

Everyday Creativity Programme Evaluation Summary

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Background and context

- The Everyday Creativity programme was the first systematic attempt within the Public Health (PH) team at ESCC to explore the potential health benefits of creativity for its population.
- The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions required unprecedented changes in the way that people in England live, work, play and interact with each other. As a result of lockdown, self-isolation and social distancing people living alone were isolated from any direct contact with other people, and those living with others had limited options to avoid conflict or abuse if it arose.
- Creative activities can be important in individual and community life through providing: a psychological escape from immediate pressures; a safe way of expressing emotions; a way of processing and making sense of the world; a way of connecting with others as well as providing pleasure.
- During lockdown many people have become more creative at home in a huge variety of ways , from creating NHS rainbows to joining online choirs. There is a growing body of evidence that participating in creative activities can improve wellbeing, reduce loneliness and reduce social isolation (1).
- The PH team wished to explore the impact of participating in creative activities on health and wellbeing as a way of supporting our population during the pandemic. A proposal was made and £125,000 of the PH grant was approved for use to pilot an Everyday Creativity Programme as one of several PH responses to the indirect impact of COVID-19.

About the Programme

- In December 2020, ESCC commissioned Culture Shift to manage the Everyday Creativity programme.
- The Public Health team identified five population groups who were determined to be at high risk of adverse outcomes during the pandemic: **Young people, Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) service users, Care home residents, Personal Assistants (PAs) and people who were unemployed or furloughed.**
- Culture Shift and ESCC PH commissioned creative artists to design and deliver a creative activity based intervention for each group. Eight providers were appointed: two for RSI delivering pottery and music making and three for care home residents, delivering two different projects – one singing and one visual arts. Other projects included social media content creation.
- A collaborative approach was taken, in order to enhance cross sectoral learning between PH, Culture Shift and the creative providers. Each of the four Public Health consultants in the team worked with one of the co-directors of Culture Shift on a particular population group throughout the project(s) and the Consultant lead and Public Health Registrar worked closely with Culture Shift on the evaluation design and delivery.

Evaluation Methodology

- Although the projects and population groups varied substantially, the aim was to evaluate each project as consistently as possible.
- The RE-AIM (2) framework, was used in the evaluation design to determine the metrics and primary and secondary outcomes wanted to capture.
- To measure impact on mental health and wellbeing over time we included three recommended (3) question sets in our starter and end of project surveys.
- We also selected two tools to capture changes in wellbeing before and after a creative activity or session. This included the positive wellbeing umbrellas designed by UCL (4) for most projects and the Canterbury wellbeing scales (CWS) (5) for the care home projects which was deemed more appropriate for people with mild to moderate dementia.
- To explore the experiences of those taking part and how and why the interventions did or did not work, qualitative engagement was undertaken via focus groups and interviews with participants. This was conducted by Latimer Appleby Ltd.
- Other evaluation data sources include the end of project review meeting minutes and any creative forms of evaluation the projects initiated themselves.

Everyday Creativity 2021

PROJECT BY PROJECT EVALUATION FINDINGS

Young people project- LUMA

“I woke up that day feeling down and then we had this dancing therapy and there was something about it that helped me to release all this negative energy and tension. It helped me feel more welcome, more at home, at peace and safe. I got to experience this and not just as one of the workers.”

Participant, Focus Group (6)

LUMA

- **90 Young People were consulted when designing the project and 54 people participated in the project.** 12 of these young people completed the starter and end of project survey.
- This project set out to improve young people's wellbeing and mental health through enabling young people to produce online social media content. The evaluation therefore needed to capture how participation in creating and in viewing the content impacted on young people.
- The satisfaction of those taking part in this project was high (100% of survey respondents reported they enjoyed taking part), even with challenges and frustrations regarding the need to meet virtually for most of the project.
- Survey respondents reported that they **learnt new skills (100%), made connections with new people (50%) and changed the way they think (33%).**
- In the survey, **50% of respondents reported a subjective improvement in their wellbeing.** Although, the wellbeing measurement tools used in the survey did not demonstrate an improvement or could not be assessed (due to a small sample).
- There are plans to continue working with young people on the channel LUMA and launch the channel later in the year, and hopefully positively impact content viewers, in addition to those who have been directly involved in this project. [Update February 2022: LUMA has been commissioned until xx

RSI project 1- Eastbourne Studio Pottery

“Well for my mental health it’s been good, yeah. I’ve had problems with alcohol and stuff so to get me doing something that you know, to fill my time is very positive and I’m close to beating that demon...”

