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Healing Arts Scotland, a national arts and health festival, engages policymakers in vital role of culture to support Scottish health systems

Scottish Ballet and the Jameel Arts & Health Lab, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) launched the "Healing Arts Scotland" impact report today at Scottish Parliament, highlighting the impact of a national arts and health week for the first time.



Holyrood, Scotland - 21 January 2025

Scottish Ballet and the [Jameel Arts & Health Lab](#), in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the "**Healing Arts Scotland**" impact report today at the Scottish Parliament. This ground-breaking report showcases the impact of the world's first national arts and health week which took place across Scotland in August 2024, incorporating **376 events** and attracting over **11,000 attendees**. The report positions Scotland as a global leader in arts and health and highlights areas in which evidence-based arts programmes can support public health.

The Healing Arts Scotland event at the Scottish Parliament was attended by key representatives of the Scottish Government, and showcased the research outcomes of the report, prepared by Edinburgh University and NYU Steinhardt, laying the groundwork for **a new Scottish cross-parliamentary group focused on arts and health**.

Speakers including **Angus Robertson** MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, **Angiolina Foster**, Chair of Public Health Scotland; and **Christopher Bailey** - Arts & Health Lead, WHO & Founding Co-Director, Jameel Arts & Health Lab, recognised the role Healing Arts Scotland had played in ensuring that scientific evidence for the impact of the arts on health and wellbeing is informing public health policy in Scotland.

As well as the new cross-parliamentary group, policy initiatives directly informed by Healing Arts Scotland include embedding evidence-based arts and creative health activities in Public Health Scotland to help reduce health inequalities that affect over 5.4 million people and support the prevention and management of physical and mental health conditions.

Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, **Sir Gregor Smith** commented: "I congratulate Scottish Ballet, the Jameel Arts & Health Lab, and the World Health Organization for demonstrating how the arts might help us reimagine our national model of health and social care in a way that can measurably impact communities. Healing Arts Scotland was a celebration of how the arts can create skylights of hope and joy for those people who need it the most."

At the end of the event, Scottish Ballet was designated by the Lab as the second global **Jameel Arts & Health Lab Healing Arts Center of Excellence**, a recognition of its outstanding leadership of Healing Arts Scotland 2024 and its ongoing commitment to improving community health through the arts. This follows the designation of Carnegie Hall in New York during the 2024 UN General Assembly as the inaugural Jameel Arts & Health Lab Healing Arts Center of Excellence.

The Healing Arts Scotland Impact report follows the publication earlier this month of the [Frontier Economics report](#), which has revealed the improvements to people's health and wellbeing that come from engagement with arts and culture are worth more than **£8bn** a year to the UK economy.

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ADDITIONAL QUOTES

Catherine Cassidy-Dedics, Director of Organisational Culture & Engagement at Scottish Ballet said: *"My main ambition for Healing Arts Scotland was to consult with, and include, as many voices and perspectives from arts and health organisations as possible, reaching groups of all sizes and across communities. Planning for the event also became a catalyst for new creative partnerships and new ways of presenting work. The impact highlighted in this report is just the beginning."*

Christopher Bailey WHO Arts and Health Lead and Co-Director of the Jameel Health and Arts Lab commented: *"Many cities around the world have taken part in our series of Healing Arts activations, but Scotland was the first to take a truly national approach. Scotland's unique sense of community, its embrace of all art forms, and its commitment to health for all was an exciting combination."*

Stephen Stapleton, Co-Director of Jameel Health and Arts Lab said: *"We are thrilled to bring this important conversation to the Scottish Parliament. The Healing Arts Scotland report is the result of months of collaboration with communities, artists, and healthcare professionals. Today's launch is not just the release of a report—it is a call to action. The evidence is clear: the arts have a vital role to play in Scotland's health and wellbeing strategy, and we hope to see further investment and policy support in this area."*

ABOUT HEALING ARTS SCOTLAND

Healing Arts Scotland 2024 was a nation-wide festival celebrating and advocating for improved physical, mental and social health through the arts. Spearheaded by Scottish Ballet as part of the Jameel Arts & Health Lab's global 'Healing Arts' campaign in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the one-week activation was launched as part of the Edinburgh International Festival and produced in collaboration with a national coalition of organisations and communities across Scotland.

ABOUT JAMEEL ARTS & HEALTH LAB:

The Jameel Arts & Health Lab is a global initiative to measurably improve health and wellbeing through the arts. With a focus on overlooked and underserved communities, the Lab leverages scientific evidence, artist-led advocacy, and capacity building to drive the integration of the arts into mainstream healthcare. The Jameel Arts & Health Lab was launched in January 2023 by the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe, the Steinhardt School at New York University, Community Jameel, and CULTURUNNERS. The Lab is the first major initiative of its kind to be supported by WHO.

For more information, visit: jameelartshealthlab.org

ABOUT SCOTTISH BALLET:

Scottish Ballet, founded in 1969, is Scotland's national dance company. Based in Glasgow, the company performs regularly across Scotland, throughout the UK and internationally - promoting Scotland's pioneering spirit far and wide. Scottish Ballet is a National Centre for Dance Health delivering specialised programmes for those living with dementia, Parkinson's, MS and Long Covid. Under CEO/Artistic Director Christopher Hampson, Scottish Ballet presents bold, adventurous performances rooted in strong classical technique, accompanied by the Scottish Ballet Orchestra. The company's broad repertoire includes new versions of the classics and ground-breaking commissions, both on stage and screen. Scottish Ballet runs an extensive engagement programme, tailored to the needs of diverse communities, promoting confidence, fostering wellbeing, and encouraging creativity through dance. Scottish Ballet is funded by the Scottish Government. Scottish Ballet's dance health programme has been made possible by the generous support of Scottish Government, Baillie Gifford (Scottish Ballet's Neurological Dance Health partner), trusts, foundations, Rose Fund, Sue & Graeme Sloan, and our patrons.

For more information, visit: scottishballet.co.uk