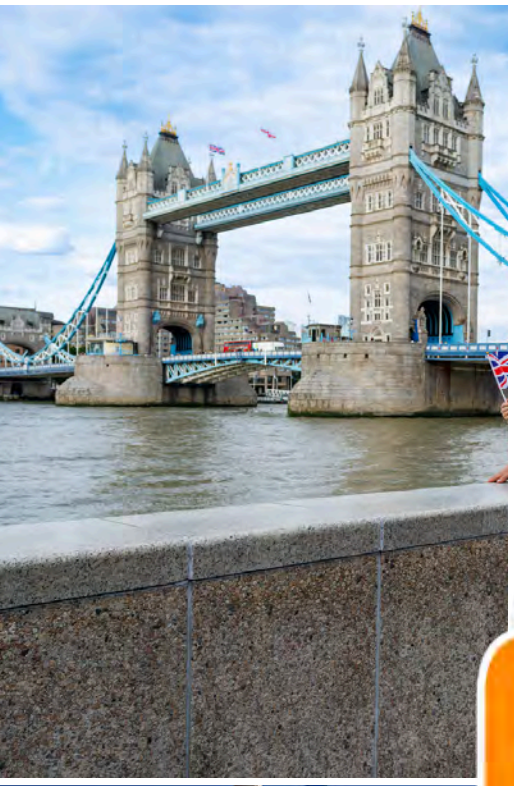
NAPA

Roots and **Routes**



A Toolkit for **Activity Providers & Care Teams**

NAPA YEAR OF CULTURE

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Foreword from Hilary Woodhead, Chief Executive of NAPA

I am delighted to introduce this Year of Culture 2026 activity resource pack, designed specifically for activity providers and care teams.

Culture is an essential part of the human experience. It shapes our identities, connects us with others and enhances our sense of belonging. In the context of care services, culture is a powerful tool for promoting wellbeing, enabling connection and celebrating diversity.

A person-centred approach to cultural activities is crucial for supporting everyone's unique identity. When activities are inclusive, they reflect the diversity and individuality of each person's culture, preferences and life experiences.

This pack provides practical, adaptable activity ideas that celebrate culture in all its forms, from food and music to personal heritage, spirituality and family traditions.

By working collaboratively with your team, families and community partners, you can create meaningful activities that honour everyone's cultural identity and build an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Through these activities we hope to encourage reflection, connection and wellbeing for everyone in your care.

Thank you for your dedication to enhancing the lives of the people you support.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER NAPA

Hilary Woodhead

NAPA CULTURE

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Introduction – Roots and Routes

The NAPA Year of Culture 2026 invites every care service to celebrate culture in all its forms.

Roots are the histories, traditions, foodways, faith, languages and symbols that anchor each person. Routes are the journeys we have taken including migration, work, school, service, holidays and festivals and the paths that still connect us to others.

Celebrating both Roots and Routes helps to:

- Reflect on identity and heritage
- Connect with peers, staff, family and community
- Express themselves creatively
- Improve wellbeing through inclusion and recognition

How to Use this Pack

1. Co-discover Roots by asking individuals about their life stories, traditions, food, music and meaningful places.
2. Map the Routes by displaying journeys with maps, timelines, playlists, recipe walls and photo trails.
3. Co-produce Activities by choosing from the activity ideas and adapting them for all abilities.
4. Evidence the Impact by using the logs and feedback sheets provided to show outcomes.
5. Share the Route by hosting mini-exhibitions, creating a You Said / We Did board and involving families and partners.

Inclusion Charter

Offer choice and voice including group sessions, one-to-one, quiet, sensory-friendly and faith-appropriate options.
• Provide accessible formats including large print (minimum 16 to 18 point), audio versions, tactile materials, captions and subtitles.
• Use assistive technology such as tablets with zoom or screen readers and vibration speakers for rhythm.
• Provide cognitive support with shorter sessions, clear steps, repetition and visual cues.
• Ensure cultural safety by asking rather than assuming about dietary laws, prayer times, modesty and language.
• Always seek consent for photos, displays and sharing personal stories.
• Manage risks carefully by checking allergens, monitoring fatigue and adapting tasks so everyone can participate safely.

