



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

Project: Happy Older People

Organisation: National Museums Liverpool

Region: North West England

Introduction

During Covid-19, Happy Older People (HOP)'s usual activity cannot take place. Ordinarily we would be funding the delivery of 'HOP Pot' creative projects in the community, and delivering quarterly network meetings to share the latest network updates and member news, with stakeholders or members presenting their work and/or research.

The monthly e-newsletter would usually contain a round-up of age-friendly arts and cultural activities across the Liverpool City Region, alongside good news stories and case studies of successful creative ageing projects. We describe it as a 'what's on' guide for age-friendly arts and cultural activity.

During lockdown we have adapted the e-newsletter to focus on activity that older people can do from home during this time, as well as sharing creative outputs from our older members and good news stories.

The content comes directly from network members who receive a reminder about the upcoming newsletter each month. The resulting e-newsletter is a resource which connects older people to a menu of arts and cultural activity across the region – during Covid-19 our members are encouraged to share activity people can do from home. We are committed to sharing the lockdown activities that our creative and cultural member organisations are delivering during this time.

Older people themselves benefit from a monthly roundup of creative and cultural activities they can take part in at home, as well as keeping well at home resources, news stories and creativity. Our professionals and member organisations receive sector news and updates from other organisations in order to understand how their peers are responding to the current crisis and provides inspiration for new ways of working.

Funders

National Museums Liverpool

Art Council England and The Baring Foundation – Celebrating Age Fund

Liverpool City Council

Who is it for?

Happy Older People's membership is diverse and includes older people, arts and heritage organisations, health and social care professionals and providers, housing associations, transport providers and community groups.

We aim to reach individual older people at risk of isolation as well as professionals in arts and cultural, health and social care, and communities, in order to share inspiration, best practice and new ways of working.

During Covid-19 our focus has been on sharing activities people can do from home during lockdown.

The delivery strategy for HOP focusses on connecting museums, heritage and arts organisations with existing support networks and groups of older people. Network members engage with and enable older people to participate in cultural activities, creating positive impacts on wellbeing, particularly amongst isolated older people.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

There are activities and online events shared in the newsletter which will support older people to remain physically healthy during lockdown – including online exercise classes and dance tutorials.

The creative and cultural activities we feature support older people to try something new and to improve their mental wellbeing, and social clubs we share aim to combat loneliness during this time.

We encourage network members to provide samples of their artwork and creative responses with us to enable them to feel proud of their achievements and to connect with peers.

Where is it happening?

Liverpool City Region predominantly but people are signed up nationally for knowledge sharing purposes.

Are you working in partnership?

We are currently part of the Young at Art partnership with FACT and Open Eye Gallery, funded by Arts Council England and The Baring Foundation. We have recently received funding support from Liverpool City Council.

How many people took/are taking part?

395 network members

For how long has it been happening?

Ongoing

What were/are the main outputs?

The HOP website is a hub for age-friendly arts and cultural activity, and even more so during Covid-19. It is updated monthly with activities and content provided by network member organisations, and artwork / creative outputs from individual members. Updates are made more regularly if more content is provided. All of this content is shared further on Twitter – @HOPLiverpool

The e-newsletter is produced once per month. So far five editions have been issued since lockdown.

Evaluation:

The monthly HOP e-newsletter delivered to the network mailing list consistently achieves a higher engagement rate than the industry average. It has an open rate of 44.3% (compared to industry average of 20.7%), and a click-through rate of 13.3% (compared to industry average of 2.1%).

We see evidence in the analytics that the email is forwarded on by network members and opened, at times, up to 50 times from the recipient's original version.

Network membership currently stands at 395 members and, because this number includes representatives from organisations and groups, we anticipate the actual reach of HOP network activity goes far beyond this number as information is shared and new ways of working develop. Professionals who are members of HOP share the information within their organisation and with families in order to connect individuals to creative and cultural activity.

What have been the challenges and successes for you?

One ongoing challenge for HOP is our ability to reach the most isolated individuals. HOP aims to address this by connecting with organisations which currently support some of the most vulnerable and isolated in the community – cascading information about services, activities and best practice via staff to individuals and families.

Another challenge is connecting with older adults who are not online. Again, in order to mitigate this challenge HOP's strategy is to connect with support organisations who can cascade information to individuals and families about how they can access age-friendly arts and cultural activity. We appreciate that this will be more challenging during Covid-19 as regular groups and activities are not taking place.

Finally, it has been challenging to work with network member organisations when a large proportion of their teams are on furlough. Despite this, we have still managed to gather content from organisations continuing to provide their age-friendly activities during this time, and it has been our success to be able to continue a monthly e-newsletter.

Further information

www.happyolderpeople.com

Created by National Museums Liverpool in 2014, the Happy Older People network (HOP) brings together arts and culture with isolated older people to promote participation and leadership in Liverpool's brilliant cultural offer.

National Museums Liverpool is a non-departmental public body (NDPB). We are regulated by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which provides the majority of our revenue funding. Museums and galleries regulated by DCMS are exempt charities under Schedule 3 of the Charities Act 2011.