



Annual Report 2023

Name of the organisation: Waterford Healing Arts Trust
(Operating under the name Réalta from March 2023)

Organisation Type: Charitable Trust

Charity number: CHY 13173

Charity Registration Number: 20040284

Réalta, Developing Arts + Health in Ireland

Vision:

For the arts to be embedded into the provision of healthcare in Ireland

Mission:

To lead the development of the arts and health sector in Ireland through support, promotion and advancement, and the demonstration of excellence in artistic delivery



Pictured at the launch of Réalta on 3 March 2023, Liam Merriman, Musician, Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts, Kevin Rafter, Chair of the Arts Council, Grace O'Sullivan MEP and Patron of Réalta, Grace Rothwell, General Manager, University Hospital Waterford, Chris Bailey, Arts + Health Lead, World Health Organisation, Claire Meaney, Director, Réalta, Dr Abdul Bulbulia, Founder, Waterford Healing Arts Trust, Catherine Drea, Chairperson, Réalta. Photo credit: Patrick Browne.

Welcome

2023 was a truly momentous year for Waterford Healing Arts Trust. After 30 years as the pioneering and leading arts and health organisation in Ireland, we officially launched as Réalta, the national resource organisation dedicated to the development of arts and health in Ireland. This formal restructuring and re-branding represents the most significant development in the organisation's history, and follows a comprehensive business planning and stakeholder engagement process which took place over the preceding four years.

Réalta has been established to strengthen the arts and health sector in Ireland and to provide a central resource for all those interested and involved in arts and health. The launch took place on the 3 March 2023 at the HSE-RCSI Educational Facility, University Hospital Waterford (UHW), with guest speaker Mr Christopher Bailey, Arts and Health Lead at the World Health Organisation (WHO), to officially launch Réalta. Other guest speakers on the day included Prof. Kevin Rafter, Chairperson of the Arts Council, Grace O'Sullivan, MEP and Patron of Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts and Catherine Drea, Chairperson, Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts.

Through its national programme, Réalta delivers training; provides information, mentoring and advice; supports networking; engages with the HSE and other policy makers to increase understanding and support for arts + health; and provides the encyclopaedic national resource website artsandhealth.ie. At local level, Réalta delivers its extensive Waterford Healing Arts (WHA) programme, which brings arts experiences – music, visual art, creative writing, storytelling – to the bedside of patients at University Hospital Waterford (UHW) and other healthcare settings to promote creativity, connection and discovery, and reduce isolation, anxiety and stress for patients, family members and staff. The WHA programme also provides rich examples of good practice, and researches, pilots and evaluates new ideas, all of which informs Réalta's national work. Réalta is core funded by the Arts Council and the HSE. Réalta is based at the Centre for Arts + Health at University Hospital Waterford.

Waterford Healing Arts Trust undertook the setting up of this national resource organisation in light of its experience, leadership and credibility in arts and health practice in Waterford over the last 30 years, and nationally since 2008. The establishment of Réalta is based on Waterford Healing Arts Trust's awareness of the need for such a lead organisation at national level within the arts and health sector, which was confirmed in the outcomes of a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process carried out by the Board and Executive in 2021-2022. This consultation was part of a wider business planning process which also resulted in the development of a long-term strategy for the Réalta organisation and the re-branding of Waterford Healing Arts Trust to Waterford Healing Arts.

The outputs in this annual report are measured against the strategic objectives outlined in our strategy and are divided across Réalta's core areas of focus as follows:

- National arts and health training and support
- National advocacy, awareness and sector development
- artsandhealth.ie
- Waterford Healing Arts

Operating as Waterford Healing Arts Trust in 2023, the organisation transferred its assets to Arts and Health Ireland CLG trading as Réalta on 31.12.2023.

1. National Arts and Health Training and Support

1.1 Promote, develop and deliver a range of arts and health training programmes

In 2023, Réalta built on and developed existing training programmes to support and strengthen the arts and health sector. These training programmes included:

Arts + Health: Check Up Check In is Réalta's leading national arts and health networking event. This annual gathering of the arts and health community promotes solidarity among arts and health practitioners and provides opportunities for participants to share their experiences, exchange ideas and support and inspire each other in their practice through a range of themed presentations and workshops. Having presented various online iterations of *Check Up Check In* during COVID, on 25 October we were thrilled to return to presenting this important event in person, thus prompting this year's theme *Making Connections*, and with an excellent event partner in the Creative Life Hub at Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA), St James' Hospital. Attended by approx. 98 people, this year's *Check Up Check In* had a special focus on mental health and wellbeing, and the challenge to practitioners of creating innovative, exciting and inspiring work within the healthcare context, and featured presentations by some of the most innovative and creative practitioners working in arts and health today. A particular highlight for all present was the nourishing, compassionate keynote presentation by UK-based arts and health consultant Daniel Regan. In terms of sector development, under the auspices of our Expanding Arts in Healthcare programme, Réalta also provided the opportunity for attendees to explore the development of a Peer Support Network for HSE staff and arts practitioners through a series of Peer Exchange Workshops.

Feedback about *Check Up Check In 2023* has been universally positive, for example:

"Congratulations on hosting such a successful event yesterday. It was wonderful to be in a room so full of experience and knowledge. The speakers were so generous with themselves; I really took a lot from it." (Musician)

"I'm emailing still absolutely buzzing from attending the Arts and Health Check Up Check In event in Dublin yesterday. Claire/Maeve and the team at Réalta absolutely nailed a wonderful conference and my head is full of ideas and I'm full of energy, hope and inspiration!!! It was so good to be there, thank you both so much for the huge amount of work you put in." (Arts + Health Consultant)



Some of the attendees at Arts + Health: Check Up, Check In 2023 at Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing (MISA), St James' Hospital. Photo credit: DGM Photographic.

1.1 Promote, develop and deliver a range of arts and health training programmes (cont.)

- **Good Vibrations: Making Music in Mental Health Settings** a continuous professional development training session for musicians interested in expanding their work to mental health settings, led by long-term Waterford Healing Arts musician Jane O'Brien Moran. This training event was programmed as part of the Well Festival of Arts & Wellbeing and was attended by four musicians.

- In association with Music & Health Ireland, Réalta hosted a five-day **Introduction to Music in Healthcare and Community Settings** for musicians interested in exploring the idea of bringing music into healthcare and community spaces with a focus on older persons' settings. It included a practical placement in local healthcare settings in Waterford. The course took place in November and was attended by six musicians.

