high quality art materials for an activity made it more achievable, and some said inspiring.

## 6. Monitoring

**The programme has continued to try to use the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Health Wellbeing Scale (WEMWEBS)** but struggles with capacity to capture pre and post project results and analyse them, and participants still find it intrusive and don't like filling in forms. Qualitative evidence is regularly collected through verbal feedback sessions and simple forms, and often voluntarily shared by participants, to indicate they benefit from groups and view their wellbeing as improved by their participation.

# Recommendations

## Strategic and management recommendations

### 1. Increase staff at management level

Pathways to Wellbeing is a complex programme making a significant contribution to communities in Bath and beyond. It requires detailed management to maintain and develop the programme, train and support a skilled team of artists and volunteers who in turn provide safe space and creative learning opportunities for people with lived experience of mental health issues, social isolation and homelessness.

### 2. Re-establish an advisory support group for Pathways to Wellbeing

The advisory group faded over the pandemic two years although museum partners still meet to share news and partners communicate individually.

A formal advisory group of partners could contribute to long term planning, development of common approaches particularly around transitions and endings, and ensuring high quality experiences for participants. With new partners now part of the programme this would be timely.

## Operational recommendations for the whole programme

### 3. Close Pathways to Wellbeing for one month a year to provide time for reflection, planning and organisation.

Build this into the annual programme so everyone including participants expect it. Provide Gardeners Lodge Art Group and IMAGE participants with an activity to do at home (encouraging a visit to a museum or cultural event if possible) as described above. There is already a bank of tried and tested activities used during lockdowns which could be re-used with adaption and/or updating.

### 4. End use of the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWEBS)

The programme does not have capacity to collect or analyse data consistently. It was hoped a university could help with this but this has not been possible. A lot of qualitative data suggests participants find their wellbeing improved by taking part, and with a growing academic evidence base stating similar WEMWEBS is not adding any additional information for the programme. Data collected so far could be securely archived as it may be of use to researchers in the future.

Fresh Art@ groups have used and analysed WEMWEBS and it shows participants rating themselves as making progress. It may be useful to continue for this group as it is a small number of participants meeting for 12 weeks annually so more manageable.

## 5. Focus more on transitions and endings

It is essential that people 'move on' from the Gardener's Lodge and IMAGE groups as otherwise there will be no space for new participants and no motivation for people to transition along the Pathway. Participants consistently express sadness as groups end and some find it difficult to move on to another Pathways group or a creative group outside of Pathways. Some people find it impossible. However, many people do move on to other Pathways groups and take part in creative activities via Creativity Works and other arts related networks across Bath and the county and or become museum volunteers. The programme already has ideas about how to support people but has not had time to put this into practice due to the pandemic and how it impacted on programme delivery.

## 6. Continue to factor in budget for transport to and from the museums

This makes Pathways to Wellbeing accessible to those living outside of Bath including younger people who do not have the money or means to travel into Bath. This is likely to be a significant cost due to rises in fuel prices as it means taxis, it also means more time booking and making travel arrangements by staff.

## 7. Offer new partners such as Mentoring Plus some annual free museum passes

These can be used by adult mentors accompanied by a mentee (who are free at the Holburne if aged under 18 but not at other museums and mentees can be aged up to 25) so increasing the likelihood of young people visiting the museums, getting involved in creative projects and feeling entitled to visit and connected with the museums in their city. There may be other new partners who could also use free passes with vulnerable people.

## 8. Consider offering creative activities outdoors occasionally (Sydney Gardens and possibly the American Museum gardens)

The benefits of creative activities and making art while being outside in nature combine well and the wellbeing benefits of being outdoors are well evidenced. People enjoyed the different experience of outdoor groups during the pandemic.

## 9. Continue offering volunteers and staff an annual artistic practice session

This made staff and volunteers feel valued and gave them a unique insight into responding and creating art and the feelings and experiences of Pathways to Wellbeing participants. Looked at more holistically this puts the Five Ways to Wellbeing into practice for staff and volunteers who make the programme possible and every day welcome participants and public to the museum.

# Conclusion

Pathways to Wellbeing has grown and developed, building on a solid foundation of core work and maintaining high quality, creative art experiences for participants. Despite two years of the pandemic, it achieved its aims (and those agreed with funders) and increased the geographic reach of the programme through more outreach work, established new work with young people and bespoke online creative activity. Over 900 people have engaged with Pathways to Wellbeing in Phase Two.

