



House of Memories at National Museums Liverpool 2012-22:

# Advancing the Role of Museums in Health and Social Care

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## Introduction

Launched in 2012, House of Memories is a multiple award-winning, international dementia awareness programme led by National Museums Liverpool (NML) in the UK. Fundamentally, the programme uses museum objects and social history collections, and the connections they have with our personal memories, family lives and community identities, to inspire, encourage and develop more person-centred approaches to dementia care. In this context, museum collections and objects curated via House of Memories act as catalysts for conversations and connections between people living with dementia and those caring for them, in health and social care settings, at home and in the community.

The programme includes dedicated museum-based training events and a range of supplementary resources, including the My House of Memories app. Along with activities involving museum collections and exhibitions, live training events for example include character-based documentary films about experiences of caring for people living with dementia, based on real-world testimony collected throughout the research and development stages of the programme. House of Memories has expanded nationally across the UK, in collaboration with a range of partner museums and galleries. In September 2020, a bespoke version of the app was launched in collaboration with the British Council and National Heritage Board in Singapore, representing the second international, licensed adaptation of the programme, following an earlier collaboration with the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) in North America. As it celebrates its 10th anniversary, the programme has achieved unprecedented scale and reach as a cultural intervention in health and social care, having “engaged with more than 100,000 people; connected digitally with 36,000 app users, and raised £3,158,000 [in] external funding” (National Museums Liverpool, 2022).

This commemorative paper reflects on the development and impact of House of Memories as a flagship cultural intervention in dementia care. This includes its response and contribution to a number of key policy drivers, with examples from the body of research and evaluation work that has run in parallel with the strategic and operational development of the programme over the past 10 years. The paper also outlines the current and future potential of House of Memories to build on these successes, retaining the programme’s position and influence at the vanguard of the international culture, health and wellbeing field.

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## 1 House of Memories in context 2012-22

### 1.1 Public Health Agendas and the Policy Landscape



Upon its launch in 2012 at the Museum of Liverpool with funding from the Department of Health, House of Memories responded to - or rather proactively anticipated - the contemporaneous prioritisation of dementia and its diagnosis, treatment and care in national public health policy and strategy in the UK. The programme developed organically in conversation with health and social care professionals, following the identification of a gap in training provision on more person-centred approaches to dementia care, and building upon a portfolio of prior and existing programmes and initiatives at NML working with older members of local communities.



Commenting in the evaluation report on the launch programme (Hanna and Reynolds, 2012), the Department of Health's National Clinical Director for Dementia, Professor Alistair Burns, states that improving "education and training on dementia is essential to the delivery of both the National Dementia Strategy and the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia". He goes on to observe that the programme "[is] making a real difference to health and social care staff and the people with dementia they care for". The National Dementia Strategy (Department of Health, 2009) includes 17 core objectives relating to improved public and professional awareness and understanding of dementia; improved early diagnosis, intervention, information provision, advice and guidance; improved care and peer support in acute, residential, community and home-based settings; and improvements in commissioning, regulation and assessment of dementia care providers.

The programme's emphasis on the practice of dementia care and focus on carers' own wellbeing, support and access to resources provided a timely intervention therefore, positioning museums as valuable community assets in dementia care policy and strategy. This was reinforced by a citation in the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia in 2012 (updated in 2015), which set targets on meeting objectives set by the national strategy and the creation of 'dementia friendly communities', convening leaders from industry, public sector and academia in the continued raising of dementia awareness and standards of care (Department of Health, 2012). The professional network and community of practice that has developed around House of Memories acts as a microcosm of this collective ambition, in and of itself (discussed further under section 2.3 – Connections, Collaborations and Communities of Practice). The programme was also commended within a review of care standards for people living with dementia (Care Quality Commission, 2014), which highlighted that people living with dementia were at high risk of experiencing poor care at some stage in the conventional pathway, with House of Memories cited as a creative intervention that focuses positively upon the individual's quality of life.

Furthermore, in 2015, the House of Memories team was commissioned by Health Education England to deliver the programme in collaboration with hospital trusts across the North West in direct fulfilment of the national Dementia Core Skills Education and Training Framework (hereafter the Train the Trainer programme, described in more detail under section 2 – Evidencing Impact and Value 2012-22). The framework, originally developed in 2015 and reviewed and updated in 2018, provides additional emphasis on the importance of person-centred care (Skills for Health, 2018), which is described as "considering the whole person, taking into account not just their health condition, but also each individual's life history, unique abilities, interests, culture, preferences and needs". House of Memories highlights the unique contribution that museum and heritage work can make in this context, concerning getting to know the person behind the dementia diagnosis.

