

Knitting Communities Together

A Leicester Community Wellbeing Project for Adults with Learning Disabilities

Evaluation Report



"I used to take stress home, but now I take my knitting"

Staff Participants from the Knitting Communities Together Project

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Little Bird SOS 

Supported by

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Introduction: project overview

The Knitting Communities Together (KCT) Project was funded by Leicester City Council Charnwood Ward to reduce the isolation of adults with profound learning disabilities, based in Day Care Centres, by enabling them to be part of the broader local community using a range of woolcraft skills.

The project took place over 12 weeks and began at 'The Little Bird SOS' (LBSOS) studio, continuing at 'Hastings Road Day Centre'. Weekly ninety minute sessions took place to develop staff skills in a variety of woolcrafts, along with discussion and community participation. This was followed by three sessions with service users in the Hastings Road Day Centre where good practice in engaging adults with profound learning disabilities was modelled and run by staff using the skills previously learned. With encouragement, staff made unsupported visits (with service users) to other community groups, using crafted items as gifts, to be generous and break down barriers. Staff developed the confidence to visit local factories and outlets to source free materials for craft work. The project concluded with a celebratory event which was attended by Cllr Newcombe, The Assistant Mayor of Leicester, Leicester Mercury and senior staff from Leicester City Council and project participants, including service users. The project grant was £1,166, with additional materials funding of £150 from Leicester City Council 'Access All Areas' funding. Additional time provided by LBSOS, including the celebratory event and follow up visits, were not funded. The cost of developing a large sensory blanket in the run up to this project was funded by LBSOS at a cost of £500.

Key project aims

- To enable staff to teach new skills to provide service users with new sensory experiences
- To extend the range and frequency of service users' engagement with their environment
- Develop the quality of service users' day to day experience by increasing engagement and community interaction
- To improve staff sense of wellbeing and to enhance their relationship with service users
- To leave a legacy of staff empowerment which would continue after the project was completed
- Improve the working environment for staff and service users
- Learn ways to obtain resources creatively and frugally
- To inform other projects.

Reason for the project: rationale

Woolcrafts, and craft in general, have experienced a revival, as 'meaning making' (Perry, 2013) becomes more appropriate and topical in a climate of recession and austerity. When people have less money and fewer resources, they tend to make things, or fix things themselves ('make do and mend').

Activities of this kind have been shown to have a very positive effect on community cohesion, and on the general wellbeing of participants (Bilby, 2013). The work involved in craft activity has a tangible reward i.e. you have something you made with your own hands which is very gratifying.

Workplaces are now looking at alternative ways of tackling workplace stress and the theory/practice of using arts and crafts to help support general employee wellbeing is growing in popularity (HSE, 2005; Gauntlett 2011). Engagement in collaborative work makes sure that 'people feel part of a community that belongs to them' and can make people feel 'safe' (Bilby, 2013). The quality of care delivered by carers,

and the wellbeing of the carers themselves, are also topical at present, and both are enhanced by the craft activity (Gauntlett, 2011).

Little Bird SOS (LBSOS)

Knitting Communities Together was a joint project between LBSOS (a social enterprise based in Leicester delivering a diverse programme of projects based around health and wellbeing), and Leicester City Council Hastings Road Centre that provides support for adults with profound learning disability.



LBSOS positively engages with people to provide life enrichment, education, socialisation, creative distraction and personal growth. Positive ideas about recycling and re-using resources for eco-friendly arts and crafts are encouraged which reinforce a feeling in the learner that they are doing something positive and useful by reducing their own environmental impact. LBSOS provides arts and craft workshops to promote health and wellbeing, along with other educational activities aimed at both adults and children. As a social enterprise, LBSOS is a non-profit making organisation that functions for social and community purposes and enrichment.

Leicester City Council Day-Care Services for adults with learning disability

The learning disabilities day service provides care and a variety of day opportunities for a number of service users (approx 122) dependent on their needs and interests. There are community venues across the city of Leicester, which deliver activities including swimming, gym, arts, drama, sports and social activities. The emphasis is on enabling people to reach their full potential. Hastings Road Day Centre is a large day care facility which provides services for people with complex needs. The service is currently in a time of change, as the transformation agenda and personalised budgets shape and influence future provision. The users of this service would greatly benefit from any activity that improves their concentration, dexterity and engagement.

