

## Reaching Out, Drawing In

### Pilot Report – Workshops for people living with Dementia



*Produced as part of a mosaic workshop at Centre Celf*

## Introduction

This pilot project was to look at and test the impact of long-term engagement through the arts and in the environment with people living with dementia, including carers and family of the person with Dementia. To do this we were looking at offering personal art sessions in people's homes alongside regular weekly 2-hour group art sessions at Centre Celf.

The project wanted to 'Reach out' to people in the community who might be isolated and withdrawn and 'Draw them in' to attending workshops at Centre Celf, being part of a group whilst learning something new or remembering past skills and being part of a community.

Celf o Gwmpas is a long-established arts charity, operating in Powys providing arts experiences and activities for people excluded from society and we wanted to build on this experience to gather information about the longer-term benefits and the challenges of providing on-going activities.

The project believed that working over a long-term period, establishing relationships between artists and participants and among the participants themselves, we could have an impact on the health and well-being of those our work supports, whilst creating a body of evidence which we hoped could help change the way arts are used in therapeutic practice in Powys.

There is increasing evidence that participating in the arts has a range of health benefits and these benefits persist long after the event.

## Challenges

The particular challenge under consideration in this pilot was engaging people living with dementia in regular participative art sessions.

The challenges around this were:

- How people could find out about our workshops when they are not out and about in society and less likely to be using social media.
- People not remembering past experiences of finding pleasure from the arts, or connecting to skills they once used.
- Carers not having the time to support someone to come, or not feeling enthusiastic themselves about engaging with art.
- People feeling anxious about coming to a new building and not understanding why they are there. Not everyone can easily leave their home and not everyone wants to go to a new place and meet new people.
- Due to the decline in people's health because of their dementia, the likelihood that they may not attend many sessions before their situation changed, affecting their ability to attend sessions.
- Travelling to the sessions could be difficult for people, especially those living at home.
- High cost of providing focussed support tailored to meet the needs of individuals particularly those who live in their own homes.

When the project began, Dementia Matters in Powys was relatively new. There were other groups (not now all in existence) such as the Dementia Café run by Mid Powys Mind, however, there was a shared experience of not knowing who the people living with dementia were and how best to get information to them. Project staff, contacted, spoke with and established as many contacts as possible with organisations, including GP's, who might

Ffon/Tel: 01597 822777 e-bost/e-mail: [centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org](mailto:centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org)  
[www.celfogwmpas.org](http://www.celfogwmpas.org) Registered Charity Number: 1073029

have contact with or were in a position to refer people/families living with dementia to us, with the hope that this would give them access to information about what we were offering.

We produced posters and flyers, prominently displayed in the local area, including GP surgery's, library's and community buildings, to spread the word and encourage interest.

An organisational challenge for the whole project were staff changes. We had staff leave due to other commitments, midway through, meaning we had to appoint other staff to take on roles but with a lack of time or crossover to give proper handovers which meant contacts, information and continuity was lost.

## Solution

This project tried out two approaches:

One was on-going arts workshops in our building, Centre Celf. A programme of arts workshops was devised, exploring many different art forms. Most of these were six-week programmes. The workshops ranged from lino-cutting to water colours, printing, silk painting, postcards and memory quilting. Water colour sessions were very popular and therefore became fortnightly and ran for eleven weeks. The people who attended these workshops were made up of individuals living at home, either on their own or with family and residents from local care homes.

The workshops were led by professional artists skilled at designing and leading arts and health workshops. Each workshop had a volunteer to help support the artist and those attending.

The workshops were described as being for people 'living with dementia'. This was intended to be an inclusive description, applying to carers as well as those people who had dementia themselves. Carers were entitled to come alone, they did not need to be accompanying anyone with dementia. One family, an elderly man with dementia, his wife and their daughter all came together. As the dementia progressed through different stages, from moving into a home, deterioration and death, the wife and daughter continued to attend the sessions.

By providing regular workshops the intention was to build up a sense of familiarity with the building, the artists and the use of art materials.

By including carers, the intention was to provide a relaxing space for people to enjoy together, where everyone was on equal terms, giving families an experience of enjoying something together regardless of the dementia, rather than the carer/s feeling they were having to support the person with dementia in the session.

The second approach was to offer one-to-one art sessions directly to people in their own homes. This was for up to ten sessions each. These sessions were about having fun and exploring the individual's creativity. As well as the artist there would be either a carer or support worker in the session.

Referrals for the work in individual homes were expected to come from Powys Mind, Powys Carers, GP and community psychiatric nursing practices as well as through adult social care. We contacted a number of organizations including health and social care professionals to refer people to us who they felt would benefit from regular art sessions in their own home. We also looked to work with residential and nursing homes and the local hospital to ensure access for dementia sufferers' resident in EMI units with the possibility of some workshops taking place in these settings.



The project helped to arrange and, in some places, pay for taxis to and from the workshops at Centre Celf, enabling participants to attend who may not have been able through lack of funds. The project also liaised with a local taxi company who picked up a person who lived on their own, who's family lived in another part of the country.



