



South West  
Yorkshire Partnership  
NHS Foundation Trust



# Creative Minds<sup>®</sup>



[www.creativemindsuk.com](http://www.creativemindsuk.com)



# Welcome

Hello, my name is Mark Brooks and I'm chief executive at South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

I'm pleased to present the fifth edition of the Creative Minds magazine.

This edition also commemorates the 10th anniversary of Creative Minds and kicks off a year of activities to celebrate the work of the charity.

Creative Minds launched in November 2011 with a vision to make creativity and the arts part of mainstream health and wellbeing practice and services.

The use of creative activities in healthcare can have a really big impact on a person's wellbeing – whether that be increasing their self-esteem, so they feel confident to try new things, developing social skills as they meet new people, or through providing a sense of purpose as they take part in meaningful activities that have structure and aims.

These impacts were recognised by South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, who host Creative Minds, and the Trust remains committed to using creative approaches, such as arts, sports, music, recreation and leisure activities, in our delivery of health services.

Since its launch, Creative Minds has enabled over 500 projects inside and outside of NHS services, alongside facilitating over 100 sports events. There are currently over 120 Creative Minds partner organisations from across all our localities too; and together the Creative Minds team and partners help support over 10,000 people a year.

Inside this magazine you'll hear stories of inspiration and recovery from people who've took part in creative activities and become part of the Creative Minds community.

You'll also hear first-hand from staff at the Trust around the benefits of creativity in supporting people with their health and wellbeing, and how our services at the Trust have worked with Creative Minds to embed creativity into care.

We hope that you help us celebrate the fantastic work of Creative Minds over the last 10 years, and also take the opportunity to consider what the future may hold for the charity.

Best wishes,



**Mark Brooks**

**Chief executive**

South West Yorkshire Partnership  
NHS Foundation Trust



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*"In my  
mess, I  
discovered  
my success"*

**Hello, my name is Sophie Mei Lan (@TheSparkleCoach) and I'm guest editor of this edition of the Creative Minds magazine**

**Creative communications can contribute to our wellbeing - "In my mess, I discovered my success"**

Clutching at my phone I sobbed into the camera as my trembling mouth tried to make sense of what was happening in my mind.

In this moment of despair, I didn't think to try and dial a number to talk to a mental health professional nor to 'call a friend', this wasn't how I could or would express myself.

With my kids playing in the room next to me, I needed a quick escape to safely get me through this latest anxiety attack. For me at that time, creating a video diary vlog was all I could think of in my swirling mind. At other moments I can be found expressing my emotions through writing, public speaking, dancing, or even facilitating yoga or journalism sessions. All creative coping mechanisms I lean on.

For this reason, I resonate with Aristotle's quote: "No great mind has ever existed without a touch of madness." The philosopher also coined the important term 'pathos' (appealing to someone's emotions) when it comes to powerful communication. The other two parts of this are the ethos or 'character' of the communicator and the other is logos or 'logic'.

Not only does this reflect what a good story contains but also the mission behind this diverse magazine and so-called 'soft and fluffy' projects as you will read about.

Such humble, human, and harmonious environments which combine logic, emotion, and most of all are character-centred, can help us all to navigate our own holistic health by creatively tapping into a range of communication skills. This may be officially dubbed as social prescribing, but it is actually about unearthing the layers of jargon.

It is about being human and telling the stories in the way that we need to. All we can strive towards is creating inclusive communities where individuals are empowered to prosper rather than to merely 'survive'.

It is such worlds we can nurture by working together. And as for that raw vlog I made in a 'moment of madness', I ended up publishing it and it reached two billion people worldwide.

Our moments of "failures can be our steppingstones to success", so please go connect, create and release your mind because you too deserve to flourish.

What's your favourite quote? Tag us on socials  
@thesparklecoach @mamameiblog  
@Creat1ve\_M1nds #CreativeMinds

Sophie Mei Lan is a multi-award-winning journalist, entrepreneur, and creative wellbeing practitioner. She regularly delivers talks and writes newspaper columns on mental health, wellbeing, and underrepresented communities.

**Connect with Sophie at:**

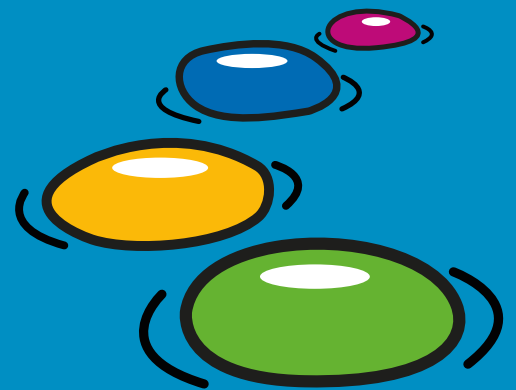
<https://MamaMei.co.uk>

<https://yorkshirefamilies.co.uk>

<https://SparkleCommunications.co.uk>

<https://SparkleUpNorth.com>

*“ Failures  
can be our  
stepping  
stones to  
success ”*



# TOP TEN Highlights



## Funding bid success from the Association of Mental Health Providers

10

In December 2020, Creative Minds celebrated their success at being awarded funding from the Association of Mental Health Providers (The Association).

The funding has so far seen Creative Minds deliver The Association's Mental Health Sustainability Programme with people that use mental health services, in collaboration with South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

The Mental Health Sustainability Programme was launched in response to the pandemic in partnership with 17 other mental health charities and the private sector to enable voluntary, community and social enterprise mental health providers to maintain services during and after the pandemic.

Match funded by Creative Minds' existing partners, Creative Minds will act as a community partner for The Association, working with voluntary and

community organisations and groups to support people with mental health needs through a range of services.

The 18-month programme will deliver community mental health and wellbeing projects and activities in the most deprived areas in Barnsley, Wakefield and South Kirklees; with a particular focus on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Keep up to date with the programme through Creative Minds' Twitter and Facebook.



Association of Mental  
Health Providers

## Creative Minds featured in national report on creativity and wellbeing during COVID-19

The work of Creative Minds and partners featured in a national report by the Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance in July 2020.

The report focused on how creativity and culture supported people during COVID-19, and shared best practice examples of how organisations created new programmes or adapted existing work to reach people who were shielding or vulnerable in their homes.

Made up of case studies of almost 50 projects received from 45 organisations in England and Wales, the report features two case studies of projects from Creative Minds partners; Dream Time Creative in Wakefield and Butterflies Dementia Support and Activities Group in Barnsley.

You can read the full report at:

<https://buff.ly/3G3d7JU>.



## Success for Creative Minds at the Patient Experience Network National Awards 2015



Creative Minds was recognised at the 2015 Patient Experience Network National Awards after winning the 'Strengthening the Foundation' award and also being runner-up in the

'Including Social Care to Improve Experience' and 'Partnership Working to Improve the Experience' categories too!

The annual Patient Experience Network National Awards recognise and celebrate the people in the healthcare industry who are leading the way by delivering excellent patient experience and care.

## Health Service Journal (HSJ) award win for Creative Minds



In 2014, Creative Minds won the HSJ Award for 'Compassionate Patient Care'.

The HSJ Awards are the largest celebration of healthcare excellence in the UK, highlighting the most innovative and successful people and projects in the sector.

HSJ judges said that the Creative Minds initiative took user-led services to a different level, hailing "the empowerment of service users that demonstrates personal and economic benefits for individuals, families and whole communities."

## Good Mood Football League

Launched in 2007, the Good Mood League (GML) is a competitive football league for adults aged 18 and over who use Creative Minds or Trust mental health services.

The league is made up of people with all levels of ability and aims to eliminate stigma around mental health while boosting the wellbeing of participants.

Teams in the league train on a weekly basis and official matches take place quarterly each year across the country. The league is supported by partners including the West Riding Football Association.

Since its launch, the GML has highlighted how sport can support people with their mental health and wellbeing recovery; allowing people to exercise in a safe space, meet new people who may be facing similar difficulties, build confidence and a support network.

As part of the 'soft and fluffy' storytelling, people who take part in the league shared what the league means to them and how it has helped them:

- "It's made a huge difference for me to get me up and running again – I relapsed three times with my illness – just to get out there, to socialise and become a team."
- "It brings people to life."
- "It's made a big difference to me believing in myself and that I can actually do something - being scared to do something and being a bit shy - really you just need to do it and you'll enjoy it. It was hard at first because I didn't know anyone and I wasn't confident, but as you come back to sessions you make friends, enjoy yourself and have fun."
- "It changed my life around."
- "You can meet people with similar problems and support each other along your journey [of recovery]."



## Weaving 'safety nets' for young people on CAMHS waiting lists

Over the last few years, Creative Minds has been expanding and developing its young people's Safety Nets programme.

Safety Nets offers wellbeing support and activities to young people who have been referred to Trust child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and are waiting to receive treatment. It's delivered in partnership with local CAMHS teams and professional football and rugby clubs including Barnsley FC, Huddersfield Town FC and Wakefield Wildcats.

The programme hosts therapeutic groups for young people to improve their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Each group runs for two hours after school in term time. The first hour focuses on physical activity, led by coaches and players from the sports club, and the second hour focuses on mental health education, led by CAMHS staff.

In response to the pandemic, an online version of the programme was also developed, which was called Home Goals. This kept the programme running through restricted and challenging times.

So far participants in the programme have showed an average improvement of 39% in the Warwick Edinburgh Short Scale which measures mental wellbeing.



Dave Watson, project development coordinator for Creative Minds, said: "Physical activity has a huge potential to enhance our wellbeing. Even a short burst of 10 minutes' brisk walking increases our mental alertness, energy and mood."

"We're delighted to be supporting this valuable work, which is popular with both young people, the sports clubs and CAMHS professionals. The contribution of clubs to the wellbeing of local children and young people simply cannot be underestimated."

"We get very positive outcomes and feedback from the programme, with many participants reporting life changing experiences and many young people want to stay on as volunteers too!"

## National win for Creative Minds at the Building Better Healthcare Awards 2015

Creative Minds won the 'Best Collaborative Arts Project' award at the Building Better Healthcare Awards 2015, which took place at a ceremony in London.

The Building Better Healthcare Awards recognises innovation in architecture, people, products and services which are helping to transform patient care across the UK, spanning 25 awards across six categories.

Phil Walters, Creative Minds strategic lead, said: "We are so proud of the success of Creative Minds, the approach has had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of so many people in our local communities. To be recognised at a national awards ceremony for the third time is a great achievement for Creative Minds and the Trust."



## Innovating through creativity

In 2016, Creative Minds appeared at the NHS Health and Care Innovation Expo to share their expertise on how creative activities can play a powerful role in healthcare.

NHS leaders and innovators across the system heard about Creative Minds work, specifically focusing on the charity's key contribution to 'Realising the Value', a project funded by NHS England which is about finding ways to help people manage their healthcare in less traditional ways.

During the Expo, Creative Minds provided their expert views on how this can be done, sharing their vast experience of using creative activities in healthcare, and covering traditional arts such as painting and theatre, as well as sports and leisure activities such as football, walking and gardening.

As part of the project, the team helped develop a range of publications focusing on 'spreading the change' and 'supporting self-management', which were launched at the Expo.

Phil Walters, Creative Minds strategic lead, said: "I think that Creative Minds was selected to be part of 'Realising the Value' because of our passion for person and community-centred care.

"It's been great to work with people who share that passion and who feel this should be central to

working in health and social care.

"We all realised very quickly that this needed much more than policy change, it needed new models, new relationships and new language, if we were to change hearts and minds and create new cultures.

"We have learnt a lot being part of this journey and we are hoping that NHS England will take the learning and work with communities to build better health and social care approaches. I have never been more certain about the idea that we are stronger together."

Read more about the 'Realising the Value' project at: [www.nesta.org.uk/project/realising-value](http://www.nesta.org.uk/project/realising-value).



# Superstar Kylie Minogue visits Cross The Sky

2

In autumn 2019, Cross The Sky, long-term Creative Minds partner and resident theatre company at Barnsley Civic, had the shock of their lives when, during a rehearsal, pop star Kylie Minogue turned up to surprise them and 'super fan' musical director, Simon Grainger.

The surprise visit was broadcast on Channel 4 on Christmas Day 2019 as part of 'Kylie's Secret Night', a one-off show celebrating Kylie and her fans.

Cross The Sky caught the singer's attention after sending her a video of the group rehearsing her 2018 hit 'Dancing' on Twitter as part of their vocal and music training. The star retweeted the video to her 2.8 million worldwide followers with an inspirational message encouraging the group to 'Keep up the great work guys!'. The video has been viewed around the world and the company have received lots of messages of support from Kylie fans.

Speaking after Kylie's unexpected visit, Simon said: "What a wonderful surprise, we're all on 'cloud nine' after Kylie's visit. It meant so much to us all and was such a special afternoon. Having the opportunity to sing some of the group's favourite Kylie songs with the lady herself was truly a dream come true and an afternoon we will treasure for the rest of our lives."

As well as developing key performing arts skills, Cross The Sky also write and perform original songs and theatre work to enable their voices, thoughts and feelings to be shared in a public mainstream arena. Their last production, 'Up in the Attic', is inspired by personal experiences of autism. It tells the story



of a man who goes on a journey of self-discovery and acceptance as he learns to let go of his childhood and to embrace his independent adult life. The coming-of-age story incorporates Gothic horror and original songs developed through improvisation workshops exploring disability pride.

Jason White, community engagement officer at Barnsley Civic, said: "There are countless research studies around the impact of culture on our wellbeing. Cross The Sky are a big part of our commitment to increasing participation in the arts for those at risk of marginalisation and supporting people to reach their potential."

The group work in collaborative and co-productive ways and see their work as turning life stories into different art forms. Cross The Sky are also commissioned to perform at the Trust welcome days for new members of staff.



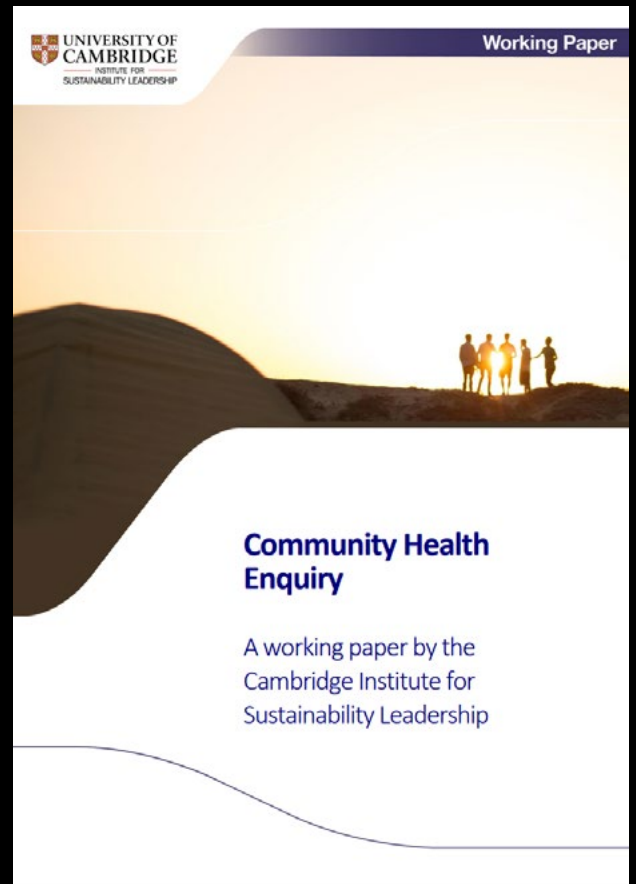
# Creative Minds shared as a 'pioneering programme' in Cambridge study

In 2020, Creative Minds were selected to be part of a study by the University of Cambridge Institute of Sustainable Leadership (CISL). The Johnson & Johnson Foundation commissioned CISL to explore the role and opportunities of community health as a mechanism for delivering improved health and resilience in communities. This position paper seeks to establish a baseline of shared knowledge and understanding, to inform future investments and actions of the Foundation and other funders, programmes/projects at the community level, and other actors across health systems.

Creative Minds was selected as a pioneering programme identified in the research as an approach which illustrates the principles set out in the paper. The community health approach refers to the design, development and/or delivery of services and activities by and within communities, contributing to improved population health and resilience. This represents a shift of power away from traditional, centralised, top-down health systems.

At a project level these are services targeted to where the need is; and provides service user empowerment and involvement, structured engagement with local partners, strong programme to health system linkages, well-paid, trained community health workers/project staff, robust, consistent tracking of outcomes and impact and knowledge networks and exchange.

The full report can be downloaded at: [www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/files/community\\_health\\_enquiry\\_working\\_paper.pdf](http://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/files/community_health_enquiry_working_paper.pdf)



Hello, my name is Aboo Bhana and I am an equality and involvement manager at the Trust.



"I was privileged to be at the beginning of the Creative Minds journey, over 10 years ago, as a founding member. We set up a number of Creative Minds projects for our service users and carers, from bibliotherapy on our inpatient wards to the canals, waterways and wellbeing programme, the Good Mood League and learning disability football fun days.

"The Creative Minds team have always been passionate about creating opportunities and working in partnership with anyone with the same values to make a difference. Well done team and best wishes for the next 10 years!"



# Creative Minds in our local communities

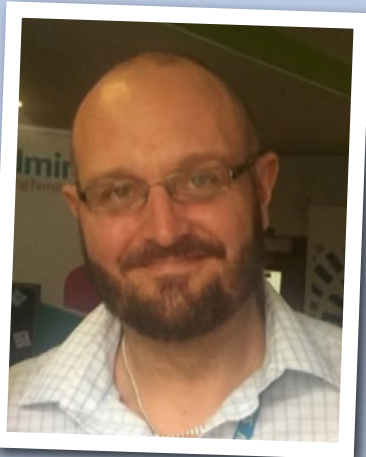
Creative Minds works with over 120 community organisations and groups to deliver arts, sports, recreation and leisure activities directly to people who use Trust services and within local communities with the greatest needs.

These organisation and groups are known as 'Creative Minds partners' and receive funding from Creative Minds and the Trust to deliver activities.

Hear from some Creative Minds partners on how they've used Creative Minds funding or worked in partnership with Creative Minds to make a difference to local people...



Hello, my name is Dave Watson and  
I'm project development  
coordinator at Creative Minds.



Dave has a keen interest in sports and physical activity for health and wellbeing and has used this interest to help create the Moving Mental Health Forward scheme in Barnsley.

Working with Barnsley Public Health, the district-wide scheme focuses on engaging with and up skilling gyms, sports clubs and physical activity groups to be able to address mental health concerns in a positive way, and to challenge stigma and promote inclusivity.

Dave said: "Physical activity promotes the release of feel-good chemicals in the brain. It helps to relieve stress and anxiety as well as providing physical health benefits. Whether alone or as part of a team, physical exercise is tremendously beneficial for everyone."

## Creative Recovery

Creative Recovery is a people-led charity that's been pioneering arts for health and wellbeing around Barnsley for over a decade. Established around the same time as Creative Minds, the two organisations have 'grown up' and flourished together over the years.

Partnership working between Creative Minds and Creative Recovery began with the launch of a 'Live Arts Café' in 2011. The café was created in response to a need identified by Trust staff, and people on Trust inpatient wards, for a local

safe, creative space which was open on an evening to them.

Over the years, the café has acted a community hub, and has welcomed patients and staff from inpatient wards at the Trust. The café has offered a break from a hospital environment for many and has allowed people to try new creative things, alongside meeting new people and developing peer support networks, which is a crucial part of recovery. Together, Creative Minds and Creative Recovery have also developed music

projects and creative approaches within CAMHS at Wetherby Young Offender Institute.

To get involved with Creative Recovery, and find out more about the wider programme, contact Helen on 07833 936019 or email: [wearecreativerecovery@gmail.com](mailto:wearecreativerecovery@gmail.com).



# Hoyland Community Choir

During the pandemic, Hoyland Community Choir provided informal, weekly online singing activities to replace usual face-to-face meetings. No previous experience or musical skill level was needed to join the sessions, which were held on 'Zoom'.

The choir's sessions were recorded and are available on their YouTube channel, as the choir found that some people preferred to sing along to the YouTube videos.



## Reds in the Community



**Reds in the Community is a registered charity delivering community and charitable activities on behalf of Barnsley Football Club.**

Professional football clubs are in the hearts of local communities, often not just geographically, but also emotionally. They have a unique connection and draw that enables them to reach far and wide, providing a great opportunity and responsibility to make a difference.

Using the power of football and Barnsley Football Club, Reds aim to engage and improve the lives of people through a range of activities and projects within four key themes of; education, health, social inclusion and sports participation.

Reds use their social media platforms to promote activities and exercise for all age ranges. They have a strong local presence and work closely with Trust and Creative Minds staff.

Creative Minds originally partnered with Reds to deliver a project with people with early onset dementia using their fabulous history archive. This work included creative writing, which has since been displayed at the grounds, and was part of making the club more dementia friendly. Reds also work with Creative Minds on the Safety Nets project with young people who use Trust child and adolescent mental health services.

## Creative Minds and Barnsley Council launch Moving Mental Health Forward

**Creative Minds have partnered with Barnsley Council to develop and launch Moving Mental Health Forward (MMHF); a collective of sport and physical activity organisations, groups, and clubs, that are working to provide a better environment to discuss and provide support for mental wellbeing locally.**

MMHF aims to support organisations, through training and funding, to become preventative influences, addressing poor mental health and wellbeing in the local community and promoting a positive mental health culture.



CREATING A POSITIVE MENTAL  
HEALTH CULTURE

All MMHF members have committed to meet and uphold a set of core principles that enable them to better support their

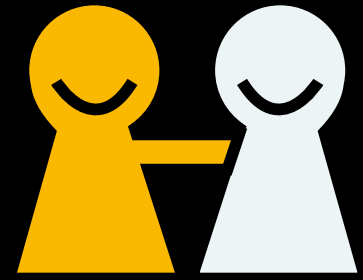
local interest groups. From small walking groups to large groups of leisure centres, it's about what these organisations can do to support the people around them daily.

MMHF has a standard recognition of good practice, and a gold standard for those who can demonstrate how they are currently going above and beyond this; highlighting and rewarding those organisations that are currently blazing a new and innovative path to support mental health within their chosen field.

Find out more about MMHF at: [www.barnsleywhatsyourmove.co.uk/active-for-health/moving-mental-health-forward](http://www.barnsleywhatsyourmove.co.uk/active-for-health/moving-mental-health-forward).

