



Happy
Older
People

HOP interim report

November 2017 – June 2018



Foreword

Emma Riley, HOP Network Coordinator, National Museums Liverpool

The Happy Older People Network (HOP) continues to bring together arts and culture with isolated older people to promote participation in Liverpool's brilliant cultural offer.

The past eight months have been a time of transition - HOP was created by National Museums Liverpool in 2014 was previously coordinated by Open Culture. Since returning to National Museums Liverpool in November 2017 we have certainly been busy, and this interim report shows what we have achieved in this short period.

During this time we have supported and attended number of events for older people, including the Healthwatch 'Live Well' event at BBC Radio Merseyside and our sponsorship of the first meeting of the Liverpool City Region Older Person's Forum at the Museum of Liverpool.

One round of HOP Pot grants has supported six organisations to deliver new activities for groups of older people, and our HOP network meeting in March allowed HOP members to have their say on the network's future direction. It was wonderful to hear that the core principles are highly valued by our members.

We are particularly proud of our partnership with Liverpool City Council on the Age-Friendly Cities Cultural Exchange to The Netherlands and we are confident that we can continue to work together to break down the barriers to participation in arts and culture for older people.

Moving forward HOP activity will form a key part of the Arts Council England Celebrating Age funded project in partnership with FACT and Open Eye Gallery until 2021. We are excited to see the project progress and the launch is scheduled to take place in September 2018.

Introduction

Established in 2014 by National Museums Liverpool, the Happy Older People Network (HOP) brings together arts and culture with isolated older people to promote participation and leadership in the Liverpool City Region's brilliant cultural offer.

The network is designed to create dialogue and space for new partnerships to be formed, connections to be made, and to communicate the age-friendly arts offer across the city and the region.

HOP membership is diverse and includes a variety of arts organisations, health and social care professionals and providers, older people, housing associations and community groups. Our network of community partners engages with and enables older people to participate in cultural activities, creating positive impacts on wellbeing, particularly amongst isolated older people.

We aim to address issues of loneliness and isolation amongst older people through HOP activity by breaking down barriers to participation in arts and culture through active engagement.

HOP network aims:

1. Contribute to making Liverpool City Region a great place to live and age well.
2. Create an effective forum for older people, cultural organisations and healthcare organisations to come

together, share knowledge and develop ways of working.

3. Increase the cultural participation of older people.
4. Enable older people to influence the development of a more 'age-friendly' city.
5. Collect evidence of 'what works', and disseminate learning to the network.
6. Celebrate the achievements and creativity of older people.
7. Recognise the active contributions of older people to arts and culture in the Liverpool City Region.

The aims of the network are accomplished by:

- Themed network meetings attended by between 20 and 90 individuals;
- A monthly e-newsletter that promotes cultural opportunities for older people circulated to a list of over 160 email addresses and counting.
- Research activity and targeted outreach meetings to generate content and create interest in the network.
- 'HOP Pot' grants to enable a variety of diverse organisations to engage older people with arts and cultural projects and interventions across the city region.

Key achievements November 2017 – June 2018

Network Meetings

In February 2018 National Museums Liverpool hosted a HOP network meeting at FACT.

Each meeting is individually themed around a topic that is older-person focused to create a central point of discussion. The network meetings are an opportunity to meet likeminded people, form new relationships and to enhance collaborative working.

The meetings allow individuals from sectors including arts, healthcare, housing and public health to come together and talk directly to each other and to distribute information in a more cohesive way.

Members reflected on the value of the network activities for older people and the member organisations.

Responses included:

- HOP bridges the gap between different sectors and organisations
- Networking with other organisations who are working with older people
- Giving and receiving support from others – HOP as a support network
- Opening up opportunities for collaboration

- Expanding networks
- Inspiration and sharing of ideas
- Interconnections instead of duplication
- Reaching different communities
- Finding out what is happening in the community
- Tapping into new services to access
- Bringing people together – meeting people you wouldn't normally meet
- Providing activity for like-minded older people

Members shared their ideas for the shape of HOP going forward and came up with ideas for new activity areas including a 'call out' section for the website and newsletter, enabling organisations and individuals to connect where specific gaps need to be filled.

