

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

Reaching young carers

Create

National (based in London)

Introduction

Create formed a partnership with The Honey Pot Children's Charity to reach out to increasing numbers of young carers who have been isolated during the coronavirus pandemic. We joined forces to bring online creative projects to dozens of young carers from England and Wales. The work began in Carers Week.

Four projects were planned initially over four weeks: photography, dance, music and drama. The workshops, which were run by our professional artists, gave the young carers respite from their everyday lives, boosted their self-esteem and creativity, and gave them a chance to connect with other young carers. Young carers are particularly vulnerable to depression and anxiety, especially during the lockdown, and creativity can provide them with a vital lifeline: a chance to express themselves, build skills and enhance self-esteem, aiding wellbeing.

"We've been having fun and learning how to play instruments. It has probably been the highlight of my quarantine. In quarantine, I don't normally get to see my friends. Just seeing other people and knowing they're all other young carers made me feel like it's not just me. Create helps young carers because these opportunities would normally cost a lot of money. If there's not much money and you only have money to pay the rent or the bills and get food for the week then you can't do it."



Create Chief Executive Nicky Goulder said: "We are so excited to be working with Honey Pot to reach new groups of young carers with the power of the creative arts. We have adapted quickly to the pandemic, and our online "Create Live!" workshops are proving incredibly successful at empowering, upskilling and bringing the joy of creativity to some of the most isolated children and adults in our society during lockdown. Young carers need us now more than ever, and we are delighted to be extending the reach of our work through this important new collaboration with Honey Pot, which are bringing young carers together at a time when they need this most."

Funders

The work was supported by Arts Council England's Emergency Response Fund

Who is it for?

One of seven key groups of participants that Create reaches is young carers. There are an estimated 800,000 young carers in the UK, and more than one third of them report that they suffer from mental health problems. In this instance, we formed a partnership with The Honey Pot Children's Charity to reach out to increasing numbers of young carers across England and Wales who have been isolated during the coronavirus pandemic.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

Run by Create's professional artists, the workshops gave the young carers respite from their caring responsibilities, boosted their confidence and creativity, and gave them a chance to connect with other young carers. They also built IT/technology skills, skills in the artform (eg: photography), teamwork, communication, social skills. The projects were designed to enable them to overcome feelings of loneliness, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, improving their sense of self-esteem and wellbeing.

Where is it happening?

Across England and Wales.

Are you working in partnership?

This project was delivered in partnership with The Honey Pot Children's Charity, which has a long-established and wide-reaching network of thousands of young carers, who they engage through much-loved respite breaks, digital inclusion outreach services and fun face-to-face outreach days. During its 24-year history, more than 20,000 young carers have benefited from Honey Pot's support services to date.

How many people took/are taking part?

47 young carers took part across four projects, from across England and Wales.

For how long has it been happening?

The project began on 9 June 2020. Three workshops took place in each week of June, covering four artforms: photography, dance, music and drama. A second run of projects is currently being scheduled for July and August.

What were/are the main outputs?

The young carers produced an online photography presentation/body of photographs; a dance performance; a music performance/music tracks; and a radio drama performance/recording.

Feedback:

One of the young carers who attended the music workshops said: "We've been having fun and learning how to play instruments. It has probably been the highlight of my quarantine. In quarantine, I don't normally get to see my friends. Just seeing other people and knowing they're all other young carers made me feel like it's not just me. Create helps young carers because these opportunities would normally cost a lot of money. If there's not much money and you only have money to pay the rent or the bills and get food for the week then you can't do it."

Steve Robinson, Operations Manager at Honeypot, said of the drama workshops: “The children were completely and actively engaged from start to finish, there was a great mix of drama, technique, writing, performance and other fun and games, and an excellent end product. Really an outstanding job, couldn’t fault it.”

Evaluation:

Staff and participants were asked to rate the success of the first sets of Create Live! in enabling the participants to develop a range of skills; and to appraise the success/enjoyment of the project overall. The key results are shown in the table below:

Participant skill development	Participant rating	Staff rating
Artform (e.g. music) skills	88%	100%
Communication	88%	100%
Confidence	88%	100%
Creativity	94%	100%
Digital / technology	100%	100%
Social skills	100%	100%
Teamwork	100%	100%
Wellbeing	88%	100%
Project overall	100%	100%

What have been the challenges and successes for you?

Successes: Achievements of the intended outcomes (See Q13 / Q14). The work has reduced young carers’ isolation; enabled them to build new skills / confidence; and give them a vital break from their caring responsibilities to have fun, enjoy being creative, meet new friends.

Challenges: Developing a new way of working that delivers high quality workshops across video conferencing; researching and updating safeguarding procedures to ensure all participants are kept safe at all times using a new delivery mechanism.

Further information

<https://createarts.org.uk/2020/06/create-partners-with-honeypot-to-empower-young-carers-during-lockdown/>

Create is the UK’s leading, multi-award-winning charity reducing isolation, empowering lives and enhancing wellbeing through the creative arts. Since 2003, it has run 10,138 collaborative, interactive creative workshops with 38,869 participants as part of sustained, inspiring programmes that use the power of creativity to bring people together, build skills, enhance wellbeing and enrich lives. In response to the COVID-19 lockdown, Create researched, developed, trialled and launched Create Live!. Via this new project concept, its professional artists deliver high quality, live, collaborative, interactive, creative workshops with groups of participants via an online platform that are fun, build skills and reduce isolation.