

A celebration of creativity in dementia and the community launches this month. Kate Parkin from creative ageing charity Equal Arts talks about how Creative Age Challenge is making difference to participants and cultural venues.

We're getting very excited here at Equal Arts as we launch [Creative Age Challenge 2018](#), an innovative campaign raising awareness and funds for dementia-friendly creative opportunities.

We've had a great response from organisations, keen to highlight the benefits creativity can bring to those living with dementia.

For the past year through [Creative Age](#) we've been supporting schools, cultural venues, museums and libraries to celebrate creativity in dementia and the community.

Anne Walton regularly attended these sessions at the [Arts Centre Washington](#) with her husband Reg after he received a dementia diagnosis.

She said: "We are 12 ordinary people brought together by dementia. It was for my husband and me an opportunity to be able to spend time together on an equal footing, being creative, concentrating and having fun. Not looking back, not looking forward just being in the here and now.

"Creative Age gave my husband so much and really improved the quality of our lives together giving us a place where the emphasis was on just being creative."

From June 2 – June 10 cultural venues signed up to the challenge campaign will showcase and celebrate the creative talents of people living with dementia, their families and carers.



Rachel Groves is learning and engagement officer at [National Glass Centre](#), Sunderland. Since 2016 they have run a successful Creative Age group. She said: "It's been a huge success for everyone involved. The high quality artist-led sessions provide stimulating and involving creative workshop which immerse participants in the making process. The

challenge events in particular has spread awareness and brought support from across departments.”

Many of the events in Creative Age Challenge 2018 will raise funding through sponsored artistic challenges to support the continuation of dementia-friendly programmes.

It's fantastic to have onboard organisations from across the UK as well as museums in Tuscany, Italy.

Helping launch the campaign will be our digital 100 Word Story Chain Challenge.

Created by older people living with dementia and working with professional writer, David Napthine, the story chain will be open to the public from June 2 until June 30. People are encouraged to develop the online tale and its characters inspired by set images and on the last paragraph they see.

The 100 Word Story Chain Challenge is open to all and will be promoted through Gateshead Library and The Word in South Shields, New Writing North Cuckoos Writing Groups and Family Explorers North East. To be part of it visit <https://www.equalarts.org.uk/story-chain>

This year's Creative Age Challenges will include:



- Arts Centre Washington's Creative Age group, Singing in the Rain, creating a large textile banner to reflect the thoughts of the group on creativity and their neighbourhood. The group have also created a collective piece of permanent artwork for the arts centre which will be previewed at the centre on June 8.
- [The Hatton Gallery](#), Newcastle, are working on a postal art exchange between the gallery's Creative Age participants and the 'In the Moment' group at [Abbot Hall](#) in Kendal. They'll be creating postcard sized artworks inspired by the Kirt Schwitters collections and the Merz Bahn Wall connection between the Lake District and Newcastle. Participants from each venue, including schools and gallery groups, are welcome to use collage, printmaking, and paint to create and post their Schwitters interpretations. Postcards will be sponsored per mile travelled. The next session, open to all, will be held at the Hatton Gallery on Thursday, June 7, from 2pm – 4pm.
- The Drawn Together dementia-friendly group at [The Customs House](#) in South Shields have set themselves the target of creating 500 circular drawings which will be exhibited in their gallery space from June 2.
- The Dolphin Project at [An Talla Solais](#) in Ullapool will be creating A Shoal of Silver Darlings inspired by the herring trade associated with the Scottish coastline. They aim to create a shoal of fish and associated artworks including tea towels and greetings cards which can be sold at a market stall at the annual Round the Pier Day

in Ullapool. The project will commence in June with the final Round the Pier exhibition and sales taking place on July 14.

- In association with Creative Age Challenge, Chichester Festival Theatre is joining with arts venues across the UK to run a week of creativity and community from June – June 9. A range of events, including free dementia and family-friendly activities will be on offer, including an [Ageless Singing](#) session and a community poetry writing event for all ages.

To get involved or attend the events listed please contact Kate Parkin, Creative Age Programme Manager, kate@equalarts.org.uk or contact each venue and project directly.