During inspiration sessions we heard from three HOP Pot funded creative projects. HOP members felt this was a valuable opportunity to find out more about using small pots of money to create meaningful activities which have a positive impact on older people.

The networking event ensured new connections were made and attendees enjoyed the opportunity to find out more about each others creative interests.

Feedback from an older person who attended the HOP network meeting for the first time:

“I enjoyed the HOP meeting yesterday - as I'm still (re)discovering Liverpool, it was good to hear of the different activities on offer for us oldies.”

HOP Pot Small Grants

In December 2017, the HOP Pot small grants scheme launched for the fifth successive year. Organisations were invited to apply for £300 to develop a new partnership project specifically designed for older people.

Successful applications demonstrated how projects would collaborate with new organisations, use innovative practices and techniques to include older audiences, add value to existing resources and use art and cultural practices to help older people to 'Live Well'.

There were six successful applications with funding being awarded to:

- Age UK Mid Mersey and 50+ Steering Group
- CompanyMatters4U and Anchor Housing
- Gerard Woodhouse and the L6 Community Centre
- Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI) and Liverpool African Elders Lunch and Activities Club
- Merseyside Jewish Community Care (MJCC) and the Liverpool Independent School of Tai Chi
- Wheel Meet Again and Liverpool Centre for Art and Design (LCAD)

Liverpool City Region Older Persons Forum

In March 2018 HOP sponsored the first meeting of the Liverpool City Region Older Persons Forum, held at the Museum of Liverpool.

The meeting brought together 65 older people from organisations from each of the boroughs in the Liverpool City Region: Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton, Halton Older People's Empowerment Network, Knowsley Older People's Voice, Sefton Older Persons' Forums, St Helen's Senior Voice and Wirral Older People's Parliament.

The meeting was chaired by Andrew Booth, Chief Officer of Sefton Advocacy, and formally opened by Steve Rotheram, Liverpool City Region Mayor.

The older participants agreed the following key points:

- The Liverpool City Region should work towards and apply for Age-Friendly status;
- The meeting supported the campaign for a national Minister or Commissioner for Older People;
- The meeting approved the Position Statement on Digital Technology, with older people encouraged to take up new technology but not forced to do so as a result of traditional alternatives being withdrawn.

During evaluation of the meeting 98% of respondents believed the meeting was relevant to their area and felt there should be further city-region meetings to discuss the needs of older people.

Celebrating Age Funding

Funded by Arts Council England and the Baring Foundation as part of the Celebrating Age Fund, HOP will be working in partnership with FACT and Open Eye Gallery to deliver a 3 year project to make creative spaces more welcoming for older adults.

The Liverpool City Region-wide arts programme will raise awareness of older people as active producers and decision makers in their own creative journey.

HOP will work to engage older people in Liverpool's wider cultural offer, creating a long-lasting, impactful legacy to improve engagement with over 60s. The programme will also support other cultural spaces and organisations to become more open, positive and welcoming places for older people.

We are delighted to be a part of the shared ambition with FACT and Open Eye Gallery to support and empower older people in taking ownership of the arts in their region.

The first partnership meeting took place in May 2018 and the public launch event will take place in September 2018.

Age-Friendly Cities Cultural Exchange

HOP and Culture Liverpool (Liverpool City Council) submitted a successful joint application to attend the Age-Friendly Cities Cultural Exchange with The Netherlands.

During a working visit the Leiden in June 2018, ten UK cities met with Dutch and Finnish colleagues to exchange ideas and learning, and to develop new thinking and collaborations for Age-Friendly Cultural Cities on an international scale.

Colleagues shared their successes and challenges during the three day visit and it was wonderful to find out about some inspiring projects taking place in the UK and internationally.

The second half of the exchange is due to take place in Manchester in October 2018, and HOP and Culture Liverpool will present findings back to Liverpool City Council and HOP members.

The exchange is supported by The Baring Foundation and The Netherlands Cultural Participation Fund, The National Centre of Expertise for Cultural Education and Amateur Arts (LKCA), The Whitworth and Manchester Museum, the University of Manchester and Age-Friendly Manchester, Manchester City Council.

GDPR

We have refreshed HOP membership to make sure that our members are actively engaged and are GDPR compliant.