The project: how it came about

LBSOS were initially invited into Layton House, a Council run day care centre for people experiencing learning disabilities, by Layton staff to look at ways of 'brightening up' the day rooms and/or garden area. This then evolved into a discussion about the potential of the Arts to help reduce workplace stress and engage service users in long lasting, sustainable and enjoyable ways.



The aim of the initial project was to install a fun and interactive textile piece, e.g. a sensory blanket, in an unused area of the day room or outdoor area of Layton House/Hastings Road Day Care Centre, which (having views of the garden), would help encourage the use of outdoor space via a variety of sensory experiences. Additional to this, we wanted to encourage staff, and service users where able, to develop their own woolcraft projects by teaching knitting/crochet/weaving skills which would be used for relaxation, and to continue and develop from the initial starting point. Staff and service users were invited to learn how to make decorations and blankets etc., which would in turn benefit the local community. The Knitting Communities Together project would follow on from the success of the sensory blanket made for Layton House.

The Knitting Communities Together (KCT) project delivery

Service users and staff on the KCT project were shown how they could use fairly basic craft skills to easily enhance their work environment. Staff were shown how to make, knit and crochet, which would result in the production of swatch samples that could be stitched together to form lap blankets, bunting, decorations, tree hangings or a sensory wall.

Their new skills enabled staff and service users to engage with the local community by providing opportunities to make items that would be of benefit to them. This could be, for example, blankets for a local care group for the elderly and bunting decorations for a community group event. Prior to the delivery of the practical part of the project, we started to forge links with the following interested groups within the Charnwood ward:



- Guru Teg Bahadur Gurdwara (Sikh Community Centre) Day Centre that provide care for Sikh elders who were interested in receiving lap blankets for their service users
- St Barnabas Road Temple who requested a Bollywood banner.

The intention of this part of the project was to create a lasting legacy, as links with the local community could continue to be developed long after the project delivery phase has ceased.

This self-contained part of the project also served to inform the potential delivery of other projects. We anticipate that a new project will be developed on completion of this project's evaluation.

To recruit Hastings Road staff to the project, the learning disabilities staff team as a whole were invited to express an interest in participation. Twelve staff expressed an interest and, from this group, six staff were selected - two from each area of the service. A range of different staff were selected and two in particular were identified as struggling with work related stress.

The sessions ran for 90 minutes each on a Thursday morning for 12 weeks. This had some impact on service delivery initially, but once a routine was established, it did not present many difficulties in terms of staff cover during the delivery.

The first 9 sessions took place at the LBSOS studio and the final 3 sessions at Hastings Road Day Centre. The first sessions were to train staff participants in the skills required to reach the objectives and the final sessions were designated to incorporate service users participants into the sessions. The final sessions gave a flavour of how to transfer the skills learned to the working environment.



The Programme

A weekly programme covering crochet, knitting, assembly, working with the community, crafting with service users and a celebratory event (see Appendix 1 for more information).

Evaluation aims

- To analyse and discuss the outcomes of this project
- To see if the aims were achieved
- To discuss what worked well and what did not work so well
- To look at the legacy left *after* the project (i.e. was the project able to continue and thrive after intervention)
- To discuss unexpected findings
- To make recommendations for future projects.

Evaluation questions and approach

A copy of the pre (appendix 2) and post (appendix 3) questionnaires are attached at the end of this evaluation.

This project used a variety of evaluation methods:

- A questionnaire was used at the beginning of the project (see appendix 2).
- Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales (WEMWBS) were measured at the start and at the end of the 12 weeks. (Permission was obtained from Dr Frances Taggart, Warwick Medical School, to use WEMWBS for this project).
- Participants were asked for 'qualitative' (more opinion based or descriptive) feedback, at each session over the 12 weeks. They were also asked to comment on what they had learned each week, and how this made them feel onto luggage style session labels.
- Notes were taken by the session deliverer
- Observations made by service delivery managers between sessions were recorded
- Photographic images captured with the permission of all involved.

Evaluation: results

Providing staff with the skills to offer their service users meaningful activity has always been a challenge as there is little practical training available to develop such skills. One of the aims of this project was to actively include the service users themselves in creating pieces of work that they have contributed to and that are attractive, durable and have meaning for the service users and their carers. In addition to this, the project also aimed to explore and find ways to make positive links with the local community and to create a more positive image for people with profound learning disabilities. The positive feedback from the session labels indicated that staff, service users and local community had all benefitted from this collaborative effort.

The crafts that were used during this project identified specific requirements for each service user to work on, based on their individual occupational therapy assessments, i.e. the activities were matched to the people. This ensured all service users would benefit from the activity. Observations from the Service Delivery Coordinator and staff indicate that this was the case.