If you would like to register to join MMHF or wish to refer your group, please call the Creative Minds team on 01924 316 285, or email [creativeminds@swyt.nhs.uk](mailto:creativeminds@swyt.nhs.uk).

# ***TwoCan: A buddy scheme supported by Barnsley Council***



Creative Minds have developed a social buddy scheme called TwoCan, which supports local people across South and West Yorkshire who are struggling to maintain their mental wellbeing.

TwoCan was created to aid with certain issues made worse by the pandemic, which has caused more people to be affected by social isolation, low mood, and increasingly poor mental wellbeing.

The project pairs together volunteers with those most at risk, based on shared hobbies, interests, and activities. It aims to make local people feel more connected by reaching out to the hardest hit individuals and providing welcome relief from social seclusion.

TwoCan's belief is that an individual's journey to mental wellbeing recovery is strongly linked to social connectedness. The scheme has been designed to support people to

regain their place within communities, take part in activities and utilise opportunities for growth.

By becoming a TwoCan volunteer, you'll be helping local people in a safe way by sharing what's important and inspiring to you. You'll create opportunities to discover new friends, help those new friends gain confidence, support anxieties, and share excitement around exploring new ideas together.

Interacting with a buddy might be as simple as starting with a phone call, or a few texts each week. As trust and confidences build, TwoCan pairs can then take part in face-to-face activities together locally. The aim is to get people talking, making connections, swapping ideas, and trying new things together.

Volunteers will also be offered the opportunity to

take part in free, mental health first aid training. This is to ensure that volunteers can offer the necessary support and feel confident in their ability to support those who need it most.

If you think you may benefit from the scheme, wish to volunteer, or would like more information, please call the Creative Minds team on 01924 316 285, or email [creativeminds@swyt.nhs.uk](mailto:creativeminds@swyt.nhs.uk).





**AfAAB**  
ACTION FOR AUTISM AND  
ASPERGERS IN BARNSELEY

# Action for Autism and Asperger's in Barnsley (AfAAB)

AfAAB is a small and friendly group that deliver two weekly sessions for members to attend. This includes 'Meet-up' which is creative activity-based session and 'Active' which is an opportunity for people to play games including, pool, table football, card games and quizzes. Additionally, members who benefit from a little more support can access one-to-one and buddying sessions, which are small hobby-related groups.

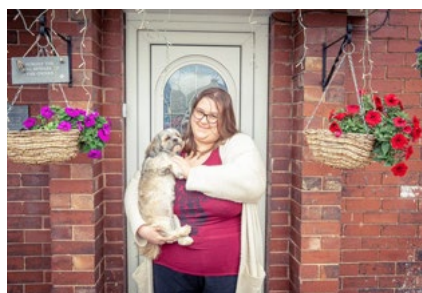
Group members love to go on outings, and during the summer months take advantage of the weather and go on day trips to places including Cannon Hall, Yorkshire Sculpture Park and

Butterfly World, alongside evening excursions to the cinema and theatre.

During the period of the pandemic, AfAAB adapted its offer to continue to support its members. Individuals were offered one-to-one walks, and these were given a creative focus to help provide additional stimulation and interest. Examples of this in action include J, who lives in Cawthorne and spent several weeks exploring the area and going on long walks with the AfAAB facilitator. Whilst on these walks, they created a map and gathered ideas for artwork to capture the local area. The artwork has mainly been created independently

by J in his own time between walks. J's artwork has since been printed into a series of postcards which he has chosen to sell in the village shop, with all money raised going towards AfAAB.

AfAAB has been supported by Barnsley Museums and worked in partnership with them to curate an exhibition at Cooper Gallery. This has since led to a project at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and another with the National Gallery. Currently, the group are working on the 'Mozart and Me' with Ignite Imagination, this will culminate in a showing of their puppet film at the Showroom in Sheffield.





**Katrina Whale, AfAAB project manager, said:**

*"Despite all the challenges the pandemic has thrown at us, AfAAB has thrived. Our membership has continued to grow, and we have learnt so much about what things best support the people we work with. Our members never cease to amaze us with their interests, talents, and willingness to try something new. They take each new project in their stride and embrace all the new challenges along the way."*

*"Without the flexibility and the openminded approach of our funders, including Creative Minds, we would not be able to provide our membership with such enriching life experiences that support their mental health, wellbeing and enjoyment of life."*



## Joan's story: "Dave made a tough time better"

Dave Watson from Creative Minds developed a friendship with 74-year-old Joan, when she was volunteering at one of Creative Minds' community projects five years ago.

Since then, Dave and Joan have become friends and regularly met up with each other. Joan lives alone with nerve and heart

complications so was forced to self-isolate during the pandemic, and therefore found getting essential items such as food and medication incredibly difficult.

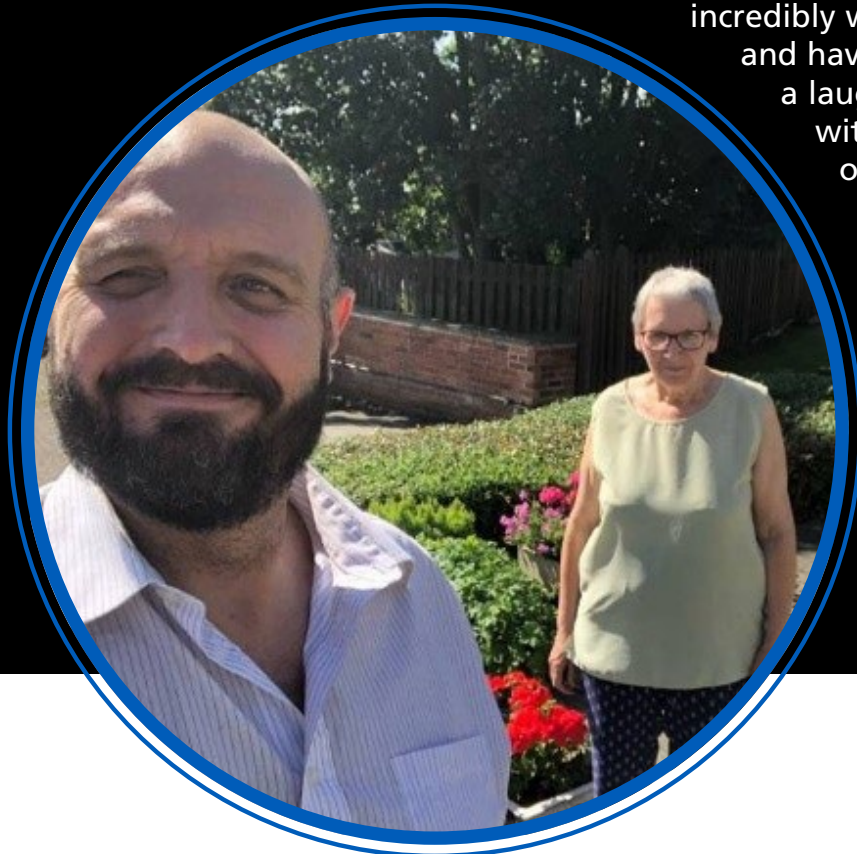
During lockdown, Dave gave Joan a call almost every day to check in with her, alongside bringing her prescriptions or any essential items. Dave said: "Me

and Joan get on incredibly well and have a laugh with one

another. She's funny, articulate and a great friend to me, so I wanted to return the favour during tough times."

Joan said: "Dave has helped me a great deal and I look forward to his calls as he's an ordinary chap with a heart of gold. We joke that I'm his surrogate grandma and it really feels like that at times. I'm incredibly thankful for him calling me during a tough time for everyone."

Joan found a passion for writing poetry and has had many of her books published, some calling her the real 'Bard of Barnsley'. She has also set up and chairs a community choir with support from Creative Minds. Joan said: "I love the choir because I have panic attacks and it makes me quite poorly. But I write poetry and I'm interested in anything to do with the theatre."



Hello, my name is Richard Raheem and  
I'm an occupational therapy  
assistant at the Trust.



"During my 13 years of working in acute mental health services at the Trust, I have been fortunate to take part in a variety of groups, sessions and activities which have been funded by Creative Minds.

"I have witnessed the positive impact that these activities have had within inpatient settings for both service users and staff. The groups have ranged from creative writing to music to physical activity, which have been so helpful in harnessing

people's creativity and providing them with an outlet to help improve their mental and physical health at a point of crisis. This has had a direct impact on the acute ward environment and has improved the bonds between everyone involved.

"I am fortunate to have been able to sit as part of the Creative Minds collective and be able to see the process of viewing applications for different projects, for both the community and within hospital settings. It's overwhelming to see how many fantastic projects are out there and need support to help people, which Creative Minds offers.

"I firmly believe that Creative Minds are a valuable service for accessing a wide variety of resources which would normally be unavailable, and I cannot thank them enough for everything they have provided. The community have had so many great opportunities thanks to their funding and the positive impact that inpatients have had from these funded projects has been life changing for some. Thank you."





Hello, my name is Alex Feather and I'm Creative Minds coordinator for Calderdale and Kirklees.

Amongst his many creative interests, Alex has developed a strong interest in fossil collecting and shares this passion in his work for Creative Minds. Alex has developed courses for local Recovery and Wellbeing Colleges and partner organisations

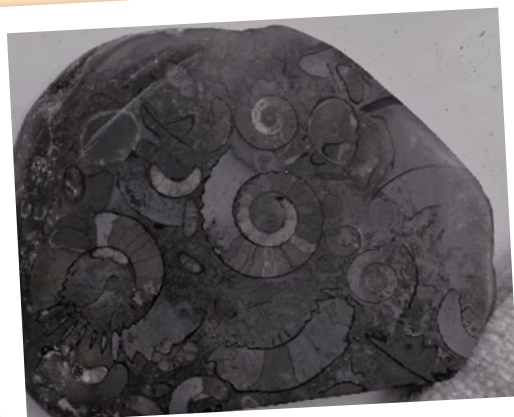
and facilitates a 'fossil fun' Facebook group as part of this. In the midst of this work, Alex has gifted several hundred fossils to learners, staff, neighbours and partner organisations, and has written articles about fossils, fossil trips, safety, preparation and the wellbeing aspects that can be enjoyed through fossil collecting.

Alex said: "There are many benefits to fossil collecting; fresh air, exercise, learning, new friendships and spinoff benefits like the connections to other activities e.g., photography, making art, walking, visiting museums and new places.

"I am enjoying challenging myself through fossil collecting as I have disabilities and a fear of heights. I used to get seasonal affective disorder in the darker months, but because fossil hunting can be better in the wintertime, it has given me more motivation to spend time outdoors.

"Almost everyone I have met says that they see fossiling as good for their wellbeing. It has increased my fitness, given me a new drive, a new passion, and new friends. It can be done individually or enjoyed with friends and family.

"Britain is rich with a wide variety of fossils, beautiful places to collect them and fantastic museums. Fossils inspire films, poetry, paintings, photography and design. They are a lot of fun, beautiful to look at and tactile to handle."



## Living a larger life in Calderdale

By David McQuillan, arts and health programme manager at South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

For the last year in Calderdale, we've been looking at the benefits of creativity across all parts of the health and care system, from public health to severe mental illness, children's centres and care homes. We want arts, culture and creativity to be embraced by local people in their everyday lives and incorporated into healthcare; resulting in longer lives and better lived, stronger, more connected communities.