As a result we have seen our HOP engagement increase as a result of the Liverpool City regions's highly active and committed approach to age-friendly arts and culture.

Next Steps

Over the next year, HOP aims to:

- Align with Liverpool City Council and the Mayor of Liverpool's Age Friendly Cities strategy and Inclusive Growth Plan
- Align with Liverpool City Region's Culture and Creativity strategy
- Increase the number of older people represented on the HOP network, with the potential for a HOP older peoples advisory group
- Increase the number of cultural partners represented on the HOP network
- Increase the number of multi-agency partners represented on the HOP network e.g. Mersey Travel
- Connect with organisations through HOP Pot funding
- Increase the numbers of older people participating and benefiting from the HOP Pot activity
- Take part in a wider evaluation on the impact of arts and cultural participation for older people as part of the Celebrating Age project
- Raise awareness of the HOP network locally, nationally and internationally

Appendix 1

HOP Pot Projects 2018

Age UK Mid Mersey and 50+ Steering Group

Reading group activity based on a literature timeline from 1840s to present day

The aim of the project was to deliver a reading club for older people, selecting books and articles that have topical or historical links with the Liverpool City Region.

The project engaged older people to 'Live Well' by providing an opportunity to socialise and to improve the confidence of the people in the group, some of whom did not read regularly or had not read for a long time.

The group members read extracts from a selection of books with links to the Liverpool City region such as: *Twopence to Cross the Mersey* – Helen Forrester, *Her Benny* – Silas Hocking, *Quiet Genius: Bob Paisley* – Ian Herbert, *Love, Affairs and Marriage: My Life in Football* – Howard Kendal, *Liverpool: A People's History* – Peter Aughton, *Lights Out Liverpool* – Maureen Lee, and *Blood Brothers* – Willy Russell.

The outcomes of the reading group sessions included an expression of feelings in a creative and practical way, an enjoyment of exploring new texts and enjoyment of being part of a regular social group.

Experiencing new things was a key part of the project and a theatre trip is in the pipeline for the group in the future.

The older people thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the reading group and looked forward to participating every week.

Comments from participants:

“Uplifting”

“It’s been interesting”

“It’s been a lovely group”

A comment from Age UK Mid Mersey:

“The people in the group thoroughly enjoyed the reading group and looked forward to and participating each week.”

CompanyMatters4U and Anchor Housing

Experiencing different cultures during an intergenerational Chinese New Year celebration day

A collaboration between CompanyMatters4U and Anchor Housing produced a Chinese New Year Celebration at a sheltered accommodation site.

The event began with Chinese lantern making while participants learned more about the celebration of New Year in

China. The lanterns were then used to decorate the space to be enjoyed during the day.

Chicken and sweetcorn soup, prawn crackers and dim sum were served for lunch, followed by fortune cookies, giving the group a tasting experience to enjoy together.

After lunch the group enjoyed traditional Chinese games, a colourful lion and dragon dance and a Kung Fu display.

The event was a social occasion and an opportunity to meet new people. The invitation was extended to older people living in Anchor Housing’s sheltered accommodation site, and a local primary school also joined in with the celebrations.

The outcomes of the project included an improvement in wellbeing thanks to new social interactions, and the pleasure of taking part in craft activities to create lanterns that were displayed and enjoyed by the group.

Experiencing another culture was a learning experience and the food provided a sensory experience to enjoy together, and the Dragon Dance gave the participants to see something which they would not usually see without having to visit the city centre.

Comment from a participant:

What a lovely day. I was so surprised and enjoyed the whole event.

A comment from CompanyMatters4U:

“It was so good to be able to offer our group of older people a different type of activity which covered so many aspects and offered an experience some have never seen before.”

Gerard Woodhouse and the L6 Community Centre

Tai Chi and Keep Fit sessions for older residents

Organised by Gerard Woodhouse, the L6 Community Centre held armchair exercise, ‘keep fit’ and Tai Chi classes for older residents in the community.

Having already identified a desire for armchair exercise sessions in the local community, the sessions were very popular with older residents.

The social aspect of the sessions was very important as for some people this was the only time they had left their home during that week.

The outcomes from this project included an increase in movement and activity, leading to an improved physical and mental wellbeing, a social opportunity for people who were at risk of social isolation and a chance to try something new in the community.

