

Innovative Proactive Wellbeing

Create

Founded in 2003, Create is a multi-award-winning charity empowering lives, reducing isolation and enhancing wellbeing through the creative arts.

Create's guiding principle is that *people need to create*. Creativity impacts emotional and mental health. It builds skills, brings joy, reduces isolation. It inspires, empowers, raises aspirations, allows us to express ourselves and to be heard. Create provides free high-quality creative arts experiences for children/adults facing challenges in their lives. Delivered by the charity's professional artists, these improve the mental wellbeing of those who need them most. Projects are delivered in partnership with "community partners" (eg: carer service).

creative:voices is a multi-artform programme that enables adult carers to take a creative break from their caring responsibilities, build trusting relationships with their peers and develop social skills, new interests and confidence. Creative arts workshops give them the opportunity to explore their creativity and to improve their mental health and wider wellbeing.

NHS's Five Ways to Wellbeing

The design, delivery and evaluation of *creative:voices* is underpinned by the **NHS's Five Ways to Wellbeing** model:

- **Give:** participants give their time to do something for themselves and be part of a group; to support one another during activities; and to give positive feedback to one another.
- **Be active:** participants play an active role during workshops that often include elements of/are centred around physical activity (eg: dance; drama; film making; photography).
- **Keep learning:** participants work interactively and experientially with our professional artists and one another to build new creative, artform, technology, and social skills.
- **Connect:** participants meet one another and our team. Their ideas and feedback are at the centre of every workshop; and social/small group time is built in.

- **Take notice:** workshops give participants time for themselves, to enjoy new experiences, be present in the here and now, and notice what is going on around them, in their surroundings (eg: seeing their home in a new light through a camera lens). By engaging with the artistic process, they are also able to take notice of 'themselves', their thoughts and feelings, and to discover a creative talent and/or passion.

Clear positive impact on mental wellbeing

96% of carers and 100% of carer staff said that carers' wellbeing had improved.

Feedback demonstrates the effectiveness of Create's approach to project delivery based on the Five Ways to Wellbeing. This addresses the impact of caring responsibilities on adult carers' mental wellbeing by providing a fun, skill-building, creative, collaborative emotional outlet, enabling them to feel connected/keep learning/take notice/give/be active.

Feedback from carers:

- *"I feel happy after each workshop. Making art has been very therapeutic."*
- *"I haven't moved to music in well over a year and so I feel quite emotional. To feel free in this busy, busy life is amazing – this is the most important thing I will do today because it has freed my mind."*
- *"My family have noticed I am happier in myself."*

Feedback from carer staff:

- *"All participants mentioned the workshop helped them relax and helped them mentally and emotionally."*
- *"All participants have expressed feelings of improved wellbeing to me at different times. They will really miss it if we don't carry on."*

- *"This is the first time that I have been to something like this. It is so nice to see everyone's inner child and how enthusiastic everyone is."*

99% of carers and 100% of carer staff said that carers felt more connected to each other, reducing isolation.

Feedback demonstrates the effectiveness of Create's approach to enable carers to FEEL CONNECTED through collaborative activities delivered in a supportive, safe space that encourages social interaction, self-expression and shared understanding, helping carers to develop relationships with each other and with carer staff.

Feedback from carers:

- *"It's so peaceful here and I feel connected to others and re-connected to the old me."*
- *"It has been very isolated so making conversation was a new beginning."*
- *"There is great camaraderie in knowing we are all in the same boat and can relate to each other and encourage each other."*

Feedback from carers staff:

- *"The social aspect of the sessions was something that carers really enjoyed about them. Being with and talking to other carers from around Manchester as well as being creative helped to reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness amongst carers."*
- *"Definitely brought people together who may never have met."*

91% of carers and 100% of carer staff said that carers developed their confidence and self-esteem.

The project enables carers to TAKE NOTICE of their surroundings and their thoughts/feelings, leading to the discovery of a creative talent/passion and development of skills, increasing confidence.

