

cARTrefu Case Study

Since 2015, the Age Cymru cARTrefu project has provided creative activities delivered by professional artists for 3217 care home residents, staff, volunteers and family members in Wales.

cARTrefu has not only ignited a passion for creativity for all involved, but has also mentored artists to improve their skills in working with vulnerable older people in care, over the 8 to 12 week period of the residencies.

Evaluation of the project was carried out with Bangor University and the Dementia Services Development Centre Wales, and found:

- Statistically significant improvement in the wellbeing of the residents
- Statistically significant improvements in staff and artists attitudes to towards residents, especially those living with dementia
- Staff are more likely to seek out cultural experiences
- Artists developed new skills

Having worked with more than 25% of care homes in Wales, cARTrefu is the largest project of its kind in Europe and is recognised as an example of best practice in a creative, relationship-centred care approach.

‘I haven’t done this for years... I don’t give myself the permission to still paint and enjoy myself... But this has been the best day I’ve had for years.’ Resident

The legacy of cARTrefu in the care homes goes beyond an increased appreciation of the arts, and into fundamental elements of relationship-centred care. Staff spoke about how the sessions had improved their relationships with residents:

‘It was so good to see her having fun and looking herself again.’ Care home manager.

A cARTrefu activity pack was developed and distributed to all care homes in Wales, and is also available online www.agecymru.org.uk/cartrefu

cARTrefu was funded by Arts Council Wales and the Baring Foundation