Our Welfare! Our Health!
The Doctor's Bag



Project Evaluation

NHS 75

HERITAGE FUND

Creative PATHS

Our Welfare, Our Health - The Doctor's Bag

Our Welfare! Our Health! was funded by the National Lottery Heritage fund, it co-created with residents in care, a reminiscence resource based on the history of the NHS.

Creative Paths CIC worked with ten care homes and delivered reminiscence sessions with their residents.

We assembled a doctor's bag containing the contents of a 1950's medical bag, and used objects of social interest on the themes of public health and welfare. These were used to stimulate the recall of personal histories during the sessions, and the stories, comments, and anecdotes shared were audio recorded.

This project is to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the National Health Service (NHS).

Listening to these stories will bring insight and understanding of the important moments in the social history relating to the positive impact and change the NHS has given.

Thank you to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Lottery Players.

Thankyou to the residents of the following care homes for their stories, voices and contributions.

The Coppice Lodge
Buddleia House
The Grand Care Centre
Sutton Court Care Home
Rivendell Care Home
Southwell Care Home
Acorn House
Kingfisher Court
Queenswood Care Home
The Rookery Care Home



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Project Outline

Our Welfare! Our Health! co-created with residents living in care, reminiscence resources that recorded memories of the welfare state and public health.

Creative Paths CIC worked with ten care homes and delivered reminiscence sessions with their residents. We assembled a doctor’s bag containing the contents of a 1950’s medical bag, holding objects of social interest on the themes of public health and welfare. This was used to stimulate the recall of personal histories during the sessions, the stories, comments, and anecdotes shared were audio recorded.

The project coincided with the 75th anniversary of the National Health Service (NHS). An important landmark for an organisation that has had an profound impact on the lives of many people in the UK. This is a significant moment to reflect on the impact of the NHS. We worked with people living in care homes as their generation has received the longest benefit and we wanted to record oral histories relating to, before the NHS was created, and the early years after it’s founding, in 1948.

During the reminiscence sessions we discussed the artefacts contained within an assembled doctor's bag, and the GP’s role in healthcare, family life, and the community, as well as other aspects of NHS health care such as maternity, dentistry and hospital care. The themes were ones everyone has some experience of, and we will be able to record stories about people’s memories of their local doctor, treatments, care and preventative care. We also interviewed people in care who previously worked in healthcare, this provided a range of unique perspectives and stories.

The audio recorded oral histories were used to create an interactive reminiscence resource, which is freely available online for carers to use to deliver their own healthcare-themed reminiscence sessions. The resource is available on our webpage at https://www.creativepaths.org.uk/projects/our-welfare-our-health-the-doctor’s-bag

The National Lottery Heritage Fund provided funding for ten reminiscence sessions in ten different care homes, heritage items relating to health care including a Doctor’s bag with diagnostic tools from the 1960's, dental equipment and first aid items. Training in oral history for the workshop leaders, and the means to create an online interactive oral history resource.



Project Activities

- Procurement of heritage items linked to the NHS and health care. We purchased a leather doctors bag with items relating to diagnosis that most people would of used or recognise, these were a stethoscope, blood pressure monitors, reflex hammer, otoscope, ophthalmoscope, laryngoscope, syringes, ureameter, we also purchased dentistry tools, breast pump, babies bottles and a health and wellbeing box with items relating to first aid. These items were photographs and researched so that we could use them to their best effect, and have a legacy use for the items too. We were also able to access items from Access Artefacts museum loan service and books from the Educational Library Service.

- Oral history training with the Oral History Society, an introductory course to oral history and the best practice for gathering oral data.

- We delivered reminiscence sessions in 10 care homes across Nottinghamshire to 75 older people living in care. The average participant age was 83. Each session lasted 2 hours, participants were engaged in object handling, reminiscence and discussion. Participants interested in taking part in the oral history, were recorded at the end of each session.

- The purchase of a audio recording device, and use of a freelance audio editor to edit and transcribe recordings.

