

Case studies: How have culture and creativity been supporting people in health, care and other institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Project: Unlocking Our Sound

Organisation: The British Library

Region: London

Designed for: Adults with dementia, shielding at home

“I think covid has actually made it easier to connect with organisations who need help supporting vulnerable people.”



The British Library partnered with Care Visions Healthy Ageing as part of the Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project, to create a dementia therapy film which explores the coastal sounds of the British Library sound archive.

Copyright for image – Ben Sommers

Music and Dementia Therapist Laura Bolton

Introduction

We are the British Library and we are the national library of the United Kingdom and give access to the world’s most comprehensive research collection. We provide information services to academic, business, research and scientific communities.

Our collection of over 170 million items includes artefacts from every age of written civilisation. We keep the nation’s archive of printed and digital publications, adding around three million new items to our collection every year.

As part of the Unlocking Our Sound Heritage project, The British Library have partnered with Care Visions Healthy Ageing to create a dementia therapy film which utilises the British Library's sound archive. Care Visions are a local organisation working in Camden delivering a range of services to support families living with dementia. During the lockdown and subsequent shielding period, they have been creating therapy films to help people with dementia remain stimulated and engaged during this time. This collaborative film uses the amazing coastal sounds from The British Library's sound archive to create stimulation for those with early to moderate stage dementia.

[You can access the film here.](#)

“This session can be used alone, it might also be a good idea to do it with caregivers, family members or friends. This dementia therapy session is most suitable for those living with early

to moderate stage dementia. However, it can also be used for later stage dementia, perhaps with support from a caregiver.

As we journey around the British coastline, you will hear wonderful sounds and do some activities that might bring back some memories, help language skills or encourage focus and attention. We will end this dementia therapy session with relaxation.”

Funders

National Lottery Heritage Fund is funding the Unlocking our Sound Heritage Project which this project is part of.

Partners

Yes – Care Visions Healthy Ageing – an organisation working with people with dementia in Camden

Who is it for?

Adults living with dementia who are currently shielding and are unable to access services outside of their home.

Are these people you have worked with before, or new participants?

New participants.

How many people took/are taking part?

So far we have had 448 views on the YouTube channel

Where is it happening?

Predominately London based, as our partnership organisation works with people in the Camden area – however as it was an online video and the British Library has a national reach, we hoped to reach more people around the country.

For how long has it been happening?

The partnership began at the beginning of Lockdown in April, and the video went out to the public in September.

What were/are the main outputs?

A video which will be on YouTube, The British Library website and Care Vision’s website.

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

Improving the wellbeing of those living with dementia by stimulating memory, help language skills, encourage focus and attention, encouraging relaxation and generally providing stimulation and contact whilst shielding, and providing carers with an activity to use with their loved one or patient.

Have you adapted existing work to make this happen? If so, how?

No this is a new stream of work for the British Library. We have never worked with this audience before. However we did use some of our audio content from our website (due to copyright clearance) so this was a slight adaption of existing work.

Evaluation & Feedback

We have created evaluation forms that accompany the video. We are also calling some people who Care Visions has a close relationship with to do ‘watch alongs’ on the phone so we can ask questions while they are watching the video. Some bits of feedback we have had so far:

Listening to the sounds made the person with dementia feel “comfortable and safe”.
The person with dementia felt they are “starting to listen, watch and remember a little more”.

What is your own impression of how it has worked? What have been the challenges and successes for you?

I feel that the final outcome was better than we imaged it would be. The quality of what has been produced is amazing. The challenge was working with a partner organisation, each with their own deadlines and internal politics. This is something that will become easier the more we get to know each other. However this has also proved a success as we were able to reach more people by working with a partner.

Are you reaching more people/fewer people/different people?

We are reaching more people with dementia.

What new skills have you or your colleagues had to develop to deliver this work?

We have had to develop an understanding of working with this audience.

What would you say has made this project possible?

The increased need and awareness of activities for vulnerable people (which was there before covid) and has now come into the spotlight. So we have been able to dedicate more funding to helping these people and there has been more of a call out for help from organisations who support these people. I think covid has actually made it easier to connect with organisations who need help supporting vulnerable people.

What would have made it easier?

More support internally in both organisations from higher management.

Further information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv7Z3z3xhgc&t=465s>