In addition to its relationship with dementia care strategy and guidance, House of Memories has developed intuitively in tandem with wider public health agendas in the UK, including preventive strategies designed to tackle the social determinants of poor health and health inequalities, and subsequent shifts towards more responsive, community-based integrated health and social care systems. Such strategies have created a useful rhetorical device for cultural sectors and leaders interested in a more integrated, cross-policy function and role for arts and culture. Emphasising the social determinants of health and wellbeing, and the inequalities that arise based on material circumstances and the social and cultural contexts in which we live (Marmot et al, 2010), greater attention is being paid to asset-based approaches to healthier communities.

Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) as a public health strategy aims to 'promote and strengthen the factors that support good health and wellbeing, protect against poor health and foster communities and networks that sustain health' (Ripon and Hopkins, 2015).

An important prerequisite is to recognise the assets available to achieve change, including the individual, organisational, associational, economic, cultural and physical resources available to people and communities. NML and House of Memories have been at the forefront of debates concerning the role of museums as community assets, including for example leading a panel discussion at the annual Museums Association conference in 2016 on the value of collaboration between museum and health care sectors (Wilson, 2016).

## 1.2 The Accelerating Arts and Health Field

Contemporary public health debates therefore have facilitated a strategic space in which House of Memories has effectively flourished as part of a wider, rapidly accelerating culture, health and wellbeing field. This has been aided by landmark projects and initiatives designed to inform and develop practice in the field; emerging peer networks and national, strategic organisations; and enhanced governance structures and political advocacy for the health and wellbeing benefits of taking part in arts and culture. These include for example the National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH), launched in 2021 as an outcome of the extensive All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts Health and Wellbeing (APPHAHW) two-year inquiry. The resultant report, *Creative Health* (APPGAHW, 2017), is celebrated as the most comprehensive appraisal to date of the role of arts and creativity in supporting both physical and mental health across the life course. The NCCH was established to action numerous recommendations made in the report, with the core objective of making creative health an integral component of health and social care systems.

Numerous other regional and national networks and initiatives have emerged and developed in tandem with House of Memories, paving the way for the NCCH and supporting its work, with the programme playing a formative role both in their leadership and governance and as an exemplar of best practice in the field. One such example is the Arts Council England-funded National Alliance for Museums Health and Wellbeing, which included the Director of House of Memories as a Board member and was a forerunner of the current Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA), providing training and development in the planning, delivery and evaluation of health and wellbeing programming in the museums sector. The Cultural Commissioning Programme (CCP) was a major national initiative, funded by Arts Council England (2013-16) and delivered in partnership with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Designed to help arts and cultural organisations collaborate with public services to deliver health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes, the CCP featured House of Memories as a case study in evidencing social value to health and social commissioners (discussed in more detail in section 2 below).

House of Memories has also received numerous awards and accolades, in recognition of its contribution to and leadership of the culture, health and wellbeing field. This includes recognition from the professional museums and heritage field, including the Museums Association and national and international healthcare design, policy and practice organisations, with awards from the Alzheimer's Society, NHS Health Education England and the World Health and Design Forum.

### 1.3 Civic Culture and the Caring Museum

House of Memories and NML are widely recognised therefore for their advancement of the caring role of museums as community assets and the wider function of museums in the civic realm, particularly for their work with ageing communities. The programme has acted as a catalyst for other NML-led work in this area, including for example the launch of the Happy Older People (HOP) network in 2014, which promotes age-friendly arts participation in the Liverpool city region. At the time of its development and launch, the social work of museums was subject to critical consideration following a gradual reframing of their role as ‘institutions of social service’ (Silverman, 2010). Whereas conventionally this role is connected to their capacity to conserve and protect arts, valuable artefacts and social histories, Silverman describes the sector’s embrace of “starkly bolder roles as agents of wellbeing and as vehicles for social change” (pp. 2). In expanding their role as institutions of social service, four principles have come to define the social work of museums: collaboration; ethics and values; inter-professional knowledge; and innovation (pp. 148). Later research on community engagement work in the museums sector (Morse and Munro, 2018), discusses evolving ‘practices of care’ in museums. These include a greater sense of ‘networked allegiance’ with local social care services and providers, with an emphasis on cultural organisations responding to socio-economic policy agendas and providing an alternative to gaps in provision created by fiscal austerity measures imposed from 2010 onwards.

