

Annual report 2025/26



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Welcome from our Chair

It is a pleasure to look back over the past year and to share some of what has been done for the profession. BAAT is a community of practitioners and our shared work aims to support and empower you, wherever you practice in the UK. More than 180 of you volunteer for BAAT – taking on roles as SIG/ regional group coordinators, on the journal, or as representatives. This work is ably supported and enabled by our hard-working staff team. Thank you all for the part you play in shaping this community!

While the pandemic was difficult for everyone, the subsequent years continued to be tumultuous internationally, with political unrest, wars, and the resulting financial pressures increasingly impacting everyone's daily life. We know that the people we support are under more and more pressure too. There is much to do, so please do get involved.

Over the past six years, I've placed your voices at the heart of our work, using monthly drop-ins and visits to Scotland, NI and Wales to listen to you. We've worked on some important resources, which involved many of you, service-users, employers, and colleagues across drama and music therapy. These have

raised awareness of our profession and its impact on people's lives, consolidated our curriculum and the resources needed by our educators and art therapy trainees, and developed a career framework for art, drama and music therapy.

Thank you for sharing your time, questions, ideas, and passion for art therapy with me. Being Chair has been a challenging role, but worthwhile. Thanks also to the staff team, who support our members and the work of the Board with such care. In March we acknowledged the role Gary Fereday had played in his five years as CEO, and in April we welcomed Samantha Barber. I know that Sam, the current Board, and those joining at this AGM have the skills and experience needed to make a real difference – for you and for those you support. As Ex-officio Chair, I'll be pleased to support and encourage them as they plan the path that lies ahead with you.

Claire Louise Vaculik

Claire Vaculik



Welcome from our Chief Executive

As I write this introduction, I have been a part of BAAT for a few short weeks, and I have learned so much about this vital community. The work you do with people in vulnerable circumstances across a hugely diverse range of settings has a positive impact on lives. I want to thank you for all you do.

I have also learned about the role that BAAT plays in the profession – and I mean the whole of BAAT from Council members to SIG and Regional Coordinators, to volunteer representatives and, of course, the staff team – everyone contributes to ensuring that you can practice art therapy professionally, in line with best practice and with the information and support you need.

BAAT raises awareness of your profession through representation at key meetings and through collaboration and participation in meetings convened by decision makers in the healthcare system, and with our allied healthcare professions. Being visible is, and will continue to be, important as the implementation of the NHS 10 Year Plan and other major policies continue.

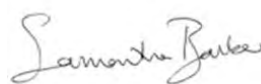
As always, your needs are our focus, so in 2026, we will review the memberzone and other parts of our offer to members, continue to participate in

policy and public affairs, establish a clear process for developing the professional guidance we know you find so useful, and review our professional development offer to ensure it continues to meet your needs within an evolving healthcare system.

In addition, and as you would expect, there are a couple of priorities that will ensure that BAAT runs smoothly and efficiently. One is to review the governance between all the parts of BAAT, making sure they dovetail together. The other is to change our head office accommodation, so that it aligns with our current needs.

The landscape in which we all work is changing. Some of the structures, institutions and frameworks within which we operate are transforming, in ways about which I am sure we have our own opinions. Yet I know two things. First, we are always stronger working together, so do get involved. Second, art therapy is amazing and the positive impact it has on people's lives should not be underestimated.

Samantha Barber





Executive summary

2025/26 at a glance

Our strategic aims 2022 – 2027

We have five main overarching strategic themes that describe what we want to achieve in 2022 - 2027:



- Support, engage, understand, and reflect the views of our members.



- Promote and champion equality, diversity, and inclusion within the profession and within our professional networks.



- Ensure the efficacy of what art therapists / art psychotherapists do is understood, and drive research and innovation, and its dissemination.



- Be the clear and respected voice of the art therapy profession and develop opportunities for our members.



- Ensure the organisation and profession is well governed, inclusive, and sustainable.

Highlights of 2025

1. Developing art, drama, and music therapy for the future

We completed the NHS England-funded commission to develop art, drama, and music therapy for the future. As part of the project we published a clinical career development framework, a new core curriculum and a suite of videos promoting art therapy.



2. This is art therapy campaign

In September we launched the first of our new **This is art therapy** campaigns, starting with a focus on art therapy in hospices and end of life care. The campaign reached nearly 20,000 accounts on social media.



3. New self-study and masterclass courses

We expanded our CPD offer this year by launching masterclasses, which offer in-depth learning from experts in the field. We also launched our first self-study courses to offer affordable and professional development.



4. Art therapy and collaboration conference

We held our second in-person conference at the wonderful Wellcome Collection, this time on the theme of collaboration, which, as one of the presenters, Ali Coles, put it is the 'lifblood' of our profession.





