



Happy
Older
People

1. Introduction

Created in 2014 by National Museums Liverpool (NML) and produced by Open Culture, the Happy Older People (HOP) network has been successful in engaging older people across the Liverpool City Region with high quality arts-friendly activity. Membership has steadily increased and the network includes a variety of arts organisations, health care professionals and providers, older people, housing associations and community groups.

The network is designed to create an arena for new partnerships to be formed, connections to be made and to communicate the arts friendly offer for older people across the city.

2. Key Achievements so far

Since March 2014 the HOP network has achieved:

- An active network of over **180 members**.

Directly commissioned arts and cultural activity through the HOP Pot Grant Fund scheme which has enabled many older people to participate in the cultural life of the city which offers:

- **160 separate sessions** of activity took place through HOP Pot projects.
- **2709 older people** reached through HOP Pot projects.
- **6 network meetings**, each attracting around 45- 60 participants, with guest speakers specifically from the sphere of arts, culture and engagement.

- A monthly e-newsletter, blog and twitter account to share information about events, opportunities, and best practice in Liverpool and further afield.
- Strategic networking to ensure that arts and culture is represented in other forums for older people across the city.
- An identifiable brand which can be used by partners to promote their activities.

This report provides a summary of the outcomes from 12 HOP Pot funded projects from November 2015 – March 2016 and collates feedback from the evaluation of the network itself.



Free Monkey Mind & One Vision Housing photography workshop

3. HOP Pot Outputs in 2015 - 2016

The HOP Pot Grant Fund was designed to ensure that the HOP network made a real difference to the lives of older people in Liverpool.

Organisations were invited to apply for £300 which could be spent on creative ways to help break down barriers which may prevent participation in the arts.

There was no specified age range, in order to allow maximum flexibility and ensure that the fund opened up opportunities for different generations to come together, or for family members to be included.

The fund required organisations to demonstrate:

- **Collaboration** - organisations working together in new ways, or for the first time.

- **Innovation** – creation of new activities and testing out new ways to engage older people with culture.
- **Added Value**– use of the HOP Pot Grant programme to add value to existing resources and assets.



St Michaels Irish Centre Tea Dance

Participating organisations were asked to work in partnership, to contribute to the documentation and evaluation of their projects, and to use the funding to create new activity rather than to sustain existing work.

The grant applications were assessed by a panel including representatives from Liverpool City Council, Open Culture, NML and individual older people. The projects were very diverse in art form, geographical location, activity, and cultural diversity (see Appendix 1).

Applicants included older people’s clubs, community groups, arts organisations, community centres and individual freelance artists.

An online survey was completed by the 12 participating HOP Pot organisations and the projects achieved the following outputs:

- **48 separate sessions** of activity took place. These included theatre and gallery trips, wreath making sessions, an arts and crafts workshop, cathedral visits, a digital photography workshop and dancing sessions.
- The project reached **448 older people**.
- At least **491** people have seen work

created by older people through HOP Pot programs.

- Of the **448 older people** reached through the project, **340 actively participated** in a creative activity as part of the experience.
- New partnerships were formed between arts and health organisations and many of these relationships were newly established through the HOP network.



Chinese Wellbeing and Pagoda Centre

4. HOP Pot Evaluation 2015 – 2016

Organisations were asked to evaluate projects by assessing intrinsic impacts, how the projects stimulated mental activity and what value it has added both to participants and organisations.

Key findings include:

Reduction in social isolation through increased levels of contact and taking part in activities outside the home.

“HOP has allowed us to bring older people from general needs housing and care and support residents out who suffer from community isolation and loneliness together to access arts and culture in Liverpool.” (Margaret Kelly Lee Valley Pensioners Club)

“There was an increase in confidence and feelings of personal achievement from the group - it was an opportunity for people to chat with each other and re-ignite old friendships.” (Christmas Wreath Making, Helena Partnerships)

“We all went out socially for the evening to enjoy a piece of live theatre allowing us to forget about the struggles some of the group members go through on a daily basis.” (Lorraine, The Spider Project)

“I fancy joining the dance class on Mondays!” (John Participant, Poppies Project)



Collective Encounters consultation event

“It gave us the opportunity to engage with befriending organisations and identify new groups of older people who may become audiences in the future.” (Mandy Rowe, Collective Encounters)

“Jean who is 88 years old last visited the Catholic Cathedral 49 years ago when it officially opened and through HOP she has visited the Cathedral once again.” (Gerard, Liverpool Six Community Group)

“It was lovely to meet so many nice people and relax and chat outside the sessions.” (Joan Hughes, Participant, Poppies Project)