- **Experience: An Introduction to Arts, Health and the Older Person:** This learning programme for artists, first delivered in 2021 in partnership with Uillinn West Cork Arts Centre and Age & Opportunity, was presented in person for the first time at the Réalta Centre for Arts + Health in December 2023. We continue to partner with Age & Opportunity on this initiative. The Keynote Speaker was Dr Lucy Pollock, consultant geriatrician and author of *The Book About Getting Older*. 12 artists participated in this one-day event.



Keynote Speaker Dr Lucy Pollock and attendees of Experience: An Introduction to Arts, Health and the Older Person, at the Réalta /WHA Centre for Arts + Health in December.
Photo credit: Keith Currans


1.2 Provide access to information, knowledge and tools and

1.3 Provide mentoring, advice and consultancy


Over the course of its three-year strategy, Réalta plans to develop a suite of resources to include standards of practice, codes of ethics, toolkits, model templates, case studies and evaluation reports. Where possible, relevant and appropriate, Réalta will carry out this work in partnership and/or consultation with key individuals/other organisations involved in arts and health and/or related areas, thereby availing of the rich experience and expertise that exists throughout our sector.

In early 2023, Réalta began working in partnership with **Arts and Health Co-ordinators Ireland (AHCI)** to develop best practice guidelines on pay and conditions for arts and health projects. This is in response to an identified need to create alignment between the arts and health sectors in the professional standardisation of this work. The guidelines will address best practice in relation to pay and conditions for freelance artists and creative producers; they will encompass different programme models and a range of healthcare contexts; and they will be informed by a stakeholder engagement process which commenced in September 2023. Arts consultant Heather Maitland, who has a strong track record in this sphere, was recruited through an open tender process in July 2023 to research, develop and deliver the guidelines, in consultation with Réalta and the AHCI. This is the first formal partnership between Réalta and the AHCI in co-delivering a project.

Réalta continued to work in 2023 in partnership with the Renal Arts Group at Queens University, Belfast (QUB), the World Health Organisation (WHO), The Centre for Arts and Health, University of Florida; and Dr Mayleen Laico from the Chong Hua Hospital, Philippines to support a global mapping of arts interventions for people living with kidney disease, which will lead to the development of policy recommendations for future work in this area, to be published in 2024. This PAINT project is funded by Northern Ireland Kidney Research Fund and the QUB Global Research Partnerships Development Fund. In 2023, the project featured a series of arts workshops which were led by, among others, Chris Bailey, Arts and Health Lead at the WHO, and Waterford Healing Arts artist Philip Cullen, who delivered an online workshop for the project partners entitled *Captured Time: An experiential introduction to art-making in a renal dialysis unit*.



"Captured Time: an experiential introduction to art-making in a renal dialysis unit"



Please register ASAP by contacting trisha.forbes@qub.ac.uk
There are very limited spaces for this event, so early booking is highly recommended.

**MONDAY 12TH JUNE 2023,
1PM - 2.15PM
ON ZOOM**

Flier for WHA artist Philip Cullen's online workshop with the international PAINT project partners in June.

1.2 Provide access to information, knowledge and tools and

1.3 Provide mentoring, advice and consultancy (cont.)

Réalta continued to offer **Advice Clinics** for arts and health programmers, artists and healthcare professionals. In addition to providing a much needed support for the arts and health community, these advice clinics feed into the design of the organisation's arts and health training programmes as we learn about the needs of the sector and the projects and programmes in development nationally and internationally.

Other highlights from 2023 under this strategic area:

- In January, Réalta made a submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media on the development of local and community arts and the role of local government in this process.
- Réalta responded to requests from national and international peers for information and mentoring on the Waterford Healing Arts *Art at the Kitchen Table* programme. Réalta shared a toolkit of templates to support the delivery of the programme by others, and sought and received independent feedback on the delivery methodology from dementia specialist Sarah Cairns.
- In May, Claire Meaney, Aisling Kennedy and artist Ciara Harrison delivered a workshop about arts and health practice to students at Gaelscoil Phortláirge.
- In June, Aisling Kennedy attended a roundtable discussion at the Arts Council, Dublin to support the development of a new all of government policy in relation to the Per Cent for Art Scheme.
- To support Réalta's knowledge gathering, Claire Meaney travelled to Copenhagen in October to attend a World Health Organisation meeting entitled *Music and Motherhood: Health-care Innovation through the Arts* hosted by the Behavioural and Cultural Insights Unit at the WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- In November, Emma Eager delivered a presentation for healthcare professionals and artists interested in dementia-inclusive arts activities at dlr Lexicon, Dun Laoghaire.
- Réalta continues to explore its consultancy offering in the context of providing support to the sector, in the first instance, and also in terms of the possibility of income generation. In 2023, Réalta provided in-kind support to the *Songlines/Festival in a Van* project by providing guidance around programme design and managing the independent evaluation of the project.

1.4 Support networking of arts and health practitioners

Through the *Expanding Arts in Healthcare* programme, Réalta commenced the development of a model for a Peer Support Network for HSE staff and arts practitioners involved or interested in bringing arts activities to healthcare services. This is based on a review of the 2022 stakeholder report and outcomes of a national in-person networking workshop, which took place during Réalta's annual gathering *Arts + Health: Check Up, Check In* in October 2023. This workshop facilitated mutual learning and collaboration between the health and arts sectors. Réalta continues to link with the Expanding Arts in Healthcare Working Group to determine future directions.

Recognising the value of the collective experience and knowledge that exists within its network, Réalta continued to network with the Arts and Health Co-ordinators Ireland (AHCI). Réalta staff member Aisling Kennedy became the Deputy Chair of this network in 2023.

In 2023, Réalta also joined a new UK and Ireland Arts + Health Network and the Creative Health Network in Northern Ireland, both of which meet online on a bi-monthly basis. Many of Réalta's peers in these networks attended *Arts + Health: Check Up Check In* as a result of these connections.



Participants of the in-person networking workshop, which took place during Réalta's annual gathering *Arts + Health: Check Up, Check In* in October 2023. Photo credit: DGM Photographic.