Feedback from carers:

- *"It has helped me with my anxiety and improved my confidence."*
- *"Feel more confident and able to express myself. Less anxious of being in a large group."*
- *"Have found myself smiling and saying 'hello' to more people in my neighbourhood."*
- *"Feel proud of what I have achieved. You don't know what creativity is inside you."*

Feedback from carers staff:

- *"Their confidence levels have been boosted tremendously."*
- *"It has helped carers to be confident and to feel valued as writers. They all seem to have been writing separately at home and sharing work has boosted self-esteem."*
- *"They were able to share and build confidence and feel valued."*

98% of carers and 100% of carer staff said that carers' ideas were encouraged, listened to and incorporated in the creative process, helping them to feel valued.

Feedback from carers/carer staff demonstrates the project's success in making carers feel encouraged, listened to and valued. It enables carers to GIVE their time to be part of a group, exchanging positive feedback of one another's work and being incorporated in a collaborative, participant-led process. Their ideas are listened to/incorporated by Create's artist/staff.

Feedback from carers:

- *"Everyone's contributions were valued and everyone really tried to listen to each other."*
- *"The feedback sessions showed everyone's appreciation of everyone else's ideas and expression."*
- *"I wanted to make mosaic and my wish was granted."*

Feedback from carers staff:

- *"The artist asked everyone what they wanted and was so friendly and helpful."*
- *"Being more involved in the creative process will have helped carers to be more immersed in the whole experience and is probably one of the main reasons why the majority of the carers came to all of the sessions!"*

87% of carers and 100% of carer staff said that carers enhanced their creative thinking and 97%/100% their creative/arts-based skills.

The programme enabled carers to explore their creativity and to KEEP LEARNING through interactive activities led by Create's professional artists that develop artform skills (eg: composing a photograph, writing poetry).

Feedback from carers:

- *"It's got my brain cells ticking – I've loved it. It has brought back beautiful memories of my mum dyeing fabric in Nairobi when I was a child. I had completely forgotten."*
- *"It's opened up my world! [There's] opportunities to make new friends – they encouraged me to reconnect with literature and now I just signed up to learn to type!"*
- *"It has a great impact on me. Now I am a dancer, I dance all around the house!"*

Bespoke design and rigorous testing

In line with Create's overarching model, *creative:voices* is developed and delivered using a well-established methodology, and rigorously evaluated throughout.

Every *creative:voices* project is co-created with a carer service that has specialist knowledge of local needs/ priorities/ its group of beneficiary carers. Working closely with each service ensures a sense of local ownership, ensuring projects are uniquely tailored. Services have in-depth knowledge of the challenges faced by the carers who use their service, enabling projects to be designed to meet their needs/interests, and project formats to be designed so carers who might otherwise lack time/confidence to attend can be supported to do so.

Our bespoke approach enables us to respond to our partners' own priorities, increasing impact. At the end of each project partners report whether 'their programme of activities has been enhanced' and whether 'they would like to work with Create again'. In 2023/24,

100% of staff said their programme had been enhanced and they would like to work with Create again. Responses are monitored and feed into our project evaluation/future plans.

Projects can be delivered online via the *Create Live!* platform if this is necessary to enable carers to take part. This takes projects into participants' homes where they are unable to leave the loved one who they care for. Online delivery has also been used to bring carers from different geographical locations together.

Led by professional artists and experienced staff

To join Create, artists must have a high-quality professional practice AND extensive experience in workshop leading. They are asked about their commitment to sustainable practice and DEI. Two Senior Project Managers interview them/then assess them delivering a workshop. References/DBS are checked.

Our artists use their artistic and facilitation skills to enable participants to achieve key outcomes (social and creative skills development/ wellbeing/reduced isolation). Projects have a high artist/staff:participant ratio ensuring carers receive the individual support and attention they deserve.

Projects are managed by Create's experienced Project Managers, who oversee to the highest standards: planning with the artists/ partner organisations including risk assessment and safeguarding; onsite delivery; managing volunteers; monitoring/evaluation.