“I really enjoyed today, really glad I made the effort I met and old friend who I had not seen for some time.” (Participant, Poppies Project)

“Thank you so much for the day at The Atkinson Gallery, we all really enjoyed ourselves and found it very interesting and are looking forward to any future similar events.” (Participant, Free Monkey Mind)

“I would love to come again to this art and crafts workshop to learn more new skills and meet friends. I gained some hands on experience and it allowed me to recall my childhood memories of Chinese Lantern making. It also helped me to reduce my loneliness at home.” (Ms Chan Yan Hau, Luncheon Club member)

Mental stimulation through enjoyment and new forms of activity

“The group learnt how to use natural materials such as willow and moss in the making of Christmas wreaths.” (Helena Partnerships)

“It has encouraged the drama group to discuss the different acting styles they saw during the theatre visits enabling us to produce our own plays by incorporating acting techniques the different theatre companies used.” (Lorraine, The Spider Project)



Collective Encounters consultation event

“At the beginning, I thought it was a difficult task and that I might not have ability and patience to do it. But after a few practices I gained the confidence and can’t believe I made it! Many thanks for the tutor and staff to give me the encouragement and help.” (Ms. Chan Mu Fang, Luncheon Club)

“Such a wonderful day. So much love. Great power and quality.” (Participant, Chaturangan)



Collective Encounters consultation event

Increased levels of physical activity (dance, walking)

“Fantastic day just because we're getting on a bit, we still like to visit places!”
(Participant, Poppies Project)

“Participants felt less stressed, with an ability to stand taller and improvements in posture.” (Rachel Rodgers, MDI)

“I feel calmer, more positive about the day and more energized after the sessions.”
(Participant, MDI)

Breaking down barriers by challenging assumptions that the arts is ‘not for me’

“I really enjoyed both workshops as it gave me a real insight on how plays are developed.” (The Spider Project Attendee)

“We've learnt that the coffee morning model is an effective way of engaging new people and sharing our work.” (Mandy Collective Encounters)

“I've really enjoyed experiencing the theatre visits and the workshops and if being honest, I wouldn't have otherwise attended. Very much looking forward to next weeks outing!” (Harris Minorik, The Spider Project attendee)

“Many residents enjoyed visiting The Atkinson in Southport, commenting that they had never been here and were delighted to visit new places.” (Daniel

Rodgers, Free Monkey Mind)

5. Future activity for older people

Many of the participants in the HOP Pot Grant Fund are keen to do more, and have built the confidence to visit arts venues independently, to continue attending classes and sessions. Organisations have also reported that they are more confident to apply for other forms of funding, confidence that has grown as a result of successfully applying for HOP Pot grants. Several organisations involved in the programme are planning further activity and extending the reach of projects to a wider group, including:

Liverpool Six Community Association has now set up a local history group, with 10 members joining because of their participation in the HOP cathedrals visits. The group is also participating in a 5-week local history course.

MDI is in conversation with the Rainbow Community Health Centre about continuing the dance sessions and adding sessions that work with people who are drug and alcohol users.

Lee Valley Pensioners Club is in the process of fundraising each week to keep the program of activity set up through the HOP grant going.



Helena Partnerships Christmas themed craft workshop

Helena Housing has attended a course specifically designed for tenants and community volunteers to gain new funding skills and knowledge and as a result are

now applying for funding to purchase resources for their community cafe.

One Vision & Free Monkey Mind are looking to deliver further workshops to residents in independent living schemes. Building on existing knowledge, participants will be taught how to transfer images to a computer and process these using digital software. Location photography work will enable residents to take part in activities outside their home, within the local community to explore this environment through a camera lens.

6. HOP Opportunities and Collaboration

HOP has successfully managed, facilitated and formed new relationships with individuals and organisations across the city region. Collaborative opportunities have emerged with city wide partners in arts and culture, health and wellbeing and with community groups and voluntary organisations.

Forthcoming plans include partnership with the Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group (LCCG) in support of their vision by 2020 to support better healthcare through digital care and innovation with older people in Liverpool.

HOP will continue to have synergy with Liverpool City Council's Healthy Liverpool agenda and with LCCG initiatives that aim to improve health outcomes of individuals as well as self-care for older people across the Liverpool region.

As well as connecting older people with arts and culture HOP continues to support carers of older people in cultural interventions that reinforce health and wellbeing drivers. HOP network meetings are a good example of a place for carers, organisations, healthcare professionals and cultural organisations to come together share knowledge, develop new ways of working and to find out key information.

