



Front Room Art Club

ARTIST BRIEF

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Introduction:

The National Centre for Craft & Design (NCCD) is currently hosting an Arts and Health season, exploring different 'seen' and 'unseen' health issues, including exhibitions which look at the implications of both mental health and physical conditions. Some of the artworks are by people who have health issues themselves and some are by artists who have worked closely with scientists on research. This pilot project is timed to coincide with these exhibitions, as part of our community outreach programme. It is also now particularly timely, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the numbers of people who are isolated at home. The timeframe for delivery will be flexible and will have to respond to the current crisis.

Front Room Art Club is a new project for the Sleaford area, designed to enable people feeling lonely and house-bound to learn new creative skills. Participants will be able to take part from their own homes, supported by an artist and volunteers, to create an artwork for a collaborative installation at NCCD. We are working in partnership with Evergreen Befriending Service, Community Lincs (part of YMCA), Voluntary Centre Services North Kesteven, Neighbourhood Team South West and Ruskington, Ancaster and Caythorpe Medical Practices. The project has been supported by Lincolnshire County Council's Community Collaboration Fund.

The partnership was formed in order to reduce social isolation by encouraging local residents to take part in creative activities.

The partners have already committed to supporting the delivery of the project with their own patients and clients, including Evergreen, who provide a free befriending service for older people living within a 10-mile radius of Sleaford. Local medical practices, Occupational Therapists and Social Prescribing Link Workers have also identified potential participants.

Context:

Loneliness is a subjective state with a number of forms. For example, 'social loneliness' is the absence of a social network or a broad group of friends, neighbours and colleagues, while 'emotional loneliness' is the absence of significant others with whom a close emotional attachment is formed. Loneliness can be a chronic condition which is exacerbated with age or a condition which flares in response to life changes such as bereavement or job loss. Loneliness can be difficult to measure.

Broadly, loneliness can be described as the gap a person feels between the quality and quantity of social interactions they have compared with the interactions they would like or expect. It can affect people irrespective of age, or class or background but can be triggered by key transitions including the onset of major or chronic illness, sensory or cognitive impairment, becoming a long term carer, bereavement, moving away from family and friends or moving into sheltered housing / care home settings.

The brief:

We will appoint a professional, experienced artist to develop a visual arts project that people can take part in from their own homes, or at small group sessions, supported by partner staff and volunteers. The project will engage around 20-25 participants. The appointed artist will devise the project and deliver workshop 'skill development' sessions with the volunteers and staff, who will in turn pass these skills on to the participants in their own homes through 1:1 visits, or in small groups meeting at NCCD. The artist will determine the artworks that could be created through this process, in order to make a collaborative artwork to be showcased at NCCD. A budget for materials and equipment will be allocated to the artist.

The project will be accessible to any age/gender/ability. Participants will typically be feeling housebound and living alone; unable to leave their homes without support and as a result feel the adverse effects of loneliness and isolation. Many participants have other significant health challenges - sensory impairment, severe arthritis, dementia to name but a few. Such conditions often worsen the effects of living alone and lead to the feeling of being detached from the 'real world'. A lack of stimulation in their home environments can often be a trigger to depression and loss of motivation to be involved in activities and events available to them. Some of the participants who could potentially participate have been identified by the Neighbourhood Team and the Social Prescribing Link Worker.

The Evergreen volunteers are people from within the community who are keen to help relieve the feeling of being lonely by bringing 'the outside in' to a participant. They commit to provide friendship and support to a person identified as being in need and as such will partner together in order to complete this project.

Outputs and outcomes:

The artworks created from the workshops and 1:1 visits could take various forms, but there are a number of considerations which will affect this:

- Participants taking part from their own homes will need to be able to do the project at their kitchen/dining room table, or even on their laps.
- Some of the participants may have limited fine motor skills, or could have a visual, auditory or cognitive impairment.
- The art equipment and materials need to be small and lightweight, for example easily packed into a small box, and kept to hand.
- Some of the participants will take part by working with a volunteer / support work at home.
- Some of the participants might take part in the project as part of NCCD's Craft Club, which supports referrals through Social Prescribing.
- Many of the participants may struggle to do the activity for a sustained amount of time and we may need to build in time for rest breaks.
- The normal barriers to participating in an art project will also apply, including lack of confidence, fear, access issues and a feeling of 'this isn't for me', but participants will all be supported by a known staff member or volunteer, and will be self-referring so should be willing to try something new.

The artist will propose what skills could be learnt (or adapted) within this framework, and what kind of artwork could be created through approximately eight sessions. The artworks could take different forms (scale, media, numbers of works produced) depending on the skills/abilities of the participants but should all be connected in some way to create the collaborative piece. For example, we have recently completed a collaborative quilt project, where different people contributed a patchwork square which were sewn together by an artist-in-residence. We'd like the project to reflect this way of working, but be something new and different. For this project, we believe the participants will want to keep their individual contributions, so although they will come together for the showcase, they will need to be returned to participants afterwards.

The artist will deliver four creative workshop 'skills development' sessions for volunteers and support staff, who will in turn pass these skills on to participants, supported by written/pictorial and online guidance. We have applied for additional funding to purchase iPads to make films that will enable participants and volunteers to use video guidance produced by the artist. If successful, this will be added to the budget.

We anticipate that some of the volunteers and other staff may also contribute artworks to the collaborative installation to make the project fully inclusive.

The process of making is important, people will feel part of something 'bigger' even if they are taking part in it 'alone'. The exhibition and celebratory event at the end of the project will give people the chance to see what has been achieved by working together, and to share this with family and friends. A sense of pride and belonging should be amongst the outcomes.

It is essential that the project is evaluated, sensitively and appropriately, so that we are able to build an evidence base for future funding. We are developing a wellbeing survey for the volunteers and participants which we hope will be easy to use.

We are also hoping to evaluate the activity and its impact on physical skills, sensory/perceptual skills, cognitive skills, social interaction skills, emotional skills and cultural demands, with the support of occupational therapy MA students (placements still to be confirmed).

Role of the artist:

In summary, the artist will:

- Devise and deliver the art activity to meet the aims and objectives as outlined in the Brief.
- Source the equipment and materials required.
- Provide training through the workshops for volunteers and staff – through workshops and written / video guidance (funding TBC for films).
- Visit participants and groups personally, where possible, to develop a rapport and provide help and support.
- Devise and help deliver the celebratory event and showcase at NCCD with partners.
- Help to evaluate the success of the project and outcomes with NCCD and partners.

Artist skills and experience:

We are looking for someone who has an understanding of the therapeutic benefits of making and creating. Applicants don't need to have special therapy training, but some experience of working with people on art projects to improve health outcomes and address individual needs will be essential.

We would like to appoint an artist/s who has:

- their own high quality art practice, with demonstrable evidence of collaborative, co-produced engaging projects
- experience of running excellent creative workshops that excite and enthuse participants
- experience of supporting vulnerable people to get the best out of creative activities
- experience of delivering workshops and / or creative projects with and for volunteers
- experience of preparing risk assessments for creative activities with vulnerable people
- experience of managing similar budgets to ensure proposals are feasible and deliverable
- experience of putting together an exhibition/showcase
- public liability insurance of £5 million
- an understanding of equal opportunities, confidentiality and procedures relating to working with vulnerable people
- the ability to work within the framework and timescale for the project
- access to a car in order to travel to and from and within a 10 mile radius of Sleaford.

Budget:

artist fees to develop project (2 days @£250)	£ 500
artist fees for training volunteers (4x half day workshops @£150)	£ 600
artist fees for participant visits, group workshops and attending celebration event and evaluation session (10 x half day @£150)	£ 1,500
Artist travel costs / expenses	£300
Participant / volunteer travel budget	£1,000
Art equipment and materials budget	£1000
Exhibition / celebration event costs	£350
FUNDING TBC:	
iPads x 4	£1,716
2x days for artist to make videos to support workshops and participants	£500

Timescale

We'd like to start the project as soon as possible, and anticipate completion with the showcase and celebration in September 2020. Artists need to be aware of and available for the following dates:

Expressions of Interest received:	Friday 17 April
Interviews:	Friday 24 April (likely to be postponed)
Presentation of project proposal with artwork ideas to partners:	Wednesday 6 May at 2pm (also likely to be postponed)
Initial presentation/training session with volunteers:	TBC

How to Submit an Expression of Interest

Please complete an application form which can be downloaded from <https://nccd.org.uk/support>

Please supply a copy of your CV and up to ten images / videos (no more than 5 mins) that reflect your artistic quality and provide evidence of previous work.