Knitting, crochet, weaving and other crafts help to make tactile connections, i.e. service users were able to touch and feel wool and other materials which helped them to interact with staff in new and positive ways. This enhanced interaction has improved their relationships, and the staff session labels show consistent, positive outcomes.

Pieces of work that have been created during this project have been used to improve the appearance and atmosphere of Hastings Road Day Centre. A designated area has been decorated which is both colourful and multi-sensory as well as being vibrant and welcoming to both staff and service users.

Observations on service user benefits

The Service Delivery Coordinator made the following observations on the effect of the craft activities on Service Users:

'A service user, who frequents Hastings Road Day Care as a base, has one to one support with a member of staff. He is known to withdraw from the larger activities, as he does not like participating, often unable to sit down or to concentrate. Since this project has been introduced, this service user has enjoyed sitting in the Knitting Communities Together session for longer periods, of up to half an hour, and has enjoyed the atmosphere, touching the sensory items and taking part in weaving activities for short periods of time.'

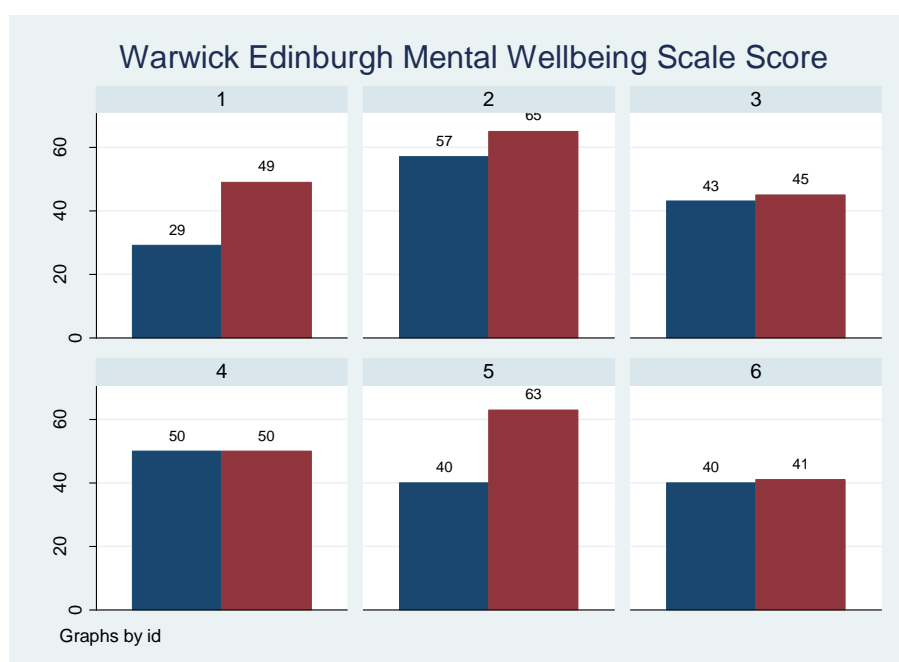
'Another service user, who was reported rarely able to settle with an activity, has sat longer than his assessed five minutes concentration span and has fully participated in the crafting activities that were on offer. Staff have also reported that his obsessional behaviours have reduced during the sessions.'

'A third service user, who has small fabric items attached to her wheelchair to play with, and usually does not seem keen on exploring other items has started to pick up crochet squares and other sensory items which has expanded her world.'

In addition to this feedback, LBSOS used the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to measure responses to a series of questions asked at the very beginning of the project, and again after it had finished.

Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale Score			
Score	median	min	max
Before	41.5	29	57
After	49.5	41	65

The chart below shows the scores before and after the activity for each individual participant. Before in blue and after in red.



In all participants the scores improved with one exception where the score stayed the same. Although a Mann Whitney test gave a p value of 0.13, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between before and after project participation, this outcome is likely to be due to the small number of participants. Nevertheless, all but one participant showed an increase in mental wellbeing and this kind of intervention is therefore worthy of further investigation with a larger sample size.

