

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

Project: Make for Tomorrow

Organisation: Make Your Mark (part of Heads On, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's charity)

Region: South East

Introduction

Heads On is [Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's](#) charity. We help people with mental health problems to feel supported, to stay active and to be more involved in their communities.

Anyone can experience a mental health problem - one in four of us every year. At Heads On we do everything we can to make things better for the people who come to Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust (SPFT) for help, by providing funding for special projects, patient and family support, pioneering research and the transformation of local mental health hospitals into more comfortable and welcoming environments.

"After another difficult week it was very pleasurable to spend time listening to Naomie and Francine chatting; really relaxing - what an uplifting afternoon! Thank you."

Our project we want to share with you for this report is called Make For Tomorrow and it is being delivered by the Trust's Arts & Health service [Make Your Mark](#).

Generously supported by [Arts Council England](#) and [NHS Charities Together](#) Covid emergency response funds, Make Your Mark (SPFT's Arts & Health programme) created an online programme of participatory events and activities delivered by professional visual artists and some famous faces from the world of film, television and stage.

Called Make for Tomorrow (MFT), it's free and for all adults across SPFT services - service users (past and present, both in-patient and those accessing service through community and participation services) friends, families, carers, volunteers and all staff.

Over two months (September & October) there were weekly interactive making workshops, talks, discussions and performances which people could tune into live or watch after on [MYM's YouTube channel](#).

Followed in November by a week-long digital festival celebrating all the art works created, special performances, launching of an online gallery, live screenings of films made and much more.

Funders

Arts Council England and NHS Charities Together Covid emergency response funds

Partners

[Arts Over Borders](#), [Hospital Rooms](#) & [Cogapp](#)

Who is it for?

Make for Tomorrow is primarily for those living with mental health problems who are adults accessing (or previously accessed) services from Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust - this might be those currently in in-patient settings (so hospitals, secure units, etc.) and also those accessing services in the community through the community mental health teams and participation services.

It is also though for anyone associated with the Trust, so families, friends, carers, volunteers, associates and staff.

The programme is billed for adults but the content is also 'family friendly' and with the judgement and support of staff, young people and families are also participating.

Following the 2-month programme, there will be a week-long digital festival and all events and content will also be open and available to all NHS mental health trusts across the country.

NB while we specifically promote everything in the MFT programme and festival to people across SPFT and then wider mental health Trusts - all content is free and online and therefore anyone can in fact access it!

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

We are engaging service users who have already participated in past Make Your Mark projects, but we are also engaging with those that haven't. It is also for families, carers, volunteers and staff too which are largely new 'populations'.

How many people took/are taking part?

1,800

Where is it happening?

For the Programme: across the geography of the Trust so East Hampshire and East & West Sussex (including Brighton & Hove)

For the Festival: nationwide

For how long has it been happening?

A pilot ran through out August 2020 at 3 in-patient facilities and then the programme launched live beginning of September 2020. It runs until November with the festival finishing on 13 November 2020. However we will continue to promote all of the content as online resources for individuals and groups and look to continue collating participants' work, adding and sharing it through the gallery.

What were/are the main outputs?

- While having some beautiful workshops and events, the programme is creating a wonderful set of digital resources which can be used retrospectively by both staff and individuals.
- The gathering of some fantastic artworks by participants which will be launched in a gallery online during the festival and stay live so work can continue to be added post programme
- 3 new collaborative artworks made with participants and visual arts in bigger projects - we plan that post programme these artworks can be showcased in gallery settings and films will be entered in to film festivals giving them life beyond MFT

What outcomes were/are you aiming for?

- The building and nurturing of a community across services and demographics through artist engagement

MFT is all about bringing hope and joy and connected ness for those living with the challenges of mental health problems either as a service user, family member, friend carer or staff.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, now more than ever, supporting one another to stay hopeful and find joy and purpose in our days is so important, particularly for those already facing the challenges of living with mental health difficulties.

Feelings of anxiety and isolation are often a painful and damaging feature of living with mental health problems, and the restrictions of lockdown has meant the disruption of people's entire support networks, a time of change to everything that keeps people well.

In the face of this global pandemic, the arts have the potential to bring hope, joy and connectedness to people with mental health problems. MFT inspires people, supporting them to create exciting and dynamic artworks that tell the stories of living through history by people who traditionally face many barriers to creativity and participation in the arts and whose voices often go unheard.

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

Like lots of places and services, the majority of activity is taking place online (a couple of projects include us posting out materials and kits to people). This is a new way of working for Make Your Mark which historically – while using its website for archiving, resources, and info, etc. – delivered all its projects and programmes 'physically'.

This has come with its challenges and benefits; no small challenge has been outreach and the recognition of technology being a very real barrier for many. Benefits include the coming together of people in geographically very different places, the opening up of using technology in a secure setting, etc.

Does your work support people who identify with one or more of the protected characteristics¹?

MFT is for those living with mental health challenges so at its heart it is for a population of those who identify with the protected characteristic of disability.

Additionally many of the artists who have been engaged in the delivery of the programme have lived experience of mental health difficulties.

Evaluation & Feedback

After every event we send round a very short feedback questionnaire which covers both content and access.

We are also very active in social media and encourage participants to tell us what they think through these channels. Additionally we are present and active in the various steering groups and patient groups where we check in on feedback within these communities.

The programme is still live so at the close of the programme and festival we will collate all feedback and stats and do some more extensive questionnaires to all participants, artists and partners.

Messages received after Naomi Harris' "in Conversation" at the beginning of the programme:

"After another difficult week it was very pleasurable to spend time listening to Naomi and Francine chatting; really relaxing - what an uplifting afternoon! Thank you."

"She (Naomie) is a really special lady - really inspiring. I liked how she freely shared about her life and told us what she does to help when things get hard. Thanks for putting on the event and when is the next one?"

"It's good to know that even film stars have their ups and downs - we loved listening to Naomi, she was very interesting and we really like her!"

"That is so cool that I got to ask Naomi Harris a question! I am a big fan of hers and hearing from her about her life was not at all disappointing. Sometimes it can feel like famous people have a magical life

¹ Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (Equalities Act 2010).

which is totally separate from the rest of us but she was just normal and I felt like she had come round my house for a cup of tea! She also gave some really good tips about meditation"

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

As a whole it feels and people have been telling us that it is incredibly good with lots of enthusiasm and positive feedback - it feels really good to be bringing together so many different people from different walks of life - a true sense of equality, democracy and connectedness - plus some great art!!

No small challenge has been outreach - engaging and recruitment for participation across a very varied and complex set of services and settings all digitally is tough! And then there is the incredibly important recognition of technology being a very real barrier for many and how we try and combat that.

As mentioned above other real benefits include the coming together of people in geographically very different places and the opening up of using technology in secure setting, etc.

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

Hard to say without analysis of all the stats and data which will happen at the end of the project. Certainly there is a sense that this is reaching new/different people.

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

Technology!... its brilliance, its nuances and also its limitations!

What would you say has made this project possible?

Partnership! - Primarily the projects partners (Heads On, Make Your Mark (SPFT), Cogapp, Arts Over Borders and Hospital Rooms), but also the support of the wider services and teams across the Trust.

What would have made it easier?

Greater resource especially people power to be able to use additional ways to go out and connect on the ground with sites and services to support engagement and participation.

Further information

[The Make Your Mark website](#)

[Make Your Mark Twitter](#)

[Make Your Mark Instagram](#)

[Make Your Mark YouTube Channel](#)