5. Jason Wilsher-Mills MBE appointed as first ambassador

Jason is known for his vibrant work exploring disability, class, family, activism and popular culture. As an ambassador, Jason will support our public engagement campaigns and help raise awareness of the importance of creativity to our health and wellbeing, and the value of art therapists.

[▶ Read an interview with Jason](#)

I am really honoured to have been asked to be an ambassador for the British Association of Art Therapists. I self-medicate with what I do in my practice as an artist, so I understand how powerful art can be.



2025 in numbers

2 new self-study courses

4 free CPD webinars

39 events

400 enquiries answered monthly

50000 social media followers

217000 journal article downloads

3100 members

1:

Supporting members

I have always felt reassured by the knowledge that this invaluable organisation has been supporting me, nourishing me and can be relied on for help if necessary.

- Liz B, art therapist

Member engagement

We're developing how we engage with our members and the opportunities we offer.

In 2025 we:

- provided opportunities for **members to contribute to our strategies** through drop-in meetings and surveys
- held our **second in-person annual conference** to share knowledge and offer in-person connections.
- **engaged closely with members on our campaign promoting art therapy** in hospices to make sure we reflected their work and perspectives.

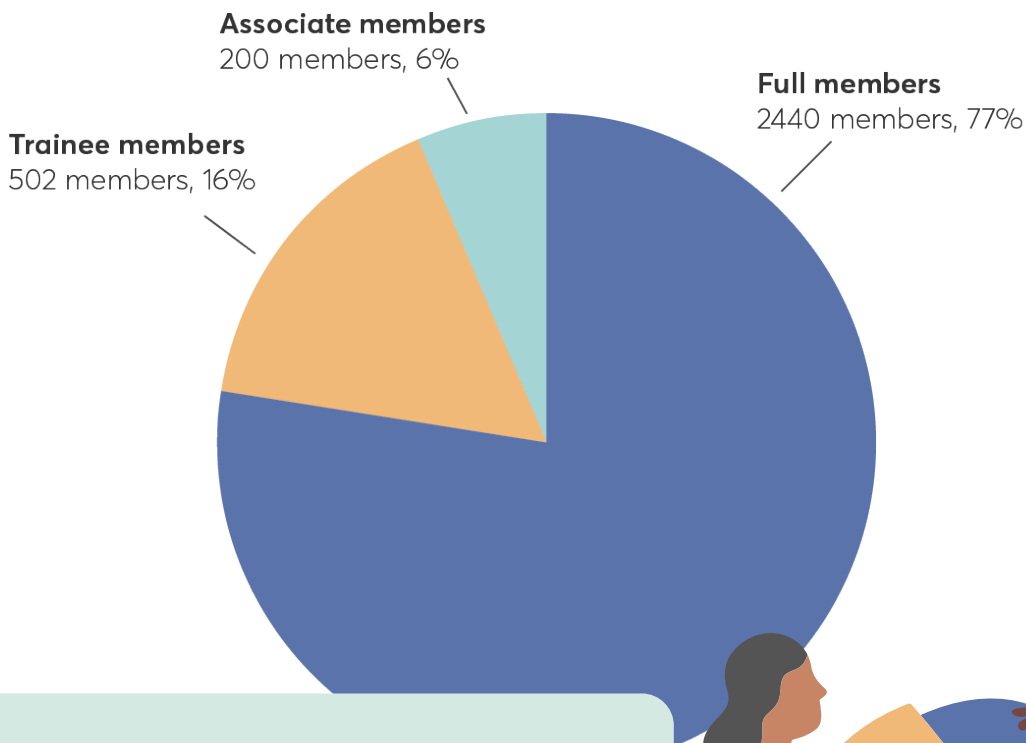


Membership

We're refining and tailoring our membership offer to improve our support.

In 2025 we:

- promoted the private practice of **700 of our members through *Find an art therapist*** helping more people access art therapists when they need them.
- **undertook a review of the memberzone** with members to help us improve our support and resources.



Membership types

The majority of our members are full members (they must be registered with the HCPC or retired art therapists). Trainees are the next biggest group, followed by associates. Associate membership is open to anyone interested in art therapy or international art therapists.



Training & CPD

We have expanded our training offer, with new masterclasses and self-study courses.

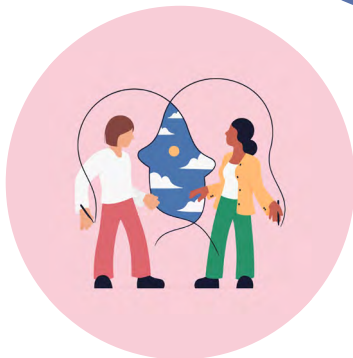
In 2025 we:

- ran four free CPD events for members to offer free career development opportunities.
- ran five brand-new courses to keep art therapists up-to-date with the latest development.