The group enjoyed the sessions so much that they will continue to take place at the L6 Centre with a small cost to participants.

A comment from a participant:

“These classes have given me a new lease of life and I have thoroughly enjoyed them, I feel that I have made new friends.”

A comment from the L6 Centre:

“The classes were fun whilst encouraging physical and mental health and wellbeing. It was delightful to see so many happy faces.”

Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI) and Liverpool African Elders Lunch and Activities Club

African Caribbean dance workshops for older adults

Six African Caribbean dance workshops took place with older people from Liverpool African Elders Lunch and Activities Club as well as Princes Park Methodist Centre, Rainbow 50+ and Hector Peterson Court sheltered housing. 65 participants enjoyed learning classical dance forms from the African-Caribbean diaspora.

Many of the dances and movements in the workshops were taught in a circle, giving a feeling of community. Participants danced with partners, encouraging each other and sharing many conversations about the best places to go and dance.

The activity sparked memories of dancing for a number of the older people.

The outcomes from the sessions included the enjoyment of dancing for the first time in a long time, and dancing a new style for the first time – improving individual self-esteem and personal wellbeing through group learning. The social aspect of the circle and partner dancing was uplifting and there were improvements in physical wellbeing for a number of the older people.

Participants were informed about the weekly classes for older adults at MDI and were encouraged to attend and continue to dance at home.

As a result of the project, the African Elders and Rainbow 50+ group are looking to work together more and a new relationship between MDI and the Methodist Centre has begun. MDI would like to host more regular dance sessions for older people at the Centre in the future.

Comments from participants:

“Fully enjoyed, I have problem with my right shoulder and this dance has helped loosen these old limbs.”

“Nice to dance and hear people laugh.”

“Losing two close friends affected me more than I expected. Dance is a good form of exercise and the music uplifts the spirit and reminds me of my youth and good company of friends. I feel so good now”.

A comment from MDI:

“Through dance and movement we can learn about ourselves and how to care for our bodies in a fun way that lifts our spirit and keep us mobile.

“Dance really does have an impact on all levels of our wellbeing. This project gave participants the chance to physically move themselves by embodying and experiencing movement from cultures other than their own, giving many of them a new way of keep active.”

Merseyside Jewish Community Care (MJCC) and the Liverpool Independent School of Tai Chi

Community Tai Chi classes

This project aimed to set up Tai Chi group sessions for older people at a community venue to enable improved physical and mental wellbeing as well as community involvement and engagement.

Group members reported feeling relaxed and enjoyed their sessions so much that they wanted to recommend Tai Chi to others.

Every session was fully booked and ended with people coming together for refreshments and the opportunity to socialise and support each other further.

Thanks to the success of the project, MJCC plan to pilot a second session each week in order to meet demand. They plan to review the financial viability of hiring a larger venue so that more people can attend.

The outcomes from the classes included feelings of calm and relaxation while the social aspect has been an additional benefit. Those who had never taken part in Tai Chi before reported improvements to their health and wellbeing and they began to access other services provided by MJCC.

Comments from participants:

“I started going to Tai Chi at the beginning of the classes. The movements are gentle but you feel that they are having a calming and relaxing effect on you and I know speaking to some other members of the group they find the same.”

“The group are beginning to learn the exercises correctly as our teacher has now started helping with the breathing exercises that work alongside. Due to the popularity of this session we now have a new one starting on a Wednesday morning (as well as on a Monday) and I for one am sorry that I cannot attend both.”

A comment from MJCC:

“We had identified the need for Tai Chi sessions for older people. The positive impact has surpassed our expectations with many club members reporting that they feel better after a Tai Chi session and recommending this exercise to others.”

Wheel Meet Again and Liverpool Centre for Art and Design (LCAD)

Film and photography course for over 50s with a local history theme

Wheel Meet Again and the Liverpool Centre for Art and Design developed a film and photography course for over 50s based in Liverpool.

The aim of the project was to produce a project based around arts, creativity and local history that would tap into the individual creativity of the participants.

Learning new skills, particularly later in life, can be very beneficial to health and wellbeing and the photography project has enabled participants develop a range of skills (photography, lighting, setting and research) by taking picture of iconic Liverpool buildings on a number of field trips.