Planning at a Glance

Weekly rhythm suggestions:
Monday – Stories and Maps
Tuesday – Food and Family Table
Wednesday – Art and Making
Thursday – Music and Dance
Friday – Local Heritage and Community

Evidence prompts for each session: What was planned? Who joined? What changed for them? What will we do next?

Activity Ideas

Roots and Routes: Migration Stories

Description
Residents explore personal or family migration stories using maps, timelines and memorabilia to reflect on heritage and journeys.

You will need:

- Tablets or computers with internet access
- Access to online archives or census data
- Printed or digital maps or timeline tools
- Photos, letters and family memorabilia
- Art and craft supplies for collages or family trees

What you do

- Introduce the idea of migration and why it shapes culture.
- Invite individuals to share their own or family stories.
- Plot journeys on maps or timelines either paper or digital.
- Ask families to email or video-call stories and photos.
- Create collages, family tree posters or annotated maps.
- Hold a Migration Stories afternoon where residents present or display their journeys.

Tastes of Tradition: A Cultural Cooking Experience

Description
Residents prepare dishes that represent cultural roots or treasured family recipes, sharing the memories behind them over a meal together.

You will need:

- Ingredients for chosen dishes taking account of dietary needs and allergies
- Cooking utensils, adaptive grips and aprons
- Printed or digital recipe cards
- Background music or stories about each dish's culture

What you do

- Co-select meaningful dishes with residents and families.
- Prepare ingredients together, giving everyone a safe task.
- Encourage reminiscence while the food is cooking.
- Share the meal as a social occasion.
- Display favourite recipes on a Family Table recipe wall.

Cultural Art and Craft: Creating Heritage Through Art

Description

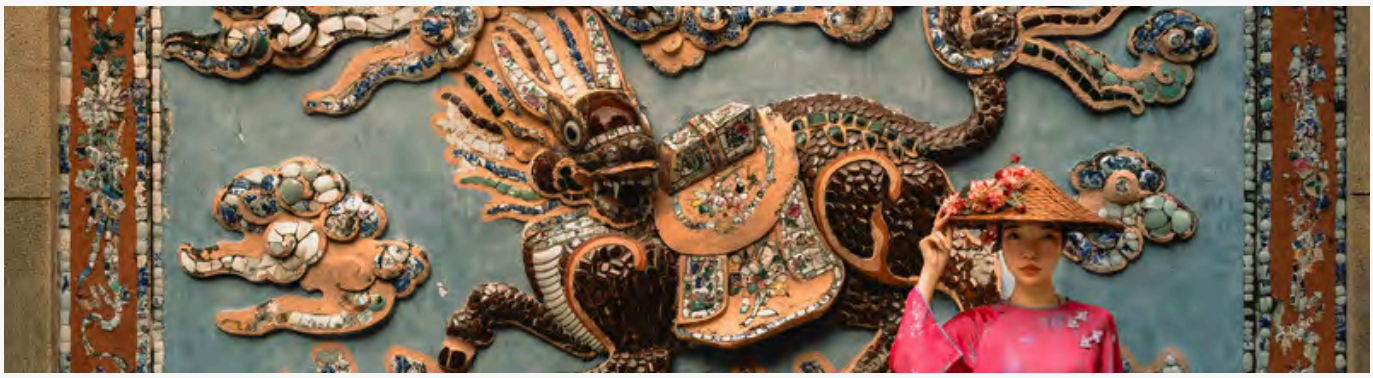
Individuals use colour, patterns, symbols or fabric to express their cultural heritage and identity.

You will need:

- Paints, pencils, markers, collage paper, fabrics, glue and scissors
- Examples of cultural motifs such as Celtic knots, Adinkra or rangoli
- Templates or stencils if helpful
- Display board or mini-gallery space

What you do

- Show and discuss cultural symbols and their meanings.
- Support each resident to create an artwork or craft piece.
- Offer large-grip brushes, tactile media or step-by-step guidance as required.
- Mount finished work in a Cultural Art Gallery space.
- Invite each artist to share the story of their piece.



Cultural Music and Dance: Expressing Heritage Through Movement

Description

Celebrates the music and dance traditions that travel with people's life journeys using listening, rhythm, singing and seated dance.