CPD courses

We offer a broad range of CPD courses on a wide range of topics, with new training courses offered every year.



New! Masterclasses

New in 2025, masterclasses are taught by **highly experienced** art therapists, to deepen your practice.



New! Self-study courses

Launched in 2025, you can now purchase two self-study courses for art therapists: **audio image recordings** and an introduction to **mentalisation**.



Supervision diploma

Our level 6 diploma in art therapy supervision runs every-other-year. It aims to equip learners with the knowledge and skills required to provide art-based supervision.

Supporting networks

We have continued to support special interest groups, with new groups being launched. Here are some highlights!

In 2025 we

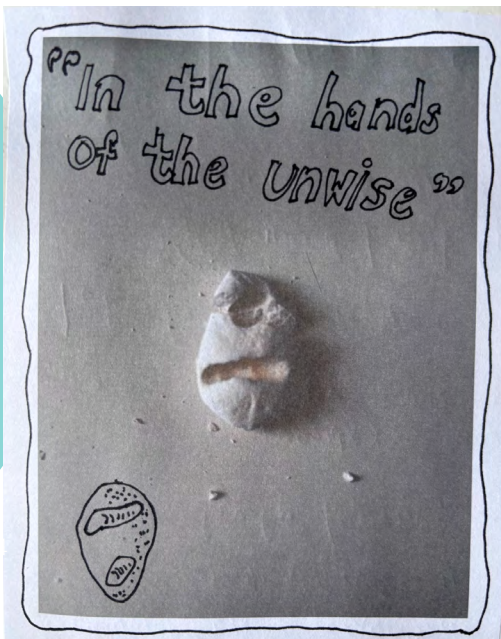
- **launched three new special interest groups** to support members in their practices, including LGBTQIA+ and nature-based art therapy.

Special interest & regional group highlights

Nature-based practice and climate change SIG

“ There have been many highlights from our first year of running this SIG, but a personal favourite has been experiencing the Climate Café run by Helen Omand and Anna Rickard which added art-making to the usual format for a Climate Cafe. For me, it really added to the reflection and processing that happened in the session.

Jenny Clarke, co-ordinator



Museum and Galleries Special Interest Group (MaG SIG)

“ We've had another active and productive year, bringing together practitioners working across museums, galleries, heritage sites, and cultural institutions.

We were pleased to see the Museum and Gallery protocol document we created to support therapists keen to work in this setting get the green light for publication. We were fortunate to have lots of different presenters both home-grown and international sharing their experience with the members.

Anne Stegmann, co-ordinator



Dual Experience SIG

// We had a charcoal drawing and information morning with Liz Atkin on body-focused repetitive behaviours, which was enlivening and interactive.

Raven Kaliana shared her work on puppetry and lived experience of child trafficking which members described as tender and deeply moving.

The group also contributes to the review committee of the IJAT, and are meeting soon to discuss responses to recent editions.

Alma McQuade & Louise Skehan, co-ordinators

Region 21 - Europe

// The group became active again in December 2025 and members are still responding to initial contacts with gratitude. The group met before Christmas and since then, the group have met for a networking evening and decided to connect with art therapy researchers and educators across the EU, starting with Ingrid Pénzes in the Netherlands and Mimmu Rankanen from Finland/ Norway. We intend to have more reflective art-making and networking.

Alma McQuade, co-ordinator

Region 19 - Scotland (Grampian, Shetland)

// Here at Region 19 we have held a monthly online Balint style supervision group. The aim of the group offers not only to reflect upon practice but also support each other. We also have a yearly eco-art day to create visual work and connect with each other.

John Newton, co-ordinator

Region 9 - Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottingham and Staffordshire

// We offered a reflective walk along the trails of Beacon Hill Country Park in Oct 2025, we looked out for vivid autumn colours, animals and shared our experiences of training, clinical practice and being human. We explored our response to the labyrinth within a twisting and turning shaded grove and searched for the local prominent sculptures of the Axe Man and the Rock Face. We offered an in-person, natural space to be together and we hope to offer more of these walks in the future.

Adele Luca Del Giudici & Rhiannon Creese, co-ordinators



Professional advice

We provide support and advice on your membership and your clinical practice.

In 2025 we:

- **gave clinical advice to approximately 16 members a month** on complex clinical issues, including on changes to adoption support funding.
- **co-published the clinical career development framework** to support art, drama and music therapists at different stages in their careers.
- **started a review of our supervision guidelines** using a new process with members to make sure a diverse range of experiences and perspectives are included.

