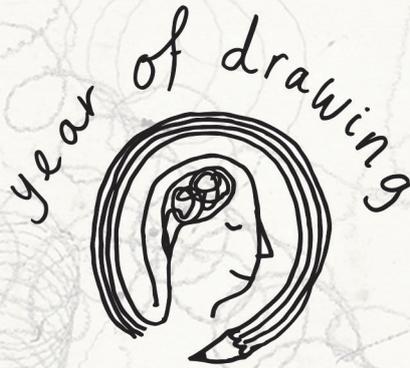




Sussex Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust



*"A Year of drawing. A decade of drawing.
A lifetime of drawing!"*

Year of Drawing participant

Make Your Mark Year of Drawing Evaluation

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Introduction

Year of Drawing was a participatory mental health drawing project developed and delivered by Make Your Mark funded through Heads On Charity between 2017-2018. The following report outlines key activity and outcomes from the project.

Context

Make Your Mark is the arts and health programme for Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT). Make Your Mark aims to use the arts to make a difference to individuals, groups and communities, to develop an arts practice to help us tell stories, transform environments and bring new understandings of health and human experience into the public realm. By giving space to the imagination we seek to integrate creativity into the fabric of health care and create new possibilities for learning, health and well-being within our communities.

Make Your Mark develops and delivers arts projects to increase participants' well-being, vitality and sense of connection with their interests and those of others. We see the arts as offering an important resource where mental health service users, staff and carers can take part as participants to learn more about themselves, their shared humanity and their creativity.

Year of Drawing, delivered during 2017-2018, has been the most ambitious project to date for Make Your Mark. It allowed the promotion of artistic activity across Sussex Partnership. To reach large numbers of NHS staff and service users, it took a multifaceted approach to communications and delivery.

Engagement

As reflected in the participant and activity data, Year of Drawing (YOD) had an extensive reach through both direct work with participants and with audience members.

Participants (direct involvement in drawing activity) - 1,132

Audience members live - 27,178

Audience members (online, in print) - 58,211

We exceeded our planned artist commissions and achieved more exhibition opportunities (temporary and permanent) than originally envisaged. (See Project Outline diagram below).

The project increased access to the arts through high quality participatory drawing events open to mental health service users via **42 pop up studios, 10 public drawing events and 8 Sussex Recovery College courses.**

Delivery of Year of Drawing

The project was held by an effective and collaborative structure of 12 monthly Creative Team Meetings bringing together all the project staff. The task of the Creative Team, made up of Lead for Arts and Health, Arts Project Co-ordinator, technician, academic

partner, professional artists and peer arts workers, was to develop and deliver high quality participatory drawing opportunities within NHS and cultural settings. The team meetings enabled both planning and aesthetic, emotional and practical support. It served as a creative and reflective base for team members to work out from.

The development of artistic and participatory practice, including sustained co-production and co-delivery with our Peer Arts Workers (artists with lived experience of mental health challenges) was of central importance.

“Recently I have recognised moments of self-confidence, which is a new feeling for me. This has come from a profound belief that I am contributing to a worthy and innovative project.” Peer arts worker.

As a team we learnt that introducing drawing ideas and using high quality materials in the context of enabling relationships helped engage many people with significant mental health challenges.

The Creative Team held the quality of drawing practice throughout. All public presentations of work from across the year were underpinned by joining a relational, exploratory approach with a curatorial commitment to aesthetic coherence showing both the drawings and the underlying processes.

Exhibitions and events

The Creative Team curated and produced two mini outreach exhibitions. The **‘Art Collection’** with works from CASS Sculpture, Royal Pavilion and Museums and Towner Gallery and the **‘Year of Drawing Collection’** using a selection of participant drawings. The outreach exhibitions were designed to make artworks accessible to people in hospital settings. These collections have also been exhibited to Sussex Partnership’s staff through 2 innovative screen saver exhibitions.