You will need:

- Music player or speakers or a live musician if available
- A playlist of songs from individuals' own and world cultures
- Simple percussion such as tambourines, drums and shakers
- Chairs with arms for safe seated dance and optional scarves or ribbons

What you do

- Play each song and discuss the memories or meaning attached.
- Teach a simple chorus, rhythm or seated dance gesture or invite residents to demonstrate their own steps.
- Use scarves or ribbons for hand movement if mobility is limited.
- Hold an informal mini-performance for peers or visiting families.
- Reflect on how the music or dance connects to their identity.

Local History and Heritage: Exploring Community Roots

Description
Helps individuals to reconnect with stories of their local area such as streets, landmarks, workplaces and festivals to foster belonging.

You will need:

- Local history photo books, postcards, old maps and archive prints
- Internet device for virtual museum or archive tours
- Optional guest speaker such as a local historian or librarian
- Scrapbook or memory wall to record stories

What you do

- Share historic images or maps of the town, city or village.
- Invite residents to recall memories about these places.
- Record each story on a large Community Map board.
- Arrange a short virtual or physical visit to a museum or landmark.
- Display photos and memories as Our Town – Our Roots.

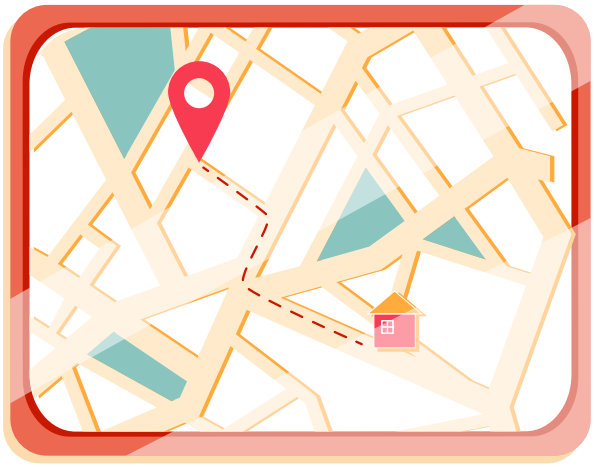
Story Suitcase

Description
A travelling storytelling kit of individuals' artefacts, photos, art and recipe cards for room-to-room or bedside visits.

You will need:
- A sturdy suitcase or decorated memory box
- Small personal objects with consent such as photos, textiles and recipe cards
- List of individuals who wish to share stories

What you do
- Invite each person to contribute one small object that represents their life story.
- Pack the suitcase carefully and label items.
- Take it around for five to ten minute pop-up storytelling visits.
- Note special quotes or memories to add into care plans.

Maps and Me Walks



Description
Creates safe walking or wheelchair routes indoors or in the garden, marked by meaningful places chosen by participants.

You will need:
- Printed signposts or photo-stops laminated with captions
- Hydration station and rest seating
- Staff or volunteer walk-buddies

What you do
- Work with individuals to name four to six stops such as hometowns, schools or favourite holiday spots.
- Place these along a corridor or garden loop.
- Offer guided walk-and-talk journeys or wheelchair tours.
- Pause at each stop to share stories or play a linked song.

Postcards from Home

Description
Families, friends and community members send postcards or photos of meaningful places to create a shared Wall of Routes.

You will need:
- Blank postcards or printable large-font templates
- Pens, stickers, stamps and display board or hanging line with pegs

What you do
- Ask families to post or email postcards of special places, recipes or sayings.
- Help individuals write or dictate cards in reply.
- Curate the postcards on a display wall, rotating new arrivals each month.
- Use them as conversation starters in small groups or one-to-one sessions.

Routes to Worship and Reflection

Description
Provides a quiet, multi-faith reflection corner or short visits from faith and community leaders for those who wish to practise or contemplate.

You will need:
- Calm space with chair or arm-rest, small table and LED tealights
- Prayer or poetry cards in several languages and faith-appropriate items
- Tablet or speaker for streamed services or meditative music

What you do
- Ask individuals and their families what spiritual or reflective practices support their wellbeing.
- Create a Roots and Routes Reflection Space that is welcoming to all faiths or none.
- Arrange optional visits from chaplains, elders or community representatives.
- Keep an easy-read timetable of quiet hours or services.

Culture in the Garden

Description
Plants herbs, flowers or vegetables from individuals' cultural traditions for sensory activity and for use in cooking or teas.