In such political contexts, the contemporary social work and caring role of museums, particularly the more expansive role of collaboration with health and social care services, could be interpreted as being born through necessity rather than choice. House of Memories however very much represents the established organisational mission and values of NML as an inclusive museum service and one that, primarily, acts with social responsibility (Wilson, 2015). As such, the programme represents intuitive cultural leadership in an environment of heightened opportunities and expectations of museums as public services. Chatterjee and Noble (2013) profile several NML-led projects, including House of Memories, in their study of museums, health and wellbeing, reflecting the museum group’s commitment to and reputation in this particular element of museum practice. Morse (2021) furthermore conceptualises the museum as a space of social care, highlighting their networked role in local ecologies of clinical and non-clinical services and in meeting a range of place-based community needs. In the following section, we consider House of Memories as a leading example of the caring museum in more detail, via its prioritisation of dementia carers and contribution to dementia care practice; demonstration of the social value of museums to health and social care commissioners; and its care and nurturing of its own professional networks and community of practice.

## 2 Evidencing impact and value 2012-22

### 2.1 Valuing Dementia Carers and Improving the Practice of Care



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The research and evidence base underpinning the development of House of Memories illustrates the contribution it has made to the policy agendas described in section 1 above, starting with its prioritisation of dementia carers and its impact on carers' own wellbeing and the practice of care in multiple professional and informal settings. Successive evaluation studies, conducted since the programme's launch in 2012, show consistently positive professional development and capacity building outcomes for participating health and social care organisations and sectors. As such, House of Memories has brought pertinent attention to the potential of museums to contribute



to core skills development in the pastoral dimensions of health care for ageing populations, including most significantly enhanced empathy and compassion.

Delivery of the original health and social care programme for example was rolled-out across the North of England in 2013, in collaboration with Salford Museum and Art Gallery, Bury Art Museum and Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens. Qualitative research data, including pre and post-training interviews with a stratified sample of participating health and social care professionals (Wilson and Grindrod, 2013), showed a demonstrable shift in participants' cognitive and emotional understanding of dementia and its implications for those directly affected and carers alike. This included an enhanced capacity for participants to consider and assess their own attitudes and behaviours, including 'quickness to judge' in care situations, leading to a more responsive, appropriate care relationship rather than over-use of reactive, 'textbook' methods. More significantly in relation to participants' self-defined motivation to attend House of Memories, and within the context of national care policy drivers, participants were more actively taking time to consider and reflect on collective practice in the workplace, and providing a more supportive environment for colleagues drawing upon House of Memories in an active frontline leadership capacity.

Subsequent House of Memories evaluation study designs were more closely aligned with policy frameworks and sector development objectives. Another regional adaptation of the health and social care programme was delivered across the Midlands in 2014, in collaboration with Birmingham Museum and Gallery, Leicester Guildhall and Wollaton Hall in Nottingham. Evaluation included the design and testing of a standardised Dementia Care Impact Measure, which assessed the impact of House of Memories on participants' subjective wellbeing in a dementia care context, and relative impact upon participants' values, behaviours and skills as dementia carers, mapped against the National Dementia Strategy. Positive outcomes included enhanced optimism, confidence and compassion as dementia carers; advanced knowledge of dementia and of own contribution to improving care standards; renewed commitment to training and development; reducing the stigma of dementia and improving dementia care environments (Wilson and Whelan, 2014).

Evaluation of the Train the Trainer programme, delivered in collaboration with the Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust, Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Manchester's Christie NHS Foundation Trust and PSS (person shaped support) Community Health in Liverpool during 2015-16, emphasised the programme's person-centred qualities and value. Specific Tier 2 outcomes, as defined and set by the Dementia Core Skills Education and Training Framework, included improved dementia awareness; improved communication, behaviour and interaction with people with dementia; and improved understanding of the principles of person-centred dementia care (Wilson and Whelan, 2016). House of Memories is particularly powerful in reinforcing the psychological needs of people living with dementia and how these are supported by person-centred care practices, including comfort, identity, attachment, occupation and inclusion (Brooker, 2007). Being commissioned to deliver outcomes at Tier 2, and evidencing such outcomes, illustrates its advanced capacity to impact on dementia care practice and the culture of care in acute health service and community settings.

## 2.2 Social Value in Health and Social Care Commissioning

House of Memories has also continued to evidence its cost benefit, social value and return on investment to health and social care commissioners, providing a best practice example of the effective use of research and evidence in cross-sector partnership working, particularly for arts and cultural organisations. A scoping study commissioned by the ICC on the economic benefits of cultural work to health and social care (Karpusheff, 2013) recommended social return on investment (SROI) analysis as an appropriate method for understanding the nuances of cross-sector collaboration and its value. It has since been applied in a number of evaluation studies at the institute, including House of Memories (Wilson, 2017). SROI provides a structured yet open platform to tell personal stories, account for value and present a ratio that has value and meaning in the economic world and within the sector(s) being evaluated (Whelan, 2015).

