

PRESS RELEASE:

What makes Didcot brilliant?

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Over the next year, residents in Didcot will be invited to participate in an arts project that aims to celebrate what makes Didcot brilliant. This is being made possible through a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund that has been secured by Oxford Health Charity.

The grant will be used to fund Oxford Health Arts Partnerships current Artist-in-Residence, Dionne Freeman, who will work with people of all ages and abilities in the town to co-produce artwork that will be displayed in the grounds of Didcot hospital and also in the underpass at Didcot station. This could be in the form of drawings, paintings, collages or mosaics.

Julie Pink, Head of Charity and Involvement said: “The Charity funds an extensive arts programme at Oxford Health as it is known that access to creative projects, be that music, dance or art makes a big difference to our patients’ wellbeing. All this is made possible through the generous donations from members of the public, former patients and their families. We are delighted that the team have been able to secure this grant from the National Lottery Community Fund that will be used to enrich the lives of people in Didcot.”

Angela Conlan, is Project lead at Oxford Health Arts Partnership. She said: “Many of our patients are older adults and may have longer stays in hospital so it is important that we have activities on our wards to keep them engaged. The feedback we receive is always very positive and many want to keep being creative once they have left hospital care. This grant from the National Lottery Community Fund will hopefully help them to do that and also build community engagement around the hospital which will be a wonderful result.”

“I am very excited to be leading this fantastic project which will celebrate all that is good about Didcot” said Dionne Freeman, Artist-in-Residence. She added: “I will be based at Didcot hospital but will be holding regular workshops and taster sessions in the town so other people can come along and join in and express themselves in a way they may not have done so before.

“As part of my work I will be reaching out to the mental health teams based at the Ridgeway Centre which is based next door to Didcot Hospital to identify people who have experienced mental health difficulties who may like to take part. Helping them to connect and engage with meaningful community activities will greatly benefit their wellbeing, help them to live well independently and provide a lasting legacy for the project.”

As well as staff and patients from Didcot hospital, young people from local schools will be invited to attend (out of school hours) and outreach sessions will

be held with other local groups such as mother and baby and dementia support groups.

Other partners in the 'Creative Connections Didcot' project include South Oxfordshire District Council's Wellbeing Team, The Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot Railway Station, Sustainable Didcot and the Train Youth Club.

Ends

Notes to Editors

For more information: contact the Communications Team on 01865 902068/902225. Communications.team@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) provides physical, mental health and social care for people of all ages across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Swindon, Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset. Our services are delivered at community bases, hospitals, clinics and people's homes. We focus on delivering care as close to home as possible.

As a leading teaching, training and research trust, we have close links to Oxford and Oxford Brookes, Buckinghamshire, Reading and Bath universities. We are part of the Oxford Academic Health Science Centre, working closely with our university colleagues to translate their findings into clinical care as quickly as possible, enabling people using our services to benefit from the latest advances in healthcare. We host the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre with Oxford University, and aim to bring the best science to the complex problems of mental disorders and dementia. We also host the NIHR Applied Research Collaboration Oxford and Thames Valley; a partnership between universities, healthcare, charities and industry, that aims, through applied health research, to co-produce better, more equitable, appropriate and sustainable health and care across the region.

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