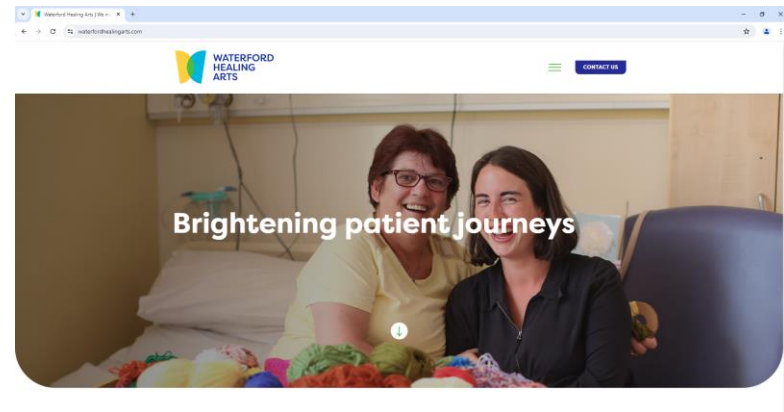
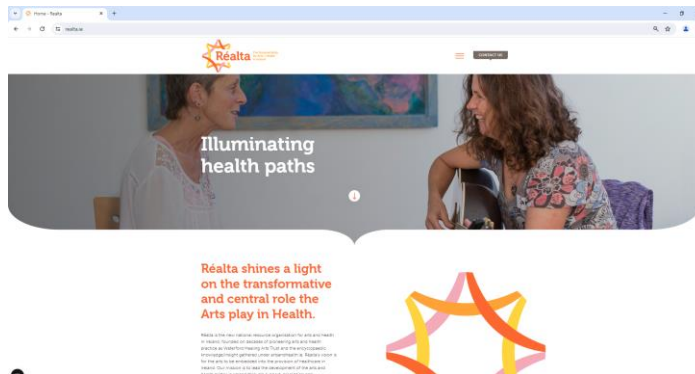
Members of AHCI celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the network at IMMA, Kilmainham, Dublin.

2. National Advocacy, Awareness and Sector Development

2.1 Promote arts and health practice and benefits

Following a highly competitive recruitment process, Réalta hired a part-time Communications Manager in July 2023. This new role is to take responsibility for communicating Réalta's work to our target audiences to support our vision and mission. A key member of the Réalta team, the Communications Manager will work closely with management and staff to design and deliver integrated communications for the organisation to optimise visibility, to consolidate the organisation's reputation at the forefront of arts and health in Ireland and to increase awareness and understanding of arts and health practice and benefits. Further, the Communications Manager will design and implement an integrated communications strategy for the Réalta organisation, to embrace and promote our national arts and health development work and our local Waterford Healing Arts programme.

As part of the restructuring and rebranding of the organisation, Réalta also developed two comprehensive new websites - www.realta.ie and www.waterfordhealingarts.com – to increase the visibility of the organisation and to raise awareness and understanding of the vast breadth of our arts and health practice, benefits, governance, news etc.



2.2 Engage the HSE and other policy makers in understanding, valuing and increasing support of arts and health practice

In 2023, Réalta continued to communicate with HSE senior management around arts and creative activity and models of practice taking place in HSE-led and funded settings. This is being done through a partnership approach with HSE members of the Expanding Arts in Healthcare Working Group, supported via the RENEW partnership with the HSE, the Arts Council, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (Creative Ireland Programme) and the Department of Health (Healthy Ireland Programme). Building on relationships forged during 2022 and informed by a pilot mapping exercise which focused on two CHO areas in 2022, this year Réalta began a comprehensive national registry of the models of arts provision in HSE Community Healthcare Services and Hospital Groups.

3.1 Showcase best practice, ideas and insights in arts and health through www.artsandhealth.ie

Total website visits in 2023: 39,983

Number of artists / arts professionals commissioned to create content 2023 (case studies / perspectives / conversation series): 21

Number of health / social care professionals commissioned to create content 2023 (case studies / perspectives / conversation series): 4

Réalta supports the development of arts and health nationally via artsandhealth.ie, a comprehensive online resource which promotes best practice in the field of arts and health via current news from the sector, monthly case studies, commissioned opinion pieces and national and international resources. Content reflects a regional spread and a range of art forms and healthcare contexts. Where relevant, site content is linked to existing research in the field. A cross-sectoral editorial panel comprising representation from the Arts Council, Create, Arts and Health Co-ordinator's Ireland, Association of Local Authority Arts Officers, artists, the HSE, and healthcare professionals continues to guide the content and direction of the site.

Opinion pieces (Perspectives) continue to be commissioned from healthcare staff, artists, service users and policy makers to reflect emerging issues and hot topics. This year's opinion pieces explored an [artist residency in a hospital operating theatre](#), an Arts for Health [collaboration with Ukrainian refugees](#), and the rekindling of the [creative spirit in the aftermath of a stroke](#).



Arts for Health collaboration with Ukrainian refugees



Theatre Room: Theatre-making in the healthcare environment
Arts + Health Conversation Series 2023

The online Conversation Series continued in 2023, with themes responsive to, and reflective of, current preoccupations in arts and health practice, including theatre making in healthcare environments, with a focus on the Martha Whiteway Day Hospital, Mercer's Institute for Successful Ageing.

Site content has continued to give voice to less visible aspects of arts and health practice. Specific areas of focus for 2023 were agreed with the Editorial Panel and included health inequalities, displaced communities, and architecture as artform focus. The focus areas have resulted in a more diverse representation of site contributors and experiences, which is in line with the Arts Council's Equality, Human Rights & Diversity Policy & Strategy and Réalta's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy.

3.1 Showcase best practice, ideas and insights in arts and health through www.artsandhealth.ie (cont.)

Two bursaries were awarded in 2023: the Documentation Bursary was awarded to theatre artist Joanne Ryan to produce a radio documentary about *In Two Minds*, a theatre production investigating the realities of living with bipolar disorder. Visual artist Catarina Araújo was awarded the Emerging Artist Bursary to reflect on *Cocooning: Catch a Breath*, a collaborative project exploring the impact of COVID-19 on mental health professionals.



Image from *Dance Bualadh Bos* documentary.