The HOP network has also formed and built relationships with key housing partners across the city, some of which have successfully benefited from the HOP Pot Grant Fund programme. Collaborating, engaging and seeking out new opportunities with housing partners encourages health and well-being practice, assists in the distribution of knowledge of activity for older people and celebrates the achievements and creativity of older people.



Free Monkey Mind & One Vision Housing photography workshop

7. HOP Network Meetings

Network meetings are focused on a specific theme to gather research and evaluate techniques and methods in engaging older people. The meetings are also a great opportunity for organisations to network with each other, distribute information, inform others about cultural offers as well as form new relationships.

Guest speakers at the meetings have included Esme Ward from the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester who spoke about Age-Friendliness in Manchester (September 2015) and David Cutler, Director of the Baring Foundation (Feb 2016).

David Cutler, Baring Foundation said;

"HOP is a great example of many benefits of arts and other organisations working together to engage older people in cultural activities. This work is sensitive to the real experience and wishes of older people and capitalises on Liverpool's unique history,

civic pride and world class arts. It is a leader in the field of arts and older people in the UK and a model that would benefit many other cities”



HOP Network Meeting February 2016

At an individual level, the HOP network meetings provide a mechanism for signposting individuals to arts and cultural activities both in the city centre and in the community, aligned with the initiatives of Healthwatch Liverpool.

8. Next Steps 2016 / 17

In 2016 /17 the HOP Network aims to:

1. Build on the Mayor’s pledge for Liverpool becoming an Age Friendly City, working with the cultural sector through creative interventions in supporting age friendly strategies, and acting as a catalyst for a more age-friendly arts offer across the city region.
2. Offer HOP Pot Grant funding, with a digital theme, to local organisations who wish to work together to break down barriers that prevent older people from taking part in the arts.
3. Work collaboratively with the Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group to facilitate, administer, and support service design aligned to regional digital care and innovation strategies.
4. Continue being a vehicle for older people in influencing the development

¹ [www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/new-research-finds-arts-and-culture-helps-combat-l/\(170316\)](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/new-research-finds-arts-and-culture-helps-combat-l/(170316)) ComRes interviewed 700 adults aged 65+ in England by telephone between 4th and 11th November 2015.

of a more age-friendly cultural offer in Liverpool, helping arts and health organisations to form relationships, collaboration and seek out health and well-being opportunities for older people.

5. Connect with Arts Council England’s research into the value of arts for older people to help highlight the positive impact of arts and culture on older people to help combat loneliness and social isolation.¹



Free Monkey Mind & One Vision Housing visit to the Atkinson Gallery Southport

Report prepared by Rachael Kally
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OPEN CULTURE



Data were weighted to be representative of all adults aged 65+ in England

Appendix 1

HOP Pot Grant Awards

1. Afro Caribbean Lunch Club

The Afro Caribbean and Friends Lunch club used the money to provide transport and refreshments for the group when visiting a variety of theatre shows and plays.

2. Chaturangan

Taking inspiration from Bisakha Sarker's installation 'Do Not Yet Fold Your Wings', a poetry workshop was led by Rodger Hill that combined arts activity visual arts, creative writing and world music.

3. Chinese Wellbeing and Pagoda Centre

Two fun learning and creative workshops with the themes of Christmas and Chinese New Year helping to promote art and culture awareness and create new interests within the community.

4. Collective Encounters

Part of Live and Learn project, a series of creative consultation events with befriending organisations set out to engage volunteers and more vulnerable older people in high-quality creative activity and remove barriers of the cultural offer cultural activity.

5. Free Monkey Mind & One Vision Housing

Working with a range of partners, the group ran a series of photography workshops for residents of One Vision independent living schemes in Sefton.

6. Helena Partnerships

A series of Christmas themed craft workshops took place at four older people's clubs based in sheltered housing schemes.

7. Liverpool Six Community Association

The Lunch Group Community Association's and housebound club enjoyed coach trip to Liverpool's Cathedrals – some seeing them for the first time.

8. Lee Valley Pensioners Club

Lee Valley Pensioners Club explored the history of Liverpool through visits to

museums, galleries and a photography project.

9. Merseyside Dance Initiative

MDI ran number of dance classes in Kensington, in partnership with the Rainbow Community Health Organisation, engaging individuals in dance activity for the first time. Classes were suitable for people with limited mobility.

10. St Leonard's Poppies Project

A series of sessions that brought together tutors and users from the Poppies Project in 2015 and the cultural offer of St Leonard's.

11. St Michael's Irish Centre

St Michael's Irish Centre delivered a number of Sunday tea dances aimed at people older people in isolation.

12. The Spider Project

The members visited a number of theatres and art galleries for older people in recovery from mental illness and family carers.



Helena Partnerships Christmas themed craft workshop