Observations on staff benefits

Staff, based at Hastings Road Day Centre, have reported to the management team, that they have felt an increased sense of wellbeing. They have commented that there is a 'lovely atmosphere' in the Knitting Communities Together room that has been created as a result of the project. Staff have reported that the project has given them hope, that there are more pleasant and meaningful things that they can achieve in the process of their working day. Additionally, a number of staff and service users from different areas of



the organisation are coming to utilise the space. For example kitchen and maintenance staff, not directly involved in the project, have shown an interest and have participated in some of the activities with great enthusiasm. There have been many 'drop in' sessions, and service users and staff have used the space to socialize and relax. Participants have left the sessions feeling supported, reporting that it is positive to bring people together where they are able to relax, chat and support each other when they are stressed. One member of staff commented that they 'used to take stress home but now I take crafts home'. The staff that have participated in this project have reported that it has 'kept them going' at a time of great change and stress. Staff have cited, in a team meeting, that the project has been instrumental in motivating them to try new things with service users at a time when morale has been low.

Improvements in the working environment

During the project sessions at the LBSOS studio, the conservatory at Hastings Road Day Centre was identified as an area for development by staff participants. The conservatory had formally been a quiet eating area for service users with complex needs but, due to insects coming in during the summer months, it could no longer be used as an eating area and had subsequently been left unused and empty for some time.

As well as being a base for two knitting sessions, which have been established since the project ended, the conservatory has now become a pleasant colourful area for staff and service users to sit together and relax. There are tables and chairs decorated in bright colours with the knitted creations that staff and service users have made. There are photographs showing the end of project celebratory event, fairy lights, reading books and other woolly sensory items for service users to enjoy when they need some quiet time.

The conservatory looks out onto an outdoor area and plans are underway to develop this as part of the ongoing KCT extended project as the weather warms up. The project has reinvented this area into a communal space for meeting, socializing and relaxing.

Extent and quality of collaboration and partnership working

The partnership and collaboration between the learning disability day service and LBSOS has been very effective in delivering this project and both sides have benefitted and grown as a result. As LBSOS and the Community Opportunities Team (part of learning disabilities day care service) are based within the same building at Cross Corners Community Arts Centre, we have plans to execute a larger project that would expand on what we have already achieved but on a much larger scale. This would include different enablement goals for service users, e.g. scarves for the homeless and open studio days. All partners are keen to capitalise on the success of this collaborative project and take things further.

Unexpected outcomes

The emphasis had been on staff learning the new skills to transfer to the service users, and then creating the knitted/crocheted items to improve the environment. There is still a gap in the process for service users with more complex needs to be able to learn new skills and create items. However, staff have been able to create individualised items with those service users with particularly complex needs but wished to develop their skills further. This has been a positive outcome even though our original aim was to enable all participating service users to create items for themselves. As in any teaching/learning process, we had to work within the capabilities of the learners.

Service users who were more able have been involved in creating items for community events. Following the project, a room was decorated with knitted items for 'Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival' by the Community Opportunities Team based at Cross Corners Community Arts Centre.

Finally, we were delighted to hear that a retired member of staff has been attending the Thursday morning knitting sessions, (that have continued after the project has ended), to keep up her links with the staff and service users.

Conclusion and recommendations

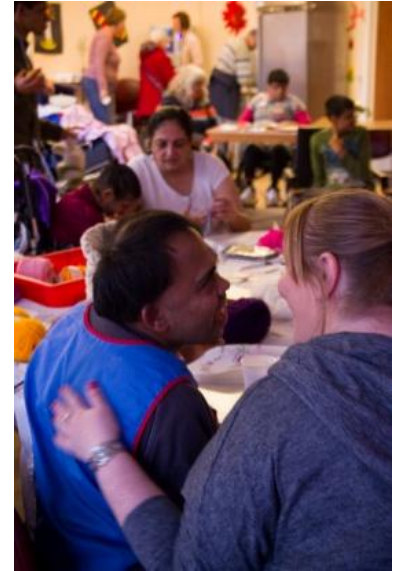
Prior to delivering this project, we anticipated positive health effects of the art and craft activities and confidence in our ability to deliver it. We predicted that the project would be successful. In the event, the 'Knitting Communities Together' project proved to be a great success by those involved and exceeded our expectations. The feedback from participants was universally positive and much of it very positive. The only minor complaint was that 3 participants thought that there was insufficient time for them to develop their skills well enough to pass them on as well as they would have liked to.

Several participants who filled in the sessional feedback labels (see appendix 5) spoke of their sense of achievement and of their perseverance having paid off. Others felt 'inspired' and 'excited'. It was observed that staff had felt the activity had 'kept them going at a time of change and stress', and that there is a 'lovely atmosphere in the KCT room' that has come into fruition as a result of the project.