Outcomes of two bursary awards from 2022 were also added to the website: The Documentation Bursary had been awarded for the documentation of *Dance Bualadh Bos*, an interactive dance performance, created in collaboration with dance artists Ailish Claffey and Philippa Donnellan and older age communities in County Kildare. Simon Fitzpatrick's short film, with original music by Brian Keegan, has been created as a lasting record of the project, capturing the workshop process and final performances, with insights from the artists, participants and partners. The film provides a powerful testament to the joy and meaning that dance can bring into our lives. <https://vimeo.com/826801835>

Visual Artist and Poet Áine Rose Connell, who was previously a speech and language therapist, was awarded the inaugural Emerging Artist Bursary to reflect on her arts and health practice to date.

https://www.artsandhealth.ie/assets/uploads/2023/01/Wherever-you-go_Reflection-by-Aine-Rose-Connell.pdf

Twelve [case studies](#) which will inspire practitioners and support peer learning were commissioned including:

- *From the Birches to What's the Story?* – An ongoing collaboration (since 2019) between visual artist Rozzi Kennedy and older people in 12 County Louth care settings as part of An Táin Arts Centre's outreach programme.
- *Reimagine UHL*, a project funded by the Irish Architecture Foundation Reimagine Programme, connected a design, architecture & engagement team led by Drake Hourigan Architects with the staff of University Hospital Limerick in 2022. The project explored the potential of the outdoor spaces of the hospital campus to offer support to staff in their working environment.
- *Artist in Residence at the Mater Hospital*: Navin Hyder was Artist in Residence at the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital, Dublin from 2019 to 2022. Hyder's interest in oncology, in particular cancer operations, led her to the hospital's operating theatres. She created a large body of work consisting mainly of drawings of live procedures, depicting the care administered by clinical staff towards patients.

[Resources](#) added to the website in 2023 included studies by University College London (WHO Collaborating Centre for Arts and Health); Trinity College Dublin (TILDA - The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing); CultureforHealth (European Commission); independent evaluations of Music & Health Ireland's programmes in Older Persons Services; frameworks and guidelines by Age & Opportunity, Arts & Disability Ireland and the Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance (UK); and HSE Talking Health & Wellbeing Podcasts (Staff Choirs and Traveller Wellbeing Through Creativity).

Site content was showcased at a number of events in 2023, including the HSE Healthy Ireland Conference (HSE Arts Officers Stand), Age & Opportunity's Artists Care Exchange and Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council's Dementia and the Arts Sharing Session.

4. Waterford Healing Arts

4.1 Deliver excellence in artistic programming in healthcare and community contexts

Art at the Kitchen Table

Setting: Private Residences + Studio (Waterford City and Dungarvan)
Target: 76 sessions delivered by 1 artist, reaching 106 people
Actual: 45 at home sessions delivered by 3 artists, with average of 1 participant per session and 63 studio sessions delivered by 2 artists (32 Waterford City studio sessions reaching an average of 9 participants and 31 Dungarvan studio sessions reaching an average of 4 participants)

Art at the Kitchen Table (AKT) continues to bring art making opportunities to people in their own homes, supporting participants to create art independently, beginning with a conversation and a creative invitation. First piloted in 2020 in response to COVID isolation, AKT aims to provide opportunities for older people who continue to be isolated for various reasons, to discover or reignite an interest in art and to develop the necessary skills to continue making art independently after their AKT sessions have concluded.

In addition to art making, the programme aims to bring joy and creativity, to impact positively on the participants' physical and mental wellbeing and to support their return to full and creative lives post-COVID.

Art at the Kitchen Table (AKT) continued in 2023 with funding from Waterford City and County Council. The individual sessions continued to take place over a three week period in people's homes, following which participants were invited to join the AKT Studio in either the Old Market Arts Centre in Dungarvan (AKT West Waterford Studio) or the Réalta/WHA Centre for Arts + Health (AKT Waterford Studio). AKT is delivered by artists Caroline Schofield and Eilis O'Toole, with relief where needed from artist Jill Bouchier. Staff member Ann Murphy, who has been supporting the AKT Waterford Studio since 2022, commenced supporting the AKT West Waterford Studio in Dungarvan in April.

Participants continue to self-refer or are referred via Waterford Integrated Care of the Older Person (WICOP), Family Carers Ireland, the Alzheimer Society, ALONE and Social Prescribing Waterford.

In December, as part of *Experience 2023: An Introduction to Arts, Health & the Older Person* training for artists to work with older people, AKT participant Roger Green generously agreed to be the subject of an 'In Conversation' with Réalta Assistant Director Maeve Butler, in order to offer a valuable insight about his experience of the programme to the participating artists.



Art at the Kitchen Table

Arts Programme in Paediatrics

Setting: Acute hospital – Paediatric Ward
 Target: 126 sessions delivered by 2 artists, reaching 444 people
 Actual: 83 Art Kart sessions delivered by 1 artist, reaching 180 children and 35 storytelling sessions delivered by 1 artist, reaching 295 children and parents / carers.

The Art Kart continued in 2023 to provide opportunities to young patients in UHW to experience the intrinsic benefits of the arts. Artist Éilis O’Toole creatively engaged hospitalised children in visual art making at their bedside two afternoons per week. Éilis brings a range of skills and experience to this role, in particular her training in working with children with sensory issues and other complex and diverse needs. Employing an inclusive, person-centered approach, Éilis continued to develop new methodologies for engaging all paediatric patients who wished to participate. Artist fees for this programme are funded by the HSE.

Storyteller Joe Brennan continued to deliver weekly storytelling experiences to children, and their families, in the Paediatric Ward in 2023. Joe’s sessions to date have been warmly received by patients, family members and staff, as they offer the children the opportunity to delve into their imagination offering respite to all. This programme was funded by the Hospital Saturday Fund in 2023.

“I was at University Hospital Waterford yesterday with my little one who was getting a day procedure & a lady with a trolley full of art supplies came around the paed ward & spent half an hour making sea creatures with us & then moved on to another child! It made a long day so much better” (Parent)



Image from Art Kart on the Paediatric Ward



Storyteller Joe Brennan with a young patient on the Paediatric Ward

Arts Programme in Renal Dialysis

Target: 48 sessions delivered by 1 artist, reaching 132 people
Setting: Acute Hospital – Chronic Dialysis Unit
Actual: 49 sessions delivered by 2 artists, reaching average of 3 participants per session, in total 147 people.

Waterford Healing Arts' (WHA) artist Philip Cullen continued to facilitate the organisation's multi-art form participatory programme in Renal Dialysis, engaging patients in visual art, digital photography, music, creative writing, poetry and cultural discovery, looking towards processes and outputs that represent artistic excellence for the participant, and identifying creative ways to share and celebrate patient artworks. This programme is funded by the Punchestown Kidney Research Fund.

Three new artists were recruited in late 2023 for this programme and as part of their training attended *Experience: An introduction to Arts, Health and the Older Person* in December. They will undertake further training and mentoring in early 2024, following which they will begin programme delivery.