- The creation of an elearning resource and website page for dissemination of the project outcomes and oral history recordings.

- An evaluation of the project.

"It feels different having your voice be recorded, I had a nice time.".



Outcome Achievement

- We were successful in finding the right heritage items, artefacts and historical documents to support the project. This was evident through the interest, engagement and contribution from participants on interacting with objects and materials bought in.

- We recorded 20 oral histories across the care homes, and 9 of these are used in our elearning resource. The recordings covered a good range of topics relating to the NHS to give a broad overview of the scope of the service.

- We put out an expression of interest on a first come basis to our care home partners, recruiting care homes and participants was quick and we were able to recruit care homes from across the county area, reaching people from diverse socio and economic backgrounds.

- Feedback from participants was positive, the reminiscence sessions provided them with a means to communicate and share with their peers their experiences of health care, and to contribute to a wider project outcome with a social and heritage benefit.

- It provided our organisation with the opportunity to train and develop new skills, and to utilise the position and access we have on a regular basis to people's oral stories through the work we do.

- The project provided value to the voice of an under represented group of the population, those in care who are often out of mind.

"I enjoyed listening to you talk and joining in, and everyone adding something."



Community Engagement

Guided reminiscence work with older people living with memory loss and dementia is a well-documented strategy for improving social interaction, connectivity and wellbeing for those living in care. It is a specialist approach to engaging people in activities that promote recall, sharing and discussion, it provides distraction, feelings of self-worth and strengthens identity for those that participate. Therefore, any opportunities for reminiscence activities and resources are highly sort by the care home community.

- The project outcomes have been shared across our networks locally and nationally, the resource will be used in care settings by activity coordinators for their residents to provide reminiscence and discussion based activity.

- Our organisation will be using the objects and artefacts from the project in our future general reminiscence sessions, as health care is so very pertinent to the people we work with.

- 75 people living care directly benefitted from the project, the care staff that supported them and family members that attended were able to benefit also from the project. Reminiscence is important to care givers both professional and informal. Reminiscence and heritage projects give opportunities for those that they care for to share their life experiences. They provide important personal life histories that can be used therapeutically and enable a closer and more understanding relationship between carer and cared for. By participating in supporting the project care staff and family will be able to connect with their cared for in a more meaningful way, by modeling the reminiscence skills we demonstrated.

- Some of the heritage items will be made into loan boxes and be available for free loan to local care homes and interested voluntary groups and organisations representing older people, such as day services, memory cafes and carers groups.

"It brought back all the memories of having diphtheria and the wet curtain."



Impact on awareness

- The heritage we have preserved is the oral histories of those that experienced the NHS from the cradle through to their final years. These memories recorded, raise awareness of the importance of capturing lived memories, in particular from a generation that will soon pass away, it has placed greater value on those life stories and the necessity to collect this important social history and knowledge in a way that is easily sharable.

- The project provided an oral history of healthcare, life, and community during a period of profound social change, making it of value to our community of interest, our local community and the wider care community. The shared histories of the NHS shows the impact that the service has had on people's lives in a real way. The project has demonstrated, that the tool of reminiscence is successful in engaging people in retelling their memories, it has shown how their personal history can be easily captured for the benefit and knowledge of others..

Heritage Conservation

- Our aim was that this project will lead to a greater understanding of healthcare heritage. In particular the service, impact and growth of the NHS. Our oral histories have captured some of that history in context, in a way that is direct and experienced.

- We have gathered healthcare memorabilia, photo's and objects from a variety of sources to make a collection of items that represent the services of the NHS.

- The oral histories collected are people who lived through the most seismic change in the history of healthcare in the UK. The event is well known, but the individual experiences are not, we have identified and recorded them, adding to an important public discourse. The recollection and telling of personal experiences from a cohort who have lived their lives' in the embrace of the post war welfare state has provided an insight into this common heritage.

