

# Meet our Arts Psychotherapies service

## 5 things you may not know about Arts Psychotherapists

1. They are registered with the Health and Care Professional Council (HCPC)
2. They hold 'dual status' as Psychological Professionals and Allied Health Professionals
3. All of our Arts Psychotherapists are trained in Mentalisation Based Treatment (MBT) which is a gold standard treatment model for people with a Personality Disorder diagnosis
4. They are hosted by the Royal Edinburgh and Associated Service (REAS) but provide services to all of our Health and Social Care Partnerships
5. Our Arts Psychotherapies team are one of the top five most developed and efficient services in the UK working across the full age range



The Arts Psychotherapies Service at NHS Lothian offers accessible, arts-based psychological treatments that help individuals navigate emotional distress and build healthier relationships with themselves and others.

Our service works primarily within Secondary Care, supporting people experiencing severe mental distress and complex challenges such as emotional dysregulation, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidality. The team brings together three psychological professions: Art Therapy, Music Therapy, and Drama therapy, delivered by HCPC-registered therapists.

### Listening to patients

Over 18 months, we gathered 160 feedback forms from patients across Adult Inpatient Services, Community Mental Health, and CAMHS. The results were clear: Arts Psychotherapies make a measurable difference.

Patients reported improvements in:

- Emotional Regulation – Learning to better understand and manage emotions
- Confidence – Feeling more self-assured in daily life
- Behavioural Change – Adopting healthier coping strategies
- Social Connection – Building trust and relationships
- Self-Insight – Understanding themselves and their condition
- Coping Skills – Developing tools for everyday challenges
- Self-Expression – Communicating thoughts and feelings through creative mediums

### Meeting unseen needs

Arts Psychotherapies help people address emotional and relational needs that often go unspoken by engaging them in a therapeutic process through the use of art or music as well as speaking. By focusing on relational health, we help patients feel connected and supported, reducing missed appointments and health inequalities. This approach enables patients to engage more actively in their recovery journey and maintain progress beyond acute care.

### Our teams in action

From just seven therapists a decade ago, we've grown to around 40. This expansion reflects the increasing demand for innovative, relational approaches to mental health care.



### CAMHS

Working across Tier 3 and Tier 4 services, supporting children and young people experiencing significant mental health challenges, we offer treatments with a strong focus on family engagement in therapeutic outcomes.



### Adult inpatient

Our Inpatient Team provides psychological therapy for patients with complex emotional needs, or cognitive and neurological challenges. Through individual and open group sessions, our team contributes to patient assessment and distress reduction during hospital stays, improving relational capacity for life beyond inpatient care.

### Community mental health

Our Community Team works within Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) across the Lothians, as well as speciality Eating Disorders and Forensics services. They deliver psychological therapies for adults living at home experiencing significant mental distress, connecting them with care in their communities.

# From the archive: The evolution of Red Dot Radio



## Broadcasting to patients at the Western General Hospital and the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Red Dot Radio has been a comforting presence for decades.

Its roots go back to the Forth Radio Network, founded in 1960 with a simple but powerful mission: to bring music, companionship, and a sense of normality to patients during their hospital stay.

The Lothian Health Services Archive team have received material from the station, which includes publicity material and photographs, as well as cd's containing the radio shows broadcast by Red Dot and its predecessors from 1962 to 2022. In addition to these objects and CDs, they received interviews with the station's Chairman, Malcolm Kirby.

In his most recent interview, Malcolm reflects on his involvement with the station and covers his initial motivations to join the former Forth Radio in his days as an Electrical Engineering student in 1969.

He talks in detail about what a typical day in the studio entails, starting with a visit to the wards to ask for song requests and all the preparation involved before the show goes on air. In addition to this, Malcolm recalls the COVID-19 pandemic, which only disrupted the radio show for a short period of time, as the team were broadcasting remotely with only Malcolm himself going around the wards a few times per week to collect requests. Later in the interview, he regards this experience as the most rewarding one of his over 50 years of work.

Malcolm said: "Before COVID we were hard wired so you could only listen at the bed side. As I continued to visit the wards post-pandemic, there were fewer



and fewer patients. So we thought we are going to have to do something and that's when we got ourselves sorted out so we could broadcast online. There was a fair bit of work in the background so we could get all that working and then we came back at the beginning of May.

**"For three months during the pandemic, we were broadcasting from home with a remote link in to the studio – I think that is probably my proudest moment, that we kept going throughout."**

With an initial interest in the technical side of the project, Malcolm refers to the enjoyment that interacting with hospital patients brings to all members of the team as one of the key aspects that keeps him involved. When asked about the reaction from patients Malcolm said: "They love it. We've had so many letters, emails, posts on Facebook, saying how much of a difference we make to their lives. The ones who do listen tend to listen for quite a long time. We have a number of patients who've kept listening after they've left hospital... The general feeling is it's something to look forward to."

Since 1962, Red Dot Radio has grown a record collection consisting of c.15,000 singles, c.12,000 LPs, c.10,000 CDs, and a large number of MP3 tracks that they are still adding to. Out of this huge selection of music, the song that made it to the number one spot on their most requested list in 2024 was Sunshine on Leith by the Proclaimers!