What we've seen throughout the pandemic is an extraordinary response from our health services and one that has been achieved by working in this integrated and connected way. It's clear

too that through the work of Creative Minds over the past 10 years, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing and the National Academy of Social Prescribing, that conditions have been created for creative approaches to be embraced and embedded across the system. This has resulted in a whole range of developments, drawing on the co-design process that is integral to the ethos of Creative Minds and the Trust.

More than change and innovation, it's the stories of people that are most moving, those things that connect us on a human level, creating togetherness and compassion through bravery and vulnerability. The things that have inspired me this year include a lullaby composed by a service user from our



perinatal mental health service, the smile on the face of a care home resident playing music or the stories of people finding hope in places they never knew existed. Lockdown restrictions made most of us confront how we keep ourselves well and I feel that creativity has been a constant theme of hope and joy. As the artist David Shrigley put it "it's just so exciting to find out that art is... actually good for people."

## Artworks, The Everybody School of Art

Artworks has been using art to aid recovery and improve mental health and wellbeing for people living in Calderdale for over 10 years. Their work began thanks to the support of Creative Minds and a shared intuition that a simple drawing class might help people feel 'better'.

Over the years, Artworks has seen the unquestionable positive impact that art and creativity have on people's mental health and wellbeing. Each person has their own story of transformation to tell, from being able to leave the house, taking pleasure in life events, volunteering, returning to work, starting higher education and, on more than one occasion, saving a person's life.

Artworks are now working with Creative Minds and other partners from the public, cultural and third sectors to develop a creative social prescribing offer in Calderdale.

"Artworks has had a major positive impact on my wellbeing. I have something to do that I care about very much and that I can immerse myself into, freeing up any negative thoughts. It has allowed me to connect with, and on occasion, deal with my emotions. It has increased my confidence not just with my artwork but also through interactions with others. The support from the directors and others at Artworks is priceless."

# Handmade Parade

**Handmade Parade, based in a big, colourful workshop in Hebden Bridge, work with people and communities to make amazing creative things happen. This often involves giant puppets, inventive costumes made from recycled materials, lots of cardboard and music and dancing in the street.**

To date, Handmade Parade have worked with people from Trust services including those at The Dales, Calderdale Recovery and Wellbeing College and CAMHS. All artwork made with service users finds its way to Handmade Parade's events, often Lamplighter in Todmorden, where its helps to illuminate the darkness of winter, as lanterns, colourful installations or digital projections.

Throughout spring, summer and autumn 2020, Handmade Parade used Creative

Minds funding to create and send out art packs to Trust inpatient and community services in Calderdale.

The art packs centred around the theme of birds and were entitled 'release' to focus on the idea of freedom during the current lockdown restrictions. Each art pack included creative materials for participants to be able to create their bird. Feedback from staff who supported their patients or service users to take part in the creative project include:

"Everyone enjoyed doing the activity and seeing the final project at the end. We have the final piece hung on the wall in the living room so that clients can see their work and be proud of what they've done. All of the individual birds are hung in their bedrooms too – well done to everyone that took part!"

"It was a lovely project to do especially in light of COVID. It went well without an artist being present and the activity was just right for my client group, as many lose their motivation, and the materials were varied and colourful."



# Awakening Arts CIC; Harmony Hub Radio

**Awakening Arts CIC launched Harmony Hub Radio, a dementia-friendly radio show and podcast for those self-isolating or shielding during the pandemic.**

The radio show was designed to help people to keep moving, feel connected and be creative, whilst supporting and inspiring carers and care homes to keep elderly people active, positive and engaged.

Each show included guided movement, old and new poems and memorable songs, alongside a guest slot which included guests

such as BBC broadcaster and poet, Ian McMillan, and aired on local radio station Phoenix FM. The shows are also available to listen to as podcasts on the Awakening Arts CIC website.

"It got me hooked almost immediately. I will listen to all of them any time I can, there is something about it that is hypnotic... I think it's the reader's voice. Very relaxing and easy to listen to, thanks again."

"A carer said he thought the podcasts were great. His wife has dementia and loves music, she enjoyed listening and particularly liked the live music sessions."

"I have listened to quite a few episodes now. They are really great, the content, the pace etc. is spot on. The guests are so talented, it's a joy hearing the different stories."

"The whole thing would sit very nicely on Radio 4 afternoon or late evening slot!"

Awakening Arts also continue to run the 'Be Here Now' community groups for people with dementia, where they come together to read poems, sing songs, dance and paint.



# Verd de gris arts

'What Remains' is a film and workshop project by Creative Minds partners' verd de gris arts and local counsellor, Gillian Brooks. The project set out to understand more about the emotional legacy of suicide bereavement and what can be done, using creativity, to support families and individuals, and to break down the stigma families often live with as part of its legacy. The project included open film screenings, question and answers sessions around Calderdale, and free creative peer support sessions for local people affected by these issues.

The success of the project has led to screenings and sessional work across the UK including in communities across central Lancashire, with Hull Samaritans, to the Suicide Bereavement Network in Manchester and senior mental health commissioners in Wakefield.

Sharon from verd de gris arts and Gillian were invited as keynote speakers to talk about the work and showcase the film at the

Suicide Bereavement UK's 8th International Conference in September 2019 to 400+ people from 12 countries (including a representative from the United Nations).

The project also contributed to the successful £173K application to NHS England to develop a regional postvention strategy for West Yorkshire, providing personal testimony and informed advice.

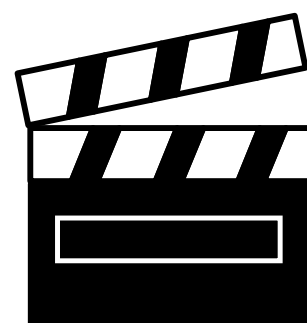
The key beneficiaries of this project have been individuals affected by suicide loss. Seeing the film and engaging in the 'conversation' has helped so many people:

"Your story really resonated with me and gave a glimmer of hope that in time I will be able to embrace all the amazing memories I have of Andrew without the solid lump in my throat and without feeling so much raw pain. I am so very grateful."

The peer support workshop sessions offered continued support:

"Sometimes we paint or draw, silently, someone will begin to talk, sometimes a conversation develops, sometimes we sink back into silence, no pressure, no awkwardness, and it is in that silence I see that although we're very different people, there are so many similar threads running through our individual experience."

As a resource, the film can help health professionals 'connect' and empathise. It helps support workers understand more. It helps friends talk about something they were terrified of mentioning. And it has helped Gillian and her family do something extraordinary for everyone affected by suicide. Watch the film at: <https://vimeo.com/460485255>.





The film's legacy has continued to grow, and in 2019 verd de gris arts were commissioned to develop a new film project by the Director of Public Health for Calderdale, Paul Butcher, highlighting themes in his annual report around acute mental health and working practices.

Verd de gris arts is also currently making a film with men and women who have previously served in the UK Armed Forces to hear their experiences of poor mental health following their transition back into civilian life. Commissioned by the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership, the organisation aims to develop a resource that can serve as an educational tool for those in need of support, to increase understanding among those still serving; give a voice to those who struggled after leaving service and shine a light on the emotional impact on the family members of military personnel.



## ***"I would have ended up on the streets" - Babur's story***

**Babur experienced anxiety and depression which led to him being referred into the Calderdale insight team.**

Working with the team, Creative Minds developed and funded a rock-climbing scheme that service users could take part in. Babur began his rock-climbing journey as part of his treatment and hasn't looked back since!

Babur is now in full-time work and has completed his rock-climbing instructor training. Babur wanted to give back to the service and Creative Minds so he now volunteers for the insight team and supports Creative Minds projects, including running weekly climbing groups and other outdoor pursuits. Babur gets to share his lived experience with people that use Trust services and share his recovery story with people whose shoes he was once in.

Babur's general health and fitness is also much improved as his diet and exercise are now designed to build upper body strength so he can climb better.

Babur's story is one of hundreds of examples of how Creative Minds has worked with the Trust to improve patient experience and outcomes. You can also hear from Babur on his personal experience through this film: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VyJ\\_y28gRc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VyJ_y28gRc).



Hello, my name is Julie Metcalf and I work in the Calderdale insight team at the Trust.

"Over the past 10 years, Creative Minds have supported our service users to spend time on creative goals, allowing individuals to express and manage emotions in a positive and productive way.

"Creative Minds have opened so many creative opportunities, football tournaments at home and abroad, climbing

and abseiling, crafts and sketching, upcycling furniture and more recently, paddle sports.

"A powerful means for mental health, reducing depression and anxiety and bringing individuals together to tackle isolation. Thank you for making a difference."



## Satellite Arts; Xylosound and The OKay Club

**Xylosound are a group of Kirklees-based musicians most of whom have learning disabilities and/or additional needs. They play large wooden xylophones and tuned percussion, make music and perform and run music workshops.**

Funding from Creative Minds helped Xylosound launch The OKay Club; a drama and performance club to help more adults with additional needs take part in drama and dance.

Xylosound and The OKay Club sessions are held at The Watershed in Slaithwaite and are led by music and

drama specialists Andy Burton and Gill Bond from Satellite Arts. The groups have so far put on festive performances with plays, comedy shows, dancing and songs. Xylosound were also commissioned to play at the Trust's Annual Member's Meeting at Huddersfield Town Hall.

"It was the best performance we have seen our son in, and I can see a huge development in his confidence."

"I absolutely love it, fab costumes, fab music, fab dancing, fab invention. I look forward to seeing their new performance every year."



## Support to Recovery (S2R)

S2R is an independent mental health and wellbeing charity who have been a Creative Minds partner since 2011.

Working across Kirklees, S2R offer a range of wellbeing, creative and outdoor workshops, all suggested by the people who use their service. Activities have included textile workshops with weaving looms and the creation of a sculpture which toured Kirklees.

Creative Minds' support and funding has also enabled S2R to pilot new ideas, including a public place where people with mental health difficulties can display and sell their artwork.

'The Great Outdoors' project was also an innovative initiative which offers adults in

Kirklees the chance to take their first steps into nature - to help people gain better access to the outdoors. So far, the project has included activities such as mindful walks, tending a community allotment and campfire crafts.

Jason Kerry at S2R said: "We know from independent research and the testimony of our own participants, that connecting people with nature as part of a group in an outdoor activity or an indoor workshop is a great way to improve emotional and physical wellbeing, reduce anxiety, create social connections and learn about both ourselves and the natural world."

Read more at: [www.s2r.org.uk/the-great-outdoors-project](http://www.s2r.org.uk/the-great-outdoors-project)

# Holme Valley Sharing Memories Group

In February 2020, over 300 people attended a special open day and exhibition created by Holme Valley Sharing Memories Group, to mark the opening of a special 'museum of curiosities' at Holmfirth Tech.

Holme Valley Sharing Memories Group, an older people's arts and wellbeing group, worked in partnership with patients from Enfield Down, plus local schools, the Children's Art School, the Bridgewood Trust and local music groups to create the exhibition.

In the past, Holmfirth Tech had housed a small museum of curiosities and the project participants recreated new objects in globes as part of a new exhibition. Local children also created 'The secret life of sheep' textile banners.

On the day there were performances and showcases from the Holme Valley Soul Choir and the Valley Beats Drumming Group (including people from Enfield Down and the Bridgewood Trust with homemade instruments) and The Children's Ukulele Group.



New art was created, new songs were written, and lasting memories were made. The museum was a truly collaborative project bringing together people with mental health issues, learning disabilities, older people and local children with local music and arts organisations.

# Third Sector Leaders

## Kirklees - Words in Mind

**Creative Minds have been working in partnership with Third Sector Leaders Kirklees (previously Volunteering Kirklees) on the Words in Mind project for the last four years.**

The project centres around bibliotherapy - the use of literature, words, writing, reading and listening to literature – which has been a core activity supported since the inception of Creative Minds. Bibliotherapy is not therapy in the traditional sense, but a therapeutic endeavour which has proven benefits for mental health and wellbeing. The emphasis is on being non-prescriptive, person-centred and having social connection.

Words in Mind have worked with library services, community groups and other organisations to provide ways in which people can enjoy bibliotherapy. Kirklees library service was an international pioneer in bibliotherapy with its 'Reading and You' scheme

in 2018, where library staff and other local volunteers were trained to run sessions for wards, community groups, care settings and the Calderdale and Kirklees Recovery and Wellbeing Colleges.

A research study by academics from Manchester Metropolitan University and Lancaster University found that through the Words in Mind project, 60 volunteers and staff were trained in bibliotherapy skills and by November 2019, they were delivering 47 groups. The study recognised key outcomes in terms of health, social interaction and cultural dimensions. Part of the project involved a conference on bibliotherapy too, which was delivered in conjunction with the Huddersfield Literature

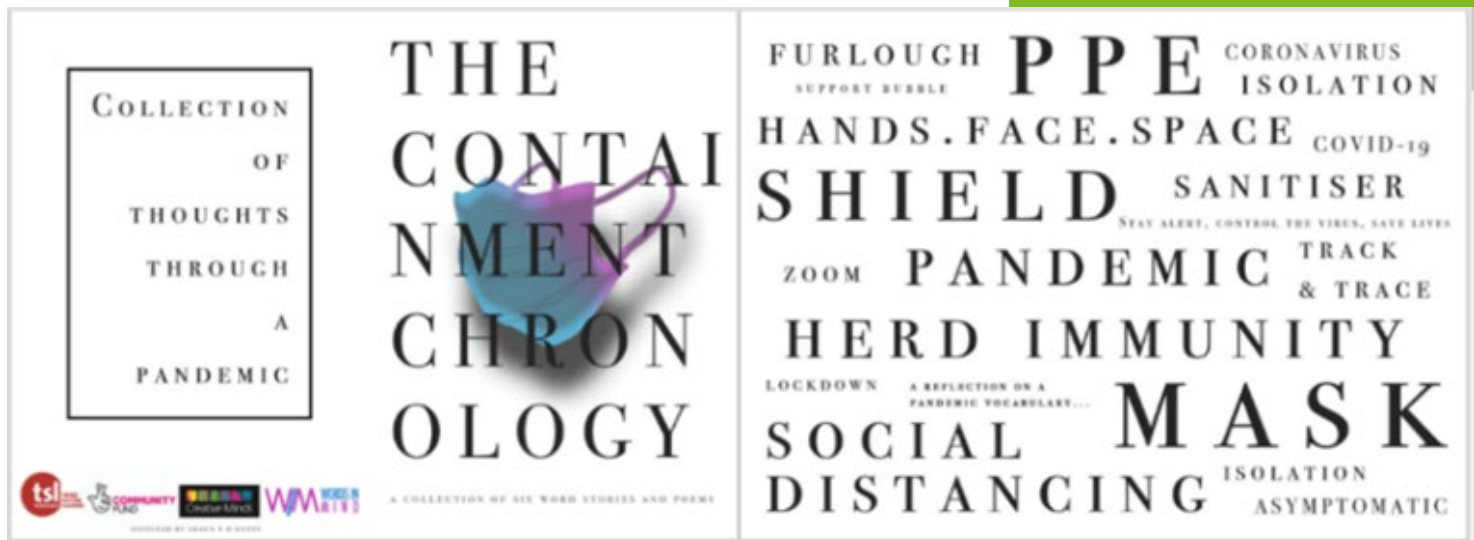
Festival and included guest speakers from the research team and Alan Johnson, ex-health minister.

**Feedback from the project has included:**

*"I don't think the subjects are as important; I think it's just like a catalyst to get the conversations going, then they go off on their own from that."*

*"You're treated as a human being with value... you're cared about, and whatever you're feeling is important and worth sharing with people."*

*"Mood levels are obviously affected by attending the session, with people becoming more settled and focused and able to engage."*



During the pandemic, Creative Minds also funded 'The Containment Chronology', a collection of poems and writing about lockdown and how this had impacted the lives of people in Kirklees. The Chronology included six-word stories and poems and helped to establish a record of social history for the future.

Stories and poems submitted as part of the chronology showed the positive aspects of the pandemic, such as rallying to help each other, time to contemplate and enjoyment of nature. Whilst the objective was to produce a reflection of uplifting experiences, it was also important to give people a chance to express fears and anxieties, of which there were many.

#### Some examples of the six-word stories include:

- Is it today, yesterday, or tomorrow?
- Nature breathed and said 'thank you'

#### Feedback from volunteers and participants also included:

*"I was impressed that everyone was willing to have a go at writing a few lines and read them aloud... there was a lot of laughter and some reflection on the tough side of lockdown."*

*"I found it really challenging to write about how I'm feeling, but it made me feel better, and being able to share how I was feeling made me feel less alone."*

## Folly Hall Mills artwork and poetry

The Trust site of Folly Hall Mills has been decorated with displays of artwork and poetry from people who use Trust services, alongside their carers and staff, and partner organisations.

Artwork developed through Creative Minds' funding and projects now decorates the main waiting areas, corridors, meeting rooms and even staff areas. One of the large corridor walls has been dedicated to poetry.

Creative Minds partner S2R were also commissioned to provide large patchworks of individual pieces of artwork for the reception area. They also gave away free artwork as part of 2019 World

Mental Health Day celebrations at Folly Hall Mills.

This project has given people the chance to showcase their work, sometimes for the very first time and in the accompanying biographies, the chance to express why art and creativity is important to them.

The project was assisted by Trust volunteer, Carrie Hanson, herself an artist and creative practitioner who formerly had a picture framing business. Over 60 artists and groups have so far contributed. Alex Feather, Creative Minds coordinator for Kirklees and Calderdale, conducted three tours of the displays for contributors, visitors and staff, the first as part of a celebration event with tea and cakes.

Feedback from visitors and staff has been overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of people sharing that they thought it would contribute to the wellbeing of visitors and staff. Visitors even reported that it made them feel calmer for their appointments and

provided talking points that improved the therapeutic relationships they had with workers. You can read some of the feedback below:

"Truly inspirational! Made me think of different ways to value and empower people I work with. It has been really special to see someone I work with take part in this project."

"It will make my mum proud of me."

"Colourful, moving, uplifting, inspirational, fascinating."

"More welcoming feel to the place."

"Staff feel more valued as their workplace is more aesthetically pleasing. It helps staff feel more connected to service users as we have extra insight into their experiences. I'm sure service users feel more connected with Folly Hall Mills as a result of having their work around the building."

The next phase of the project will see Creative Minds continue to help showcase the talents of local people through Trust premises and other venues, with a focus on gaining artwork and poetry from more young people too.





## A message from Neil...

Hi, I'm Neil Garner and I'm chair of the Kirklees Creative Minds Collective, which is a group of public and staff members that help Creative Minds fund and support projects.

I am, myself, a creative person. I paint, play guitar, drum and sing, and I have a small forge that burns charcoal for metalworking.

As chair, my role is to discuss the funding applications and processes and to keep discussion flowing and on time. I also take time to visit projects, this is very beneficial to my mental health as it stops the days seeming so long, and I often come home from such visits with a feeling of satisfaction that I played a small part in bringing the project about.

I have lived experience of serious and enduring mental health issues and I think that creativity has helped me cope over the years. It gives all of us involved with Creative Minds a sense of fulfilment that we may have helped many people in the community.

*Hello, my name is Dr Richard Coaten and I am a dance movement psychotherapist at the Trust.*

"It's great to have the opportunity to celebrate Creative Minds' 10th anniversary. I have seen first-hand what a difference art can make in the quality of care and how it can transform a care environment.

"Creative Minds is not just about arts and health; it's much broader than that. Since launching, Trust staff have seen how the Creative Minds portfolio and range of work, with care and sensitivity, can be tailored to their own service delivery area.

"Creative Minds has helped build new partnerships, create meaningful outcomes for individuals and groups, while at the same time offering match-funded grants to support a whole range of organisations to work with the Trust. It really is a win-win, plus it's improved people's mental and physical health!

"I am in no doubt that Creative Minds is of both national and international significance,

with its model of good practice in how the NHS can transform itself in the communities it serves being shared by universities and research institutes.

"I hope that after all it has achieved these past years, Creative Minds continues to thrive with the dedication of a great team of which I feel proud to have been a member of in earlier years."





Hello, my name is Ash Mahmood and I'm Creative Minds coordinator for Wakefield, forensic services and the Mental Health Museum

Amongst his many creative interests, Ash has developed a strong interest in mindfulness and spirituality and has developed and delivered sessions on mindfulness. The sessions are adapted to individual needs of service users and staff, and have taken place at Newton Lodge, Fieldhead. Ash also provides support for pastoral care at the Trust as a Muslim Chaplain, supporting service users in Friday prayers and access to the Masjid.

Ash also looks after the Caring Garden at Fieldhead, with help from Creative Minds partner, Grow Wakefield, and service users and professional workers that meet up and discuss the future of the Caring Garden.

**Ash said:** "Gardening can improve many aspects of mental health, focus, and concentration, and it can also improve mood. Gardening can make you feel more peaceful and content. Focusing your attention on the immediate tasks and details of gardening can reduce negative thoughts and feelings and can make you feel better in the moment. Just spending time around plants eases stress for many people."

Gardening can also bring other benefits for people with mental health and learning disabilities, such as:

- **Boosting self-esteem.** Self-esteem is how much you value and feel positively about yourself. Helping a plant grow is a big accomplishment. When you see your work pay off with healthy plants, your sense of pride gets a boost.
- **Improving attention span.** Gardening can change how well you pay full attention to a single activity. If you struggle with staying focused on tasks, conversations, or topics in your daily life, gardening can help you learn to concentrate on what's right in front of you without getting distracted.
- **Providing exercise.** Things like weeding, digging, and raking are good exercise. Regular exercise can help reduce anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. If you don't like going to the gym, gardening can be an enjoyable way to still get these benefits.
- **Encouraging social bonds.** Gardening with others at a community garden or other group setting involves teamwork to achieve shared goals. Being part of a larger group can benefit your mental health by increasing your social connections and your support system.



# CoActive

CoActive have been a Creative Minds partner since 2015, which has enabled the charity to deliver continuous creative activities, whilst demonstrating depth of engagement and brave artistic aspirations and achievements.

Two years of consecutive film-making projects explored slapstick comedy, silent film melodrama and early basic special effects techniques, and led to the production of many short films, many of which are available to watch on YouTube: <https://buff.ly/3FbHYD3>.

Beyond Bounds was a project that combined art and dance and expressed and explored restriction. CoActive found exciting ways of engaging with audiences which led to touring many places in Wakefield and Leeds. CoActive and Creative Minds partnered to successfully secure a large grant from The Arts Council for this project.



2019 saw CoActive explore further the interplay between dance and art and enabled members to take part in The Long Division Festival, a promotion of the local Safer Places Scheme and The Art Walk.

Over the pandemic, Creative Minds continued to work with CoActive. Together the partnership provided meaningful activities over lockdown through digital platforms, delivering art materials and creating bespoke DVDs of activities. Members were connected through phone calls, doorstep greetings and outside walks too.

The charity's current project focuses on developing yoga practise, which is a great tool for taking notice of our bodies, posture, body strengthening and addressing anxiety and stress. This work has been very beneficial so far, with connections made and new skills learnt.



# Wakefield Youth Justice Service

Wakefield Youth Justice Service used Creative Minds funding to provide a positive activities programme for local young people in the criminal justice system.

The programme helped young people to relieve stress, whilst providing an opportunity to learn new skills, build confidence and improve mental health.

During the programme, young people were encouraged to share, carry out team building exercises and form healthy friendships during days out and activities such as kayaking, foot golf, walking and museum visits.

The funding provided opportunities for the young people to try new things and access activities that they would not normally consider, this has been particularly beneficial

during the pandemic. For those young people unable to take part in group work, the funding provided one to one gym and boxing sessions to teach and model stress busting exercises.

Feedback from young people, parents/carers and staff who were part of the activities was very positive, and included:



"At first I didn't like the idea of kayaking because you get wet, but now I love it."

"I do think my grandson benefited a lot from the positive activities programme, he is now really good at home and school."

The programme has also helped in the diversion away from offending behaviour and would not have been possible without the funding from Creative Minds.



# Faceless Arts - helping communities to connect

**Over 260 people took part in workshops delivered by Faceless Arts to create silk paintings of local scenery and landmarks; to celebrate the Wakefield district.**

The workshops also focused on the sharing of memories and stories from participants, with feedback including:

"Reminiscence was a big part of the project. Some of those in the Alzheimer's group had memories prompted by the images of local historical sights."



"Using local pictures was a good idea as it encouraged people to participate because they were familiar with the picture. The technique of tracing the photo through the silk meant that no-one could argue that they couldn't draw and therefore didn't want to join in."

The silk paintings created during the workshops have since been shared at The Hepworth.



# Grow Wakefield

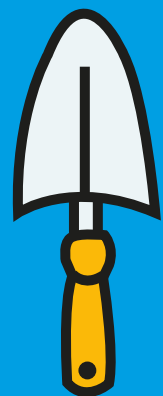
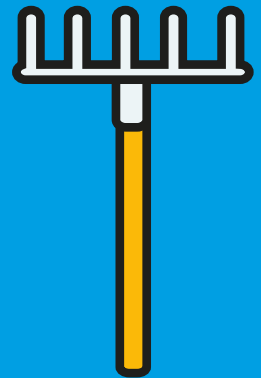
Grow Wakefield have been a Creative Minds partner for over seven years. Throughout this time, they've focused on improving the physical and mental wellbeing of local people, including people who use Trust mental health and learning disability services.

The work of Grow Wakefield started in the Caring Garden at Fieldhead in 2015. In 2017, the group expanded to create a community-based therapeutic gardening project in their community garden at Outwood Memorial Hall. The garden has a greenhouse and potting shed, with winter woodworking sessions being held inside the hall, so that service users can continue to meet during the darker months when it is more difficult to garden.

Grow Wakefield's projects offer activities which provide people with access to the five ways of wellbeing; connecting with peers, being involved in physical exercise, experiencing different and new environments, learning new skills and sharing their own skills with the group.

By getting people involved in horticultural and woodworking activities, this also brings subsequent mental and physical health benefits, such as reducing social isolation and increasing participant's access to healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables.

In the past 12 months, Grow Wakefield have worked with Creative Minds and other partners to improve and develop the Caring Garden at Fieldhead. They are also working on future funding for initiatives to build on and strengthen the links between Trust services offered at Fieldhead and Grow Wakefield projects, providing a pathway so that service users can continue their recovery and start to play an active role in their local communities further.



# ***Theatre Royal Wakefield – a year like no other***

Creative Minds funding helped Theatre Royal Wakefield to carry on supporting young people within their Performance Academy and Chime group (for young people with learning disabilities) during the pandemic.

The funding allowed the theatre to offer online performing arts classes to keep young people active, alongside regular virtual 'meet ups' and activities, providing a space to talk to friends, share worries and feel less alone; overall supporting their wellbeing.

Over 80% of young people who took part in activities had reported that their mental

health was suffering and that being able to connect to like-minded friends out of a formal school setting really helped them during lockdown.

Young people who are part of the Chime group especially benefitted from the regular sessions too, with feedback from a local parent sharing:

"It's such a comfort to me that she has you wonderful people in her life... [She] is starting to return to a better state of mind thankfully so thank you for all you are doing."



## *Dream Time Creative CIC – doorstep creations*

**During the pandemic, Dream Time Creative CIC worked with Creative Minds and Nova to launch 'doorstep creations' and provide free craft kits to the community of Wakefield.**

Each craft kit contained the materials needed, written instructions and a link to the craft tutorials on YouTube. The project was also supported by a public Facebook group where the participants could share their creative journeys through photos and provide encouragement to others, alongside their written thoughts on the activities and the pandemic.

The project was aimed at people who were lonely or socially isolated during the pandemic, so it particularly focused on connecting people and giving them an activity that would help them to feel included, alongside expressing their creativity.

During the project, over 450 kits were sent out, and the project was recognised as "outstanding service to the community" by Ed Anderson, Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, with two of the craft kits featuring on BBC Radio Leeds too.



Hello, my name is Michelle Williams and I work in the Wakefield insight team at the Trust.

"Since the beginning, the use of creative approaches in mental health has been an interest of mine. I have a joint honours degree in art and creative psychological interventions, so it's definitely up my street!"

"I was invited to be involved with Creative Minds at the Trust, supporting community interventions, service provisions and designs of possible projects.

"Creative Minds activities have been shared with people who we work with, alongside projects being integrated into our service offer. This includes climbing wall experiences and we've continuously shared ideas and evidence of what has worked well for people."

# The 'big blue head' sculpture project at Fieldhead

**The 'big blue head' sculpture project was a collaborative venture between the two low secure forensic units at Fieldhead, working alongside Arts in Mind.**

In January 2012, a series of joint workshops were held at Fieldhead, which lead up to the beginning of the sculpture project.

Artist, Amanda Wray, was commissioned to work alongside members of staff and service users from both units to produce a final sculpture to be displayed on the Fieldhead site.

Paul Dews, music and arts practitioner at the Trust, also provided support and guidance to service users and staff to maintain continuity of engagement.

The experiences and insights of the participants formed a central aspect to explore innovative ideas, concepts and skills, in a process that engaged with professional artists in a unique and creative environment. The participants explored new ways of thinking and used media that they had never worked with before, such as mosaics.

The group considered form and learned mosaic styles and techniques. They also considered the outdoor setting of the final piece when deciding on materials, their choices influenced by durability and safety. The concept for the design was based on places of meaning and what is meaningful to the group.

Each participant designed and made their own personal mosaic. During the creation of the sculpture, two main areas were addressed:

- **Skills** – service users and staff benefitted from the collaboration with two professional artists, learning new expressive skills and providing opportunities to further develop artistic abilities. The project enhanced the learning programme available in the hospital and provided an opportunity for positive creative interactions between service users and staff.
- **Therapeutic elements** – encouraging self-esteem and confidence, whilst contributing to ongoing recovery and wellbeing. All participants engaged equally as artists in a shared journey of imagination and expression. This provided a powerful affirmation of self-image and worth against the often-negative connotations of what it means to be a patient in a secure psychiatric institution. It also encouraged cooperation and understanding between the two groups of service users.



The big blue head sculpture is an iconic piece on the Fieldhead grounds and remains in daily use as a seat and a place of quiet refuge. The project itself caught the interest of those involved and was the catalyst for numerous further pieces of art and projects across the Trust.



Hello, my name is Dave Ogden and I'm an occupational therapy manager at the Trust.



"I've been involved with Creative Minds since the beginning. The use of creative approaches in mental health and learning disabilities has been at the core of my practice, and a personal interest of mine.

"I have been a creative champion throughout my time at the Trust and have been actively involved in a number of projects from the big blue head, work with Theatre Royal Wakefield to various choir projects and work with Castleford Tigers.

"I also encourage others to take up the mantle and drive the creative agenda."

Hello, my name is Sarah Osborne and I'm artistic director at Yew Tree Youth Theatre and Yew Tree Arts.

"Writing with patients and staff at Newhaven and Newton Lodge, Fieldhead, is always a creative and inspiring process. Our annual pantomime is usually a high point of the festive season (before COVID stalled our theatrical endeavour), and when funding from Creative Minds gave us the opportunity to write 2018's pantomime script with patients, artists at Yew Tree Arts knew we were in for a treat!

"The writing took place over a series of workshops where, in partnership with the patients, we created a plot and a cast of characters. In true pantomime style, there were jokes a plenty. But in a break from tradition, instead of the play being based on a well-known fairy tale, a host of well-known characters from a variety of stories including Scrooge, Puss in Boots and the Fairy Godmother featured in the story instead!

"Each of the writers brought a unique and authentic voice to the writing, meaning the pantomime script was of a quality and richness that as professional writers we wouldn't have achieved. The process and the product were brilliant, and what was even more rewarding was that as soon as we had finished the script, we took it straight into the rehearsal room to get it ready for performance!"



# ***Football hopes for Trust forensic services***

Staff and service users at Newton Lodge, a medium secure hospital based at Fieldhead in Wakefield, have been working hard to create a new footballing experience with help from Creative Minds.

Staff nurse, Paul Crossland, ward manager, Damon Barker Scholes, and Creative Minds coordinator, Ash Mahmood, have teamed up to put the wheels in motion to become affiliated by the

English Football Association (FA), and build a football team with the aim to train and compete in the Trust's Good Mood League.

Both Paul and Damon have previously been involved in successful football events at Newton Lodge, and are keen to promote the positive impact that they have on the mental and physical wellbeing of all involved.

Paul, who also works as a football coach in his spare time, said: "Many of our service users struggle with motivation to start exercising or may get intimidated by the idea of a gym.

"Football creates an alternative way to help people get active but also helps with skills in other areas, such as teamwork and confidence, which they can build on as they plan for their futures and recovery."



# The Mental Health Museum - working on wellbeing

**The Mental Health Museum is a place where conversations start.**

The museum and its team interpret the history of the West Riding Asylum group of hospitals, and have an internationally significant collection of artefacts and a paper archive, which tell the story of the evolution of treatments for mental ill health, and the experience of living and working in these hospitals.

Alongside this collection, the museum has a contemporary collecting policy that includes gathering ongoing accounts from people with lived experience of mental health. The museum aims to be a space where, through these objects and stories, visitors can explore mental health and co-produce new interpretations. Through the displays and activities, the museum can challenge the stigma and prejudice associated with mental ill health and encourage people to explore different perspectives and new ways of thinking.

The museum knows that providing a space where staff and visitors can talk about mental health through its collections is very valuable. However, as part of the work of the Trust, the museum team have begun to explore new ways that they can extend the offer and encourage activities and conversations that help promote wellbeing further.

The museum is seen by staff as a hub which can be used creatively. For example,

the team are developing activities relating to the museum's collection that provide the opportunity for a gentle hour of crafting within the museum space. The museum also welcome people to come and borrow a novel from the library and encourage knit and natterers to come and enjoy a lively afternoon and some company.

In addition to opening the museum to a variety of activities, the museum is inviting other services that can help people to plan their recovery for when they leave Trust services. This includes drop-in sessions with the Citizens Advice Bureau, for example. Providing services like this at Fieldhead, in a space which is familiar to users of Trust services, will hopefully enable individuals to access useful advice quickly and easily.

The museum continues to adapt and develop its services in response to the needs of its visitors and audience. If you have an idea for the future development of the museum, please do get in touch, as the team would love to hear from you!

**Twitter:**

@MHMwakefield

**Facebook:**

@MentalHealthMuseum

**Website:**

[www.mentalhealthmuseum.co.uk](http://www.mentalhealthmuseum.co.uk)



The Mental Health Museum team

Hello, my name is Graham Hill and I am a consultant psychiatrist in the perinatal mental health team at the Trust.



"Creativity is the most precious skill mankind has, from the development of the wheel right through to the Trust's magical Creative Minds service. It can lurk within all of us, unseen and unknown, unrecognised and unnurtured. My 'hat's off' to Phil, Alex and all colleagues, for helping people find those keys which unlock their hidden skills. You are truly magnificent, and so kind too!"

# Research

## *Our shared commitment to innovation in mental health services: The centrality of research and learning for change*

**An introduction by Professor Barry Percy-Smith and Mike Lucock, University of Huddersfield.**

Creative Minds are really quite unique in being a linked charity of South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, who are supported to develop non-medical and creative approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

The arts and creative health agenda, together with social prescribing, have now gathered substantial momentum nationally. Yet there is much still to do for these approaches to be understood and incorporated into mainstream provision.

Since 2015, the University of Huddersfield have forged a strong partnership with Creative Minds, driven by a shared commitment to realising the effective use of creative approaches to mental wellbeing.

Our role as researchers interested in social and organisational change has been as a learning partner with Creative Minds, both in evaluating projects and initiatives but also in facilitating learning and innovation with stakeholders and service users.

There is much we still need to learn about what makes a difference with creative approaches and how we can extend good practice more widely, including through professional and service learning with mental health service providers.

We share a participatory ethos. Creative Minds customise provision around people's holistic needs rather than solely in response to medical diagnoses. Similarly, we operationalise our expertise in participatory action research and systemic inquiry, working with others to develop deeper understanding about what works and how, and using this to support further coproduction in innovation of creative activities to enhance wellbeing.

Creating spaces for learning and inquiry – for example through the use of World Café approaches which harness expertise by experience and support innovation and development – are key to this work.

The way in which Creative Minds works in partnership with service users and community organisations suggests the projects it supports are more likely to be accessible, acceptable and beneficial for people, including those who are reluctant or unable to engage with mainstream services. However, more research is required to understand if this is the case and how this works, so lessons can be learnt locally and nationally.

Our partnership with Creative Minds is currently supported by two PhD studies, set up through Yorkshire and Humber Applied Research Collaboration, which are providing rich new evidence into the benefits of creative approaches. We are looking forward to continuing our partnership working with Creative Minds to further innovate thinking and practice and share our joint commitment to bringing about change in mental health services.



# A peer-led approach to evaluating the 'soft and fluffy'

*In partnership with the University of Huddersfield and People's Voice Media and with funding from The Health Foundation.*

People that take part in Creative Minds projects tell us that creative activities are good for wellbeing. They not only make you feel better but can be life transforming.

Although we know this, our experience is that the benefits of creative approaches are hard to capture. People want to spend time doing activities, not filling in evaluation forms or surveys. This can therefore give us a limited picture of what people who take part in our projects experience, leaving a gap in capturing wider experience, and lack of evidence around impact of activities. For this reason, and often from a more medical perspective, creative activities can be seen as 'soft and fluffy' and not providing clinical outcomes.

We therefore wanted to help people to tell and share stories of their experience of using creative approaches for their wellbeing, and we chose to do this through community reporting.

Community reporting is a storytelling movement that was started in 2007 by People's Voice Media, and it uses pocket technologies like smart phones to support people to tell their own stories in their own ways. Central to the approach is the belief that people telling authentic stories about their own lived experience offers a valuable understanding of their lives.

We trained a peer-led network of community reporters to collect stories from each other to evaluate creative activities and provide insights into new approaches to mental health and wellbeing. Opportunities for everyone to have their say were provided. Through the collection of stories, both audio and video, participants were able to listen to others whilst ensuring that everyone felt that their lived experience was a valid and valued story to share.

22 people were trained in community reporting and almost 100 stories were gathered through direct peer-to-peer sharing and storytelling sessions. The stories are shared on The Institute of Community Reporter's website: <https://communityreporter.net/creativitywellbeing>

Some of the themes that emerged told us that creative activities:

## **Offer something different:**

"An opportunity to express yourself in a different way and to be with other people – kind of just letting go of the everyday experience of life and thinking too much and doing too much."

## **Shifts my focus and "distracts me":**

"I started seeing things differently... my whole life changed, my purpose in life changed, I started acting differently, it [creativity] gave me a different perspective and that's what I needed."

## **Facilitates expression and exploration:**

Creative activities help and allow a person to express themself in different ways; one person described how writing enabled them to verbalise. People described feeling "truly understood" and "listened to" through participation in the different activities/groups. This facilitation of expression and exploration was described by one person as "a cure to a lot of my anxiety and depression."



**Allows acceptance and inclusion:** The groups and activities create a sense of community, “a family”, which helped people feel safe, included and “part of something”...“you feel wanted” “they are more family than family.”

**Are innate and essential:** “The essence of life” - helps a person to feel alive and is essential to wellbeing. “More than a hobby, it’s a lifestyle for me. It’s my whole life, I don’t know what I would do without creativity in my life.”

“Creativity means life. If I didn’t have creativity in my life, I would not be here today. I did an art class that saved my life, and it continues to keep improving my life and keeps me well and maintains my status quo in this emotional roller-coaster of life.”

One member of staff who supported the project also described it in the following way:

“A no brainer for funders in terms of the return on the investment that you get, while they play football all their mental health and social issues are forgotten and that transcends into the rest of the day, probably rest of the week, and to the next session that they play football. It keeps people well and out of hospital. A lot of the people now are not taking medications, they are doing physical activity, looking after their physical health, they’re exercising, stopping smoking.”

One participant also said: “Don’t give me a tablet for my depression, give me a football.”

Despite national drivers that promote a general move away from an ‘expert-controlled’ health system to one that is much more in the hands of the individual and community, frustration and concern as to how and whether this is translated into practice still remains strong.

The empowerment of individuals through participatory and service user-led approaches, such as community reporting and co-production with policy and practice professionals, are key to taking this agenda forward; if we can find ways to translate the robust evidence and invest in creativity, dispel myths surrounding creativity, and develop the training of our professional workforce to recognise the potential of creativity for our health and wellbeing.

In June 2020, the full ‘soft and fluffy’ evaluation was published. The evaluation has so far helped the Creative Minds team to fully understand the benefits of creative activities, to plan future approaches around what works best and to share the findings with other health and care organisations, alongside South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

You can read the full evaluation report at: <https://buff.ly/3jjJ8DO>



# Creativity and communication: In our mess, we discovered our success



*By Sophie Mei Lan*

Creativity may appear as a 'soft and fluffy' approach to mental health treatment, but it is bolder, bigger and brighter than "just painting a picture" or "writing some prose".

Creativity may even feel 'soft and fluffy' at times when you tap into your creative power, losing yourself amidst one of the many creative practices.

From drawing to graphic design, writing and even community reporting, creativity comes in many forms of expression. This is a vital tool in communication with each other but also for all of us to manage our own mental health.

I relate to all the human stories I have discovered in my quest to demonstrate that this vital tool, which is integral to all our wellbeing and needs to be on the forefront of all our minds, including medical professionals.

Whatever your creative flow, so many of us so-called 'service users' are much deeper than a label and our 'illness', with our voices feeling stifled.

“Art has been key to my mental health recovery, creativity is far from soft and fluffy.”

So as someone who lives the hybrid life of a 'service user' and 'creative media professional', I was reinvigorated by the pioneering spirit of Creative Minds who commissioned People's Voice Media to deliver a community reporting workshop to discover why and how creativity matters to people who have mental health problems.

In a true creative spirit, I went along wearing two hats - one as a support for two of the team at CoActive Arts Charity and the other, as a service user.

Central to community reporting is the belief that people telling authentic stories about their own lived experiences offers a valuable understanding of their lives. Community reporting provides opportunities in which people can use storytelling to:

- Find their voice
- Challenge perceptions
- Be catalysts of change

People's Voice Media follow a model of mobilising stories (responding), gathering stories (probing), and curating stories (sense-making).

One of the community reporter participants, Dan, shares what happened and how community reporting has transformed his own life too:

"Our training sessions were held at the Mental Health Museum in Fieldhead. The leaders asked some of the group members to tell their stories and we went outside to edit those stories and then we came back and shared them.



"There was also a session in Huddersfield which was a roundup of everything we had done, and again we asked people for stories. We also had a group activity where we had to put things on a big piece of paper, and then decide whether we were happy to keep them on or move them to another section on the paper.

"I now do reporting regularly as I write notes on sports teams, mainly football, and then I put them into a blog ([danssportsblogweb.wordpress.com](http://danssportsblogweb.wordpress.com)) or on Facebook (@DansSportsBlog). I use my passion to explain the game and key moments within games and my opinions too."

I too can relate to Dan's journey, as someone who has experienced mental health issues alongside weaving my way into the not-so-friendly media industry in my passion to become a multi-platform journalist.

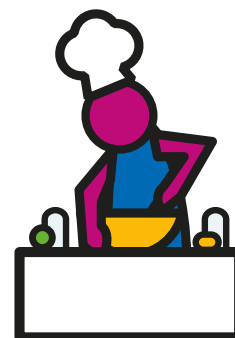
Things transformed when I started sharing my own journey during a moment of despair whilst working from home and experiencing anxiety and post-partum psychosis, using the power of vlogging and blogging.

Community reporting reignited my mission to still work in the media industry but as a perfectly imperfect 'authentic voice', sharing my own story, but most importantly empowering and supporting others to share their story across platforms, so that not only is their voice heard, but it is articulated in a way that changes minds, lives and the media.

I now run <https://sparklecommunications.co.uk> which encompasses community journalism projects, magazine publishing and the sharing of communication skills. I still blog and vlog at <https://mamamei.co.uk>, <https://yorkshirefamilies.co.uk> and <https://sparkleupnorth.com>



“ You have to do some form of yoga and meditation to stay well as a journalist. ”



“ Baking helps calm my dyslexic and dyspraxic mind. ”

## Hayley Trowbridge, People's Voice Media



"We've found working with Creative Minds to be really encouraging and welcoming. They have introduced us to a range of new connections and networks and have supported us to develop lived experience storytelling across Yorkshire.