FAQs for members

Need advice or help quickly? See if we have an answer to your question in our FAQs.

New professional advisor, Rosie Creer appointed

In 2025, we appointed Rosie Creer as the association's new professional advisor. Rosie brings extensive experience in clinical leadership and frontline art therapy practice.

New pre-registration education advisor

Blanka Hubena, an experienced art therapist, higher education leader and researcher has been working as a consultant advisor to offer advice and guidance on pre-registration.



▶ If you have a problem, suggestion or need advice, you can email: hello@baat.org

We can offer advice on clinical issues, but we are not a trade union.

Art therapist awards 2025

Our awards recognise the outstanding contributions made by art therapists across the UK.



Innovation

Cath Wakeman OBE was awarded the *Innovation* award for her work founding Imara, a Nottingham-based charity supporting children and families affected by sexual and domestic abuse.

// I would like to thank the children, young people and families who I have met and worked with at Imara, they are the people who have provided the ideas that have led our work and our development at Imara.

Lifetime achievement award

Eileen McCourt was awarded our *Lifetime achievement award*. Eileen has made a significant and widely-recognised contribution to the advancement of the profession over a career spanning nearly 40 years.



Anti-oppressive art therapy

Lillian Shipton and Heather Dimarco received the *Inclusive and anti-oppressive practice award* for their work at Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre, where they facilitate art therapy groups for survivors of sexual violence.

// It is my privilege to be alongside the clients we support, and this award is a testament of the bravery and courage shown by each and every group member.

- Heather Dimarco

Maintaining inclusive and anti-oppressive practice is central to creating safety for all service users.

- Lillian Shipton

2:

Equality, diversity and inclusion



Maintaining inclusive and anti-oppressive practice is central to creating safety for all service users.

Lillian Shipton, art therapist and awardee for
Inclusive & anti-oppressive art therapy

We are committed to creating a more diverse and inclusive culture in the art therapy profession.

In 2025 we:

- provided **three scholarships for our supervision diploma** to support art therapists from underrepresented groups to enable them to develop their art therapy career.
- held our **second award for inclusive and anti-oppressive practice** for art therapists to promote and advance anti-oppressive art therapy practice.
- made further steps to become **a disability confident employer**, including providing work shadowing experience.
- commissioned **British Sign Language translations** of two videos promoting art therapy to make information on art therapy more accessible to the deaf community.

We acknowledge we still have a lot of work to do. Structural inequality, oppression and discrimination have a huge impact on our society and within our small profession. If you have ideas for our equality, diversity and inclusion work get in touch.

▶ Email hello@baat.org



BSL translation by Rubbena Aurangzeb-Tariq

3:

Research and innovation



**Art therapy is a place where
you do art about your feelings**

Child, aged 7, quoted in McDonald, A.,
Holtum, S., & Drey, N. S. J. (2019)

Driving research and innovation

We publish a leading art therapy journal, and offer research advice to support high-quality research and clinical innovation.

In 2025 we:

- published **35 articles in our journal**, the *International Journal of Therapy*, including a special issue on nature-based art therapy.
- made our **research clinics more accessible with 16 appointments across the year** (previously 4 set days). The clinics offer full members time with our experienced Research Officer to develop their research projects.
- ran our **annual free peer reviewer training** to encourage more art therapists to become peer reviewers and support our journal.

- shared **research career opportunities, funding opportunities and sources of support** for developing funding bids in the monthly Bulletin.
- ran our **Innovation award** for the second year to recognise, promote and drive innovation in art therapy practice.
- published **articles on routes into research in our magazine**, InSight, including on research internships, peer reviewing and NIHR pathways to encourage our members to consider careers or professional development in research.



Raising awareness

We're working to increase awareness of art therapy research.

In 2025 we:

- increased the article views of the *International Journal of Art Therapy* by **30% to over 217,000 downloads.**
- **published three more research evidence webpages** for art therapy and why it might be helpful for different groups of people.
- moved our journal's social media account to LinkedIn (previously on X/Twitter) to reach a professional audience with nearly **1000 followers so far.**

- ran the *This is art therapy* campaign with clear messages, highlighting the research evidence for art therapy.

Evidence pages

You can find our published evidence pages on our website:

[Cancer](#)

[End of life care](#)

[Primary schools](#)

[Psychosis](#)

[Self-harm](#)



International Journal of Art Therapy

The *International Journal of Art Therapy* (IJAT) is our official academic journal, and a leading publication of art therapy literature.