Participant, interview (6)



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Eastbourne Studio Pottery (ESP)

- This project was targeted at ex-rough sleepers in Hastings and Eastbourne, now housed in temporary accommodation because of the pandemic. ESP worked with service users to explore a variety of media and techniques including printing, painting, experimental photography and pottery during the sessions.
- Every RSI service user has very complex and multiple needs, impacting their social skills and confidence and initially the project struggled to engage with this group, but this improved once regular sessions were offered in spaces participants were already attending.
- There were **50 contacts, comprised of 33 individuals**, during the course of the project. Due to the complex needs of this cohort, it is a huge achievement for this project to have directly worked with as many people as it did. Three participants completed a wellbeing umbrella before and after a session and four participants completed a short survey about their experience on the project.
- **All three participants reported feeling happier** after their activity and **two of the three reported feeling more excited and more inspired**.
- When asked directly in the survey, **100% reported that they felt that the project had improved their wellbeing**, especially in that they felt happier, less angry and more confident in trying new things.
- As a result of being involved in this project, one participant reported he had the confidence to try a new gardening course, which may lead to a qualification and potentially an apprenticeship.
- ESP are continuing to work with the RSI and offering sessions to RSI service users.

RSI project 2- Resonate

"I got out of bed the wrong side this morning and wasn't up for anything, I thought I'd just chat with you a bit today but playing some music with you both has really sorted me out"

Participant, speaking to project lead

Resonate

- This project was targeted at ex-rough sleepers in Hastings and Eastbourne, now housed in temporary accommodation because of the pandemic. This project worked in collaboration with the RSI provide a series of music based creative workshops to RSI service users.
- Every RSI service user has very complex and multiple needs, impacting their social skills and confidence and initially the project struggled to engage with this group, but this improved once regular sessions were offered in spaces participants were already attending.
- There were **44 contacts, comprised of 24 individuals**, during the course of the project. Due to the complex needs of this cohort, it is a huge achievement for this project to have directly worked with as many people as it did.
- No quantitative data was available to evaluate this project.
- The qualitative feedback collected by those involved in the project suggested that the participants really enjoyed the sessions and a number stated that their mood improved following a session, and professionals reflected that they could see an increased sense of focus in service users.

Care Home residents project 1- Everyday Creativity in Care

“It was a really lovely session, it jogged her memory so much, she was telling me all sorts of stuff and we were dancing around the room. The beauty is you start in one place and don’t know where you will end up”

Activity co-ordinator, Focus Group (6)