In 2023, Réalta continued to manage the process of installing additional technology to the Renal Dialysis Unit to support a Movie of the Week/Film Club for patients, to take place during their long hours on dialysis. A sound system was also installed in November 2023 so that ambient music could be played when patients are receiving dialysis treatment. This new equipment was funded by the UHW Renal Dialysis Patient Fund. The film programme is facilitated by artist Philip Cullen and Réalta Assistant Director Maeve Butler.

With funding from Rethink Ireland, WHA delivered two new pilot programmes in 2023 in partnership with the Renal Dialysis unit as follows:

1: A visual art workshop for home dialysis patients who are currently not reached by the arts programme was designed and delivered by Waterford Healing Arts and artist Philip Cullen, in consultation with the Renal Home Therapies team at UHW. The programme ran for six weeks at the Réalta/ Waterford Healing Arts Centre for Arts + Health. While the programme was offered to the approximately 40 people on home dialysis, just two people participated in the programme. A review which was carried out to identify the reasons for the low uptake revealed that the major barriers to participation were ill health, lack of transport and lack of motivation to attend anything on the hospital campus outside patients' normal appointments.

2: A Storytelling Project in the Renal Dialysis Unit ran for 11 weeks. Delivered by WHA Storyteller Joe Brennan, this proved very popular with approximately five patients participating in each hour-long session. Patients expressed that the programme was a wonderful and creative diversion from the tedium of dialysis, they enjoyed the stories, they had the opportunity to tell their own story in return, and they felt listened to and valued.



Patient Nicola making music with artist Philip Cullen, joined by staff member Margaret Moran, as part of the Arts Programme in Renal Dialysis

I brought the dream of flying

In 2023, WHA continued to support artist Corina Duyn, who lives in full-time nursing home care, to continue her collaboration with artist Caroline Schofield. We worked in partnership with GOMA Gallery of Modern Art, Waterford on their joint exhibition *I Brought the Dream of Flying*, which ran from 14 January – 11 February 2023 and was funded by Creative Waterford. The exhibition launch was attended by approximately 70 people, and three public talks which took place over the duration of the exhibition were well attended.

WHA arranged for Christopher Bailey, Arts + Health Lead at the World Health Organisation and guest speaker at the Réalta launch, to visit Corina in her nursing home while he was visiting Waterford, which was a very exciting and unexpected outcome from the whole project for Corina.

The exhibition toured to Creative Brain Week at the Naughton Institute, Trinity College Dublin, from 6 – 11 March. Maeve Butler and Caroline Schofield gave a lunchtime talk about the work on Wed 8 March 2023. Christopher Bailey was also a guest at Creative Brain Week and viewed the exhibition. This tour to Creative Brain Week was funded by Creative Ireland via Creative Aging International.

Caroline and Corina wrote a [case study](#) about the project for artsandhealth.ie. After the intensive period of the exhibitions, Corina and Caroline continued to work together over an additional 10 weeks, at a more relaxed pace, with funding from Rethink Ireland.



Réalta Assistant Director Maeve Butler and artist Caroline Schofield giving a public talk about *I Brought the Dream of Flying* at Creative Brain Week, Trinity College Dublin in March 2023.



Chris Bailey, Arts and Health Lead, World Health Organisation viewing the *I Brought the Dream of Flying* exhibition at Creative Brain Week, Trinity College Dublin in March 2023.



SEPC staff participating in an introductory art workshop with Caroline Schofield

A new pilot Arts Programme in Palliative Care took place in the South East Palliative Care Centre, located at UHW, in July and August 2023, funded by Rethink Ireland. This was followed by a further 10-week Artist Residency in the setting from September to December 2023. The programme was delivered by visual artist Caroline Schofield and poet/writer Lani O’Hanlon. The aim of this programme was to support patient wellbeing and promote quality of life through creative activity. It follows an initial, highly successful pilot programme on the oncology ward at UHW in 2019, which was subsequently interrupted by the pandemic.

The palliative care philosophy is to support the person to live as well as they can for as long as they can. The Arts Programme embodies this philosophy by offering the person the opportunity to create and discover something new and positive about themselves, even at a very late stage in their lives.

Feedback to the Pilot Arts Programme in Palliative Care was universally positive, with staff members at all levels stating how beneficial the experience was to patients and family members, and to staff themselves. A comprehensive review of the pilot phase of the programme was carried out, involving the artists, management and staff of the SEPC and Waterford Healing Arts. Common themes which emerged from the review included:

- the contribution to the holistic care of the patient;
- the sense of achievement by the patient;
- the satisfaction and ease arising from the patient being able to tell their story and/or leaving a ‘legacy’ piece for their loved one;
- the positive impact on families;
- the positive impact on staff;
- the professionalism of the artists.

Feedback comments included:

“It has added to the patients experience here in the IPU (In Patient Unit). Provided great comfort to families at the most difficult times.” (Nurse)

“Far exceeded initial expectations. Very beneficial to both patients and family. Benefits observed in large spectrum of patients and their conditions... (the artists were) always approachable, professional and understanding. Excellent insight into people they’re working with...Excellent addition to Oak Ward. A great initiative. Highly recommend.” (Doctor)

Phase 1 (6 weeks, artists working concurrently): 40 patients and 30 visitors (family members)

Phase 2 (10 weeks, artists worked 5 weeks each, consecutively): 33 patients and 23 family members

The pilot project began with a workshop for staff, which was attended by 15 staff.

Iontas Arts + Mental Health Programme

Target: 2,659 people
Setting: Mental Health Settings
Actual: 270 sessions delivered by 8 artists, with an average of 9 participants per session.

In 2023, service users based in mental health settings in Waterford City and County continued to engage with approximately 270 arts experiences through Iontas, WHA's year-round multi-disciplinary participatory arts and mental health programme. Iontas is delivered in partnership with the Waterford Wexford Mental Health Services (WWMHS) by a core team of artists with expertise in arts and mental health, and aims to realise processes and outcomes that are ambitious relative to participants' ability. The programme spans a range of settings including rehabilitation and recovery (Odhran Lodge and Grangemore, St Otteran's Hospital); acute and sub-acute hospital units (Department of Psychiatry, UHW); high support hostels (Ard na nDeise); Psychiatry of Later Life (Aidan's, Waterford Residential Care Centre); Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and through the community with support from the Community Mental Health Teams.

The Iontas team of artists are musicians Jane O'Brien Moran, George Higgs and Liam Merriman; writer and dance artist Lani O'Hanlon; visual artists Jill Bouchier, Ciara Harrison and Adele Stanley; drama facilitator Liam Meagher; and storyteller Joe Brennan.

This year again saw a whopping 45 music sessions take place at Aidan's Unit, facilitated by Tanja Warkentin, Occupational Therapist, and supported by Assistant Director of Nursing Joan Croke-Power and the rest of the wonderful team. Musicians Liam and Jane played their instruments and sang together, while encouraging residents to sing along, too. Often everyone sang together, with some residents even getting up to dance.

Thanks to the success of the 2022 'Common Ground' project with artist Ciara Harrison, a strong relationship had been cultivated between Waterford Healing Arts and staff in CAMHS. In the spring of 2023, a 12-week project took place at the Centre for Arts + Health with Ciara and young people from CAMHS, supported by the CAMHS clinical team.



Making art at the Department of Psychiatry, UHW

2023 was an important year for music in the Department of Psychiatry. This year marked the first year since the pandemic lockdown of 2020 that music returned to the Brandon Ward. Musicians Liam Merriman and Jane O'Brien Moran, supported by the Occupational Therapy team, sang with and played music for participants in the ward. It provided some much needed respite for all who joined in.

In 2023 also, a map of *Telling Tales* launched at Odhran Lodge. *Telling Tales* is a storytelling project, a co-production between storyteller Joe Brennan and service users who attend The Recovery Hub at Odhran Lodge. The project was supported by the Rehabilitation and Recovery team and Waterford Healing Arts. The stories shared during the project were the inspiration for a beautifully illustrated map by illustrator Anne O'Hara. Whether it's the home we grew up in, or the location of a particular event in our lives, the notion of place plays a large part in our memories and the stories we tell. It was therefore fitting to share these stories on a map of Waterford and its surrounds. The large-scale map was installed and officially launched in October 2023 with a celebration for the participants to mark the occasion.

In February 2023, as part of the Well Festival of Arts and Wellbeing, a once-off collaborative dance experience with dance artist Philippa Donnellan, musician Sadhbh O'Sullivan, and participants from Aidan's Unit, took place on the unit, located at Waterford Residential Care Centre (WRCC). This dance experience was part of a larger project called the BIG REEL, a national dance project with older age communities, part-funded by the Arts Council of Ireland. The project was supported by Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts, Dance Ireland and Dance Limerick with special workshops taking place across Ireland throughout 2023. A final BIG REEL performance took place at WRCC in October 2023.

Iontas is supported by a stakeholder group comprising representation from service users, artists, healthcare professionals and the voluntary sector, and is funded by the WWMHS through an annual Section 39 Grant Aid Agreement.



Telling Tales storytelling project, a co-production between storyteller Joe Brennan and service users who attend The Recovery Hub at Odhran Lodge



Dance artist Philippa Donnellan and musician Sadhbh O'Sullivan during the workshop with participants from Aidan's Unit, Waterford Residential Care Centre, February 2023, as part of the BIG REEL project.

Open Studio

Target: 36 sessions delivered by 1 artist, reaching 201 people
Setting: WHA Centre for Arts + Health
Actual: 36 sessions delivered by 1 artist and 1 volunteer reaching up to an average of 7 people per session.

WHA's Open Studio offers accessible art making opportunities for people who are socially isolated for reasons of ill-health or disability. Open Studio resumed in person sessions at the WHA Centre for Arts and Health in January 2023, led by artist Jill Bouchier. Jill's inclusive approach sees her working with the Open Studio participants using one-to-one collaborative arts methodologies so that participants who have diverse artistic and personal needs can work at a level that is in keeping with their individual ability and ambition. Participants pay a nominal fee to participate in this programme. Jill is assisted in the Open Studio by volunteer Sarah Lee.

The Open Studio participants spent most of the year working towards an exhibition of their work entitled *Gatherings*. The exhibition took place at the Index Gallery, Central Library, Waterford in November 2023.



Open Studio members pictured at the launch of their exhibition *Gatherings* at Index Gallery, Central Library, Waterford. Photos by Tom Quilty.



Image from Open Gallery workshop at Waterford Residential Care Centre

Target: 27 sessions delivered by 2 artists, reaching 162 people
Setting: Acute Hospital and Residential Care Home
Actual: 28 sessions delivered by 2 artists, reaching an average of 8 participants per session and 2 staff members.

Open Gallery is an inclusive art project which invites people, including those living with dementia – and their family members / carers – to look at, discuss and enjoy paintings from the UHW Art Collection in a safe and welcoming space, supported by professional artists Caroline Schofield and Jill Bouchier.

While COVID restrictions on the elder care wards at UHW remained in place for the first half of the year, WHA continued to deliver Open Gallery at Waterford Residential Care Centre (WRCC). As the sessions have progressed with residents, their confidence, interest and motivation has grown, which has facilitated the artists to push the boundaries and develop the Open Gallery model. The sessions continued to use artworks from the UHW Art Collection as the basis for the Open Gallery conversations, but sessions also included art making by the participants, inspired by the artworks they have learned to read, analyse and interpret.

A visit to Mount Congreve Gardens took place in September 2023 with the group from Waterford Residential Care Centre, staff and WHA artists and management. Participants spent the afternoon sitting by a small lake, painting all the flowers and greenery around them, in the beautiful sunshine.

At the end of September, sessions resumed on the elder care wards at UHW for the first time since pre-pandemic. These sessions followed the original Open Gallery model and introduced many patients to ‘reading’ paintings, much to their surprise and delight.

In 2023, Open Gallery was funded by Waterford City and County Council.

“It was fabulous! The patients are all still talking about it. They really enjoyed it. It really lifted them. For the patients and the staff, it was lovely to have that break. Please pass on my thanks to everyone.” (Staff member, Medical Ward 3, UHW)

Arts Programme for Healthcare Staff

Target: 16 sessions delivered by 2 artists, reaching 108 people
Setting: Acute – Staff
Actual: 1 art camp for 10 children of healthcare staff in February delivered by 1 artist and 15 choir sessions delivered by 1 choral director, reaching 20 staff members.

To continue nurturing long-term relationships with healthcare staff in UHW, to boost staff morale and to build champions for WHA's work, the organisation continued to develop its arts programme for HSE staff in 2023.

In February, a three-day art camp for children of HSE staff entitled *Sewing Seeds and Sculpting Stories*, was delivered by artist Ciara Harrison, as part of the Well Festival of Arts and Wellbeing.

In August 2023, Healing Sounds began a weekly *Drop-in and Sing* programme aimed specifically at HSE Staff, and led by experienced choral director Damien Kehoe. *Drop in and Sing* provides a creative platform for staff to de-stress after work and to enjoy social connections with colleagues. To offset costs, healthcare staff pay a nominal fee to participate in this programme. This programme evolved into the Cór Chroi choir who continue to meet on a weekly basis.