The good effect on service users was also observed: 'Lovely to see service users laughing and enjoying feeling the samples and getting fingers stuck in the holes!' and 'Amazing to see the service users' reactions'. We identified 3 particular service users, who had previously been reluctant to take part in activities, who engaged with and enjoyed this particular project and staff commented that the KCT project had 'unlocked personalities and made connections'.

The fact that staff and service users have both benefitted from this experience is particularly gratifying, and their relationships had clearly been enhanced and improved.

An effect on the physical working environment was also noted; 'To see colour and light in Hastings road and service users is fantastic!' It also transpired that the corridor area, when transformed by the activity, has become an important social meeting place, attracting staff who had not even been involved in the project. It has effectively bought a dead area of the building back to life.



As well as qualitative feedback, the 'Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale' was employed to analyse the project outcome. While this indicated that the difference in well-being before and after was not significant, this could mainly be attributed to the small number of participants. The positive responses from participants indicate that a quantitative evaluation of larger projects ought to be carried out with academic support.

The celebratory event at the end of the project, as well as being an enjoyable conclusion, was also extremely useful in helping galvanise the participants into a further continuation of project activities. They were enthusiastic and inspired and, since the project ended, have been pro-active in sourcing materials inexpensively (and repaying donators with made items) and making prayer mats, temple decorations and crocheted items for the local community. At the event itself, they presented several blankets to a Sikh temple and a crocheted banner to the St Barnabas Bollywood dance group. The participants have also used their new skills to contribute to events such as Red Nose Day and Poppy Day.



Looking further ahead, future plans are underway to work with the Police, New Walk Conservation Society, Local Primary School's and other local community organisations and groups. This future project will involve knitting and crocheting scarves for homeless people for the winter period 2015/16. The scarves (all made by the participants) will be tied to lamp posts along New Walk, with labels attached indicating that they are not 'lost' but free to wear in the cold. The participants group will liaise closely with local homeless charities to ensure homeless people will benefit from this new project. This is likely to be a high profile project that will involve planning, require some funding and will involve staff/service users/police and homeless charities all working together.

The self-sufficiency of the participants group to continue with such craft activities and use them to engage with local communities is a truly marvellous legacy of the Knitting Communities Together project.

For a more robust quantitative evaluation, using 'Warwick Edinburgh' or similar, more projects like this should be run and rigorously evaluated (White, 2014). Art and craft projects, the aim of which is to improve or enhance human well-being, seem to generate a great deal of positive feedback and the Knitting Communities Together project has been no exception. This really needs to be backed up by a more scientific analysis, using the best measurement tools available.

It would be useful to further investigate what crafts and skills each individual service user within the group can create as independently as possible, (with discreet staff support), with the emphasis on the service user as the creator. This will depend on the level of independence of the service users - some within the group are excellent knitters and crocheters who need to have a sense of purpose and meaning to the work they create. Other service users could be encouraged to weave, knit or use other methods that require only seconds or minutes before needing a rest.

Any future project should include more specific outcomes for individual service users incorporating occupational therapy assessment and other essential information for the activities offered by staff.

The group are currently learning felting, which is a more sensory experience, and service users with complex needs can actively participate in this.

Projects like this do not have to be exclusively craft activities. Similar successes could be achieved with other meaningful activities like gardening. However, art and craft activities seem to work really well, not just to draw the participants into making things, but also to create a positive and mutually supportive atmosphere. A community cafe (with regular activities taking place) would be an excellent extension to this idea and enable adults with even profound learning difficulties to integrate with their local community in a safe, creative and comfortable environment.



References

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Thank you

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Peter Henshaw and Dave Pidgeon - proof readers

Leanne Robinson, Service Delivery Coordinator, Learning Disabilities Services and project lead for Knitting Communities Together Project for Leicester City Council Day Services

Maria Viskaduraki for statistical analysis and report

All staff and service users, LCC Day Care Services for Adults with Profound Learning Disabilities involved in this project

Appendix 1

Participant information sheet - project schedule

Knitting Communities Together

Knitting Communities Together is a joint project between Little Bird SOS, a local 'not for profit' social enterprise that specialises in running Arts for Health and Wellbeing workshops, along with LCC Hastings Road day care centre coordinated by Leanne Robinson, Service Development Coordinator. The project has been supported by the Leicester City Council (LCC) Community Fund for the Charnwood Ward.