The SROI process involves identifying changes that have occurred as a direct result of the training programme. The analysis uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative data and financial proxy information to estimate the return on investment, typically expressed as 'for every £1 invested, 'x amount' of social value is created'. In the Midlands programme evaluation, key stakeholders from cultural and health and social care sectors across the three participating locations were invited to participate in an SROI workshop. Social value indicators identified during earlier data collection and analysis activities (including the Dementia Care Impact Measure) informed workshop discussions and analysis of the cost benefit of House of Memories to the Midlands region. SROI analysis substantiated and validated these findings, pointing to considerable instrumental value for the dementia care sector. Outcomes were grouped according to three themes including dementia awareness; improved care standards; and professional development. These outcomes translated into an economic value and a return on investment of £1: £8.66 (up to one year after House of Memories in the Midlands) and £1: £44.68 (up to eight years after House of Memories in the Midlands).

It was particularly important to consider the social return on investment of the Train the Trainer programme for NHS Health Education England as the commissioner and for participating NHS staff and health professionals. Again, three complementary themes were distilled from quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the evaluation process, including dementia awareness; improved care standards and living well with dementia. Identified Tier 2 dementia care outcomes and strengths such as communication, behaviour and interaction were directly attributed to the quality of training materials, including character-based documentary films and use of the My House of Memories app. This emphasises the cultural value of the programme as a museums-led creative intervention delivered in acute health settings. In return for an investment of £19,800 to train a total of 112 healthcare professionals in Tier 2 dementia awareness and core skills, a total of £357,599 of social value was created, returning an SROI ratio of £1: £19.06.

The SROI method has also been used to evidence the social value of the programme as a community asset in informal dementia care settings. Building on the success and impact of the original health and social care model, the House of Memories family carers programme was launched in 2017. A national pilot programme was delivered in 2016, in collaboration with New Walk Museum and Art Gallery, Leicester; Salford Museum and Art Gallery; and the British Museum, London. The ICC's evaluation combined quantitative profiling of participants' care responsibilities and museum engagement; standardised measures of subjective wellbeing and care burden (adaptations of the

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale and Zarit Burden Interview); participant observation of live sessions; qualitative interviewing with programme partners; and SROI analysis (Ganga and Wilson, 2020).

Data showed positive outcomes concerning the understanding and practice of person-centred care, including strategies to reduce the stigma associated with dementia; to support living well with the condition; to promote dignity, respect and compassion in dementia care; and to combat isolation, social exclusion and loneliness. Social value analysis validated the personal outcomes of the programme relating to subjective wellbeing, dementia knowledge and awareness, and person-centered care practices. As a social return on investment for commissioners and key stakeholders, analysis showed an SROI ratio of £1: £18.73 over a projected five-year period for the family carers programme. The use of social value research and SROI as a meta-analysis of the impact of House of Memories therefore has undoubtedly helped to create a universal indicator of value across the programme's various models of delivery and extensive network of commissioners and cross-sector stakeholders. NML has effectively used this evidence to make the strategic case for museums' cost effectiveness in terms of health and wellbeing outcomes and in building sustainable collaborative relationships with health and social care sectors and community-based services.

## 2.3 Connections, Collaborations and Communities of Practice

The long-term research collaboration between NML and the ICC has also enabled a more nuanced, ethnographic observation and consideration of the strategic characteristics and operational dimensions of House of Memories that have shaped and defined its development, longevity and success. At a strategic level, an extended, cross-sector community of practice, including a range of cultural partners, health and social care agencies, local authorities and central government departments, has supported the programme's development. Its efficacy and value to delivery partners, and significance of the working relationship with NML, have been consistent points of consideration throughout evaluation research. Common benefits include national profile and its influence on local cross-sector buy-in; the quality, robustness and transferability of the framework and resources; and the expertise and active support of the House of Memories team (Ganga et al, 2017).

One of the most significant leadership achievements of the programme team has been the effective lobbying and engagement of political leaders, both regionally and nationally (Wilson, 2015). From the outset, this includes inviting local MPs to participate in training sessions and the then Minister of State for Care and Support, Sir Norman Lamb, to a specially convened awareness raising event in Liverpool, to galvanising comprehensive support and acknowledgment within the House of Commons. Milestone events include a dedicated parliamentary debate led by Steve Rotheram (now Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region) in June 2013. This drew attention to the scalable social and economic effectiveness of House of Memories, following investment from the Department of Health and Liverpool City Council's recognition of House of Memories as a leading driver of its age-friendly city policy. The speech points to House of Memories as an example of how cultural assets can be used to greater effect in the dementia care campaign, and most notably reflected a passionate care and respect for the work of NML.