WHA continues to build on other staff initiatives, including the Staff Art Wall exhibition programme (*see also Exhibitions Programme*) and, where relevant, the Artist in Residence scheme.

"It's my favourite hour of the week!" (Staff member and choir participant)



Children of healthcare staff making art at *Sewing Seeds and Sculpting Stories* with artist Ciara Harrison. Photo credit: DGM Photographic.

Well Festival of Arts & Wellbeing

Target: 20 sessions delivered by 28 artists, reaching 600 people
Setting: Acute, Care Home, Private Residence
Actual: 11 events, 22 artists, reaching 19810 people

The Well Festival of Arts & Wellbeing celebrates the health benefits of participation in the arts by all. Presented by Waterford Healing Arts, Garter Lane Arts Centre and Waterford City and County Libraries, the Well Festival champions the links between arts and wellbeing and increases public engagement through a wide-ranging programme of innovative free events for all ages across many art forms, including music, art, dance, film, poetry, theatre and literature.

In 2023, the Well Festival took place from 13-18 February. Each day, festival-goers had the opportunity to witness colourful, beautiful, thought-provoking music, art, movement, poetry and literature, and to experience the joy of creativity through a range of workshops and interactive opportunities for all ages.



Good Vibrations CPD workshop with Jane O'Brien Moran. Photo Credit: DGM Photographic.



Well Festival Keynote: Why Arts? with Dr Chris Fitzpatrick and Jennifer O'Connell. Photo Credit: DGM Photographic.

Waterford Healing Arts events included:

- *Fancy a lift?*, a daily poetry postcard, curated by poet Stephen James Smith, delivered on meal trays to patients at University Hospital Waterford (UHW), through Waterford Libraries and online via poetry videos on www.wellwaterford.com;
- *Why Arts?*, the Well Festival Keynote conversation, featuring Dr Chris Fitzpatrick, poet and former Master of the Coombe Women & Infants University Hospital Dublin, and journalist and proud Waterford woman Jennifer O’Connell;
- *Good Vibrations*, a continuous professional development (CPD) workshop for musicians working in mental health settings, led by Jane O’Brien Moran;
- *Healing Sounds Sessions* with Waterford Healing Arts Trust’s musicians at the bedside of patients and residents in various settings;
- *Find the Butterfly, Find the Bee*, a special exhibition at University Hospital Waterford created by artist John Conway from his conversations with professional healthcare staff working in paediatric settings;
- *THE BIG REEL*, a relaxing sensory workshop with dance artist Philippa Donnellan and musician Sadhbh O’Sullivan, part of a wider project supported by an Arts Council Dance Project Award 2022 and developed in association with Dance Limerick, Waterford Healing Arts and Dance Ireland.
- and the much loved festival flagship event *Sunshine: sharing writings to brighten our souls* (renamed this year from *We haven’t had an earthquake lately*) supported and hosted by The Book Centre Waterford, and led once again by our wonderful Guest MC Catherine Drea.
- For younger audiences, the Waterford Healing Arts Wellies programme invited children and young people on the Paediatric Ward at UHW to embrace their imaginations with Joe Brennan’s *Magical Stories* and to chase their worries away making Guatemalan Worry Dolls with artist Eilis O’Toole in her *In My Heart* workshops.

The Well Festival is funded by the Arts Council, the HSE, Waterford City and County Council with additional support from Sanofi.



Images from Well festival of Arts & Wellbeing. Photo Credits: DGM Photographic.

Healing Sounds live Music Programme

Setting: Acute hospital, care home, private residence
Target: 47 sessions delivered by 5 artists, reaching 876 people
Actual: 42 sessions delivered by 5 artists, reaching 2334 people

In 2023, the Healing Sounds on the Wards programme continued to develop and present live music to patients at University Hospital Waterford and in other healthcare settings in line with changing public health measures.

For the first half of 2023, Healing Sounds took place weekly in the South East Palliative Care Centre (SEPCC) and in Waterford Residential Care Centre (WRCC). From early August 2023, Healing Sounds was welcomed back into the main hospital and regular live music was played in the often challenging settings of renal dialysis, oncology, paediatrics and on several medical wards. These live music sessions are embedded in the overall care of service users and staff often report on the transformative nature of the music on patients.



Healing Sounds at Waterford Residential Care Centre

The success of the Healing Sounds live music programme is evident in the universally positive feedback received regularly from patients, residents, staff and family members. People regularly describe the importance of the respite and creative connection they feel when they experience live music of a high quality in close proximity, at such a difficult time.

Throughout 2023, WHA continued its focus on the sustainability of the Healing Sounds programme with the mentoring of professional musicians, led by Liam Merriman and Eoin O Meachair. WHA further strengthened the existing team with the addition of three new musicians to the panel in late 2023, while also continuing to support the whole team to take space and time to develop their experience, repertoire, their understanding of their role and their relationships with UHW staff, through their reflective journals and providing training and learning opportunities through workshops and seminars.

The Healing Sounds programme was funded by Rethink Ireland, the National Lottery and Waterford Hospice in 2023.

“It makes you think of the old world dances, the dresses swirling as they’re spinning around.” (Patient in Renal Dialysis)

“Thank you for your efforts... Things like this should be preserved and appreciated; in terms of the benefit – it’s more than some of the tablets we use.” (Nephrologist)

“Can they come in every day? Oh my God, they’re so good!” (Nurse Manager)

Artists' Peer Exchange and Mentoring Programme



Experience: An Introduction to Arts, Health & the Older Person, Dec 2023. Photo credit: Keith Currams



Introduction to Music in Healthcare & Community Settings

Waterford Healing Arts (WHA) supports artists to reflect on and develop their arts and health practice through local, national and international peer exchange, mentoring and training. This programme is for artists who work on the WHA programme and others working in the area of arts and health.

