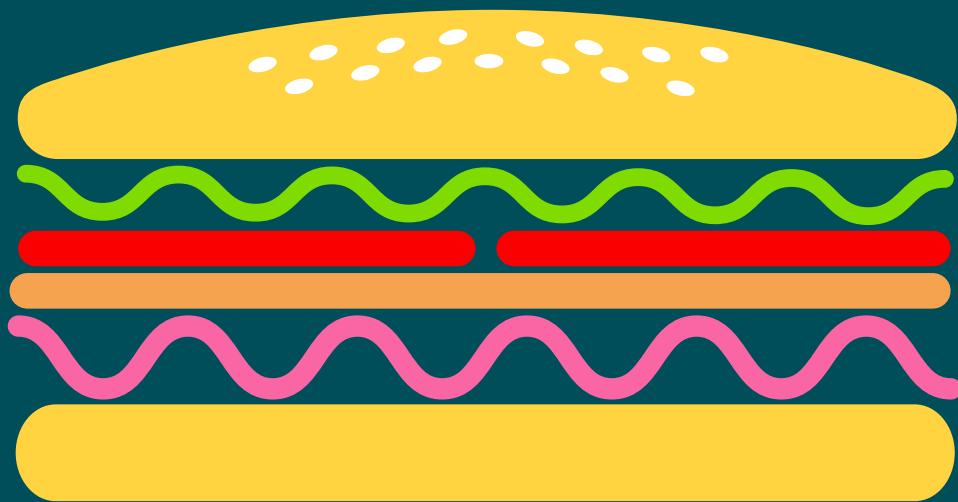


# A Piece About

## HUMAN RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE



Over 20 different strands of work took place between March and October 2022 as part of Rights Made Real Phase 2.

Each of these strands was situated under one of 4 Human Rights.

This Slice offers a slice of insight into one of those strands.

# A PIECE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE

## Introduction

Welcome to this Piece.

In the context of the Rights Made Real Project, the Right to Cultural Life was explored from the perspective of culture events, for example theatre and music, as well as access to activities which tap into and explore cultural identity, artefacts and retained skills.

While there is no specific reference to cultural life in the National Care Standards, the two descriptive statements below broadly tap into this human right.

1.25 I can choose to have an active life and participate in a range of recreational, social, creative, physical and learning activities every day, both indoors and outdoors.

2.22 I can maintain and develop my interests, activities and what matters to me in the way that I like.

The statements above refer to the outputs and outcomes of when a person's right to personal expression has been realised; the work in Rights Made Real outlined below explores some of the processes and practices that can support these outputs and outcomes to be achieved.

## About this Piece

The term 'piece' has been used for two reasons:

Firstly, the ideas and questions presented in this document are 'a piece' of the picture in relation to the human right to participation in cultural life for people living in care homes; and we appreciate that there is much more to be said about this human right.

Secondly, the 'piece' plays with the idea of a Scottish sandwich, where between slices of bread there is a tasty filling.

The slices (structure) in the Rights Made Real project were 6 strands of work (termed 'Opportunities' in the project) which took place under the theme of Right to Participation in Cultural Life. These slices are listed below. There is a full description of these slices available at [www.rightsmadereal.org.uk](http://www.rightsmadereal.org.uk) under the Resources Tab.

The 'filling' are the key theme, learning, and further curiosities that emerged during the course of the project, this learning is also outlined below.

At the end of each filling is 'an open curiosity'; a question to which there is most likely no one neat answer and is designed to spark further conversation.

All the resources referenced in this piece are also freely available [www.rightsmadereal.org.uk](http://www.rightsmadereal.org.uk) under the Resources Tab- Right to Personal Expression Resources.

## The Slices- Overview of the Strands of Work (Opportunities) that Took Place to Explore this Human Right

### **Aliens Play- Citadel Arts & Capital Theatres**

Performance of a play in Capital Theatres to which care home residents were invited.

### **Are Ye Dancin'?- Tenterhooks**

Tour of the Are Ye Dancin'?' non-verbal show to care homes in Argyll & Bute, Inverclyde & Glasgow.

### **Buff & Sheen- Moonslide**

Tour of Buff & Sheen- a socially distanced show taking place through windows- with Buff & Sheen getting up to antics and acrobats trying to clean those same windows!

### **Centrestage- Afternoon Tea & Music**

Residents and staff from a number of care homes came together for an afternoon of music, dancing and afternoon in Centrestage, Kilmarnock

### **Room for Music- Music in Hospitals and Care**

Visits to care homes by musicians to care homes, which included group concerts, as well as one-to-one musical engagement in peoples' own rooms

### **Traditions & Treasures Scottish Cultural Boxes- Paula Brown**

An assortment of carefully curated items, connected with traditions, and creative skills in Scotland with particular reference to Shetland & Orkney.

### **Resource Development**

Personalised Musical Moments- in collaboration with Jane Bentley

Ideas for musicians who would like to engage in personalised musical moments with people living in care homes.

## Creating Connections with the Principles from the National Care Standards

A summary of the ways in which the principles were brought to life are listed below; further description is available in each of the individual 'slice' documents.

- Opportunities offered to locations and people that might not ordinarily have access to a range of cultural shows
- Nature of the shows designed to be accessible to everyone
- Raising awareness of the different ways in which people can show that they are engaged- for example sitting quietly with eyes closed (while a musician is playing) and offering critique during a show
- Creating opportunities for collaboration, for example making music with the resident, residents offering to help with tidy-up after the show

## Filling 1: Right to Cultural Life- Attention to Levels and Layers

From the offset the Rights Made Real project strove to connect in particular with people with later stage dementia, whilst also being aware that all stages of dementia are represented amongst the population of people living in care homes.

### Different Layers

The Scottish Cultural Box was an offering which was curated with accessibility in mind, and so the various objects inside the box were chosen for their sensory qualities, as well as ability to be used in different ways depending on the person's abilities and interests.

Further ideas for future development of cultural box are to extend it beyond Scotland, to include items from the countries of international care home staff members, to help residents and staff to share with one another about their respective cultures.

### Different Levels

We strove to work with collaborators in creating opportunities that offered a high quality experience of cultural life:

- outside the home (Centrestage and Aliens Play)

- in communal settings in the home (Are Ye Dancin', Buff & Sheen, Room for Music and Scottish Cultural Box)

- as a one-to-one experience (Room for Music and Scottish Cultural Box)

The planning for these opportunities took place at a time when the visiting restrictions in care homes, and guidance on residents visiting public settings, remained uncertain. The desire to take the risk of hoping these cultural experiences would be possible by summer 2022 was fortunately a risk worth taking.

One care home staff member at the 'Aliens' play commented that pre-Covid trips to cultural events were a regular part of care home life, and her sense now was that there was a lot less available that care homes could tap into.

### An Open Curiosity

The focus on offering one-to-one experiences musical experiences was a new venture; and perhaps speaks to a question about how we interpret the value of a cultural experience such as a musician in a care home? - is it by the number of people who participate, and might there also be something to consider in terms of the value of offering a personalised experience to those who might otherwise have limited access to expressions of culture & creativity?

## Filling 2: Right to Cultural Life- Knowing Your Audience

Within the Rights Made Real project we purposefully sought out artists and collaborators who were very skilled and experienced in working with people with dementia in care settings. We felt this important from the perspective of the experience of the resident, the care home staff and the artist. We were grateful for the expertise of Luminate- Scotland's <https://luminatescotland.org/> creative ageing organisation, who were instrumental in helping us make connections with collaborators.

There was a real openness from collaborators to engage in further learning and expansion of their approach working with people with dementia in care settings. For example, Citadel Arts committed to working with creative collaborators (people with lived experience of dementia) from Capital Theatre, to have the script and performance of the Aliens play be reviewed from the perspective of a dementia-friendly performance. Another example is Music and Hospitals and Care piloting the approach of incorporating one-to-one musical experiences into their care home visits.

Learning that emerged in terms of one-to-one musical engagement is captured in the resource- Personalised Musical Moments (available under the Personal Expression Resources Tab at [www.rightsmadereal.org.uk](http://www.rightsmadereal.org.uk)). This resource acknowledges the sensitivities of moving the cultural experience into some one's private space, and offers ideas on how this can be respectfully done.

### An Open Curiosity

To 'know your audience' in terms of working with people living with dementia in care homes, is to be aware of the possibility for surprises- for people to join in, to say something unexpected, to wish to leave when the show has just begun, and for all of this to be welcomed. Some elements of a dementia friendly performance in theatre settings include the following-

- Attention to the show's lighting and sound i.e. avoiding startling noises, or loud noises where its not clear where the source of the noise is coming from
- Clearer visual markers and signage around the theatre.
- A relaxed attitude to movement and audience responses during the show.
- A quiet space available before, during and after the show.
- Extra staff on hand to support audiences during their time with us.

Are there other principles you would add for performances in care homes?

## Filling 3: Right to Cultural Life- Engagement and Enjoyment

The aim of the Rights Made Real project was to offer high-quality cultural life opportunities to care home residents. It would be natural to assume that residents' enjoyment of these opportunities would be our intended outcome; during the course of the project some curiosities arose about this.

Is enjoyment an essential component in order for the right to be deemed to be ‘successfully’ achieved? How does expressing critique of a cultural experience fit within the right to cultural life? How might our desire to offer experiences that we think are pretty guaranteed to be enjoyed influence our ability to take a risk, go with something a bit different that might just suit a small number of people? With limited resources/budgets whose perspective do we seek about what cultural life opportunities to organise? How do we assess someone’s enjoyment – what if they appear to enjoy the first few minutes and then decide to leave? What are the different ways in which people might show that they are engaged in a show/cultural offering?

In posing the questions above, we acknowledge the very natural hope that people in care homes have positive experiences when engaging in cultural experiences- we had that hope in Rights Made Real, and heard numerous stories of where this hope was realised in the different opportunities.

### **An Open Curiosity**

Alongside the hope that people might enjoy the cultural experience, what other signs might there be that the cultural experience was worthwhile?

## **Saying Your Piece/ Sharing this Piece**

Is there something else that feels important to you about the Right to Cultural Life for people living in care homes?

Were there any of the ‘Open Curiosity’ questions that stood out for you, that you might like to share and discuss with others?