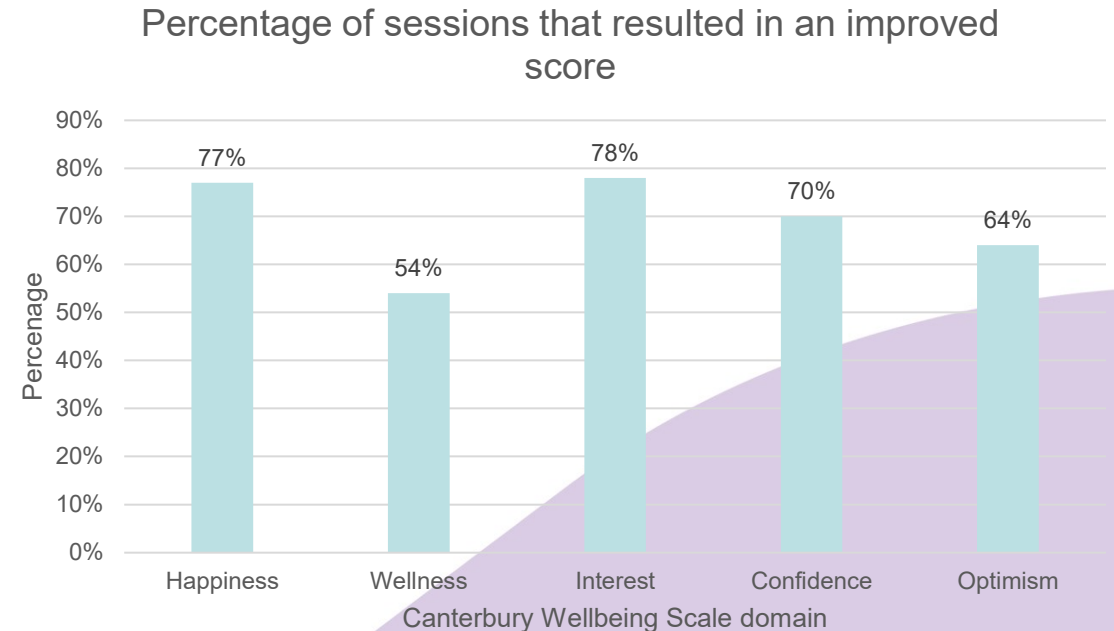


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Everyday Creativity in Care

- The project team worked closely with Activity Coordinators (ACs) across care homes in East Sussex to support them to lead creative activities with residents as part of daily personalised care.
- **32 activity cards were co-designed with staff** to support care home staff to engage with residents' varied interests and life experiences in a creative way and support for care home staff was provided remotely.
- **39 residents across eight homes participated** in the project.
- The CWS was well utilised before and after each activity and a clear improvement across five wellbeing domains was demonstrated (see graph).
- The qualitative data suggested that **both residents and staff really enjoyed being involved**, and **staff felt more confident and skilled in delivering creative activities** to residents.



- Some of the parent companies of the homes that were involved are considering how they might expand this work to other homes, potentially having a significant impact on the wellbeing of many care home residents across the country.

Care Home residents project 2- Raise Your Voice in Care

“So it's just been really fun and you just notice like at the end (of) every activity or singing activity we've done this like, yeah, they're notably happy.”

Care home manager, Focus Group (6)

Raise Your Voice in Care

- Raise Your Voice (RYV) in Care is a new strand of a longstanding community music project. In their work, with people with dementia in the community, they observed that as people moved into care homes singing disappeared from their lives and so this project aimed to bring music and singing into everyday life in care homes.
- Initially the team ran online (Zoom) sessions for staff and residents to understand better what was needed and then refined and developed their resources to support staff to lead singing for residents. **Online videos were produced to support care home staff** lead warm-ups and songs, provide improvisation ideas and use movement and percussion in a musical session. The final stage of the project saw the project leads mentor and support staff using their resources.
- The project worked with **52 residents and 11 staff members across two care homes.**
- There was no quantitative data available for this project.
- The qualitative data collected suggests that **both staff and residents enjoyed taking part in the project** and that **staff felt that residents moods were lifted through taking part.** Staff also reported an increased confidence and skill in care home staff leading the activities.

Personal Assistants

“There has been so much going on with this, it’s almost hard to find a specific thing to say because there's just been so much. So yeah, being part of a group and doing something we're all enjoying, some of us perhaps weren't expecting to get so much out of.”