▶ [Visit the journal](#)



It's been inspiring to see such diversity and innovation among the 2025/26 early career researcher and new practitioner prize winners and runners up; a promising sign for the future of art therapy. We look forward to celebrating and sharing more about their work at BAAT's annual conference in November 2026.

- Zoe Moula, Editor-in-Chief, IJAT

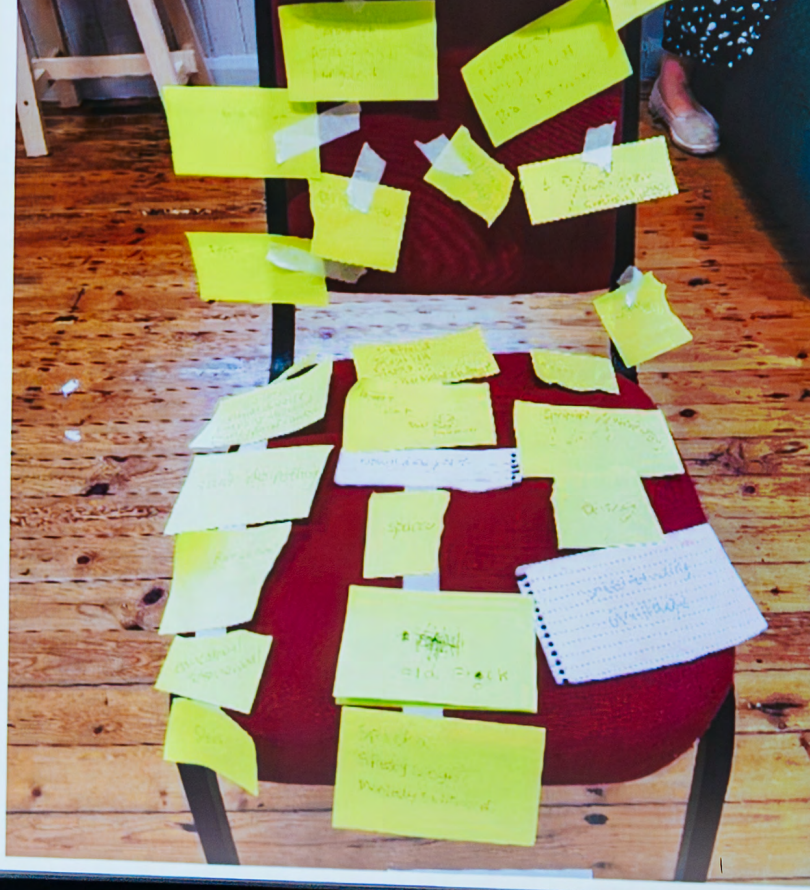
Top articles in 2025

In case you missed them, our most popular articles in 2025 were:

- ▶ [Art therapy for children and adolescents with autism: a systematic review](#)
- ▶ [Art therapy with an autistic person with learning disabilities](#)
- ▶ [An exploration of the role of mess-making in art psychotherapy](#)

Cover art: '(Dis)Intergration 2' by Simon Reekie





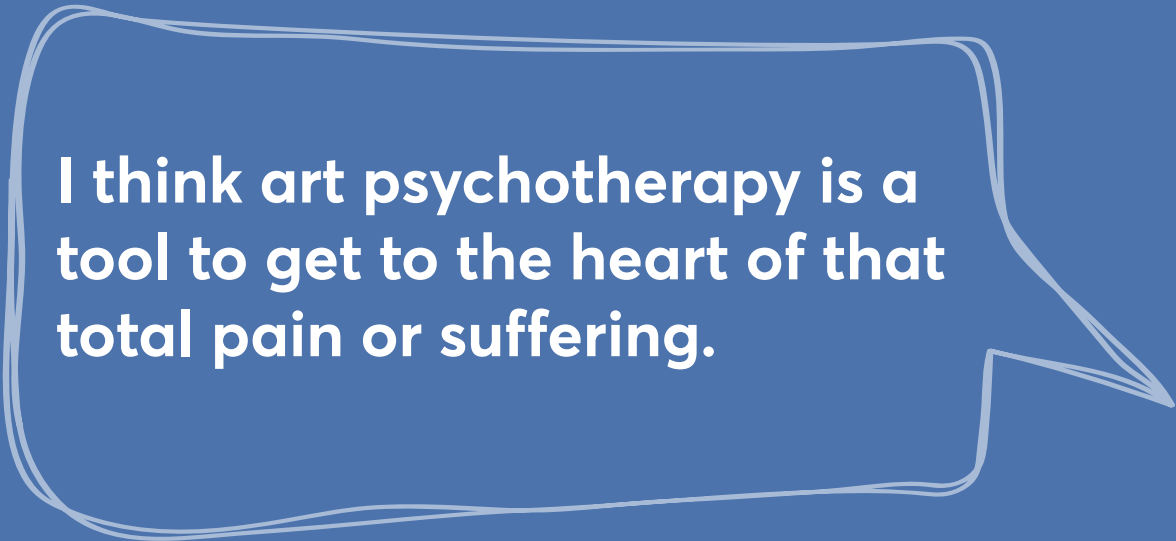
Our annual conference in 2025: Art therapy and collaboration

