

Evaluation and research for Brighton 3Ts

Subject: Evaluation meeting
Title: Meeting minutes
Date: Tuesday 6th March 2012

Evaluation meeting

On 6th March 2012, Willis Newson facilitated a meeting with the Brighton 3Ts JAG with the aim of exploring possible approaches to evaluating the project. Ideas had been generated around the possibility of partnering with an academic institution to deliver a robust evaluation or even to undertake a research project. This meeting was designed to explore these possibilities.

The aims of the meeting were therefore to:

- explore possible approaches to evaluation and research
- understand the opportunities and limitations inherent in each approach
- reach consensus on the aims for the evaluation/research
- identify a way forward and consider possible partnerships to support this activity
- consider how to embed creative approaches to evaluation into the project to ensure that the process and outputs reflect the creative nature of the work, engage the widest possible audience and provide meaningful findings

In preparation for the meeting the JAG were asked to consider the following two questions:

- *Why do you think it is important to evaluate this project?*
- *What question(s) would you like the evaluation to address?*

The meeting was facilitated by Meg Attwood, Willis Newson's Evaluation and Research Lead. Meg took the JAG through a consensus development exercise. This required the group to reflect on their rationale for the evaluation, prioritise facts about evaluation and research and then prioritise aims for the evaluation. The aim of this exercise was to identify areas of consensus so as to sketch out a way forward for the evaluation.

Rationale for the evaluation

When asked to respond to the question "Why do you think it is important to evaluate this project?" the JAG's answers clustered around the following themes:

- Assess the success of the project in achieving its aims (considering ideas of quality and value for money)
- Evidence the impact of the programme on patients, staff and visitors
- Reflect on and learn from the process of implementing the programme so as to inform the development of future arts programmes
- Showcase the work of 3Ts
- Contribute to the arts and health evidence base

Figure 1: JAG responses to the question “Why evaluate?”

Quality	To be assured of the quality of our arts programme
	How can we ensure we get the best possible art?
Learning	To learn lessons for futures commissions at BSUH
	To reflect on and learn from how we did things...What could we have done differently or better?
	To inform the development of the futures arts programme.
	To identify if the aims were achievable and if not, why not?
Value for money	To know whether it was worth spending the money; whether the money was well spent
	Are we getting the best value for money? How can we ensure that?
Celebrate and advocate	To better articulate and therefore publicise/celebrate what we have achieved.
	Showcasing the work of 3Ts
	To raise awareness of the achievement of the programme both within and outside the Trust
	To demonstrate the ‘work’ of going through the effort of the project – people’s time and money.
Maintain values	Keep the integrity of and ethos of the New Hospital 21 st century values.
Explore impact	Seek feedback from end users
	To find out what impact the artwork and the arts programme have had
	To work alongside patients and staff to generate stories that communicate the impact of the programme in a very meaningful way.
Contribute to evidence base	To contribute to the evidence base on arts in health – to support the arts in health agenda (platform for funding), to avoid reinventing the wheel (overcome NHS silos, learn from each other).
	Strengthen the evidence base for Arts in Health

Evaluation aims

When asked to reflect on the aims for the evaluation, the JAG’s responses reflected those above with consensus emerging in the following areas:

- The identification of learning and development of best practice
- Evidencing the impact of the project
- Advocating for arts and health at 3Ts
- Assessing the success of the project in achieving its aims

Figure 2: JAG reflections on the aims for the evaluation

To identify learning and develop best practice	To identify weaknesses in the process to inform future projects
	What was the experience of all parties involved in early integration and did this process add value? How could it be improved?
	To understand the “nuts and bolts” of delivering a project so as to continuously improve and learn from practise.
	To provide insights that will help to shape and inform an ongoing arts programme.
	Have we used the best possible process?
	To inform future good practice
	To take the learning into the future
	To increase our competence in managing an arts programme
	Learn from works and what doesn't work
To assess if early collaborations / integration made a different or not.	
To celebrate the project	To provide an output that serves as a legacy for the project.
To contribute to the evidence base	To contribute to the wider Arts and Health evidence base and reinforce it.
To advocate for arts and health	Evidence for increased funding
	To have 'material' with which to advocate to Trust Board and Fundraisers.
	To generate evidence that will support fundraising efforts (eg. for an ongoing arts programme).
To work with academic partners	To collaborate with academic partners
To evidence impact	To understand the mechanisms through which the design of a building can communicate care and compassion
	To generate evidence of health outcomes
	Proof of the value of creative spaces
To assess project success	To ensure we have met the aims we set out to achieve
	To check whether we've achieved our stated aims
	How do we evaluate if whether we have reached our aims?