In addition, the group researched and selected films with a Liverpool setting of theme to view and talk about together.

Over the course of the project small group discussions allowed people to come together to share their work while developing their creative and social skills. Their work will be displayed in presentation books which will be specially produced as something to keep and cherish.

The project has been a catalyst for a new heritage-themed project planned for later this year.

A comment from a participant:

“The course was extremely enjoyable and there was lots of interaction between the group and discussion about our work.

“It was well worth it as we saw a lot of Liverpool, some of which brought back personal memories and some places members of the group had never seen. I enjoyed it as we went to places all over the city and when we visited Crosby beach

we all took different picnic items with us to share for lunch so it was also a social day out.

“The tutors were both excellent. I hope there will be a similar course soon.”

A comment from Wheel Meet Again:

“All of the participants enjoyed the project and displayed knowledge and pride in their city and its heritage. They gained new skills, which they will be able to utilise on the new project which is set to start later this year.”

Appendix 2

HOP Advocacy and Representation

- Winter Survival event at Holiday Inn
- Widnes Vikings Dementia Activity Academy
- Live Well event at BBC Radio Merseyside
- Wheel Meet Again
- Health Activator Training at PSS
- Care Quality Commission and Liverpool City Council feedback session at the Museum of Liverpool
- LJMU Dementia Arts and Culture Research Group at The Walker Art Gallery
- Liverpool City Region Dementia Summit in Knowsley
- 'Creative Ageing: Delivering Excellence in Participatory Activities for Older People' training course at Collective Encounters
- Dementia Connect workshop at FACT
- Liverpool City Region Older People's Forum at the Museum of Liverpool
- Museums Health and Wellbeing Conference and launch of the newly formed Culture, Health and Wellbeing Alliance in Birmingham
- HOP Network Meeting at FACT
- GoodGym Liverpool and Liverpool City Council
- Veterans HQ
- Healthiness Ltd Health and Wellbeing Day at Sefton Palm House
- Liverpool City Council Life Chances Fund Steering Group
- Me2U Centre, Kirkby
- Encountering the Unexpected conference in Manchester
- Rhythm Reactions
- Life Chances Fund virtual meeting
- The Choir with No Name's 'Big Spring Gig' at St George's Hall
- Adult Social Care team at Liverpool City Council
- Celebrating Age Fund partnership meeting at FACT
- Culture Liverpool at Liverpool City Council
- 'Flashback 1960s' event at The Walker Art Gallery
- Age-Friendly Cities Cultural Exchange

Appendix 3

HOP overview

Since March 2014 the HOP network has:

- Created an active network of 160 members including 47 arts and culture organisations and 48 health and social care providers (July 2018).
- Built an identifiable brand which is regularly used by partners to promote age-friendly arts activity their activities.
- Produced a monthly e-newsletter with 160 subscribers to share information about cultural events, opportunities and best practice across the city region. Since renewing the mailing list to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) the engagement rate has greatly increased. The e-newsletter has a high open rate of 55% (over industry average of 21%) and a click through rate of 23.4% (well over industry average of 2.2%). These results indicate the high level of activity and engagement of the network members, despite a decrease in the number of member email addresses.
- Grown the social media and web presence. The website continues to gain regular traffic as the central information source for HOP members, and the Twitter following continues to grow with 722 followers.

- Hosted thirteen network meetings, with guest speakers from the art and cultural sector.
- Conducted strategic networking and outreach activity with older person focused community groups and organisations across the Liverpool City Region.
- Commissioned arts and cultural interventions through the HOP Pot grants scheme which has enabled many older people to participate in arts culture and well being activities across the city. HOP Pot results include:
 - 292 sessions of creative activity
 - 3921 older people accessing culture as either a spectator or participant through HOP Pot projects

Key findings from HOP Pot activities include:

- A reduction in social isolation through increased levels of contact from taking part in cultural interventions outside the home.
- Improved mental stimulation through enjoyment of new forms of activity.
- Increased levels of physical activity through exercise and through participation in workshops.
- Breaking down barriers by challenging assumptions that digital art is 'not for me'.
- Increased levels of social interaction through the formation of new friendships and bonds.