The aim is to enable you to develop your own guerrilla knitting style knitting projects to enhance your immediate work environment along with your service users. Those who are able will discover how to knit, crochet and weave which will result in the production of swatches that can be stitched together to form lap blankets, bunting, decorations etc. These new skills will enable service users and yourself to engage with the local community by providing opportunities to make items that will be of benefit to them. We have already started to forge links with the Guru Teg Bahadur Gurdwara (Sikh Community Centre) who would like lap blankets for their day care centre elders, and St Barnabas Road Temple who would like a 'Bollywood' Banner for their dance group.

You will spend 12 weeks (90 minute sessions) at the Little Bird SOS studio at Cross Corners, learning a variety of wool craft skills such as crochet, knitting and weaving and will be working with selected services users testing out/transferring your new knowledge and skills to them.

Throughout the project we will be collecting evaluation information in the form of written and verbal 'soundbites' and questionnaires, that will help us to find out how this project is benefitting staff and service users. We will also be documenting the process through photography/video and encouraging staff to write about their experiences through the medium of a blog, thereby reaching out to the community beyond the day-care centre. There will be a celebratory event at the end of the project where we will gift items, mentioned above, to the Guru Teg Bahadur Gurdwara and St Barnabas Road Temple.

Lisa Pidgeon will be facilitating the practical learning and project management side of this project. From time to time you will also see Jacqui Booth, who will be taking pictures/video, and will also be responsible for helping us evaluate this project. There is more information about the schedule at the end of this info sheet.

The expected outcomes of this project are as follows:

- Staff will learn the skills to be able to create basic items such as bags, room decorations such as bunting and flags, any other items which can be crocheted, knitted or weaved.
- Very basic techniques such as finger knitting will be used which all service users regardless of ability could take part in will be taught to staff in a series of workshops, which can then be relayed to service users in regular sessions, quiet times, 1:1 or in larger groups.
- The creations will be distributed around the local community for example: knitted blankets in local care homes/residential day care centres or knitted buntings that convey a message
- Additionally, groups and individuals will experience the pride and ownership of making something useful and functional which can be taken home or used to decorate the place they attend each day.
- Improved manual dexterity
- Increased and maintained attention and focus.
- Self-expression and choice making – colours, fabric texture etc.
- Hand eye coordination. Exploring and transforming materials with bare hands
- Sensory integration.
- Sense of delight through production and accomplishment.
- Developing connections between local communities i.e. community centres and care homes, thereby raising awareness of learning disability within the local community enabling the reduction of barriers perceived to be associated with this.
- Communicating with other community groups beyond the service users own direct community.
- Communication and participation. A positive and meaningful group purpose.
- Reminiscence - crafting to trigger memories of childhood, families and happy times. The focus will be on sharing positive experiences.
- Meaning making – having an item which you have made, using colours or items which mean something to you e.g. trains , photos, favourite music etc., and which remind you or a specific time.
- Absorption – giving people with severe learning disabilities who lack opportunities to focus , to achieve and control their immediate environment.
- Improvement of the immediate environment – textures, colours and multi-sensory facets.
- Spending time in different environments within the local community: if appropriate permissions are sought.

Schedule

All sessions will take place at Cross Corners Community Arts Centre on Thurs from 9.30am - 11am.

11 Sept	Getting to know you. Pre-project evaluation. Let's start crochet - Chains
18 Sept	Crochet - chains and double crochet
25 Sept	Crochet - double crochet and treble crochet
2 Oct	Crochet cont - granny squares
9 Oct	Knitting and purling
16 Oct	Knitting - casting on and casting off
23 Oct	NO SESSION HALF TERM
30 Oct	Finger knitting and chopstick weaving
6 Nov	Putting it all together
13 Nov	Working with the local community, how do we communicate with them?
20 Nov	Crafting with service users
27 Nov	Crafting with service users
4 Dec	Crafting with service users - post project evaluation
Celebratory event date and time tbc, sharing experiences of being part of this project	

The above plan is subject to change depending on your needs. All materials and equipment are supplied. There will be tea/coffee/cold drinks and biscuits available for the sessions. If you already have the skills mentioned above, you are encouraged to share your knowledge with fellow participants.

Appendix 2

Pre-project participant evaluation form

Knitting Communities Together

Participant Evaluation Form

Taking part in projects like this can help improve health and wellbeing. By completing this form, it will help us see if your participation contributed to your health and wellbeing. This will help us to improve our practice. We would like to ask you to complete the questionnaire again approx. halfway through the project and at the end. All of the information that you give us will be kept confidential.

