

# TOWARDS A MENTALLY FLOURISHING SCOTLAND: THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT IN SCOTLAND 2008 - 11

Response to the discussion paper from **Art in Healthcare**.  
February 2008

## INTRODUCTION

Art in Healthcare is a small, national voluntary organisation that is keen to engage with other national and local agencies and stakeholders to support the promotion of mental health and wellbeing.

We are particularly interested in how this can be achieved in healthcare's physical environment, both as a healing and a work environment.

We believe we have a role to play in **promoting and improving mental health** through a focus on improving the healthcare environment.

We can also **support improvements in the quality of life**, social inclusion, health, equality and recovery of people who experience mental illness in areas such as cultural and recreational activities.

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### Equality of access

Our work takes a broad approach (rather than individual interventions), but we aim to reach those who need it most. As well as our work in traditional hospital settings, we are increasingly trying to reach

- People in institutional settings, especially those in secure care or subject to detention, or people living in care homes.
- Accommodated children.

We also practice what we preach. In February 2008 ENABLE Scotland named Art in Healthcare as the best small employer of the year for people with learning disabilities.

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## LOCAL DELIVERY

### **What we offer**

We own a collection of 1300 high-quality, original artworks that are offered for a modest annual rental to any healthcare organisation in Scotland.

We also work with healthcare organisations who wish to commission work that will be permanently sited with them. We believe that our work improves patients' experience of care, as we work with them to commission artworks to reflect their experience.

Our collection and projects are available to hospitals and community-based treatment facilities across Scotland. The services we offer are unique, flexible and extremely good value for money. We offer a long term solution to the dilemma of using artworks to improve the environment, without the worry of insurance, repair, maintenance and, perhaps, disposal.

- We offer a regional service that does not compromise a Health Board's commitment to local delivery.
- We are a voluntary organisation that can add to what is offered by public sector services.
- Our work helps improve Scotland's built environment in healthcare
- We support the healthcare workforce to approach health improvement in a holistic fashion.
- We offer healthcare organisations and individuals ways of working together differently, often in new ways.
- Carers, relatives and visitors also benefit from what we do.

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### **Work in employment and workplace settings**

We know that the workplace is an ideal setting for interventions help to promote good health.

By making high quality artworks available to hospitals and healthcare settings throughout Scotland we are improving both the healthcare setting and the workplace of those employed in healthcare.

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## SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

As an arts organisation we endorse the view of Sir Brian McMaster, expressed in ***Supporting Excellence in the Arts: from Measurement to Judgement***. DCMS, January 2008. He says

*Engaging new audiences and deepening their experiences has long been a goal of funding bodies, cultural organisations, artists and practitioners alike. One of the biggest barriers to audience engagement is the notion held by many that the arts are simply not for them. The 'it's not for me' syndrome is endemic and conspires to exclude people from experiences that could transform their lives....Once the initial barrier of engagement is overcome, audiences must be given the opportunity to deepen their experience and be introduced to more complex work. The best person to communicate with audiences is the artist; therefore artists, practitioners and cultural organisations need to explore ways of communicating more effectively with their audience.*

We aim to support young Scottish artists by buying their works for our collection and engaging them for site-specific work. Our aim is to ensure high artistic standards in all aspects of our work.

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## PROGRESS

We believe that we have much to offer in the implementation of the Action Plan. We want to continue what we do, in partnership with other national and local organisations and would like to develop more in the areas of

- collecting and disseminating evidence of what works and what looks promising
- encouraging and supporting development and innovation
- providing opportunities for networking and learning
- support for national campaigning as one part of an overall social marketing approach

In April 2007 we secured a grant from Scottish Government of £64,000, spread over three years. This grant enables us to develop our work in the field of mental health. It also enables us to consolidate our achievements and build up those activities which will enable us to generate a sufficient level of income to support our work. The continuing support of the Scottish Government will enable Art in Healthcare to make a unique contribution to improving mental health and wellbeing in Scotland.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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