You will need:
- Raised planters, pots or window boxes
- Seedlings such as basil, coriander, mint, lavender or rosemary
- Watering cans, gloves and adaptive trowels
- Recipe or tea cards for harvested herbs

What you do
- Choose culturally meaningful plants with individuals.
- Plant and label them in accessible beds or pots.
- Hold short watering or tending sessions daily or weekly.
- Harvest herbs for Tastes of Tradition meals or herbal tea afternoons.

Routes on Wheels – Corridor Culture Trail

Description
Turns corridors or lounge walls into a mapped culture trail of photos, timelines and QR-coded audio stories.

You will need:
- Large printed maps, posters and historical or cultural photos
- Captions in large print and QR-code audio clips
- Chairs or listening benches along the trail

What you do
- Pick five to six display points along a corridor or lounge.
- Mount the visuals with captions and add QR audio for storytelling.
- Encourage individuals, staff and families to tour the trail in their own time.
- Refresh the display each season with new stories or photos.

Pen-Pal Routes – Intergenerational Links

Description
Pairs residents with school pupils, youth groups or overseas seniors to exchange letters, drawings or video postcards about where we come from.

You will need:
- Paper, envelopes and stamps or a secure email or video platform
- Safeguarding agreement with the partner organisation
- Volunteer or staff pen-pal coordinator

What you do
- Partner with a local school, scouts or heritage group.
- Match interested individuals with pen-pal buddies.
- Support them to write or dictate letters or record short audio or video greetings.
- Display incoming letters or artwork on a Pen-Pal Routes Wall and send replies regularly.

Monthly Theme Suggestions

January – New Beginnings: Migration Stories and Postcards
February – Languages of Love: Poems and Story Suitcase
March – Foodways: Tastes of Tradition and Culture in the Garden
April – Faith and Reflection: Routes to Worship
May – Maps and Journeys: Maps and Me Walks and Corridor Trail
June – Work and Journeys: Migration for work and uniforms or tools displays
July – Festivals and Parades: Music and Dance showcase
August – Seaside and Summers: Local Heritage memories
September – School Days: Pen-Pal Routes and intergenerational projects
October – Storytelling: Cultural Art Gallery and Story Suitcase tour
November – Remembrance and Resilience: Routes through challenge
December – Homecomings: Family table meals and inclusive winter traditions

Evidence and Evaluation Tools

- Participation and Wellbeing Log recording name, activity, mood before and after, adaptations used, a quote and any follow-up.
- Care plan insert: My Roots, My Routes, My Chosen Activities, What Helps Me Join In and How We Will Know It Helps.
- You Said / We Did Board to collect resident and family ideas and show how the service responded.

Safety and Consent Highlights

- Check food allergens and texture needs for all cooking or tasting sessions.
- Provide chairs with arms for dance or exercise, offer rests and ensure hydration.
- Seek consent for photos, displays and digital sharing.
- Supervise all volunteers, pen-pals and guest speakers.
- Offer an opt-out alternative for every activity.

Materials Checklist

- Tablets with chargers
- Speakers or headphones
- Large-print cards and bold markers
- Tactile collage kit
- Laminated maps and signs
- QR-code sheets
- Portable story suitcase
- Adaptive cooking and gardening tools
- Hydration trolley
- Recipe cards
- LED tealights for the reflection space

Closing Message

Roots and Routes celebrates the stories, skills, tastes, sounds and journeys that make each resident who they are.

By embedding these activities you will:
- Strengthen identity and belonging
- Offer inclusive joy every day
- Build evidence of person-centred practice for inspectors
- Create a truly welcoming cultural community in your service

How NAPA Supports You

The Year of Culture provides practical resources to help embed culture into care. Toolkits, case studies, training sessions and resources for celebrating cultural dates are all available.

NAPA also encourages teams to share their own experiences so that together we can build a national movement that celebrates culture in care.

NAPA National Activity Providers Association
SUPPORTLINE
supportline@napa-activities.co.uk

NAPA YEAR OF CULTURE

Conclusion

Culture shapes identity, creates joy and builds community. For people in care settings, access to culture is essential.

This includes everyday traditions, arts, heritage, local history, museums, galleries, libraries, archives, religion, spirituality and faith. It also includes celebrating diversity and ensuring inclusion.

NAPA

The Professional Association for Activity Providers and Activity Provision

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