A special House of Commons reception held in June 2014, again led by Steve Rotheram, represented a second significant political intervention for House of Memories.

This brought together everyone involved in the programme, including people with dementia and carers, with MPs from across the main political parties to celebrate the achievements of the programme to date and launch the My House of Memories app. The contribution of the programme and leadership expertise of team members have since been recognised by policy makers, with their active inclusion in key strategic groups and initiatives. In January 2021 for example, Carol Rogers MBE (Director of House of Memories) was invited to join the UK Prime Minister's Champion Group (PMCG) for Dementia. The PMCG, Co-chaired by Angela Rippon CBE and Jeremy Hughes CBE, is responsible for delivering actions set by the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia, providing external expertise on how different sectors can become dementia-friendly.

Understanding stakeholder needs, distributed ownership and lateral decision-making are all key characteristics of truly collaborative leadership (Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Archer and Cameron, 2008; Peck and Dickinson, 2008) and of the development of House of Memories. The Train the Trainer programme, commissioned by Health Education England in 2015, is a good example of collaborative leadership in action. This involved museum professionals from the House of Memories team training acute health care professionals in participating NHS hospital trusts across the North West, to subsequently deliver the training themselves on a cascaded basis to hospital colleagues. Similarly, different national and international versions of the programme (described throughout the paper) were designed to be responsive to local needs and to complement the organisational culture, identity and collections of host institutions, whilst benefiting from the NML team's expertise, brand and professional reputation.

The My House of Memories app, launched in 2014, was co-designed with people living with dementia and their carers (via partnerships with local community organisations) who continue to advise the programme team on new developments and initiatives. These include Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Liverpool Dementia Action Alliance (and its Service Users Reference Forum), Everton Football Club, and LJMU, care of the international, European Commission-funded Innovate Dementia programme. It is also important to note that the programme has its own supply chain and creative ecology through partnership working and co-production with other arts, media and cultural organisations. This includes digital developers for the My House of Memories app, a theatre company for live forum theatre and filmed, character based documentaries as part of training events, and numerous national and international museum and gallery partners. Such professional partnerships have enabled the consistent production and delivery of high quality creative content and experiences throughout the programme's expansion. From a research and development perspective, House of Memories continues to engage a range of academic collaborators from disciplines including health psychology, gerontology, nursing and applied health. The enduring connections with carers and people living with dementia however best characterise the core principles and values of the programme, which remains relevant and responsive to local community needs while having global reach.



## 3 Horizon scanning and future directions

### 3.1 Museums and the Digital Realm



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Recent digital developments and innovations illustrate the programme's ongoing responsiveness to local community needs, including new multicultural versions of the My House of Memories app and On The Road, an immersive mobile museum experience launched in 2021. As such, House of Memories continues to expand its digital footprint, advancing digital developments in museum, health and social care fields in the post-pandemic landscape. Whitehouse (2015) observes that the 'incorporation of technology is key' in reimagining the museum and other learning organizations, in order to fully extend its boundaries and interfaces with health systems. The Coronavirus pandemic

emphasised this digital turn in culture, health and wellbeing. The Museums, Crisis and Covid-19 project (Crooke et al, 2022) considered digital adaptation and adoption by museums during the pandemic, with research highlighting that accessible digital content, produced in coordination with existing exhibitions, collections and museum values, brought museums into contact with new audiences and increased digital confidence in museum and heritage sectors across the UK.

House of Memories adapted in a similar fashion with an innovative reimagining of its digital offer, including online delivery of training programmes for professionals and the development and launch of new initiatives. On The Road, as the name suggests, is now taking the programme out into the community via a branded, converted vehicle and mobile museum, which opens up into an immersive cinema and activity space, sharing images and social history stories from the city of Liverpool. On The Road can be booked to visit different venues and locations, including for example care homes, community centres and outdoor events. The Connect My Memories tablet loan service was also launched in 2021. Working with local community networks, it provides staff and volunteers with kit, training and digital heritage resources to support isolated older people to form new digital skills, connections and interests.

