



Open Call for Artists:

Réalta Arts + Health Research + Development Residency 2026

Réalta invites applications from artists of all disciplines to submit proposals for its Arts + Health Research + Development Residency programme. We welcome applications from artists who are keen to explore and grow their participatory and collaborative arts practice in a healthcare context.

The residency programme will provide the successful applicant with the opportunity to research and develop their arts + health practice during a one-month period of exploration and development based at the Réalta Centre for Arts + Health, University Hospital Waterford (UHW). Throughout the residency, the artist will have space to test ideas, explore new approaches and begin shaping the early stages of a project in an acute hospital setting, working creatively in collaboration with the hospital community.

The artist will have access to a dedicated studio space, a larger multi-use studio and the Réalta Arts + Health Library. The Réalta team will be available to offer support and mentoring throughout the residency, as needed. In addition, the artist will have the opportunity to shadow some of the Waterford Healing Arts programmes at UHW. A full list of these programmes can be found [here](#).

The fee for the residency is €3000. The Réalta Arts + Health Research + Development Residency is funded by the Arts Council.

About Réalta

Réalta is the national resource organisation dedicated to developing arts + health in Ireland.

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 national information hub artsandhealth.ie.

At local level, Réalta delivers its extensive **Waterford Healing Arts** programmes, which bring arts experiences – music, visual art, creative writing, storytelling – to patients at UHW and other healthcare settings to promote creativity, connection and discovery, and reduce isolation, anxiety and stress for patients, family members and staff. The Waterford Healing Arts programmes also provide rich examples of good practice, and opportunities to research, pilot and evaluate new ideas, all of which informs Réalta's national work. Réalta is core funded by the Arts Council and the HSE.

For further information:

Réalta's national work: www.realta.ie

Waterford Healing Arts programmes: www.waterfordhealingarts.com

All about Arts + Health: www.artsandhealth.ie

The Hospital Context

The hospital community is made up of many different people, including patients, visitors and staff. There are different types of patients, including in-patients, day patients attending regular treatment, and out-patients attending appointments. Visitors include family members and friends visiting in-patients, and carers (family and others) accompanying people to appointments. Staff include the medical and healthcare staff treating and taking care of patients, ancillary staff including catering, porters and security, and hospital management and administration staff. Each person has a different relationship with the hospital.

Hospitals can be rewarding but also challenging places for artists to work. Progress can sometimes be slow. There are practical limitations around how art can be shared or created, including restrictions related to space, health and safety, and infection control. The regular movement of patients and staff can also make communication and continuity difficult.

In spite of these challenges, there are incredible opportunities for artistic engagement, building connections, and developing thoughtful, responsive work within the hospital setting. Previous Artists in Residence have embraced these opportunities in diverse ways:

See: <https://www.waterfordhealingarts.com/programmes/artist-in-residence/>

See also this case study detailing earlier Artist in Residence projects:

<https://www.artsandhealth.ie/case-studies/waterford-healing-arts-trust-artist-in-residence-programme/>

Useful Resources:

www.artsandhealth.ie

www.waterfordhealingarts.com/programmes

www.realta.ie

An Introduction to Arts and Health // 10 Things to Consider by Mary Grehan

Participatory Arts Practice in Healthcare Contexts – Guidelines for Good Practice by Mike White and Mary Robson

Application Process

The artist(s) will be selected through a process of open competition. Criteria for selection will include:

- The track record of the applicant
- The quality of the idea and the proposed research aims
- The innovation of the artist's approach
- The responsiveness of the artist's practice to the healthcare context
- Anticipated outcomes
- Proven commitment to the role of the arts in a healthcare context

How to apply

Applicants should submit:

- A current CV (maximum 2 pages), including contact details for two current referees.
- A one-page outline of a programme of work you would like to undertake during the residency, including your aims, who within the hospital community you plan to engage with, and the theme of your research. *All themes are welcome*, but we are particularly interested in proposals which align with principles in our *Climate Action and Sustainability Policy*. The policy is available [here](#).
- Documentation of practice: maximum 10 fully captioned images /video links / sound recordings / publications including, where available, documentation of collaborative practice. For film or audio work over 10 minutes in length, please indicate a 5-minute segment that you would like the selection panel to view. Text-based examples of work should not exceed 2000 words.
- Please indicate your willingness to undergo Garda Vetting.

All of the above should be compiled into one PDF document to be clearly marked with your name and contact details. The PDF document should not exceed 3MB.

Applications should be submitted by e-mail to claire.meaney@realta.ie, no later than **Thursday 27 August 2026 at 5pm**. E-mail applications **should not exceed 3MB** in size.

Queries and Support

If you would like to find out further information before making an application, please email Claire Meaney to arrange an informal chat at claire.meaney@realta.ie.

Additional Access Requirements

We welcome applications from artists with disabilities and/or additional access requirements. Artists can submit their applications using video or audio formats. Video / Audio applications will be transcribed using an AI transcription service.

If you require additional support in applying for this residency, or you wish to submit your application using a video or audio format, please email claire.meaney@realta.ie or phone Réalta on 051-842664 in advance of the submission deadline.

Interviews

All short-listed applicants will be invited to attend for interview the **week beginning 7 September 2026**.