“Just wanted to say congratulations and thank you for the new make your mark screensavers....it was amazing what a positive impact it had on my mood. It gave me just the pause I needed in my day and reminded me of how important art is for my wellbeing.” NHS staff member

Alongside the YOD collection, a **Drawing Ideas Pack** was devised and distributed widely within the Trust and to cultural partners. 50 packs of drawing materials have also been shared with services across Sussex Partnership to support ongoing drawing practice.

The Creative Team co-curated drawings for 3 public exhibitions (**Marks Make Meaning, University of Brighton March 2018, Southampton City Gallery April – June 2018, Main Gallery, Phoenix Brighton July 2018**). Each exhibition explicitly referred to mental health. Through this the project sought to challenge existing public discourse, expectations and stigma linked to mental health.

Through delivering YOD public drawing and training events, the project again sought to extend understanding of the role of the arts in supporting mental health and wellbeing. The training events focused on ‘Drawing for wellbeing’, ‘Supporting access to the arts for people with mental health challenges’ and ‘Learning from a Year of Drawing’ and were hosted by Cass Sculpture (West Sussex), Jerwood (East Sussex) and Phoenix (Brighton).

Learning from the project was also presented at the symposium **‘Learning from a Year of Drawing: How can drawing support health and wellbeing?’ (12/09/18)**. By combining

reflection and action, discussion and drawing, the symposium set out to inform practice directly. The symposium was delivered in association with Brighton and Sussex Medical School. Year of Drawing was also featured in the 2018 annual report of the Director of Public Health (Brighton and Hove).

Year of Drawing Feedback

The project brought many people together in new ways and enabled hundreds of individual discoveries, connections or reconnections with creativity, as well as the companionship that arises from drawing alongside others.

"It was wonderful (pop up studio) and brought our hospital and wards together. We had people who don't normally talk talking and actually producing lovely art work. We had people uniting from different wards across the hospital. Not just the patients but the staff as you inspired them that they could do something similar on their wards" NHS staff member.

Participants have consistently offered positive feedback. Year of Drawing interventions enabled development in art making skills with direct links becoming apparent between arts participation and improved mood, confidence and reductions in distress, inhibition and isolation being identified many times by the Creative Team.

"Being lost in art was a new pleasure where I never thought I would again feel any joy." Pop up studio participant.

The project made a commitment to using high quality drawing materials throughout.

"People LOVE good drawing materials. They feel the investment in them as well as enjoying the stimulus of new experiences." Creative Team member

Partnership

A key strategic aim of Make Your Mark is to build stronger links between health and cultural sectors. Year of Drawing was therefore delivered in collaboration with 11 major cultural organisations. These partnerships were positive with participants valuing the increased access to arts venues, as well as gaining new awareness of their programmes and collections.

"Great to see the artefacts and narrative about this project in an exhibition. It's difficult to give engaging processes and 'felt' value a visibility. I've heard a lot of good things about Year of Drawing so it's brilliant to see something of its process, impact and reach." Gallery director.