## Benefit

The benefit of the project was that we were able to run weekly workshops for at least two years. This enabled us to build up a small core group of people who attended weekly, mainly made up with residents of local care homes but also a couple of people who initially lived at home. The participants built up a relationship with the artists they worked with, feeling comfortable coming to Centre Celf for their sessions and having an expected routine and expectation.

They were able to suggest art techniques they would like to try and we adapted sessions to provide for this.

Feedback from participants include,

- "It is relaxing, I feel happy"
- "Working in a group improves her communication"
- "... I like being in a small quiet group of people, I feel happy"
- (the sessions helped) trying something new and remembering how to use the skills (already known)

The weekly workshops were very successful, especially water colour painting which became a long-term course alongside other six weekly workshops. The participants worked together on projects as well as producing individual pieces.

The one person we were able to work with in their own home enjoyed the sessions when they happened and produced some lovely work.

Ffon/Tel: 01597 822777 e-bost/e-mail: [centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org](mailto:centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org)  
[www.celfogwmpas.org](http://www.celfogwmpas.org) Registered Charity Number: 1073029

Through using a number of evaluation tools, we were able to establish that the project enabled us to demonstrate that involvement in arts activities can lead to greater connections with others, lessening isolation and opening doors to other community activities.

- “B is very relaxed with this group. He enjoys doing the art and it meets his needs”
- “Being part of the groups has helped C’s self esteem
- “C definitely loves to go to exhibitions and to see her own work exhibited”

## Result

The project was able to run 88 workshop sessions over a two-year period, with between 2 and 6 participants, some with carers and some without, attending at any one time. When people came, they enjoyed the work and gained a great deal of satisfaction and on-going benefit. This is well demonstrated with the Celf o Gwmpas case study that was featured in the Arts Council of Wales publication Arts and Health in Wales. A mapping study of current activity 2018. A career is quoted:

“At home he just wants to lie down. He doesn’t even want to go to the day centre now. But he looks forward to coming to you. He’s in a better mood after he’s been. It does have a therapeutic effect.”

Region: POWYS TEACHING HEALTH BOARD

## Reaching out drawing in

DEVELOPING AND EVALUATING NEW WAYS OF USING THE ARTS TO REDUCE ISOLATION AND IMPROVE WELL-BEING



**Key Outcomes:**

The benefits to the participants include:

- Feeling less isolated as a result of the arts workshops
- Being stimulated by engaging in new activities
- Increased enjoyment

Family carers also value the additional support the project offers them.

Jointly funded by Arwain (Rural Development Plan for Wales) and Arts Council Wales, REACHING OUT DRAWING IN is a two-year pilot project that aims to combat rural isolation and increase well-being through high quality participatory arts sessions. Run by Ulandrindod, Wells-based arts charity, Celf o Gwmpas, REACHING OUT DRAWING IN offers a range of professionally-led, arts workshops in a safe and friendly space for participants to explore and enjoy.

Two parallel programme strands, offering weekly creative workshops, run concurrently at Celf o Gwmpas' Centre Celf in Ulandrindod: one designed for people living with dementia and their carers; the other for learning disabled adults.

The workshops are led by experienced artist facilitators who introduce participants to a variety of artforms including painting, collage, mosaic, print-making and music. Further creative sessions take place in different community settings - including in people's own homes - throughout Powys.

REACHING OUT DRAWING IN is also enriched by the work of artists in residence (poet & visual artist, Helen Ivory, and poet, Ira Lightman) who lead activities for groups with a range of support needs at Giffach Nature Reserve and at Centre Celf.

As well as evaluating the impact on participants' well-being, the programme is exploring the potential of adopting a social prescribing model by developing new referral routes into the programme in partnership with health and social care professionals and statutory bodies.

“At home he just wants to lie down. He doesn't even want to go to the day centre now. But he looks forward to coming to you. He's in a better mood after he's been. It does have a therapeutic effect.”

Participant's spouse

18

Ffon/Tel: 01597 822777 e-bost/e-mail: [centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org](mailto:centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org)  
[www.celfogwmpas.org](http://www.celfogwmpas.org) Registered Charity Number: 1073029

The project found that with consistency of regular sessions and familiar artists, people would come regularly, helping them to remember past experiences of finding pleasure from the arts, and connecting to skills they once used. Preparation and skill of our skilled and experienced artists and consistent approach to the running and management of workshops proved invaluable to the success of the workshops and therefore the project.



Identify individuals living in the community, and not in care homes, proved quite difficult and therefore obtaining referrals for individuals living at home for us to go out to was minimal. Due to the nature of dementia, people's situations were ever changing, especially those living at home, so although we had other referrals by the time they were followed through or the process started, the home situation changed and it was no longer viable or suitable to have an artist visit in the home.

Participants enjoyed took pride in the work they produced and enjoyed seeing their work on display both in our final exhibition as well as in the community.

- "C definitely loves to go to exhibitions and to see her own work exhibited"
- "It makes me proud to see my work in the community"

## Contact details

Sarah Hill  
Project co-ordinator  
[projects@celfogwmpas.org](mailto:projects@celfogwmpas.org)



Ffon/Tel: 01597 822777 e-bost/e-mail: [centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org](mailto:centrecelf@celfogwmpas.org)  
[www.celfogwmpas.org](http://www.celfogwmpas.org) Registered Charity Number: 1073029

