



# ABCD Toolkit: Craft Group

**by Jennie Langridge**

We chose the local Sailing Club as our venue because it is big enough to have one big long table so all can sit together. As it is an evening and weekend social venue they have room for daytime groups. A further benefit was that when friendships were made at the craft group the sailing club became a place where they wanted to socialise outside of the craft group as they felt relaxed and secure in familiar surroundings.

The venue ticked lots of boxes for accessibility. It was on a bus route, had on street parking nearby and good disabled access.

We had a minimal charge for all so that we only needed 8 to attend to cover the hire of the venue.

## People that attend

The craft group is advertised but mostly people came through word of mouth and also through referrals from outside agencies. We wanted to encourage those that have felt isolated to engage back into the community. We have had a lot of success with this. We started originally with us community builders attending so they could see the same familiar faces to welcome them in, but very quickly those that were regular attendees took this role on so Amanda and I could step back.

We do still have a gentleman that continues to come 3 years after his wife sadly died. He used to bring her and then walk his dog. He now comes and makes the tea and coffee for us saying that he very much wanted to keep the social aspect of seeing friends. He felt this was a life line after his wife had died.

## **Jayne's story – a regular group attendee**

Before coming to the craft group I had become almost a recluse due to illness, anxiety and depression. My friend told me about the group and asked me to come. After plucking up the courage I came and was faced with lots of smiley faces. I have been attending for nearly 4 years now and my life has been truly transformed. I have made good friends for life. The group are supportive, kind, caring and we laugh and make beautiful crafts. I feel it has become the hub of the Community on a Thursday. Jennie our Community Builder has been a great support to me and I now go out of the house and even bought myself a mobility scooter with the encouragement of others so I can join in the outside activities with the group. Thank you to all for giving me a life.

Jayne has also become the lead of sourcing new ideas of makes and teaching the group once a month for those that want to join in.

The craft group has become their own little mini Community often entering into Community engagements including: -

- Knitting baby hats for the Neonatal ward
- Volunteering to help in the kitchen to prepare food for Sunday activity/events at the local Social Centre
- Organising social outings
- Supporting local charities one of which raised £250 for Macmillan with a coffee and cake sale
- Regular plant and book swaps
- Producing an amazing scarecrow for the local festival
- Supporting the local Defibrillator fund raising by providing the raffle prizes
- Attending the lunch club at the local pub for the over 50's

This is just a few of the many things that they have been involved in.

This has been a very enlightening journey for us all and it has become a much-valued part of the community.