"It was most interesting, a lot of it I didn't know!"



Educational Value

- The project has valuable educational outcomes for all generations, particularly in a time where for many years the welfare state and its services have been taken for granted, and are now under going transformation and cuts that mean services are under threat.

- Our organisation promotes life long learning, as we believe that the benefits of learning should be available at any age. Through participating in the project and using our resource, older cohorts of care home residents, are able to learn about the NHS, from each other's experiences. They are then able to reflect and consider the past, the present and the future of the service.

- The project has identified and documented objects, artefacts and memorabilia that will help tell the story of the NHS and it's history for the educational benefit of others. It has linked those tangible pieces of history with the personal content of recorded oral histories, and participants own records and photos, making the story of the NHS reflective of the society and people it has served.

"There was a lot to take out of it, I enjoyed all of it."

"It brought me back, it reminded me of feeding a baby from the old fashioned bottle."

"It has been very interesting to see the change in everything, and to see all the instruments."

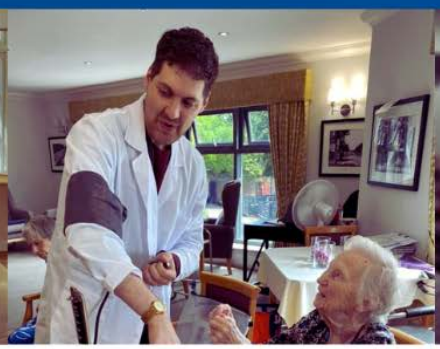


Achieved Purposes

- Training for two members of the project team from the Oral History Society - An Introduction to Oral History.
- A designated project page on our website, holding the e-resource, project outline, photographs, separate audio buttons and the project evaluation.
- Our Welfare, Our Health, 17 page online audio/visual interactive e-resource, with recordings of memories of the NHS from nine older people living in care that participated in the project. With supporting photos and videos' linked to the theme.
- Transcription document to download from our website of the recordings.
- Audio playback on the website of three of the participants stories.
- The deliver of ten reminiscence workshops in ten care settings on the theme of the NHS, it's history, purpose and achievement.
- The acknowledgement of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Lottery players for the grant funding that made the project possible.
- A greater knowledge and understanding of the benefits of capturing and promoting heritage, for the older people living in care within our community of interest, and the wider community. The experience and skill set to explore its uses further in the work we do to promote activity and learning for health and wellbeing.

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Conclusion

In conclusion the project has successfully met the outcomes of our brief.

To measure the success of the project we have considered the following -

- The engagement and enjoyment of the participants.
- The quality of our output and outcomes.
- The preserving and dissemination of the heritage we collected.

Feedback from participants and care staff, and our own observations is that the project was very much enjoyed by the participants. This was evident in the discussion and enthusiasm shown in the sessions, their remarks and feedback and that they talked about the project after we had left. There was also a willingness to talk and share, on some occasions quite intimate information. This demonstrates their interest and commitment to contributing to heritage, and their trust in the process.

The planning and structure of the reminiscence workshops was very successful in stimulating recall, and discussion. The resources used were of a high quality and considered research had been undertaken to identify the right objects to source and bring in. The sessions also had an element of fun and theatre, with participants trying out the medical equipment and wearing the doctors coat.

We found that in some situations due to the difficulty in finding quiet spaces to record the audio in the care homes that some of the recordings were not usable. This is something that is very difficult to mitigate in health settings of this type. However we are confident the ones we have used in our resource are of a high quality and show a broad experience of the NHS. We have also transcribed all of the audio in the resource, this is available as a PDF on the website.

The e-learning resource is easy to navigate and meets the requirements of the brief, providing an interesting way for the heritage to be accessed on our website. The oral recordings are themed with videos and original photographs to support them.



Additional credits:
Project conceived, coordinated and delivered by Chris Boote and Karyn Stavert
Captivate elearning resource - Karyn Stavert
Audio Editing and Transcription - Emma Wass

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