

Open Arts Referral Guide

***OPEN ARTS** is a community arts and mental health programme that aims to promote confidence, skills, self-esteem and positive mental health. The programme offers creative courses that act as a springboard for people to move on in their progression pathways, onto other forms of community involvement, learning, training, or work. We aim to increase social inclusion, diversity, prevention and wellbeing, by using the creative arts as a tool from which participants can focus and learn from. Courses also offer further volunteer opportunities.*

Participants are required to be:

- Motivated to attend, to improve their wellbeing, to engage with the group and in art making in a regular pattern
- A low level of risk to self and others

We cannot offer placement for people with the following, as they are unlikely to benefit:

- Active risk of harm to self/current suicidal intent or a recent suicide attempt, or still in crisis
- Active risk of harm to others or recent history of violence
- Active symptoms of psychosis or manic/hypomanic episodes
- Personality traits that would make engagement with the group difficult for the other members
- Drug and alcohol misuse at a level of misuse likely to prevent engagement with the studio community
- Significant psychosocial or physical health factors which prevent engagement in regular psychological therapy

Practicalities:

- **Currently all our Open Arts courses and activities are held in our new venue Open Arts, Garon park community centre, Eastern avenue, Southend on sea SS2 4FA.** We are in the Old Trinity football social club. Next door to Little Heroes, behind Kids Kingdom.
As you turn into Garon Park from the roundabout, it's the first road on the right. Drive under the yellow height barrier and the building is on the right. They'll be orange flag and a pull up banner on the gate.
- Groups consist of around 15-20 people
- Sessions usually last 2 hours
- Participants have to make their own way to the group but can be accompanied by a support worker or carer if preferred
- Travel or childcare expenses cannot be covered
- Materials are provided
- The groups are facilitated by professional arts facilitators, with support from volunteers. The groups focus on the creative arts as opposed to mental health
- If a participant needs support to get them to the course, and to support them in settling in, that is fine with us but will need to be arranged by the referrer or Care Co-ordinator. The Open Arts manager should be informed if a support worker, or member of family will be accompanying the participant

Course fees

- **Open Arts is NOT FUNDED by the NHS** but operates completely on external funding, donations and fundraising by participants, volunteers and local businesses.
- Places are open to those on Self directed support/Recovery budgets /personal budgets /carers budgets at a cost of £250 for a 2 hour 12 week course or £350 for the course and a 3 month studio placement at Open Arts, Garon Park Community Centre on completion of the course. Care Co-ordinator/support worker applies for the budget on participants behalf

For those who are not able to receive the funding, they can still be referred. We ask for £10 / £5 towards each session but understand that may be difficult so are happy for people to pay what they can. Free places are also available. Open Arts is funded by the donations we receive as a charity. Donations are always welcome.

Who is it suitable for?

- Adults aged 16 and upwards who identify with having a mental health need and would like to manage their mental health through being creative.
- People in recovery from mental ill health
- Carers
- We can work with any level of ability – beginners and participants with experience in art are all welcome
- Participants need a level of self-management within the group
- Open Arts offers a stepping stone between statutory services and mainstream services, so it is suitable for those who are keen to work on creativity, learning, art, and social interaction, but are not quite ready to sign up at their local college or community centre on their own.
- We also offer courses for wellbeing which are open to all.

Referring procedure

- We have an open referral route.
- Please refer using the Open Arts referral form
- Participants can be referred by someone working with them (mental health professional, support worker, doctor) or a family member
- Participants can self-refer
- Referrals to be sent to Open Arts via telephone, email (if within a secure email system) or by post using a referral form.
- Once referral is received we will make contact with the Care Co-ordinator to discuss how the place will be funded.
- Once their funding is agreed, participants will receive a letter with course programme, details of the time and location and a map.
- Referrals may take up to one month to process.

What will happen in the course?

- Taster sessions in a variety of arts subjects. Our standard course is in Fine Art (e.g. painting, printing, pastels and clay at an introductory level). We can run courses in Digital Art, Drama, Creative Writing, Film making, Percussion or Yoga, if there is enough demand.
- Creative Arts Tutors will demonstrate techniques and show examples, and participants will be given time and space to use the ideas suggested in their own way.
- Individual creative support is also offered within the group if required.
- Space and flexibility to work at your own pace.
- People will not be judged on their level of ability.
- Artwork is not explored in the same way it may be in the Arts Therapies. **This is not a therapy session.** The Open Arts team are not qualified mental health professionals.
- Participants have to be able to cope in the group situation. They need to be at the right point of their recovery to be able to engage in and benefit from the process of Open Arts courses
- If participants feel vulnerable, please consider bringing a support worker for the initial session or the whole course.
- A studio environment is created to facilitate freedom, experimentation and social interaction.
- Students are provided with all materials they need whilst on the course.
- Information, advice and guidance input is also available.

What happens after the course?

- Participants are signposted onto other opportunities in their area, including community groups and classes and volunteer opportunities
- Other optional next steps for participants are:

- Exhibitions
- Gallery visits
- Studio Space
- Voluntary work

PLEASE SEND REFERRALS:

By email: epunft.open.arts@nhs.net or jo.keay@nhs.net

When emailing referral forms please use password protection if not from an 'nhs.net' account

Further Enquiries To:

Email: epunft.open.arts@nhs.net

Jo Keay, Open Arts Manager 07580 982 462 email: Jo.Keay@nhs.net

Please visit <https://www.openartsessex.org/> and <https://eput.nhs.uk/our-services/essex/essex-mental-health-services/adults/open-arts/>

Facebook @openartsessex <https://www.facebook.com/openartsessex>

Instagram @OpenArtsEssex <https://www.instagram.com/openartsessex/>

and Twitter @OpenArtsEssex <https://www.twitter.com/openartsessex>

Thank you

Open Arts is managed under EPUT Charity Fund Registered Charity number 1053793

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