

## Imperial College Healthcare Charity

Press Release

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### Elderly and dementia patients get creative thanks to charity workshops

For immediate release

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A new series of artistic workshops are launching on 9 July at Charing Cross Hospital aimed at elderly patients and those with dementia.

The project, funded by Imperial College Healthcare Charity, will be carried out at the West London hospital's Lady Skinner Ward by Paper Birch, an organisation that uses art and creative workshops to stimulate patients and encourage memories and thoughts.

In London there are currently around 65,000 people diagnosed and living with dementia, and this is predicted to rise by 16 per cent up until 2021.

Paper Birch's founders, Laura Venables and Faith Wray, will be running a series of weekly workshops involving a mix of projects where patients are encouraged to use arts and crafts as a means of expression. The workshops are designed to help distract patients and to encourage greater mobility. Both Laura and Faith are Masters students at the Royal College of Art, and having experienced the impact dementia and memory loss through ageing has on people's lives, they were determined to bring their own personal skill set into the healthcare environment.

Faith says: "We both feel very excited about the project. It's wonderful having such fantastic enthusiasm from the staff to make projects like this happen. We feel that creativity, communication and companionship are crucial to helping provide a better quality of life for patients within health environments. Our previous projects have had some incredible success stories; moments like these continue to drive our work within this area.

"Our workshops can make a genuine difference to patients and staff, as it gives ward staff the time to concentrate on patients who are in need of more frequent care. Alongside this, workshops can encourage mobility of patients and can totally change the atmosphere around a ward."

Imperial College Healthcare Charity raises money for the five London hospitals of Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, including Charing Cross. One arm of its work is to use its art collection to help create a warmer environment for patients and staff, and to use the arts in different ways such as these workshops to engage with patients in a complimentary fashion.

Ginny Wright, consultant physician within rehabilitation services at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, says: “We’re really looking forward to these workshops starting on the ward, as we know how important it is to engage with our patients and working creatively with them can really help with other aspects of their rehabilitation. The workshops will add another approach to the way we care for our patients, especially those with dementia.”

**-Notes to editors-**

For more information about the workshops, contact Bevis Man on 0203 312 2061 or email: [bevis.man@imperial.nhs.uk](mailto:bevis.man@imperial.nhs.uk). Website: [www.imperialcharity.org.uk](http://www.imperialcharity.org.uk) Stay up to date with the charity’s Twitter feed on [@ImperialCharity](https://twitter.com/ImperialCharity).

**Imperial College Healthcare Charity**

Imperial College Healthcare Charity raises and manages charitable funds for five London hospitals within Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust: Charing Cross, Hammersmith, Queen Charlotte’s & Chelsea, St Mary’s and Western Eye hospitals. Since 2009, the charity has awarded over £12million in grants to over 290 pieces of clinical research and healthcare projects across the trust hospitals, all of which aim to improve patient healthcare.

Imperial College Healthcare Charity Art Collection brings works of art into our hospitals in a visually stimulating and vibrant way that enhances the health care environment for patients, staff and visitors. The Collection has established a reputation as one of London’s leading hospital art collections.

**Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust**

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust comprises Charing Cross, Hammersmith, Queen Charlotte’s & Chelsea, St Mary’s and Western Eye hospitals. With more than one million patient contacts each year, it is one of the largest acute Trusts in the country and, in partnership with Imperial College London, is the UK’s first Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC).