



FSS an Iarthair agus an Iarthuaiscirt  
HSE West and North West

## Call to Artists

Building on the participatory arts programme at Galway University Hospitals (GUH), Saolta Arts invites **professional practicing visual artists** to apply for opportunities in the following hospitals of HSE West North West in 2025 – 2026; University Hospital Galway, Merlin Park University Hospital, Portiuncula University Hospital Ballinasloe, Mayo University Hospital and Roscommon University Hospital. Artists with a commitment to participatory/collaborative practice and public engagement will be considered. Only artists whose practice focuses on artistic outcomes that enhance health and well-being (arts and health), rather than therapeutic or clinical outcomes (art therapy), will be considered.

## Participatory Visual Artist Panel 2025-2026

Saolta Arts in partnership with our colleagues at University Hospital Galway (UHG), Merlin Park University Hospital (MPUH), Portiuncula University Hospital (PUH) Ballinasloe, Mayo University Hospital (MUH) and Roscommon University Hospital (RUH), invites expressions of interest from professional practicing visual artists to join a Participatory Artist Panel for workshop facilitation and public engagement opportunities at the hospitals. Artists must demonstrate a commitment to using participatory/collaborative methodologies and be available to work in hospital sites in Galway City, Ballinasloe, Castlebar or Roscommon; as well as other community settings within the HSE West North West. **Only Visual Artists will be considered at this time.** The panel will be in place for opportunities that arise during the period 2025– 2026, including the *Mending HeArts* Project. Artists selected will complete Garda Clearance, Child Protection, and Hand-hygiene training. Inclusion on the panel does not guarantee work.

## How to apply

Applications should include:

- A current CV (maximum 2 pages)
- Contact details for two current referees
- Documentation of practice: 6- 10 fully captioned images and/or up to 3 examples of texts, audio or links to film documentation. Please include relevant examples of participatory/collaborative practice if available.
- A one-page proposal outlining
  - how you might engage with patients and/or staff
  - why you are interested in working in the hospital context and other community settings.
  - which hospital/s you are interested in working at
  - your availability and any preferences during the period January 2025 – December 2026

Applications should be submitted to Margaret Flannery, Arts Director, Saolta Arts, University Hospital Galway, Newcastle, Galway, H91 YR71 or emailed to [saoltaarts@hse.ie](mailto:saoltaarts@hse.ie) no later than Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2025 at 5:00pm E-mail applications should not exceed 15MB in size.

## **Processing and assessment of applications**

The artist will be selected through a process of open competition. The criteria for selection is:

- Quality of the artist's participatory/collaborative practice.
- Level of relevant experience demonstrated through the CV and other supporting materials.
- The suitability and responsiveness of the artists' practice for the hospital environment.
- The ambition, originality, and competency demonstrated by the artist.
- The proposed arts activity as outlined in the proposal.
- The availability of the artist.

Applications will be short-listed then selected by a panel comprising representatives from Saolta Arts, an external professional artist/arts programme manager and staff from HSE |west North West.

Artists will be notified of shortlisting by Friday 7th March, 2025.

For further information contact 091 544 979 or email [saoltaarts@hse.ie](mailto:saoltaarts@hse.ie)

## ***Mending HeArts***

*Mending HeArts* is a Creative Ireland Health & Wellbeing project led by Galway City Council in partnership with Saolta Arts CLG, Galway County Council, Croí Heart and Stroke charity, working with HSE West North West.

Working with project partners, Saolta Arts wish to expand our participatory arts programme following patients through their cardiology pathway. Through a series of art workshops across Galway City and County, including University Hospital Galway, Merlin Park University Hospital, and Portiuncula University Hospital, as well as rural locations in County Galway, the project seeks to widen arts engagement in healthcare. It aims to build capacity through training and upskilling artists to work in healthcare settings, and building a sustainable model of arts in healthcare that can be extended beyond Galway to the wider West-North West Health Region and replicated in other health regions nationally.

## **Saolta Arts**

Saolta Arts runs the west of Ireland's leading Arts and Health programme as a means of improving the hospital experience for patients, staff and visitors. Saolta Arts believes access to the arts promotes well-being and enhances the hospital environment. Since 2003 we have provided a multi-disciplinary programme of events and activities, including exhibitions, participative workshops, music, theatre and poetry.

## **The acute hospital context**

The acute hospital can be a challenging yet rewarding context for artists to work in. They engage the hospital community in a range of clinical and non-clinical spaces including day rooms, waiting rooms, wards and public areas, across a variety of healthcare specialisms. Each setting comes with a specific set of parameters. These encompass the particular needs of the patient group, Health & Safety, Infection Control, and the routine of the care area. These can change very quickly and often the progress of arts projects can be very slow. The acute hospital has a high staff and patient turnover which can make communication particularly challenging. We work in partnership with our health care colleagues to minimise these challenges and optimise for the benefits of our participatory arts programme. This also requires working with resourceful artists who can navigate limitations and embrace possibilities towards inclusive access as far as is practicable. We work with artists who are responsive to the diverse and changing needs and vulnerabilities of the hospital community, nurturing the discovery and development of creative potential,

encouraging new ways of seeing, and stimulating fresh dialogue – making the hospital a place of possibilities.

### **What is Arts and Health? A definition by the Arts Council of Ireland**

Arts and Health is the generic term that embraces a range of arts practices occurring primarily in healthcare settings, which bring together the skills and priorities of both arts and health professionals. Good Arts and Health Practice is characterized by a clear artistic vision, goals and outcomes. Alongside these, it aims to promote health and wellbeing by improving quality of life and cultural access in healthcare settings. It may incorporate different approaches, including conventional arts production and presentation, arts participation and environmental enhancement. Arts and Health initiatives may range from once-off events to long-term programmes. The term Arts and Health is preferable to Arts in Health or Arts for Health as it reflects the equal partnership of skills necessary to ensure good practice. There is a clear distinction between Arts and Health practice, where a key goal is the experience and production of art, and the Arts Therapies, where the primary goal is clinical.