"The projects we have collaborated on together has produced a lot of meaningful learning, such as tangibly identifying the benefit of creativity on people's wellbeing and better understanding health inequalities, particularly in terms of mental health.

"Whilst this work has been based locally, we've been able to share the learning with partners across the UK and Europe, and the Creative Minds team have been really supportive with this. We hope to continue to work alongside the team long into the future in different creative and community-building projects."

# PhD study one

## Arts, recovery and identity

Current research by Louisa Peters (PhD psychology researcher at the University of Huddersfield) in partnership with Creative Minds.



### Research aim

To find out how and why community-based art activities aid recovery from serious mental illness, particularly through identity change.

### Expert panel

Thank you to Sara Rose, Shahedah Masood, Jo G, Neil, Debs Teale; Creative Minds, Cartwheel Arts and MAECare for your input.

### Initial findings

So far, the research has identified three main mechanisms within community arts activities that enables positive identity change. Coping, connecting and overcoming challenges:

**Coping:** Learning creative skills develops coping through escapism and/or expression.

**Connecting:** Meeting likeminded people encourages support and acceptance.

**Overcoming challenges:** Art groups offer a safe space to overcome personal, creative and social challenges.

These mechanisms help individuals become aware of their strengths and achievements and allows them to redefine themselves beyond illness labels. Developing a positive sense of self is an important part of recovery.

### What's next?

The next phase of research will involve using photos and interviews with art group attendees, to capture recovery stories.

To find out more, or to get involved, please contact: [louisa.peters@hud.ac.uk](mailto:louisa.peters@hud.ac.uk).



# PhD study two

## Young people and creative arts



Creative Minds is partnering in an exciting research project exploring the role of creative arts for young people, within the context of mental health.

The research project, undertaken by Stacey Durham, a researcher at the University of Huddersfield, aims to highlight three key objectives that will deliver new knowledge about creative provisions for young people living with mental health difficulties.

### What will the research help us to understand?

- The context in which creative provision is accessed by young people
- The benefits of creative activity for young people, aged 14-19, living with mental health difficulties
- If, and how, creative activity might function during periods of complex change.

### Want to get involved?

If you're interested in becoming involved in this project, please contact Stacey on [Stacey.durham@hud.ac.uk](mailto:Stacey.durham@hud.ac.uk).



# Developing Young Creative Minds

By professor Barry Percy-Smith



Mental health issues account for a significant proportion of the ill-health experienced by young people and it's estimated that 75% of mental illness in adults starts during adolescence.

Yet, national demand for child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) far outstrips capacity, many having lengthy waits to access treatment. Significant numbers of children and young people are not being referred into, and/or are not able to access services, due to limited resources being directed towards those with more severe and complex difficulties. Yet, there is mounting evidence that early intervention and community-based interventions can help to prevent difficulties becoming more severe and entrenched.

There is an acknowledged need for more community-centred ways of working in health and social care, and an increasing focus on empowering individuals and communities to engage in participatory development. National drivers promote a move towards a more socially community-driven model of health and social care, such as 'social prescribing', seeing creative activity having positive impacts on physical and mental health, improving clinical and social outcomes.

Creative Minds has, from inception, made every effort to work together with all stakeholders, including service users, in planning, development and implementation. With a focus on empowering service users to develop user-led services, Creative Minds approaches offer a different way of engaging with communities than through conventional services and have worked especially well with people who have traditionally been difficult to engage.

In 2017, The Centre for Applied Childhood, Youth and Family Research at the University of Huddersfield were commissioned to undertake some scoping work to inform the further development of a Young Creative Minds work approach. The work involved consultation with a total of 19 young people, with 18 adult stakeholders and informal conversations and discussions with over 12 community-based practitioners, CAMHS and youth workers. The aim of this work was to identify, develop and

support the development of creative approaches to help children and young people manage their mental health and support their wellbeing.

Young people firstly identified a range of different activities they found beneficial including singing groups, making cards, poetry, rap and making music, making jewellery, drawing/art, climbing, cooking, sports, nature, being outdoors and looking after animals/horses.

Young people derived a range of benefits from these activities. For some, there was simple fun and pleasure in doing art and producing something. Producing a piece of art can generate feelings of self-worth and a sense of achievement especially for young people who may find it difficult to achieve this in other areas of their life.

"The clay globes were fun and easy to make ... it was fun to create something new."

Many young people reported how much they valued the opportunity to get messy doing art. There appears to be something about art that gives young people some freedom to express themselves how they want, to experiment and to have some control momentarily in their lives. Art activities provide an opportunity to relax and seek respite from school and life, lifting their mood and providing time to think and come to terms with things.



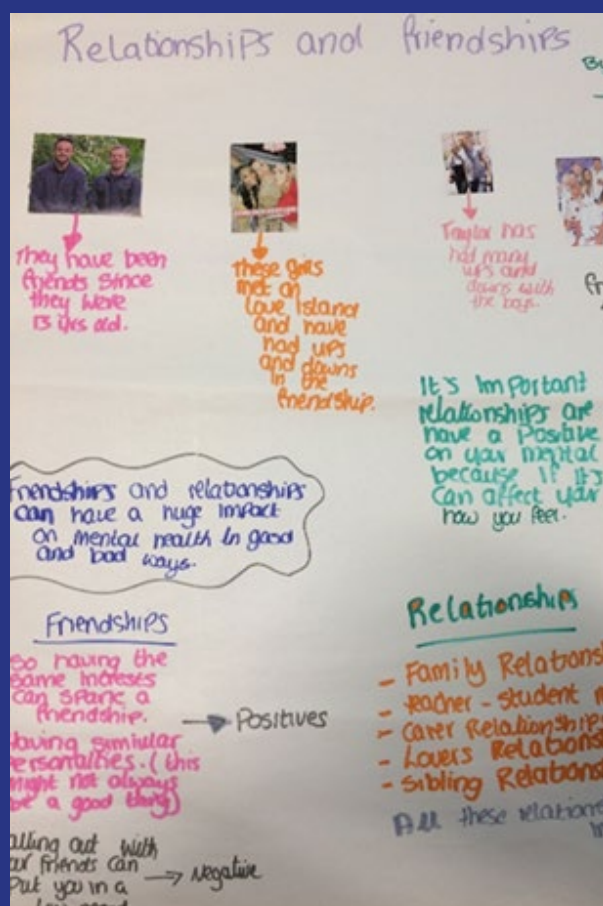
"Adults don't understand me and put me down, no one understands me... sometimes I can't express what I want to say. Music and poetry are a way of expressing my feelings."

The provision of creative activities needs to be geographically, socially and financially accessible. When young people are experiencing mental health problems, they may lack the confidence to access activities independently. Having 'buddies' to go with them is important in supporting young people's take up of creative opportunities. If creative activities are provided on a regular and sustainable basis in communities, then take up of these creative opportunities as a pathway to recovery becomes normalised.

Activities can play an important role as part of a recovery, enable participants to manage independently and reintegrate back into the community. Creative activities are not to necessarily replace medical interventions but are more part of a broader network of provision to support mental wellbeing. This means that community artists, youth workers, schools, outdoor and nature-based education providers all become part of a re-imagined mental wellbeing service for children and young people, alongside CAMHS clinicians.

## Recommendations and outcomes

Developing creative activities to support mental wellbeing constitutes a culture change in mental health service provision for young people. To fulfil the potential of such a culture, some of the following steps have been identified as being needed at a systems level:



- Reconfigure the ethos of CAMHS from an expert clinician-led service to a young person-led service, involving opportunities for young people to engage in activities according to their own agenda from which engagement and recovery work can happen
- In line with strategic developments, opportunities should be provided for practice-based learning and training of existing CAMHS staff to reanimate roles and working practices in ways that incorporate non-medical providers and social prescribing of creative, nature and community-based activities
- There is already a whole network of providers already doing good work with young people with mental health issues. Creative Minds are already linked to these and are ideally positioned to playing a pivotal role in systematizing these links in relation to the 'clinical' system
- Development of a volunteer, peer-mentoring system and support with establishing self-help groups as key strands in a reconfigured CAMHS which could include a buddying network.

# Looking back and looking forwards

**Phil Walters, Creative Minds strategic lead**

Looking back over the last 10 years, I feel a key factor in the success of Creative Minds is the development of the Trust's mission to "help people to reach their potential and live well in their community", which marked a shift to a more recovery-focused approach at the Trust. This shift allowed Creative Minds to flourish through supporting the person-centred approach, developing community partnerships and enabling people to be part of something positive in their communities.

In November 2011, the Trust launched the Creative Minds strategy to demonstrate its commitment to having creative approaches in service delivery. This also provided a framework to build on good practice. The strategy encouraged and promoted more partnerships that offered opportunities for individuals and groups to develop and grow creatively. By 2015, Creative Minds had developed into a charity which built on these community partnerships and continued to co-fund creative projects across the organisation and our local places.

The growth and development of Creative Minds hasn't been without its challenges. Creative approaches can often be seen as 'soft and fluffy' within healthcare settings and sometimes clinical outcomes aren't recognised or can be difficult to measure through traditional medical thinking. Cultures and approaches within health and care organisations can often take time to change. Over the years we've developed a community storytelling approach with participants explaining in their own words how transforming creativity can be, and why they want more of it, to help this agenda.

We've also worked with the Trust to support innovation and facilitate rapid decision-making, which can often be difficult to do in large NHS organisations. This has helped us to respond to new opportunities as quickly as possible through our Creative Minds partners, so we are ready to work together, and we can join up community opportunities and provide match funding.

Creative Minds, now in its 10th year, has had many achievements, national awards, academic articles, good practice reports and we continue to support the Trust to develop as a creative organisation. Looking forward, we feel like Creative Minds is in a good place. The world is much more open to the role that creativity plays in healthcare and this is bringing with it more opportunities to develop and expand our approach. We continue to put participants at the heart of everything we do, and we are proud of the peer-led projects we have supported, and it has been joyful to see them flourish.



During the last couple of years, and the devastating effects of the pandemic, we have worked with our partners

to offer activities that are COVID-safe and follow risk assessment and procedures. This has meant an increase in social media and remote ways of working, through online platforms and activity packs sent to people's homes. As part of this, we've seen a much bigger response to our projects in terms of attendance and we will continue with some of this into the future, but we do look forward to more face-to-face working again.

Some people find it difficult to attend projects or activities in person and we have developed the buddy scheme in Barnsley that supports people to engage with activities more. We're also looking at developing the Moving Mental Health Forward accreditation scheme that will link with more clubs and societies, across all our localities, to ensure they are more mental health friendly and able to support their community.

Another exciting development is that we have secured funding for two creative practitioners to join our team. The first post will cover Calderdale and Kirklees which we have now successfully recruited to, and the other post will cover Barnsley and Wakefield which we hope to have someone in post in early 2022. We look forward to the amazing activities that will emerge in the future from these new team members!

These are just some of the ideas we are working on. We hope that you will continue to support us in the future, get more involved and be part of our magical social movement that strives to connect with everyone, and help to restore hope, meaning and purpose to the lives of those that need it.

## **Keep up to date with Creative Minds!**



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Email us at [creativeminds@swyt.nhs.uk](mailto:creativeminds@swyt.nhs.uk)



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