



Lullaby Circle

Project Report

Impact

Throughout this project we empowered:

108 older adults living in care to attend sessions with babies and their families through singing, movement, and community engagement

61 young people aged 0 - 3 and their families to participate in creative, guided sessions, engage with older people in a care setting

Members of the public to engage with the project through TV coverage, and call outs to donate blankets for the sessions

About the Project

This pilot project began as an idea to encourage older people to enjoy the positive benefits of being around babies and intergenerational connection. Sessions were designed for older adults who's children and grand children have grown up, or simply for those that would benefit from engaging with young people and their families. The opportunity to hold a baby may not be as accessible for residents living in care settings, and we aimed to changed that.

Through this idea, we invited parents with babies under one year old to attend ten weekly Lullaby Circle sessions in two Care Homes. These sessions involved encouraging older and younger people to get together to sing lullabies, participate in gentle movement, and hold babies to inspire positive outcomes and feelings of connectivity.





The Creative Process

To ensure a sense of transformative space for all participants, we collaborated with a theatre maker to create a 'set' that can be installed by facilitators to evoke feelings of calm and sensory play to the room.

This set included bunting, blankets, handmade sensory trees, electric tea lights and floor blankets to allow residents and families to feel comfortable, adding a sense of familiarity to the space each week.



Resident Case Study 1

During the first Lullaby Circle session, one resident shared that they had never had children, but was very happy to hold the babies and encouraged parents to go and have a cup of tea while she held their child. She would cradle them, sing to them, and was clearly very comfortable around young people and their families.

She later shared with us that she had worked at a maternity surgery in her youth, and reminisced with us about looking after babies while new mothers spoke with their doctor. She enjoyed telling us stories about her career, and laughed when telling us that weighing the babies on metal scales was too cold for them!

Not only did this resident find happiness and feelings of joy while being in these sessions, but she was able to reminisce about her life, recalling memories from her younger years. Moments of reminiscence like this can have positive outcomes on memory and wellness, particularly from those living with dementia.



**“ This has really
brightened my day, and
my life ”**

Resident Case Study 2

This resident had been living with health needs that limited her speech and movement. This meant that communication was different, and without being able to directly communicate with her, parents were initially unsure how she was going to engage with their babies.

However, as soon as she saw the families come in each week, her face lit up and she was smiling. She held the babies, played with them and was creating meaningful connections with the young people and their families.

For older people that once had children of their own, holding a baby can feel like second nature. It was clear in this case that the resident had a love for babies, and held them so comfortably and naturally.

As these sessions were weekly, each parent had the opportunity to learn about each residents access needs, get to know each resident and gain a sense of familiarity and friendship with residents living in the care homes.



Community Engagement

To engage the community in this project, we asked members of the public to participate by donating blankets that will be used during the sessions. By doing so, we were able to bring handmade blankets from members of the public to sessions each week, allowing residents and families to feel a sense of community, while also promoting the sessions to community members.

To further promote these sessions and widen engagement, Alive Activities were able to receive both recorded and live TV coverage, through the BBC and ITV. The BBC social media piece went international and reached thousands of people. We broadcast live on This Morning - reaching over 1m people. Not only did this coverage allow us to promote the work we do, it highlighted how intergenerational connection benefits both the families and residents.



Legacy

Lullaby Circle was a resounding success as a pilot project. The positive outcomes from families, residents, staff and community members were overwhelming. Due to the success of the pilot, we have been able to offer these sessions as a paid, ongoing offer to care homes.

This project continues to inspire intergenerational connection, community engagement and positive outcomes for all generations involved. Our goal is to continue delivering Lullaby Circle sessions, encouraging positive intergenerational connections in care homes.



Conclusion

We discovered a range of positive outcomes from this pilot project:

- Residents were able to reminisce about holding babies, whether that be their own children or through past careers.
- Parents were able to hand their baby over to residents, allowing them to enjoy conversation with other parents and residents, evoking a sense of community.
- Residents were able to offer advice to new parents, allowing them to recall life as a new parent, and find familiarity with the babies and their grown ups.
- Families and babies were invited in to care homes from the community, which encouraged stereotypes of care homes to be challenged. Many parents noted that they had not been in a care home before, but were very pleased to have met the residents and create new friendships.

Overall, all residents and families involved in this project were able to engage with each other in meaningful ways through intergenerational connection.