

To Whom it May Concern,

We just want to say wholeheartedly Thank You, to the whole team for working and supporting arts & creativity in Offaly and the new Tullamore Community Arts Centre. Our roles as socially engaged artists, members of the community and as the core part of an arts and health organisation is to look at existing strategy for arts access and engagement for all. The arts and creativity for the health sector along with professional practices and collaborations has grown significantly.

Time and time again there may be arts plans, policies, best laid intentions but a genuine lack of capacity to support them. Having researched and published A Creative Charter in 2019, Offaly Arts and Health Organisation Anam Beo understands the need to have a strategy in place for access and the roles involved. Our charter placed us as contributors to The National Charter for Arts and Creativity for Older People by Age and Opportunity to be launched this year.

The new purpose built community arts centre in Offaly is centrally located in the heart of Tullamore, close to parking, will be wheelchair accessible with its own sheltered Courtyard. It is the ideal venue for events, product or book launches, meetings and seminars. It will be intrinsic to the access of Arts in the Community and an Arts for Health projects, where there is learning for all; participants, artists, students, healthcare professionals, management and advisers. A sustainable community generously living together.

As learning needs are identified, they may be addressed through various structures, such as peer and mentor learning sessions, work placements, training days, conferences, accredited courses and network meetings. A place of knowledge and learning and creativity, that is accessible where there are community and county wide achievements, collaborations and news, are celebrated.

A place to support small arts organisations, community groups, agencies and individuals, also have visibility. A programme and projects for schools, Bealtaine, Offaly Disability Equality Network, Green Offaly, Offaly Age Friendly to name but a few.

A place where older artists, arts and health, community arts practitioners and participants can work independently or be supported by a well-resourced environment, management team and skilled artist facilitators.

A place where there is an Arts, Health Community programme embedded into the arts centres with potential partnership HSE funding to support a Services Manager.

To support access, promotion, knowledge/concept of arts & health, understanding wider issues, mental health, loneliness and more as a creative hub to benefit societal health collectively and this bit is important, Arts and Health is not only about engagements in hospital/care settings etc. Reference <https://www.westcorkartscentre.com/>

I am hoping that Offaly County Council could connect with a HSE Community Services person to initiate and advocate such a place, where there is access to an Arts, Health & Community programme embedded into the Tullamore arts centre with partnership HSE funding to support a Services Manager.

Yours sincerely,