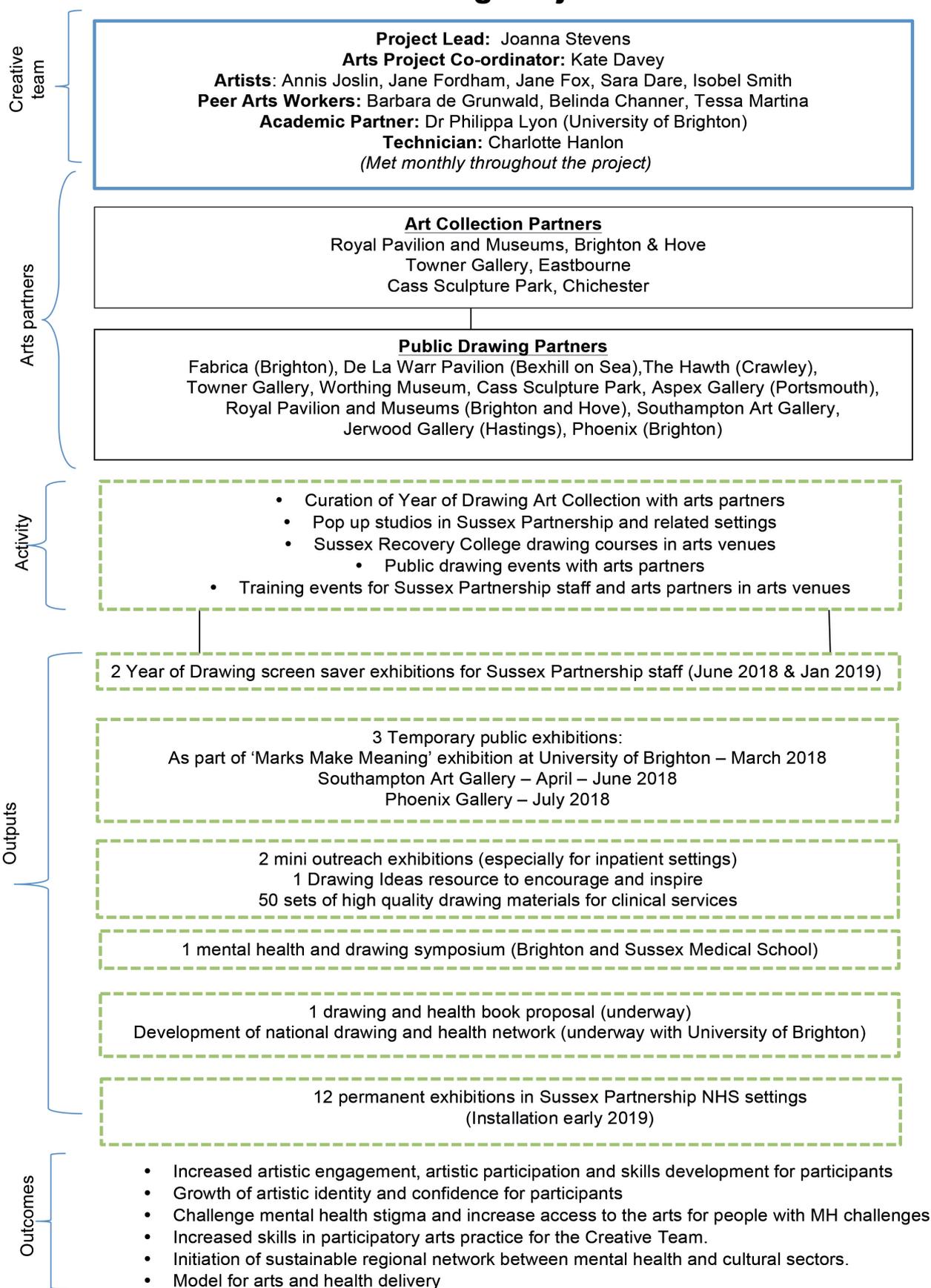
Legacy

The project has an ongoing legacy through twelve permanent exhibitions of drawings that were installed in NHS settings in early 2019, as well as through the increased awareness, interest and confidence in drawing that was initiated for many people during the year. Fifty packs of drawing materials were delivered across clinical services to support this.

"Year of Drawing has sown a seed – and signposted a need." Creative Team member

We believe Year of Drawing's commitment to excellence in participatory practice, artistic innovation and co-production with people with lived experience of mental health challenges has further established the role of the arts in mental health both within and beyond Sussex Partnership.

A Year of Drawing Project Outline



The Year of Drawing was funded by Heads On Charity with generous grants from National Lottery through Arts Council England, Chalk Cliff Trust, John Horniman's Children's Trust, Dixie Rose Findlay Charitable Trust, and Rocking Horse Children's Charity.