Evaluation approach

When discussing the best approach to the evaluation, consensus emerged in the following areas:

- The evaluation will need to assess the impact of the programme whilst also exploring the processes involved in its delivery - capturing learning that will inform future arts activity
- A qualitative approach is felt to be the most appropriate to capture stories that meaningfully communicate the impact of the programme on patients and staff
- Using creative methodologies is a priority for the JAG, ensuring that the evaluation reflects the creative nature of the programme
- There is a desire to partner with an academic organisation so as to increase the credibility of the evaluation and raise the profile of the programme

- The evaluation should provide an output that serves as a legacy for the project
- The evaluation should provide evidence of impact that will support future fundraising efforts (e.g. for an ongoing arts programme) and contribute to the arts and health evidence base

Figure 3: JAG reflections on evaluation approach

Process	A process evaluation assesses the processes involved in delivering a project and identifies learning. This can then inform future practice.
Creative methods	A robust evaluation can be made more meaningful by the use of creative methods that promote engagement and improve response rates.
Impact	An impact evaluation can provide evidence of the impact of a project on participants thereby helping to secure future funding Evaluation / research that seeks to access patient / staff views in depth (ie. interview, focus groups or open-ended questionnaires) would likely require NHS ethics approval.
Academic partners	Academic partners add credibility to an evaluation Academic evaluation / research tends to raise the profile of an arts programme both regionally and nationally – an aspiration is that the work would be published? Or is it?
Partnerships	Partnerships support the delivery of robust evaluation by facilitating data gathering (eg. access to statistics / medical records) and allowing for knowledge and expertise to be shared – what are our options? Which faculty? Who? How do we find it? How do we get what we want? Equal partnerships
Research	Research, particularly in an area where little is known, can make a significant contribution to the wider arts and health evidence base. Research tends to focus on a very specific question whereas an evaluation could cover two to three overarching questions (eg. the extent to which the aims of the programme had been achieved).
Quantitative	Quantitative research is concerned with numbers and outcome measures. It can be used to test a hypothesis or assess the effectiveness of an intervention – How do you isolate what gives you quantitative results?
Qualitative	A qualitative approach to research / evaluation focuses on the subject experiences and perceptions of participants.
Evaluation	An evaluation can be conducted across a whole project / programme or it could focus on a specific element of the wider project. For example, single commissions Evaluation assesses the extent to which a project has been successful – has it met its aims?

A sketch of the evaluation aims

Based on the cards prioritised during the meeting and the discussions around possible approaches to evaluation, the JAG sketched out the following three aims for the evaluation:

1. To understand the impact of artworks within an improved environment on the emotional experiences of patients, staff and visitors
 - 1.1. Possibly with an exploration of how this effect differs for public and private spaces within the hospital
2. To identify learning that will inform the development and delivery of future projects (e.g. an ongoing arts programme)
3. To assess what impact the early integration of artists (recommended best practice) has had on the process of implementing the programme and its outputs

Possible ways forward

The opportunities to evaluate this project exist on a continuum from an internal evaluation of the project, conducted by the 3Ts team, through to an academic evaluation/research project. The option/s that are chosen by the JAG will depend on the available resources for delivery and the appropriateness of the approach to their needs and the aims for the evaluation. There are three possible options:

Option 1:

Willis Newson could help the JAG to structure a basic internal evaluation of the project and then mentor them through the process to ensure that the evaluation is implemented in a robust way. The evaluation could include several creative evaluation methods and tools. This will help to ensure that the evaluation is engaging for participants and produces meaningful findings. It could also provide the JAG with a legacy of the project in the form of a creative output.