On The Road and Connect My Memories are both responsive to emerging priority areas of public health relating to mitigating the effects of loneliness and isolation, particularly concerning older populations and the exacerbating impact of the pandemic. Research by The British Red Cross (2020) reported that a lack of meaningful contact, a reduction of informal and formal support, and increased anxiety had exacerbated loneliness during the crisis. This research also identified communities at greater risk of loneliness and isolation, including people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, those living with long term physical and mental health conditions, people on lower incomes and those with limited access to digital technology and the internet. Recent digital developments in House of Memories with an outreach emphasis therefore, are also helping to tackle digital exclusion in communities. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Loneliness inquiry, launched in 2020, identified people living with dementia and their carers as another specific group at risk of loneliness (APPG on Loneliness, 2021). The inquiry report recommends closing the digital divide as a critical intervention, including investing in digital infrastructure, and increasing digital skills and confidence.

Other examples of the digital expansion of the programme are equally significant in terms of extending and diversifying access to museum services and collections. House of Memories is doing pioneering, international work in this context, with its multiple dual-language versions of the My House of Memories app. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, the Memories of Yemen project (2021-22) for example involved the co-creation of a digital Yemeni heritage collection. The project started with a conversation between NML and a young person from Liverpool's Yemeni community, Abdul Wase, who was looking for resources to support the care of his Grandmother who is living with dementia. Abdul contacted NML after discovering House of Memories and seeing its value but realising that it would not necessarily resonate with his family due to its emphasis on western culture and social history. The intergenerational project has since engaged more young people amongst Abdul's peers, and elder members of the community, to create a dual-language (Arabic and English) version of the My House of Memories app, using museum collections from project partners the British Museum and the Fashion Museum Bath, and objects collected and photographed by community members. The project has been extensively promoted and celebrated, within and across (national and international) Arabic-speaking communities.

House of Memories Cymru is another dual-language version of the programme, beginning in 2022 with funding from the Welsh Government. The programme, to include training, app packages and activities in Welsh and English, will be co-produced with a consortium of museums and care networks across Wales, supporting older people and those living with dementia. Content will represent Welsh heritage within rural and urban settings, including isolated communities where health inequalities can be prevalent. Such initiatives are meeting multiple objectives therefore in the public health landscape, while simultaneously supporting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) priorities with museum and heritage work. Such work goes “beyond the functions of curatorship, conservation, management and education, to defining the museum in relation to the needs of society, and embodying its role as well and fully as possible” (O’Neill and Silverman, 2012).

### 3.2 Social Prescribing and Healthy Communities

A literature review on health and social care policy, conducted by the Innovate Dementia team at LJMU in December 2021, identified five key strategic themes of relevance to House of Memories and its future vision and direction. These included:

- 1 - UK Dementia Provision, Dementia Strategy & Guidance
- 2 - Social Prescribing
- 3 - Loneliness, Exclusion, and Isolation
- 4 - Digital Inclusion
- 5 - Prevention, Education and Training

Section 3.1 above explores the significant contributions made already, and foundations in place, regarding themes 3 and 4. Social prescribing, whereby patients or service users presenting with mild to moderate mental health concerns are referred to a social activity within the community as an alternative to clinical treatment, has advanced considerably in health and social care in recent years, as a means of tackling the multiple dimensions of health inequality. This includes increased investment within the NHS since the launch of House of Memories, with the introduction of Link Workers and infrastructural support within local areas through GP practices. The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP), launched in 2019 as an umbrella development agency, speaks directly to the ethos and values of House of Memories with its mission to advance social prescribing through promotion, collaboration and innovation, creating partnerships across the arts, health, leisure, sport and natural environment. The specific value of museums in social prescribing for older people is highlighted through research by Thompson et al (2018), including opportunities to acquire new learning and skills, and improvements in psychological wellbeing over time.

Social prescribing therefore provides a (thus far, comparatively under-explored) platform for the programme team to further consolidate and develop its role as a community asset and national exemplar of best practice. Within the Liverpool city region and beyond, there is considerable scope for example to offer the suite of House of Memories resources, including the original training programme, app and digital engagement opportunities and activities led by the HOP network, on a referral basis in collaboration with health and social care providers. The LJMU literature review highlights how this could support place-based public health agendas, including reducing demand on NHS and GP services (Office for Health Improvement



and Disparities, 2019). Expected outcomes of social prescribing include stabilised mental health and wellbeing and reduced isolation, but to be most effective, the needs of the person rather than the service should be prioritised. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that social prescribing services should be co-produced and commissioned with people experiencing multiple disadvantage, to help ensure that the right activities are identified (MEAM, 2020). Given the House of Memories team's extensive experience and expertise in co-production, commissioning and person-centred services, potentially there are reciprocal learning and development benefits for the social prescribing professional community.