One hundred and fifty delegates in the packed auditorium were joined by 70 online to hear a range of speakers including the internationally renowned artist, Claudy Jongstra, and art therapist and researcher Nicki Power and the Lawnmowers Theatre company. Feedback was very positive and planning for the 2026 conference has now started.



4:

The voice of the profession



I think art psychotherapy is a tool to get to the heart of that total pain or suffering.

Dr Ros Taylor MBE, Medical Director, Harlington Hospice

Influencing decision makers

We have been building our campaigning capacity to promote the benefit of art therapy.

In 2025 we:

- launched ***This is art therapy***, our ongoing campaign to promote the power of art therapy, with a focus on hospices.
- responded to consultations on the **NHS' workforce plan** to ensure art therapy is considered in national policies.

Promoting art therapy - resources for art therapists

We have created a page with useful resources for art therapists to advocate for their work and the value of art therapy.

You can also find videos on our YouTube channel, content on our social media, and more articles in InSight.

▶ **Visit resources**



This is art therapy

In 2025, we launched a UK-wide campaign to promote art therapy starting with hospices.

Hospices are facing increasing challenges, including financial pressure on services, staff burnout and moving care to the community.

Through the campaign, we showed how art therapy can support hospices in facing some of these challenges.

We did this by:

- launching a digital campaign and suite of resources reaching nearly **20,000 social media accounts**.
- using a respected hospice leader in the sector as an advocate, reaching **over 7000 people with their message**.
- engaging nearly **20 hospices** and associations across the UK in the campaign.
- following up opportunities with **Hospice UK** to reach more hospice leaders.



Our voice online

We're building our online profile to be the trusted voice on art therapy in the UK and beyond.

In 2025 we:

- increased our followers on social media to over **50,000 people (an increase of 17%)** to reach more people with the benefits of art therapy and what we do.
- received **500,000 views on our website** from 70,000 users, as a go-to source for trustworthy information on art therapy.
- reached nearly **10,000 users** with articles from our digital magazine, *InSight* on the impact of art therapy and showcasing leading figures in the field.





Cover art by Virginia

InSight

Top InSight articles in 2025

In case you missed them, the most popular articles we published in 2025 were:

- ▶ [Neurodiversity and art therapy](#)
- ▶ [Art therapist as protected title](#)
- ▶ [Working as an art therapist with people who experience psychosis](#)

Write an article for InSight

Find out how you can submit an article to InSight

- ▶ [Go to submission guidance](#)

Strategic aim 5:

Governance and sustainability

Our governance

We are governed by a Council, who are the Directors of the limited company. They are elected by full members at our annual general meeting.

The modernisation work that Council has been carrying out in recent years has taken a step further over the past year. After taking professional advice about governance and practice, Council developed a new framework – with roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes now clearer and easier for all involved to follow.

Governance documents

Our [Articles of Association](#) are the legal framework that constitutes the organisation and describe how we are governed.

These have been adopted and provide the structure that enables us to use our skills and expertise to deliver for members and to support the profession in our different roles.

Our Council

Claire Louise Vaculik,



Michele Wood



Sarah Challenger,
Council member



Melissa King
Council member



Jacqui McKoy-Lewens
Council member



Francesca Norouzi
Council member



Catherine Stevens,
Council member



Simi Warah
Council member



Blanka Hubena
Pre-registration
education advisor



Daniel Regan
Equality, diversity
& inclusion advisor



**Professor
Diane Waller OBE**
Honorary president



**Advisor
roles**

Our staff team

Samantha Barber
Interim Chief
Executive Officer



Dr Abimbola Badiora
Finance manager



Alex McDonald
Professional
development &
comms manager



Amy Collins
Events officer
(part time)



Daniella Robbins
Events officer
(part time)



Federica Tomasi
Administrative
officer



Kate Peel
Operations manager
(part time)



Kat Starczewski
Senior digital
comms officer
(part time)



Lucy Witcomb
Events officer
(maternity cover,
part time)



Louise Nazir
Membership services
manager



Rosie Creer
Professional advisor
(part time)



Dr Sue Holttum
Research officer
(part time)



Across the four nations

BAAT Alba/Scotland, BAAT Tuaisceart Éireann/Northern Ireland and **BAAT Cymru/Wales** work with members in each nation to support them and promote art therapy in a way that meets each nation's specific context.