When the pandemic closed museums, Pathways to Wellbeing kept in touch with participants and even engaged new people, by offering online or downloadable activities to do at home. Art experiences inspired by museums and led by professional artists proved to be a successful tried and tested mix. Online activities maintained quality with detailed planning to make activities practical and achievable as well as enjoyable.

Pathways to Wellbeing's updated Theory of Change reflects how its aims are achieved. The Five Ways to Wellbeing continues to be a practical framework for understanding how to promote mental health and wellbeing and underpins the Theory of Change. Participants consistently report positive outcomes related to the Five Ways to Wellbeing. People engaging in online and 'create at home' activities during lockdowns also reported positively on outcomes such as reduced anxiety, feeling calmer, developing an interest and gaining a skill and/or knowledge. Outcomes such as being more physically active were limited because of government restrictions on social meetings and lockdowns.

Measuring changes in wellbeing is complex. Validated psychological tools were tried but with limited success because of lack of capacity to analyse large amounts of data. When analysed for small samples it showed improved wellbeing over time. Regular qualitative feedback from participants and partners, and quantitative data about regularity of attendance whilst providing less rigorous 'measured' evidence to support the claim that participants wellbeing improves, is remarkably consistent. Groups continue to operate waiting lists as they are oversubscribed.

A research collaboration with the University of Leicester is exploring the role of museums in supporting mental wellbeing. It is hoped Pathways to Wellbeing can help understand how participation in museum-based creative activities can promote mental well-being.

Sharing learning about how programmes like Pathways to Wellbeing can promote wellbeing and make museums caring places has supported more museums to develop this work. Sharing knowledge contributes to growing evidence about how museums, heritage and arts can contribute to mental health.

Pathways to Wellbeing has changed the Holburne Museum, an unexpected outcome that has been welcomed. The Pathways to Wellbeing ethos: making the museum a safe and welcoming place to be, respecting and caring about everyone, and providing high quality artistic experiences has created a culture shift within the museum. The museum is embodying the Five Ways to Wellbeing through its support for the programme and determination to care for the community as well as the museum collection.



## Appendix One

# About this evaluation

This summary evaluation reviews Pathways to Wellbeing Phase Two Programme from May 2019 to May 2022. This will inform end of project reporting requirements to funders, be shared with partners, and inform development of the programme and future funding bids.

The evaluation focused on learning and outcomes from the programme with particular reference to outreach work across the community (especially during the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021) and new work with young people.

Evaluation methodology included:

- Documentary review and analysis of programme reports including funding and monitoring reports.
- Review of participant feedback across Phase Two.
- Face to face or telephone interviews with the director of the Holburne Museum, Pathways to Wellbeing programme manager, a support worker, artist, participants and volunteers (covering Gardeners Lodge Art Group, IMAGE, Discover Museums, new groups for young people and outreach work).
- Face to face discussions with several participants from Fresh Art.
- Telephone interviews with partners Creativity Works (Creative Wellbeing Manager and Fresh Arts Worker) and Mentoring Plus (Chief Executive).
- Telephone conversation with Jane Hardstaff, PhD student Leicester University.
- Attendance at the Pathways to Wellbeing Learning Symposium: *People make museums – Museums and Care* in April 2022.

The evaluation was carried out by Mary Ryan, Independent evaluation consultant who also evaluated the Phase One programme for 2019 to 2022.

See: <https://www.holburne.org/learning/community-engagement/pathways-to-wellbeing/>

Right: A Piece for the Ages, artwork exhibited as part of People Make Museums Exhibition, Holburne Museum, 2022