From an arts and health perspective, Arts Council England's Creative Health and Wellbeing agenda (ACE, 2022) encapsulates these developments. Designed to complement and help to fulfil the Let's Create 2020-30 strategy, the document sets out how the council's work on creative health will tackle health inequalities by positioning creativity at the 'heart of people's lives'; connecting people with their communities through creativity; and supporting creative innovation in the professional culture, health and wellbeing field. The social prescribing movement is referenced prominently throughout the document, as a platform for enhanced collaborative work with the NHS; for maximising the potential impact of arts and culture in health and social care; and enhancing place-based partnerships and approaches. NML-led knowledge exchange activities would be of particular value to this agenda, particularly to wider arts, cultural and social enterprise sectors and their own organisational development. Other more advanced collaborative options for example include the team acting as a training provider in cultural commissioning, building upon the work of the CCP described in section 1.2, and recent advances in arts-led social prescribing. This is one potential avenue for working with ACE, the NCCH and NASP on a national basis.

### 3.3 Dementia Care as an Ongoing Public Health Priority

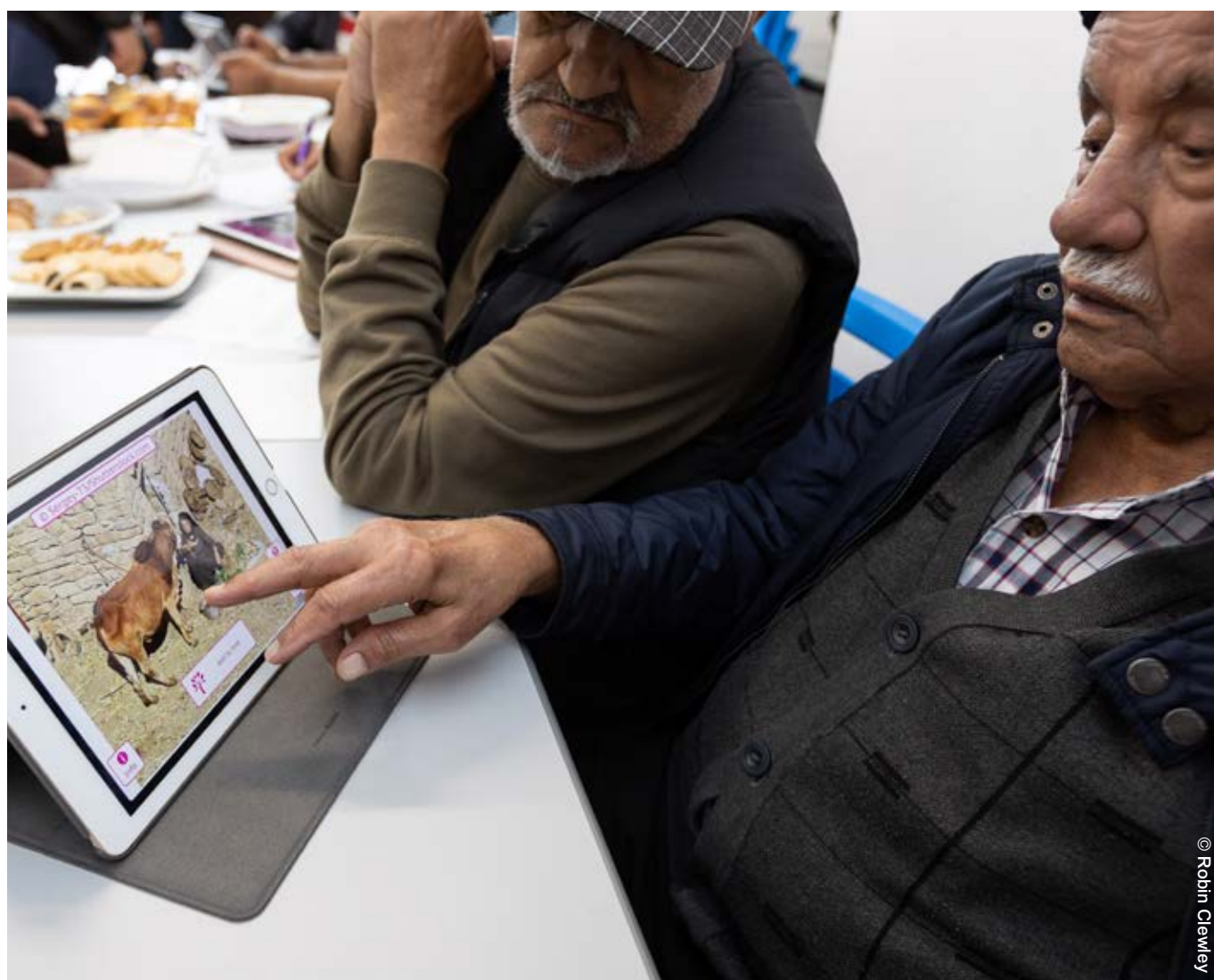
As described in section 1.1, House of Memories was astutely and comprehensively developed in tandem with a range of dementia care policy drivers and strategies. The LJMU literature review identified current and immediate priorities in UK Dementia Provision, Dementia Strategy & Guidance. The updated Dementia 2020 Challenge (Department of Health and Social Care, 2019) includes new and revised actions pertinent to the work and strengths of House of Memories. These include engaging more people living with dementia in research and development; continued engagement with businesses to encourage a dementia friendly society; and establishing ways to engage with groups 'not yet reached', including BAME and non-English speaking communities. Dementia Quality Standards published by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE, 2019) also reflect the core objectives and qualities of the programme, including providing people with dementia with a range of activities to support wellbeing and offering education, skills and training to all carers of people with dementia.