1. What are the reasons that you decided to take part in this 'Knitting Communities Together' project?

2. What age group category do you fall into?

18 - 24		25 -34		35 - 44		45 - 54		55 - 64		65 - 74		75+	
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3. How would you rate your health today?

Good		Very good		Fair		Poor		Very Poor	
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4. Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks:

Statement	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
I've been feeling useful					
I've been feeling relaxed					
I've been feeling interested in other people					
I've had energy to spare					
I've been dealing with problems well					
I've been thinking clearly					
I've been feeling good about myself					
I've been feeling close to other people					
I've been feeling confident					
I've been able to make up my own mind about things					
I've been feeling loved					
I've been interested in new things					
I've been feeling cheerful					

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (c) NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006.

5. Are there any comments that you would like to make?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this evaluation form.

Appendix 3

Post-project participant evaluation form

Knitting Communities Together

Participant Evaluation Form

Taking part in projects like this can help improve health and wellbeing. By completing this form, it will help us see if your participation contributed to your health and wellbeing. This will help us to improve our practice. All of the information that you give us will be kept confidential.

1. How would you rate your health today?

Good		Very good		Fair		Poor		Very Poor	
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2. Do you feel this project achieved its expected outcomes? (see attached sheet listing expected outcomes)

Yes		No	
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If No, what outcomes were not achieved?

3. Did you learn anything that was unexpected?

Yes		No	
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If yes what did you learn that was unexpected?

4. How has this project helped with your interaction with PMLD services users?

5. What did you enjoy most about participating in this project?

6. What did you least enjoy about participating in this project?

7. Describe how this project helped you to engage with your local community?

8. Below are some statements about feelings and thoughts

Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last 2 weeks:

Statement	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future					
I've been feeling useful					
I've been feeling relaxed					
I've been feeling interested in other people					
I've had energy to spare					
I've been dealing with problems well					
I've been thinking clearly					
I've been feeling good about myself					
I've been feeling close to other people					
I've been feeling confident					
I've been able to make up my own mind about things					
I've been feeling loved					
I've been interested in new things					
I've been feeling cheerful					

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (c) NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2006.

9. Overall, how would you rate the delivery of the project sessions?

Good		Very good		Fair		Poor		Very Poor	
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10. Are there any comments that you would like to make about this project?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this evaluation form.

Appendix 4

Participant information sheet - working with local communities

Knitting Communities Together

Well done for all of your hard work in getting this project off the ground. The past few weeks have been brilliant and we have been very impressed with your enthusiasm, determination and commitment to the work of delivering to the outcomes of this project in a timely manner. We have a few more weeks together, finishing and installing the sensory wall, working with your service users and finishing off the Bollywood bunting for the St Barnabas Road Temple and the blankets for the Guru Teg Bahadur Gurdwara. The next part of the project will look at how you can develop the confidence and skills to continue the good work and ensure that things progress in the future long after the tuition and guidance by Little Bird SOS (LBSOS) ceases. We would love to think that this will be a long term initiative that continues to make links with the local community thereby supporting and enabling your service users to enjoy simple wool crafts and interaction with other local community groups.

Community participation and social capital and happiness

This is something that is of particular interest to LBSOS. We have a firm belief that people doing things together in communities is really valuable¹. It prevents social isolation and nurtures trust and friendliness. Social capital is about working together for the good of society as opposed to financial capital that enables you to do things that you would not ordinarily be able to do without money. There is clear evidence to suggest that social connections, communication and working together with others on shared projects is essential for health and wellbeing and helps to secure a healthy and trustworthy society². Meaningful connections with others doing meaningful things impact on happiness and contribute to the Five Ways to Wellbeing³. There is research that shows that happiness is strongly associated with the quality of our relationships and connections with others. It is also strongly associated with self-esteem and having meaningful projects to work on. There is also evidence to show that creative projects, linked by online platforms are invaluable in promoting human happiness⁴. The payback is not through financial reward but through something much more deep and meaningful and this can ripple through all aspects of our lives on many levels.

Connecting online

Nowadays we have easy access to local, national and international communities online. With the recent introduction of Web 2.0 technologies it is even easier to communicate with like minded communities via platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, blogging etc. Having such a choice of platforms gives us the opportunity to create our own personal space online free of charge using a variety of media choices such as words, photos and video and these need not be of high quality. Visitors to such sites are more interested in the quality of the content and the support it may provide. More and more people are spending time online, as opposed to watching the TV, because the internet makes real-world connections which sparks interest in new things⁵. We fully support the use of online communities to help raise awareness of your own creative endeavours, to connect yourself with other like-minded people and to ensure that you document the vital work that you do within your own face to face community and beyond the walls of your local working environment.