# Appendix Two

## Table of Pathways to Wellbeing Groups and Activities

<p><b>Core Work</b></p>	<p><b>Gardeners Lodge Art Group</b> Museum-based supported art group. Referrals through social prescribing/self-referrals. Cycles of 6-week project blocks led by professional artists. Participants can attend for 30 weeks. Runs all year, entry level group.</p>	<p><b>IMAGE</b> – peer led museums art group with support from artists for some sessions. A progression group for Gardeners Lodge and open to others. Meets every other week, runs all year.</p>	<p><b>Fresh Art@</b> entry level group for those in first stages of mental health recovery and referred by NHS partners. Run for 12 weeks once a year. A partnership with Creativity Works (who manage the project), Avon &amp; Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Trust and Bath MIND. On Ward sessions – 4 sessions a year. Creative sessions run in mental health hospital wards, with artist, museum staff and Fresh Art worker.</p>		<p><b>Discover Museums: Pathways to Volunteering</b> for vulnerable adults who want to volunteer but lack the confidence to start. A trained museum mentor supports their mentee to develop a response to collection objects ending with a shared presentation evening. Annual 12-week course.</p>	<p><b>Exhibiting artwork</b> made by participants at local arts festivals, galleries, at Bath Abbey and the Holburne Museum. Some work donated to enliven mental health wards, corridors and waiting rooms.</p>
<p><b>New Developments</b></p>	<p><b>Support for young people’s mental health</b> <b>Young Futures project</b> – partnership with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) <b>Boys in Mind</b> – Untold Histories Film <b>Creative workshops for young people</b> with Mentoring Plus – large scale willow construction, Mick Peter cartoon figures, silver jewellery making <b>Museums Inspire</b> – 2 x 8-week museum-based supported creative groups for university students struggling with mental health (+1 on-line group piloted during lockdown) <b>Creativity &amp; Wellbeing</b> group for NHS staff on long term sick leave</p>	<p><b>Outreach work</b> <b>Create@home art boxes</b> co-produced with CAMHS and young people and distributed by schools and CAMHS <b>Creativity4Wellbeing</b> – online weekly creative activities during lockdowns for regular participants and opened to wider on-line community <b>Instagram galleries of artwork and You Tube</b> ‘artists demo’ videos <b>Creativity &amp; Wellbeing group for NHS staff</b> on long term sick leave</p>		<p><b>Sharing knowledge</b> and learning about museum-based mental health and wellbeing programmes and good practice <b>Learning symposiums</b> about the work <b>Supporting other museums</b> via consultancy and training <b>Presentations</b> at national and local conferences <b>Training</b> on running safe creative groups and mentoring <b>Informal sharing</b> of learning at exhibitions and events often by Pathways participants <b>Academic Liaison supervising</b> and contributing to research</p>	<p><b>Pathways Artists Collective (PAC)</b> formed Met once a month and donated original artwork which was made into gift cards and sold in museum shop</p> <p><b>New partnerships:</b> Bath Abbey Bath Mind Boys in Mind Calf to Cow Production Company Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Mentoring Plus Sydney Gardens Royal University Hospital, Bath University of Bath Wellbeing Service and The Edge arts venue University of Central London University of Leicester</p>	

# Appendix Three

## Pathways to Wellbeing

### Theory of Change Model

KEY  
Blue text = New groups



## We believe

Museums promote wellbeing by creating opportunities for people, and museums to:

- Connect with others
- Become active
- Take notice
- Learn
- Give back

High quality arts experiences stimulate engagement, learning and self-worth

Change happens over time in safe, supportive and welcoming spaces

On-line creative groups and activities can engage wider audiences and lessen barriers to participation

Partnerships strengthen communities and support museums to contribute to wellbeing for all

Museums are enriched by working with a greater diversity of local people

Museums of the future care for their communities as well as their collections and the past

Sharing knowledge helps other museums connect with their communities and promote wellbeing

## Outcomes

Improved mental health and sense of wellbeing through:

- Better focus and concentration
- Creative self-expression
- Improved social skills
- Feeling valued and connected
- Making friends
- **Feeling less lonely during the pandemic**

Regular attendance and engagement with museums and groups leads to:

- New experiences that awaken curiosity
- People enjoying creativity, making and exhibiting artwork
- People having a reason to attend that is not therapy
- People learning new skills
- People making friends and looking forward to groups

People engaging virtually and via social media gain some of these benefits too

People new to heritage engage with the arts, heritage and museums:

- People are involved in new opportunities
- Free passes encourage more museum visits
- Museum audiences become more inclusive

Collaboration strengthens museums and relationships:

- Staff and volunteers learn to support people with a range of needs
- Museums support the local community and are more inclusive
- Builds partnerships between museums, health and community sectors

Other museums promote mental health and wellbeing in safe and effective ways

## Impact

### Improved mental health and wellbeing as people experience:

- Better mental health
- Less social isolation and loneliness
- Better engagement with services
- Workplace and further education experience

