

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

Project: Butterflies

Organisation: Creative Minds / Butterflies

Region: Yorkshire & Humber

Introduction

Butterflies is a registered charity. It provides a dementia and Alzheimer's project which has adapted its ways of working and practice through the Covid-19 pandemic.

- We provide a bank of 13 volunteers who make phone calls twice a week to approximately 10 members each. We offer support, a friendly voice, updates of events and general conversations
- We offer a book and activities distribution service to help keep them stimulated and occupied
- We offer a reconnect service now lockdown procedures are easing to try and eliminate isolation and promote engagement with friends following Government guidelines
- We work closely with Barnsley Museums, who distribute activity and reminiscent packs to all our members
- We work together with Qdos Creates to offer video links to indoor chair exercise, alongside drawing, creative and artistic sessions to our members
- We also email film clips of activities carried out in the previous year so they can reminisce over past outings with friends they have not seen for many months
- Butterflies is part of a dementia crisis line offering telephone support between the hours of 8pm and 12am, seven days a week. This is available for people with dementia and in particular their carers.



Image: Sandra and Jim receiving a carer's wellbeing pack. Butterflies/Creative Minds.

Funders

Creative Minds have co-funded this with Butterflies charity who have their own funding manager and other third sector funders including Coalfields Regen Trust, SYFCT Covid fund, Making Space, Barnsley Council, Ward Alliance Covid fund and Persimmons Homes Covid fund.

Who is it for?

The project focuses on working with Qdos Creates to engage people suffering with degenerative brain conditions alongside supporting their carers. The project includes online support with downloadable content such as projects to do at home (e.g. simple chair-based exercise yoga and more) and it also supplies arts and crafts materials and items to engage and occupy its members. The project finally supports people through calls, checking-in, medication pickups and basic personal care.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

We want to provide an overall package which includes physical and mental wellbeing for participants whilst also supporting their carers. We want to support the lonely, isolated and vulnerable members of our community to ensure they are not forgotten in the midst of a crisis period. The project also aims to ensure this group of people are kept up to date with guidelines set out by the Government, and that they are supported to fully understand the importance of the need to keep safe and well.

Where is it happening?

Barnsley, South Yorkshire

Are you working in partnership?

The project is delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including:

- NHS - regarding new online support, virtual diagnosis and working with frailty scales with regards to hospital entry
- Barnsley Council to carry out telephone support in out of office hours and weekends working with a bank of third sector dementia support groups within the Barnsley area CCG and commissioning groups.
- Butterflies offer twice weekly support telephone calls from a bank of 13 volunteers and session workers
- Butterflies working with Qdos Creates to develop and continue a provision of engaging and stimulating arts and health options
- Barnsley museums to provide reminiscence packs to distribute to members
- Local groups including Crossroads care agency to source opportunities for professional carers to be placed with our members in times of crisis during Covid-19 and continuing to offer personal care on a long-term basis
- Crossroads care and Age UK to distribute welfare packs to the homes of carers and people with dementia.

How many people took/are taking part?

Butterflies can engage with 100+ service users per week.

For how long has it been happening?

The charity has been running for approximately six years, however the Covid-19 element began in March 2020; which the charity now hope to continue as a recognised service.

What were/are the main outputs?

Online and downloadable content, doorstep deliveries leading back to face to face events when safe to do so. The aim is to reconnect participants to avoid social isolation whilst staying safe, following Government guidelines.

Feedback:

People we contact are extremely appreciative of the contact made and now enjoy lengthy conversations which often is the only link with other people. They are able to express any concerns and request help when needed after gaining the trust from the person making regular contact.

What have been the challenges and successes for you?

We are delighted in how the project has been received by our members/participants. All volunteers and service workers making this regular contact have gained excellent feedback from the persons they speak to, often getting remarks stating they are often the only link to the outside world.

The challenges we are now facing with this service is the lack of time we have due to the lengthy conversations held with their regular contacts. Many feel they can confide and express themselves more after becoming more confident confiding in their regular contact. The success of our service is proven by the lovely comments made and how participants are contacting the project to show how much they appreciate our calls.

The project has been very successful and there have been extremely challenging events and circumstances these have been met with a determined resolve. Any difficult situations have been used as learning milestones to help maintain good progress.

Further information

<https://fsd.barnsley.gov.uk/kb5/barnsley/fisd/service.page?id=Cl-nTuTe2p4>
www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/creative-minds/home
www.qdoscreates.com

Creative Minds is an award-winning charity hosted by South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SWYPFT). We develop and fund creative activities to support people with their mental health, wellbeing and recovery. Our initiatives cover arts, leisure, recreation and sports/physical activity. We work closely with SWYPFT services and our Creative Minds partners in the community to develop projects which benefit our public and staff. Since its launch in 2011, Creative Minds has enabled over 500 projects, facilitated over 100 sports events and benefits over 6,500 people per year. We have around 130 Creative Minds partner organisations from across all our localities in Barnsley, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.

Creative Minds is a linked charity hosted SWYPFT with 4 core workers, with the use of bank and sessional staff as required.