The deadline for all applications is **Friday 17 April**. Applications received after this time will not be accepted.

A shortlist will be drawn up and suitable candidates will be interviewed on **Friday 24 April** by representatives from the partners and NCCD – please note this date is likely to be postponed due to the current crisis. Applications (and enquiries) should be submitted via email to:

Lucy Lumb, Visual Arts Development Co-ordinator (NCCD): lucy.lumb@lincsinspire.com

Background Info:

The project came out of consultation through the Lincolnshire County Council 'Join the Dots' initiative – where it was determined that there was a need and demand for a focused and collaborative approach to working with people who are house-bound and feeling lonely, for various mental or physical health reasons. The partners are:

The National Centre for Craft & Design

The National Centre for Craft and Design (NCCD) in Sleaford, Lincolnshire is dedicated to the exhibition, celebration and promotion of international, national and local craft and design. The venue includes a main gallery and smaller interactive spaces that showcase an ever-changing programme of exhibitions each year, from the most innovative, challenging and accomplished artists to new and emerging talent.

Following a merger with artsNK in 2018, NCCD offers enriching arts and cultural experiences across North Kesteven through a dynamic multi-arts outreach programme of community projects, dance workshops, events, performances, public art commissions and education initiatives. NCCD has a stimulating learning programme that inspires people of all ages, skills and interest levels and a craft and design shop for the latest contemporary handmade products.

Evergreen Befriending Service

Evergreen Sleaford provides a free, confidential befriending service to those elderly (aged 70 or over), lonely (living alone) and isolated (unable to get out and about unaided) living within a 10-mile radius of Sleaford. Evergreen believe that simple, committed friendships may reduce and prevent the isolation experienced by those who may not have family or friends close by. The aim of an Evergreen Befriender is to step in and become a friend, with a mutually enriching and rewarding friendship developing. Each volunteer commits to a weekly visit between 1-2 hours to their friend, for a chat, to play games, maybe go on a trip together - whatever the pair choose to do between them.

Neighbourhood Team South West

South West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Lincolnshire Community Health Services, Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Hospital Trust and Lincolnshire County Council are working together to integrate health and social care services to improve and streamline care for residents. Integrated care aims to 'join-up' health and social care to meet the needs of an ageing population and transform the way that care is provided for people with long-term conditions, by enabling those with complex needs to lead healthier, fulfilling and independent lives. Neighbourhood Teams will enable the provision of the right care, at the right time, in the right place. Neighbourhood Teams bring together health and social care professionals including GPs, community nurses, social workers, community psychiatric nurses and therapists.

Voluntary Centre Services

Voluntary Centre Services (VCS) supports volunteers and voluntary and community organisations across Lincolnshire. As well as operating accredited Volunteer Centres in Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford that deal with over 2,000 volunteer enquiries each year, they can offer help to anyone wishing to set up a group, funding advice and access to news and networks in the voluntary and community sector. They have an active team of invaluable volunteers working alongside staff to deliver services across our districts. VCS also deliver a programme of volunteer management training which is available for anyone who finds themselves with responsibility for volunteers.

Community Lincs, part of YMCA Lincolnshire

As part of YMCA Lincolnshire the Community Lincs team is based in Sleaford and works across Lincolnshire. The team has been supporting communities since 1927. Work is guided by an ambition to create a Lincolnshire where people are connected, communities thrive and opportunities exist for all. Their ethos centres on working with people, giving them the skills, resources, connections and confidence to help them deliver a better future for themselves, the people they care about and the communities they live in.