Finding voluntary and community groups in Leicester.

You can search online via Voluntary Action Leicester website: <http://www.valdirectory.org.uk/>

You can choose the types of organisations and the work they do and who they do their work, for example 'community care for socially excluded and vulnerable' or 'community care for homeless people' etc. The search will return a list of the organisations with a link to their website as well as contact details. This will help you identify where the groups and the organisations that support them. This will give you a good idea of how to identify and contact local groups about your Knitting Communities Together project.

Online etiquette

Not only can you connect directly with local organisations, you can also connect online. LBSOS support connecting online and find it a really great way of promoting the work that we do but there are some rules that it would be wise to abide by to ensure that your online community comes across as being polite and professional. When you post anything online, to a facebook wall or a tweet or in a blog post, it is worth remembering that everyone, no matter how secure you think things are, could potentially see it. Think of it in the same way as if you were having a face to face interaction, with someone, when you post online. Here are a few things that it is strongly recommended you avoid:

- Banal status updates - the world wants to hear things that are of general interest
- Swearing and excessive vulgarity
- Posting with the CAPS lock on
- Tagging unflattering photos of others
- Cultural, political and/or racial insensitivity
- Oversharing
- Participating in annoying games
- Overposting
- Overcommenting
- Using acronyms
- Overuse of emoticons ☹️😐😞
- Speaking unkindly of others
- 4V01D U51NG 1337 - Avoid using Leet - a way of typing with a mixture of letters and words

Things to **THINK** of before you post:

T = is it TRUE?

H = is it HELPFUL?

I = is it INSPIRING?

N = is it NECESSARY?

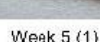
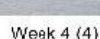
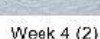
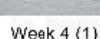
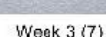
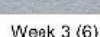
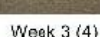
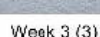
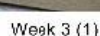
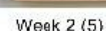
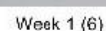
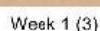
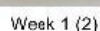
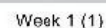
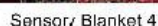
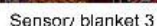
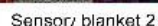
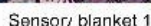
K = is it KIND?

So in conclusion, you have done brilliant work and have taken the first steps towards understanding the importance of using craft to make connections with your local community. This will help and enable your service users to engage in activities that have meaning. The hope is that this project continues into the future.

References:

1. Gauntlett, D, (2011) Making is Connecting. Polity
2. Field. J, *Social Capital*, 2nd edition, P160
3. Five Ways to Wellbeing, *New Economics Foundation*
4. Lanyard, R. (2006) Happiness: Lessons from a New Science, P66, Penguin
5. Gauntlett, D, (2011) Making is

Sensory Blanket & Week by Week Luggage Tag Feedback





Week 5 (3)



Week 5 (4)



Week 5 (5)



Week 5 (6)



Week 5 (7)



Week 5 (8)



Week 5 (9)



Week 5 (10)



Week 5 (11)



Week 6 (1)



Week 6 (2)



Week 6 (3)



Week 6 (4)



Week 6 (5)



Week 6 (6)



Week 6 (7)



Week 7 (1)



Week 7 (2)



Week 7 (3)



Week 7 (4)



Week 7 (5)



Week 7 (6)



Week 7 (7)



Week 7 (8)



Week 8 (1)



Week 8 (2)



Week 8 (3)



Week 8 (4)



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Week 9 (3)



Week 9 (4)



Week 9 (5)



Week 9 (6)



Week 9 (7)



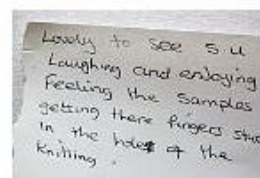
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Week 10 (1)



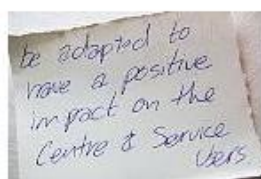
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Week 10 (4)



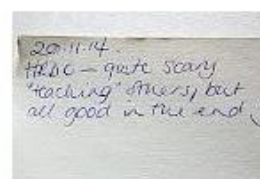
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Week 10 (6)



Week 10 (7)



Week 10 (8)



Week 10 (9)



Week 11 (1)



Week 11 (2)



Week 11 (3)



Week 11 (4)



Week 11 (5)



Week 11 (6)



Week 11 (7)



Week 11 (8)