Other strategies advocate the need for people with dementia to live independently (i.e. at home and in the community) for longer, supported by early diagnosis; improved public health information and campaigns; improved access to support for carers; and improved infrastructure through digital technology and integrated care systems (Alzheimer's Society, 2021; APPG on Dementia, 2021; Health and Social Care Committee, 2021). There are clear pathways therefore for House of Memories to continue to engage with policy agendas and effect positive change in dementia



care. There is now much more understanding and recognition of the value of arts and creativity for people living with dementia, including for example research on participatory visual arts (Barroso et al, 2022); literature and reading groups (Longden et al, 2016); and music therapy (Moreno-Morales et al, 2020).

Academic research on the value of arts and culture is supported by more media coverage and representation, which is raising public awareness. The BBC series *Our Dementia Choir* with Vicky McClure for example is an emotional and empathic portrayal of the realities of caring for a loved one with dementia and the importance of community support (Mangan, 2019). *House of Memories* continues to occupy a significant space with its prioritisation of carers and support for the dementia care community, promoting museums as anchor civic cultural institutions. An enduring feature of the evaluation research described in section 2, has been the ability to attribute the impact of the programme on carers' own subjective wellbeing and their more empathic understanding of dementia and its consequences to the quality of the museum-based content and creative experience of *House of Memories*.





Once more, not just in response to but also rather in anticipation of these contemporary policy agendas, the current House of Memories strategy (National Museums Liverpool, 2022) is designed to continue to fulfil the programme’s mission as the world’s leading museum innovation for the dementia community. Key ongoing, defining elements to this work include dementia friendly digital innovation; museum-led dementia training; academic research informing clinical and social practice; and international partnerships. The strategy is motivated by the needs of an ageing population in the UK, with the number of people aged over 60 set to increase from 15m (2014) to 22m (2039); and the number of people aged over 85 from 1.5m (2014) to 3.6m (2039). By 2025, 1 million people will be living with dementia in the UK. Of all the UK’s care providers, 11% care for

people with dementia, and it is estimated that there are around 700,000 unpaid, family (primary) care providers. Two thirds of people living with dementia live at home and are mostly supported by unpaid carers. There is urgent need to reduce pressures on the NHS, through the expansion of integrated care solutions delivered 'at place' (as cited within the 2022 UK Health and Social Care act).

National short-term goals (2022-24) include government support for regional app partnerships in England and devolved nations (Scotland and Northern Ireland); extended community participation in Liverpool city region via Connect my Memories and On The Road; and education, training and development opportunities in nursing and applied health via partnerships with local providers. Medium (2025-27) and long-term (2028-30) goals include development of a national social prescribing model; continued diverse digital content creation and community partnerships; digital innovation and expansion of On The Road with multimedia partners, including BBC; and development of a national research programme in partnership with Everton Football Club, regional health innovation networks and academic health education and training providers. International expansion of House of Memories through new global partnerships in the US, South America, South-East Asia and Europe will respond to similar demographic trends, with worldwide dementia cases expected to almost triple to 153 million people by 2050.

Ultimately and in summary, the collaborative leadership capabilities of the team behind House of Memories at NML have been instrumental to its success as a high-quality cultural intervention in dementia care policy and practice. In relation to multi-agency working and the creation of dementia friendly communities, House of Memories has effectively positioned museums as the ultimate 'boundary spanners', characterised by the ability to engage with others; deploy relational and interpersonal competencies; and to acknowledge and value difference outside own professional circles (Peck and Dickinson, 2008). Combined with the team's relentless commitment, care and compassion in their work, House of Memories remains uniquely placed to continue to advocate the value of museums in dementia care and to advance the international culture, health and wellbeing field over the next ten years.



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