This is under the oversight of Council, which oversees our UK-wide strategy

and has ultimate responsibility for the association. Council has indicated that work now needs to be done to ensure that members in England also have the means to feed into national issues.

BAAT Tuaisceart Éireann /Northern Ireland

Chair: Clare Boyd

Highlights from 2025 include:

Eileen McCourt, BAAT NI Committee member, received the BAAT Lifetime Achievement Award for services to art therapy – such a well-deserved award!

We responded to multiple government departmental consultations and lobbying in person at Stormont events and meetings. Colleagues (image top left) attended an Allied Health Professionals Showcase event in Stormont.

Members attended a successful CPD day on 'The Sensory Studio: Adapting Art Therapy for Autistic People'. It was delivered by Claire Thompson with Clare Boyd providing a case study (image bottom left).

A group of our committee members presented at EFAT's International Conference. Our presentation was "highly rated and... selected by the Conference Committee." It showcased the long-standing core NI approach to art therapy: trauma-informed, client-led, relational practice, underpinned by sound governance and HCPC Standards.



BAAT Cymru/Wales

Sarah Challenger

Highlights from 2025 include:

In April a trip to Cardiff Gallery was arranged to see the Gwen John exhibit. It tells Gwen's story as it's never been told before, revealing new ways of seeing her life and art and celebrating an artist whose vision still feels strikingly modern today.

We held an exhibition stand at the launch of AHPF Cymru which was attended by several members of the Senedd (Welsh Government). It was a great opportunity to raise awareness of art therapy.

BAAT has been working with Health Education and Improvement Wales in creating a workforce plan for the first time. This has not yet been published.

The Welsh Arts Therapies Advisory Forum has been growing in strength over the last year. BAAT support and engage with WATAF which is a great benefit to its Welsh members as along with the connections it offers across the arts therapies modalities it also strengthens the relationship between Welsh Government and arts therapists in Wales.

BAAT Alba/Scotland

**Chairs: Alex Taneus-Miller and
Catriona Macinnes**

BAAT Scotland provides a member-led forum for the association to engage and support members in Scotland.

It helps ensure we understand the Scottish context and legislative frameworks and advises and supports our public affairs work. Scotland also has four regional groups that support members in the following regions: Clyde, Forth, Highlands and Western Isles, and Grampian and Shetland.

