

STATISTICS - Focus on the Arts Psychotherapies in East Lothian:

Between January and June 2023, East Lothian Arts Psychotherapies Community Mental Health Service received **24 new referrals**. This service offers both Art Psychotherapy and Music Therapy to persons accessing support through primary and secondary care. Initial appointments aim to allow informed decision making about whether a person attends low intensity arts-based psychoeducation groups for ten-weeks or higher intensity individual arts psychotherapy, which offers increased relational depth for up to 18 months. At decision points referrals are carefully considered to different parts of the pathway, other psychological therapies or wider statutory and voluntary services as appropriate.

Arts-based psychoeducation groups (music or art):

Number of group appointments attended	52
Numbers Did Not Attend	14
Numbers Could Not Attend	7

Patient experience:

"It has been a real joy to be part of this group. There has been a flow right from the word go"

"I never felt under pressure and felt I could be honest in a non-judgemental atmosphere"

Individual therapy (music or art):

Number of 1:1 appointments attended	212
Numbers Did Not Attend	51
Numbers Could Not Attend	25

Patient experience:

"They [The Arts Therapies] are helping me to manage my different emotions either by myself or with others who I can lean on for support. Art therapy has also helped me build up my communication skills so I can articulate how I am feeling and what I need from others when I need support."

"I am using art to cope with difficult feelings and emotions and as a distraction when I am trying to cope with feelings that are too strong for me to deal with safely by myself."

WHAT NEXT?

- Connect with statutory mental health services in Midlothian and West Lothian to improve accessibility to the Arts Therapies across NHS Lothian
- Recruit to Edinburgh South Community Mental Health Teams for 2-year test of concept – Mentalisation based group Arts Psychotherapies Program commissioned by Edinburgh Thrive.

The Community Team in Aug 2023 comprises of 2.5 wte.

New project proposal for Edinburgh South has confirmed Thrive funding.

In October we welcome additional 0.8wte through practice placements.

East Lothian Joint Mental Health Team (Primary and Secondary Care):

Art Psychotherapy and Music Therapy

Edinburgh North East/North West Community Mental Health Teams:

Art Psychotherapy

Edinburgh South East/South West

Test of change proposed for new service

Lothian Easting Disorder Service:

Art Psychotherapy

FAST Learning Disability:

Art Psychotherapy

IHTT Edinburgh:

Art Psychotherapy



SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS: Focus on a 'Proof-of-concept' project: The arts therapies within the Edinburgh Intensive Home Treatment Team (IHTT), Royal Edinburgh Hospital

Mai Gorringer, Art Psychotherapist, has been working with Edinburgh IHTT since January 2023, on a proof of concept project intended to explore the potential benefit of the inclusion of the arts therapies within this service. Initially proposed as a six-month project, additional funding has recently been secured which will accommodate a year's worth of learning and data collection. The project has at its starting point a hypothesis that IHTT's 'treatment as usual' may not offer fair access to assessment and care to all people; particularly to those who find words inaccessible or unhelpful when trying to understand or describe intense emotional experiences. The hope is that the inclusion of the Arts Psychotherapies within Edinburgh IHTT can enable them to work more effectively with underrepresented groups.

Vignette: Artmaking to tolerate being with others. Outcomes – strategies to facilitate social interaction, and hope.

Suzie* was referred due to difficulties the team had experienced when trying to assess her. She had presented as largely silent and disengaged, hidden in a hooded dressing gown and wearing headphones. Suzie attended two sessions, spending the first showing me her anime drawings, and the second speaking about childhood trauma and her long history of physical health difficulties and efforts put in day to day to manage her wellbeing. She explained she found it very difficult to feel at ease with unfamiliar people, but that working with art materials helped her feel more comfortable and enabled her to speak more freely about her feelings.



Towards the end of her second session, she spoke about her awareness of a need to start meeting people and doing things in her community. She said she wanted to try gardening at a local community arts organisation, as she hoped that doing something 'alongside', as we had during our sessions, would give her a tolerable way to be with people.

*Name has been changed to preserve anonymity.

Priority has been given to individuals for whom verbalising thoughts and feelings and being with others is a particular challenge. In addition to this, issues with emotional disconnect, being 'stuck' with repetitive themes, patient preference, and previous experience of talking therapy as destabilising or unhelpful have been identified as referral criteria. So far, Art Psychotherapy has given 'difficult to engage' patients alternative ways to self-regulate, interact, and communicate during assessment and treatment. It has enhanced staff understanding of patients and has facilitated better engagement with Edinburgh IHTT and wider services. Please contact mai.gorringer@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk if you would like access to the project's interim report.

RESEARCH:

Catherine Chalmers, Art Psychotherapist, is currently participating in the first cohort of **the First Steps into Research** scheme, part of NHS Lothian's Clinical Academic Research Gateway Awards. This structured research experience supports health and care professionals with an interest in research to gain first-hand experience through being embedded in a research team for 12 days over a 12 month period. Catherine was placed with the PICASSO team, a pilot clinical trial exploring Psychological Interventions for Complex PTSD and Schizophrenia-Spectrum disorder. She hopes to apply the insights and skills gained during this experience to her clinical work as an art psychotherapist working in community adult mental health. Catherine is giving a presentation on this learning experience at the Lothian and Health Care Professions Research Conference in November.