The following peer exchange and training opportunities took place in 2023:

- Three Waterford Healing Arts' artists (musician, visual artist and storyteller) completed half-day training in dementia provided by University Hospital Waterford.
- Four musicians participated in a continuous professional development (CPD) workshop focusing on delivering music in mental healthcare settings, delivered by long-term WHA musician Jane O'Brien Moran in February.
- Visual Artist Caroline Schofield took part in a two-day masterclass in March with the RHA (Royal Hibernian Academy) in Dublin.
- In July, storyteller Joe Brennan availed of a mentoring session with long-term WHA artist Philip Cullen to support his delivery of storytelling in the Renal Dialysis Unit.
- Visual artist Eilis O'Toole participated in an online mentoring session with dementia trainer/ specialist Sarah Cairns to support her work delivering the Art at the Kitchen Table programme to people living with advanced dementia.
- In September, four Healing Sounds musicians had the opportunity to experience a valuable presentation by a deeply experienced Music Therapist from Sobell House, Oxford thanks to the support of Palliative Medicine Consultant Dr Jane Fleming.
- In October, nine WHA artists participated in our annual national gathering of the arts and health community *Arts + Health: Check Up Check In* at MISA, St James' Hospital in Dublin, availing of the opportunity to experience inspiring and nourishing presentations, upskill through the afternoon workshops and network with their national and international peers.

- Three newly recruited WHA musicians participated in the five-day *Introduction to Music in Healthcare and Community Settings* training programme delivered by Music and Health Ireland, in partnership with Réalta, in November.
- Four newly recruited WHA artists attended *Experience: An Introduction to Arts, Health and the Older Person*, delivered in December by Réalta in partnership with Age & Opportunity.

WHA artists are continually encouraged to identify and access training and mentoring opportunities in Ireland and abroad. This strategy of investing in WHA artists will facilitate the ongoing exchange of ideas, research and experimentation, thereby ensuring the development of consistently high quality collaborative programmes.

4.3 We will transform the hospital environment through the arts

Curatorship of Art Collection and Exhibition Programme

The **Art Collection** of University Hospital Waterford (UHW) is the biggest collection in any healthcare facility in Ireland. This extensive collection of over 600 artworks is curated and managed by Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts and features work by well-known Irish artists including Pauline Bewick, Donald Teskey, Tom Molloy, Paul Mosse, Amelia Stein, Carmel Mooney, Janet Mullarney, Robert Ballagh and Graham Knuttel, alongside work by exciting emerging and international artists. Artworks are located throughout the hospital, from the public corridors to the ceilings of clinical spaces, transforming the hospital building from a bare, sterile, institutional space to a vibrant, supportive, human place, offering sustenance and easing anxiety, as well as simply inviting patients, staff and visitors to engage with contemporary art.

Works on loan from the Arts Council, Waterford Municipal Collection, the Office of Public Works and private collections are displayed alongside artworks received through generous donations from artists and other benefactors, including the Irish Contemporary Arts Society, and artworks purchased by the hospital and Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts over the last three decades. The Per Cent for Art Scheme has also contributed to the growth of the collection. Working in partnership with the HSE South East Capital Projects Department, Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts has managed art commissions for new capital developments and renovations at UHW and the nearby Waterford Residential Care Centre.

In 2023, in response to numerous requests for artwork, WHA set aside a budget to commission new work at UHW to be match-funded locally. This included a number of internal and external artworks. A beautiful stained-glass ceiling artwork by artist Rayleen Clancy was commissioned for the Birthing Pool Room in the Maternity Ward in November 2023. An original light-box photograph of Waterford Quays by photographer Tom Quilty was installed in the tea-room used by surgical theatre staff. WHA also worked with The Walls Project to produce a mural in the gardens of the South East Palliative Care Centre. All commissions were developed through a collaborative process with staff, patients and the artists, and overseen by the WHA team.

18 artworks were donated to the UHW Art Collection in 2023. These paintings were installed throughout the hospital, from the Oak Ward in the South East Palliative Care Centre, to St Teresa's Unit (age-related services).

The Art Collection also continued to be an important resource for the Open Gallery and Art at the Kitchen Table programmes in 2023.



WHA worked with The Walls Project to produce this mural in the gardens of the South East Palliative Care Centre.



An original light-box photograph of Waterford Quays by photographer Tom Quilty was installed in the tea-room used by surgical theatre staff.

Curatorship of Art Collection and Exhibition Programme (*cont.*)

The Waterford Healing Arts **Exhibition Programme** at UHW is a means of engaging the hospital community of staff, patients and visitors in contemporary art and arts practices, while also being an opportunity for artists to showcase their work within an atypical exhibition space. The exhibition programme aims to bring some wonder and magic to the hospital, to soften the clinical environment and humanise the space. Exhibitions are chosen for their aesthetic quality and for their positive impact within a hospital setting. The audiences for such exhibitions far exceed what any gallery or arts centre could hope to attract and the exhibitions offer talking points beyond the medical context. Exhibitions typically run for eight weeks, with scope to engage the hospital community in collaborative/ participatory arts experiences in tandem with the exhibition.

Following an open call for proposals in late 2022, an exhibition programme for 2023-2025 was devised. In 2023, John Conway's *Find the Butterfly, Find the Bee...* was exhibited as part of the Well Festival of Arts and Wellbeing. This was a series of child-friendly risographic prints inspired by conversations John had with healthcare workers from Children's Health Ireland.

WHA also worked in a cross-sectoral manner with other community organisations in Waterford to support initiatives at a local level. One such project is the Healthy Ireland-funded Breastfeeding Friendly City initiative. WHA supported the local working group by developing and delivering an exhibition by Neonatologist and Artist Dr Afif El Khuffash throughout October 2023.

WHA continued to celebrate the creativity of HSE staff in 2023 through its Staff Art Wall, an initiative which provides staff at the hospital with the opportunity to display their own artworks for a season of two months duration. Located along the Post Room Corridor in the main hospital, this exhibition space is one of the busiest areas of the hospital, thus ensuring maximum visibility for the artworks on display, and huge kudos for the artist/staff member. 2023 Staff Art Wall exhibitions included:

Farewell Sunset - a collection of photographs by Healthcare Assistant Geraldine Duffin.

Coast – a collection of photographs of the Waterford Coast by WHA staff member Tom Quilty.

Memories of Old Ireland – a series of photographs from Healthcare Assistant, Dymphna O'Herlihy.

In a Landscape – a series of oil paintings from artist Eilis O'Toole.

Summertime – acrylic paintings by Dermatology Nurse Marley Irish.

Untitled – a collection of fashion photography by Henriique, a member of the cleaning department.

Salt of the Earth – a landscape photography collection by Joanna Taraska, from the Laboratory Dept.

The Staff Art Wall continues to be popular among UHW staff and is booked up the end of 2024.

The total audience for 2023 for all exhibitions was 57,955 people.



Dermatology Nurse Marley Irish and her colleagues with her Staff Art Wall exhibition *Summertime*

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Artists

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