### Increased enjoyment and interest in the arts

- People more likely to engage with the arts, experience joy and meaning through new creative experiences
- People gain an enduring interest in the arts, heritage and creativity

Wider participation in arts/heritage communities

- People take part in local cultural activities as audiences, volunteers, artists and producers

### Stronger Partnerships

- New/non-traditional audiences trust and value museums
- Heritage, health, community and arts organisations work together in creative and innovative ways
- Museums become an integral part of a wider and more diverse cultural community and arts scene
- Museums care about, and are an embedded part of, their communities

### Sharing knowledge

More museums contribute to the wellbeing of their communities

## Our Vision

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH ART

# Appendix Four

## Testimony

### Story One

#### FreshArt@

*I was referred by a psychologist, I didn't know anyone. They send a taxi for me there and back otherwise I couldn't do it because of chronic pain and mobility problems. It's been a lifeline for me, it got me out and even if I'm not well I can just sit and watch others, there's no pressure. There's an amazing team of artists and supporters and it's a very practical model with excellent tuition. We've visited three inspirational museums, so rich and multi-faceted. My piece is inspired by the River Avon and huge walls of maps in a museum, it's kept me going. The whole thing is experiential, there's learning, inspiration, compassion, sense of community, and it's non-judgemental.*

*Ending is tough and I don't feel so good about that. The group arrived at the right time for me, I might be more open to joining another group now.*

FreshArt@ participant discussion with external evaluator, 2022.

### Story Two

#### Creativity 4 Wellbeing 'virtual' group participant

*When lockdown happened I was upset and stressed at the thought of not going to art group and seeing my friends and meeting all the wonderful artists. After a couple of weeks I had an email and text to say Pathways to Wellbeing were organising some form of virtual art group and would I be interested. I had mixed feelings on the one hand I was really pleased I would have something to do each Wednesday but also a fear I would not be able to take part because of lack of equipment. I soon realised my fears were unfounded. I found myself looking forward to Wednesdays and couldn't wait to find out what the task was for that week. I could shut myself away for a few hours and not think about the bad stuff going on around me. The art group also gave me a chance to use different materials to create things I would not normally use.*

*It was also lovely to see other people's work on Instagram, knowing there were people I have not seen for a long time creating their own art and I instantly did not feel so lonely and disconnected from the outside world. I was surprised how focused I became with each week and I was happy with what I had done. It was also comforting to send someone photos of my artwork and receive positive feedback and nice to see some of it on the Instagram page.*

Shared by a Pathways to Wellbeing group participant, 2021.



### Story Three

#### Fresh Art@ and Discover Museums – a supported Pathway

*I'm not the person I was 12 weeks ago when I started. I feel different. I got completely engaged with the process and art making and it makes me forget my anxiety. I feel like a changed person. Everyone is so accepting in the group, there's no pressure - just support.*

*Discover Museums began simply enough for me because I'd stepped into it from the Fresh Art project and had already done some drawing at the Holburne Museum. I wanted to expand on this work so had a sense of the creative direction I might take.*

*I'm inspired by the museums - the space, beautiful surroundings and amazing objects hand crafted by people with amazing skills. I haven't visited museums before.*

*I chose an exquisite 18th century silver jug for pouring cream and a Dutch still life to focus on. I loved looking at it, there was very little to describe it, a few highlights and a little colour, yet its form and texture were beautifully communicated. It was quietly stepping out of the dark and that resonated with how I'd been feeling.*

Left: Coming out of the Darkness - a Discover Museum's participant response to a Dutch Still Life painting at the Holburne Museum

*I'd been pretty nervous in the days leading up to the Discover Museums presentation evening. However, as I began and touched on the hopelessness I'd been experiencing, darts of emotion shot crazily through my body.*

*All I had been through over the last year, a terrible depression, and how a simple drawing had meant so much to me became very present, but I must have picked up on the supportive energy in the room (people had become impressionistic blobs by this point) because I was able to plough on through my talk. I was determined to share my creative journey because I really cared - I'd been afforded a wonderful opportunity and this was my chance to acknowledge that.*

*In my case it was through Pathways that drawing these objects that were clearly made with love that gave me a chance to reignite my belief in living.*

*I've called my work 'Coming out of the darkness'.*

FreshArt@ participant discussion with external evaluator and additional written comments, 2022.

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