PA participant, focus group (6)



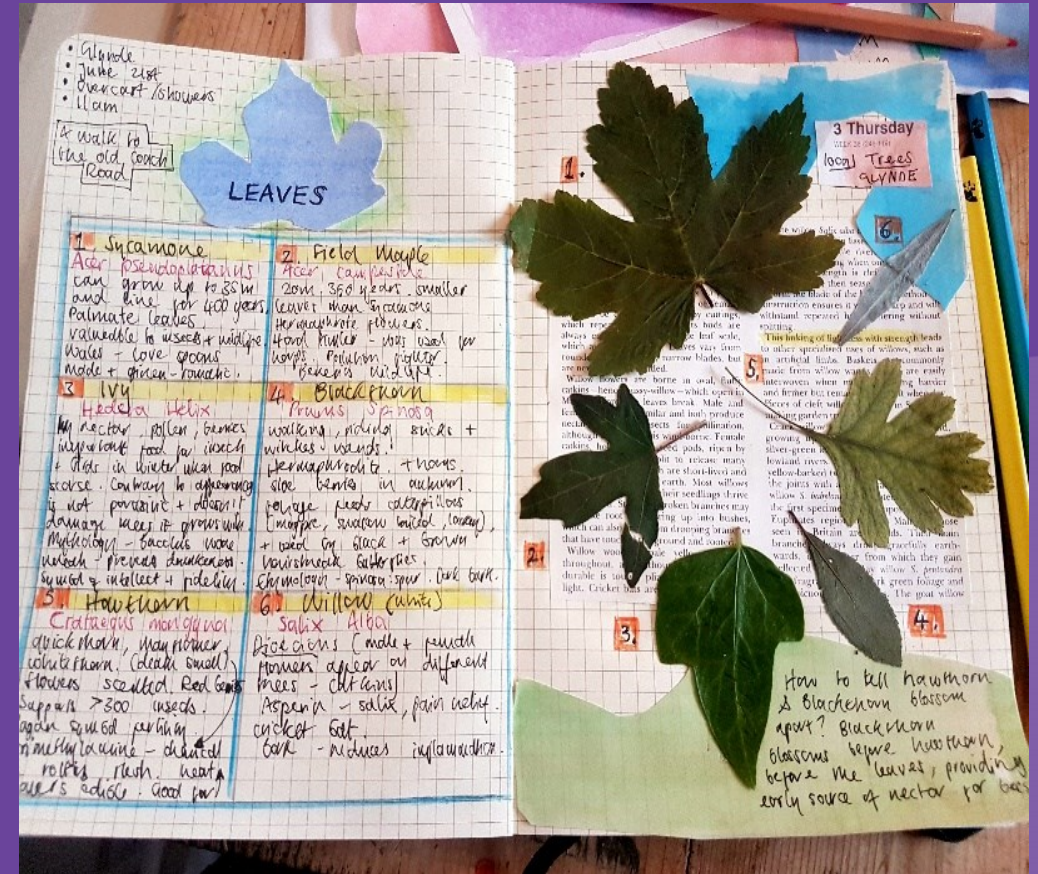
Personal Assistants (PAs)

- The project sought to engage PAs in a programme of Everyday Creativity facilitated by an online co-design workshop and engagements through the East Sussex Personal Assistant Network (ESPAN) monthly meetings. Following the co-design phase, a dedicated webpage and Facebook group was set up for PAs to prompt and share creative activities and bespoke creativity packs were produced and sent out to interested PAs.
- PAs are typically a very disparate group, with many actively choosing not to be part of a collective, and so engagement with this project was challenging. Despite this, approximately **35 PAs were engaged** across most or all of the duration of the project.
- The creative online co-design session with PAs demonstrated an improvement across a number of wellbeing umbrella domains- after the session **62.5% of participants felt more inspired, 50% reported feeling happier and more enthusiastic and 37.5% reported feeling more excited than before the session.**
- Qualitative feedback from PAs who participated in the focus group suggested that they felt they benefited from the project, especially in terms of connecting with other PAs and sharing ideas.
- Now that the project has finished, the project team plan to leave the Facebook page open but it will not be monitored. Continued activity will depend on input from group members.

Unemployed and furloughed project-RESTORE

“It pushed me to go outdoors and look at things differently...it energised my world.”

