

Covid-19 Response Grants 2020

Reachout with Arts in Mind

Who are Reachout with Arts in Mind?

Reachout is a Forth Valley charity, delivering creative opportunities, education and wellbeing to local communities aged 16 – 80 years experiencing life's challenges, mental ill health and disability. Using expressive arts as the vehicle, the service delivery model promotes informed wellbeing choices and mental health awareness to maintain wellbeing and prevent relapse.



Reachout advocates a strengths based approach and is self-managed by members. This gives members a sense of ownership and commitment and is a significant factor in Reachout's success. Local volunteers play a key role in supporting and delivering the services provided.

What had to change due to Covid-19?

- Since the start of lockdown Reachout has continued to link with Forth Valley partners to enable them to support members in different ways.
- Reachout has facilitated members to be part of a collaborative creative process whilst remaining in the safety of their own home with the aim of achieving a sense of self-worth and value. The programme of activity included the distribution of materials, provision of online information and support and virtual events such as chair yoga and music gigs.

How was the grant used?

- The grant was used to purchase 'blank' gnomes, paint materials and craft packs which were distributed to participants to create and decorate their gnome.



Gnome Sweet Gnomes

What difference has the grant made?

- The 'Gnome Sweet Gnome Project' evolved in response to loneliness and social isolation of members during the pandemic. The project recognised that participation in arts activities has a positive impact on wellbeing.
- 31 members received a 'blank' plaster gnome and paint pack to decorate their gnome. The craft packs were delivered and collected on completion by community volunteers.
- The gnomes are exhibited online at <https://www.reachoutwithartsinmind.org.uk/gallery-1> and in the Reachout studio. A short film has also been created to showcase the gnomes.
- 31 people took part in this art project and participants reported feeling part of something when Covid-19 restrictions meant they could not attend face to face sessions. They also reported improved mental wellbeing.
- Participants used their imagination to create their gnomes – some created characters related to the pandemic e.g. Colin the Covid Gnome who was an NHS doctor and gave the message 'Keep Well, Keep Safe.'

'This project was fully embraced by members, it sparked imaginations and provided creative relief and fun at a time of great disruption and distress.'

(Studio Manager)

'When the gnomes were exhibited together in our studio they became a real talking point and a great source of smiles and interest to all those who were able to access the studio again and our Gnome Sweet Gnome film made this exhibition accessible to those who were still unable to attend the studio. Our sincere thanks for the funding to help make this project possible.'

(Studio Manager)

