

The Poetry Treatment – new project in major UK hospital

This August, The Poetry Trust, Suffolk-based organisers of the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival will launch an innovative, year-long project – *The Poetry Treatment* – in Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals. Support for the project includes £16,000 of Grants for the Arts lottery funding from Arts Council England, East.

At the hospital, which is on the outskirts of Norwich, staff, patients and visitors will be able to enjoy poems on over 160 loo doors, in corridors, on canteen tables and on hospital radio.

Some 60 poets will be ‘donating’ poems – all of whom are poets who have taken part in the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival or other Poetry Trust events. They include Connie Bensley, Roy Fisher, Geoff Hattersley, Ian McMillan, Adrian Mitchell, Helena Nelson, Christopher Reid, Michael Rosen and Jackie Wills.

Up to 62 employees, from cleaners and catering staff to nurses and consultants, will take part in free poetry reading and writing workshops led by Michael Laskey, poet and founder of the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival and Jane Anderson, the Poetry Trust’s Learning and Outreach worker.

Poetry Trust Director, Naomi Jaffa said:

“Hospitals always involve a lot of waiting around and we want to give people something a bit different and perhaps help them forget their worries for a time. The hospital is a vast and shifting community and we’re really looking forward to taking poetry to such a large and varied audience and hopefully winning some converts along the way.”

The Poetry Treatment is being organised in collaboration with the Hospital Arts Project and this is its first major poetry project. Emma Jarvis, Hospital Arts Co-ordinator said:

“I was delighted to be approached by The Poetry Trust as a number of staff had recently contacted me to show me their poems and to ask about a possible poetry group. And this project is so much bigger than just a reading group. We’re hoping it will really get people talking and that as the project progresses we may even see poems from some of the staff appearing alongside those of the professionals.”

The Poetry Treatment is being funded by Arts Council England East, The Limbourne Trust and Norfolk County Council. As part of the project there will be a careful evaluation. Contact The Poetry Trust on 01986 835950 or info@thepoetrytrust.org if you would like to be sent a copy of the report.

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For more information

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Editor's Notes

The Poetry Trust is one of the UK's flagship poetry organisations, delivering a year-round live and digital programme, creative learning opportunities, courses, prizes and publications including the international Aldeburgh Poetry Festival. The Poetry Trust is based in Halesworth, Suffolk. www.thepoetrytrust.org

The **Hospital Arts Project (HAP)** at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals enhances the Hospital environment for patients, visitors and staff, by involving and engaging them in a wide range of programmes. These include visual arts and crafts, interior design, events, performances and workshops, as well as external arts and design including sculpture, seating and gardens. HAP also cares for the Hospital's collection of historic artefacts.