Participant, interview(6)



RESTORE

- Creative development sessions were provided to people who were unemployed or furloughed, aiming to facilitate self-expression, reflection, realisation, mindfulness and actualisation. The cohort group was quite diverse and anonymous and so the project team made links with local job centres and libraries to help reach the target group.
- A range of short courses were offered to the cohort, including nature writing, journaling, creative writing and photography.
- **75 people attended at least one session** of a course, with **64 people attending more than one session on one of the courses.**
- There was no quantitative data available for this project.
- Qualitative feedback via interviews suggested that **participants felt that the project had improved their wellbeing**, especially in terms of increased confidence and increased mindfulness.

Evaluation limitations

- Most projects found the collection of quantitative evaluation data (surveys, wellbeing umbrellas and CWS) to be challenging resulting in lower levels of collection than required to provide robust statistical evidence of impact on mental wellbeing.
- The more successful quantitative data collection was for momentary measures (pre-post event) rather than capturing longer term changes.
- Only a small number of participants were willing to take part in focus groups and interviews, and so while this qualitative data was positive about the impacts of participation it may not have been representative of the participants as a whole.
- It was tricky to evaluate the programme as a whole, as each project took a co-production approach to designing creative activities resulting in substantial differences in the types of activities run and the population groups for each project.
- It was also challenging to find appropriate evaluation tools and methods to obtain data for the outcomes of interest for all projects. Some project leads felt that the surveys were unfeasible, and so a shortened version was produced centred on the person's experience of taking part (RSI groups).

Conclusions

- Five of the seven projects met or exceeded the target number of people to engage directly with. Two projects (which had high targets) struggled to engage with the number of people proposed given the tight timeframes for delivery. 313 people were directly engaged in total.
- The qualitative data available suggests that the majority of participants had a very positive experience on the project. Although for some, online delivery was a barrier. Had there not been a pandemic, then delivery would not have been done online.
- Other feedback was that some people felt that they were not creative, or not a “creative type” and therefore these activities were not meant for them. This is an interesting area to explore in the future to understand how to reduce barriers to participation.
- There were challenges in collecting quantitative data using validated measures of mental wellbeing. For some groups (care homes) the tools were probably not appropriate. For others, it is unclear as to why uptake was so low but one suggestion was that there were additional barriers to completing these online.
- Further developmental work is necessary within public health and with the creative sector. Public health could become better at including other sort of evaluation including process evaluation, and wider measures of impact. However, some potential providers perhaps didn’t fully understand the rationale behind Public Health commissioners and future funders requiring evidence of impact.
- In future programmes, with multiple and varied projects, it may also be necessary to tailor the evaluation tools and methods to each individual project and work more closely with each project lead, to increase the acceptability and likely take up of these tools.
- The Public Health team also needs to develop a greater understanding of how other types of data are relevant and potentially work with academic partners to develop our understanding and use of evaluation techniques in this field.

Next steps (Feb 2021)

- Dissemination of learning
- Two of the projects (LUMA and Eastbourne Studio Pottery) have been extended.
- Alternative methods of evaluation are being explored with academic partners.
- PH team developing new role for specialist in creativity and health

References

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4. Thomson, LJ and Chatterjee, HJ. UCL Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit. 2013
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6. Latimer Appleby Ltd in association with Jenny Harvey (Research Consultant). Post Project Qualitative Evaluation report (Focus groups and interviews). 2021.

Glossary

- **AC-** Activity Coordinator
- **CWS-** Canterbury Wellbeing Scale
- **CMT-** Corporate Management Team
- **ESCC-** East Sussex County Council
- **ESP-** Eastbourne Studio Pottery
- **ESPAN-** East Sussex Personal Assistant Network
- **ECC-** Everyday Creativity in Care
- **KPI-** Key performance indicator
- **ONS-** Office for National Statistics
- **PAs-** Personal Assistants
- **PANAS-** Positive and Negative Affect Schedule
- **RE-AIM-** Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance
- **RSI-** Rough Sleeper Initiative
- **RYV-** Raise Your voice in Care
- **SWEMBWS-** Short Warwick- Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale