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South East London ICB and Southbank Centre Unite for Health and Arts Partnership



L-R Andrew Bland, Alex Brierley, Mark Ball, David Bradley
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We're delighted to announce an exciting partnership between the South East London Integrated Care Board (SEL ICB), South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) and the Southbank Centre. Together, we're using the power of the creative arts to improve health and wellbeing for communities in south east London, especially for children and young people.

On 19 December 2024, leaders from SEL ICB and the Southbank Centre signed a Memorandum of Understanding to officially launch this collaboration. The partnership will focus on supporting the development of:

- **The Southbank Children and Young People's Creative Health Centre:** A dedicated space for creative health programmes providing interventions that improve and support the mental health and wellbeing of local children and young people.
- **Waiting Well Interventions:** Supporting children on CAMHS waiting lists through creative activities.



- **Creative Health Prevention Programmes:** Using the arts to promote better mental health and prevent issues before they arise.

This partnership aims to improve mental health of children and young people by offering creative outlets and resources to tackle health inequalities through focusing on those most in need. It aims to build lasting change by securing charitable funding for impactful projects backed by a joint evaluation framework to be developed in 2025.

At the heart of London's cultural life, the Southbank Centre has a history of transforming lives through creativity and the arts, bringing people together and fostering wellbeing. This groundbreaking collaboration builds on that legacy to improve health outcomes across south east London.

Mark Ball, Artistic Director at the Southbank Centre, said: *"This is a really important moment. We have had the evidence for a number of years that the arts make a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of all people – and we know that there is now a very significant crisis in young people's mental health. So to be able to bring our two organisations and disciplines together and to think and act strategically about how to address this really pressing issue through arts and creative practice feels invaluable."*

A growing body of evidence illustrates the links between cultural and heritage engagement and health and wellbeing with research by the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) from 2019 and [University College London \(UCL\)](#) finding that cultural engagement can help to prevent, treat and manage physical and mental health problems. Creative health initiatives support the Integrated Care System to take a holistic and person-centred approach to health.

Alex Brierley, Director of Creative Engagement at the Southbank Centre, said: *"This partnership between SEL ICB and the Southbank Centre represents a transformative opportunity to harness the power of creativity to improve health and wellbeing for young people in our local communities. By combining our position as a national leading arts centre with the SEL ICB's expertise in healthcare, we're taking an innovative step toward addressing health inequalities and providing meaningful support for those who need it most."*

Over the next 12 months through the partnership, the Southbank Centre and SEL ICB will work with NHS, cultural, voluntary and charitable sector partners in setting a longer-term roadmap to help deliver key programmes for local communities.

Andrew Bland, Chief Executive at the South East London Integrated Care Board, said: *"Creating partnerships beyond the health service is the job of Integrated Care Partnerships. In South East London we're serious about finding those groups of partners who can best improve the health and wellbeing of our residents. Waiting for people to fall ill before we do anything about their needs is the most expensive and unaffordable way to improve people's health. This partnership with the Southbank Centre focusing on the arts and young people's mental health is a clear priority for us. I'm excited we've been able to codify this partnership today and excited for what we can do together in the future."*

David Bradley, Chief Executive at South London and the Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, said: *"We're delighted to be involved in this important partnership focusing on the urgent challenge of young people's mental health. With the majority of mental health conditions*



occurring by the age of 14, the earlier we can intervene to provide support the better - and we know that there is strong and growing evidence that creative health interventions play an important role in helping people with good mental health. This partnership will have vital benefits for those that need it most."

This partnership is an example of how SEL ICB is developing innovative partnerships to tackle health inequalities – working alongside innovative programmes such as South London Listens – to explore how we can work with our communities to create lasting, positive change.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the South East London Integrated Care Board

The South East London Integrated Care Board leads NHS services in the London boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth, Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham and supports partnership working and integration.

[South East London ICS - Integrated Care System](#)

About the Southbank Centre

The Southbank Centre is the UK's largest multi-arts centre and engages the most diverse audiences of any performing arts organisation in the UK. Our biggest venue, the Royal Festival Hall (2,700 seats) is the lasting legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and the ambition and values of that project – that arts, ideas, innovation and culture can heal communities and should be available and accessible to everyone – are still our guiding principles today.

The Southbank Centre is uniquely able to offer a wide-ranging, inclusive and world-class artistic programme spanning contemporary visual arts, music, dance, performance, literature, comedy and spoken word across the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, the Hayward Gallery and our free spaces. We are also home to the National Poetry Library, the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) and six resident orchestras (Aurora Orchestra, Chineke! Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Philharmonia Orchestra).

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