



## Case studies: How can the arts and creativity support people who are shielding or vulnerable during Covid-19?

Generate  
Aspex  
South West England

### **Introduction**

Aspex has been running Generate, a weekly programme of art workshops for people with dementia and a self-led carers support group, since 2015.

The person-centred approach to our work means that we are able to support participants at all stages. We have developed a model which enables participants to work on their own projects, with tailored support and guidance, so everyone is working in a way which is appropriate to their interests and needs. No two participants are doing the same thing and each person is encouraged to develop their own distinct style. One challenge the participants often face is a realisation that they no longer have the same skills that they know they once had. Our way of working means we celebrate their current capabilities, rather than highlighting how their skills/functions have changed over time and reduces any possibility of comparison with each other, which could result in negative feelings.

Our workshop facilitators and therefore have built a trust and understanding with everyone in the group. Training in Dementia Awareness has been provided to all staff and volunteers, including those directly working on the project and general office and front of house staff.

### **Funders**

ACE Catalyst Evolve & The Rayne Foundation

### ***Who is it for?***

Our Generate project supports people with dementia and their Carers. Our focus is on people who are still living in the community and therefore at risk of social isolation. We have continued our project remotely and have noticed a shift of focus, having previously worked directly with people with dementia, our work remotely is more reliant on carers.

### ***What outcomes were/are you aiming for?***

*Our project has a focus of improving health and wellbeing and combatting loneliness*

### ***Where is it happening?***

Portsmouth/Hampshire

### ***Are you working in partnership?***

Our project isn't run in partnership with any other organisations, however it was established with NHS CCG funding in 2015 and has relied on partner organisations for the recruitment of participants. These include: Age UK, Alzheimers Society, Solent Mind & local NHS services.

***How many people took/are taking part?***

We usually have up to 12 people with dementia + carers participating at any one time.

***What were/are the main outputs?***

As well as our weekly workshop sessions, we normally host exhibitions of participant work, as well as celebration events and trips to other arts organisations – however, these have all had to stop for now. In place of this we are running weekly chats via WhatsApp and sharing of artworks digitally, we have posted materials to all our participants to enable working from home and we also offer telephone & post exchanges for those who do not have digital access.

***What have been the challenges and successes for you?***

Funding is always our greatest challenge and even more so in current times. Initially the recruitment of participants was a challenge, however now our project has such a good reputation and we have developed partnerships across the city, this is no longer an issue and we often have a waiting list.

**Further information**

Aspex is a unique visual arts and educational charity based in Portsmouth. Our mission is to support emerging artists and reveal the creative process. We believe in the fundamental right that everyone has to access the arts and the importance of this to our physical and emotional wellbeing. We create varied opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience contemporary visual art - from looking and discussing, to making and curating. Aspex employs 8 staff.

<https://www.aspex.org.uk/whats-on/participation/aspex-at-home-generate/>