Temporibus autem deprecatam sunt fugit

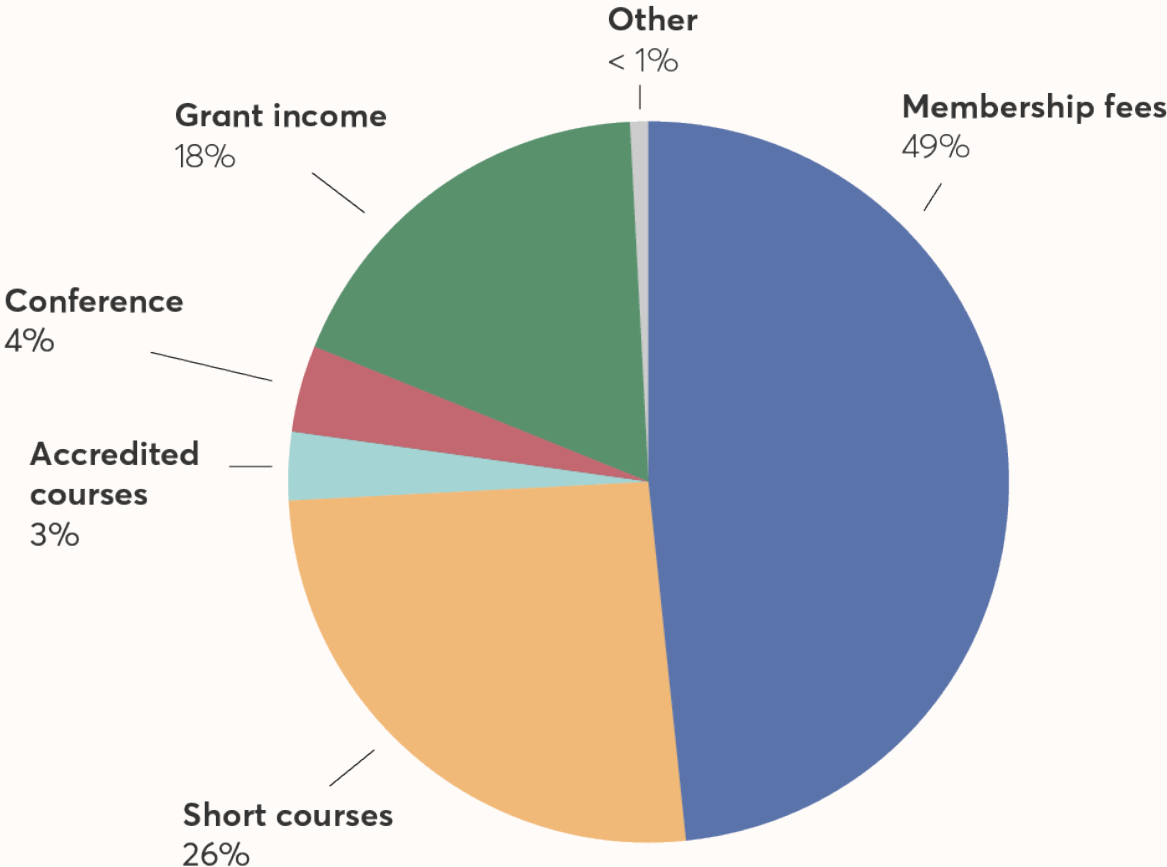


Our finances

As a non-profit, all our income goes back into the association to support members and develop the art therapy profession.

Income

In 2025, our biggest income was membership fees, followed by short courses and then a grant for the NHS England project.



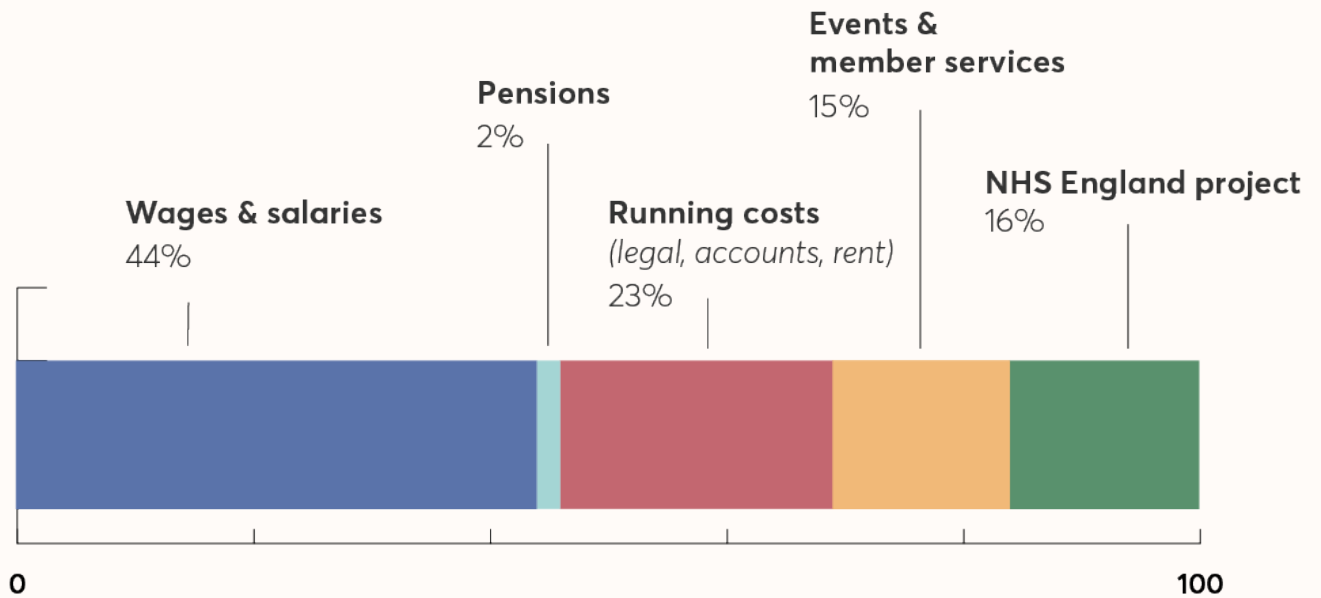
2025 income by percentage

Expenditure

In 2025, our biggest expense was staff costs, followed by running costs. The third biggest expense was then the NHS England project, which was funded by the grant from NHS England.

Full financial report

▶ You can view our full accounts on the government Companies House website website.



2025 expenditure by percentage

Thank you!

Thank you to those of you who serve in voluntary roles - supporting special interest groups, regional groups, peer reviewing articles for our journal, writing for InSight, and all of the other areas of our shared work as a community. Your efforts make such a difference to our profession and to those we support across the UK.

If you'd like to get more involved, please do get in touch!

▶ [Email hello@baat.org](mailto:hello@baat.org)