The evaluation could cover one or all of the aims identified depending on the priorities of the JAG. Although this is the least expensive alternative, it would still require time and input from the JAG. The main benefit of this approach is that being mentored through the process of developing and implementing a robust evaluation framework will embed learning within the 3Ts team and develop their evaluation knowledge and skills. This can then be used to inform future evaluation work (e.g. of an ongoing arts programme if this is established).

Rough estimate of cost: £10,000 - £25,000

Option 2

The JAG could contract an external evaluator to evaluate the project, focussing on all or some of the above evaluation aims. With the right evaluator in place, this could produce a high quality evaluation. This approach may have greater credibility with the Trust, as it will have been done by an objective “outsider”. Input from the JAG would still be required, but this would be limited to providing data (e.g. information and participation in interviews/focus groups) rather than the delivery of the evaluation.

Rough estimate of cost: £25,000 - £50,000

Option 3

The JAG has expressed an interest in working with an academic partner. This could be done in three ways:

- Academic partner undertakes an evaluation of the project
- Academic partner undertakes a focused research project
- PhD student is funded to explore an area of the project

This approach could lend itself to an evaluation of some or all of the JAG's evaluation aims (academic-led project evaluation) or could be more focused, exploring particular aspects or themes of the project in greater depth (focused research project/PhD).

This approach would result in a higher profile for the project within academic circles and the publication of an article or articles in academic journals, if this was something the JAG and their research partner were keen to pursue.

There are a couple of options in terms of identifying an academic partner. The JAG could identify a researcher or research team within the University of Brighton who might have an interest in the project or alternatively, the JAG could work with a specialist arts and health researcher, who would probably not be local to Brighton.

Possible partners within the University of Brighton could be found in the:

- Centre for Health Research, which has a "Health promotion, policy and practice" research stream that amongst other things, "explores how settings can create or solve problems relating to health, and how they can function as complex and inter-linked systems in order to increase understanding of how effective health improvement can be developed". They are also interested in "evaluating interventions, actions, and/or policies through the use of qualitative methodologies that can deepen our understanding of how and why different interventions work in particular contexts and at different times; and in different places."
- Social Science, Policy and Research Centre, which has a care, health and wellbeing research cluster. They have "strong links with policy, practice and with service users and community organisations with whom we carry out collaborative research."

Of course, partners may be found in the arts or architecture departments, but the above would probably be more suitable for exploring the aims that the JAG has identified.

Alternatively, the JAG could work with a specialist arts and health researcher such as:

- Professor Norma Daykin, at the University of the West of England is a social scientist with a special interest in arts and health. She leads the Arts and Health Research Programme within the Centre for Public Health Research. "This programme draws together academics, researchers and practitioners from a range of disciplines including social and health sciences; arts; music and healthcare to examine a wide range of arts related topics. The group undertakes systematic reviews and evaluation studies as well as exploratory and methodological research."
- Professor Paul Camic, at Canterbury Christ Church University, a psychology professor with "long-standing interests in how psychology and the arts might intersect with health care to form new intervention and research possibilities". Professor Camic work has included research on "the use of found and second hand objects in clinical work and the gallery/museum as a site for mental health intervention to enhance wellbeing and quality of life."

If this option were to be taken forward, a brief would need to be developed, which could then be distributed to possible partners in order to assess their interest in the project and their suitability as a project partner.

Rough estimate of cost: £100,000 - £200,000 (to fund academic-led evaluation or research project)
£60,000 (to fund PhD)

Budget

The Arts Strategy identified a budget of £20,000 for evaluation. Option 1 could fall within this budget, but options 2 and 3 would require partnership funding.

Next steps

- To agree on the aims for the evaluation
- To identify the best option/s for the evaluation (options 1-4 or a combination of these)
- To put together a brief for the external evaluator/research partner
- To identify possible partners and share the evaluation brief with them
- To select appropriate partner/s and identify possible funding sources
- To draw up a scope of work and time plan for the evaluation
- To fundraise for the option/s chosen