

(SMHAFF) events

Our Project Story



Tell us about the funded project – what did you set out to achieve? Who participated? How successful was the project? Will your project continue?

We set out to organise and run a series of events during the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival (SMHAFF), to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and reduce isolation amongst carers from the Gypsy/Traveller community in Argyll.

We held three separate events:

An evening of storytelling with Jess Smith

This evening at the Grassroots café was for Gypsy/Travellers to come together and share their stories in a relaxed and informal environment. This was also an event that was open to the public and helped to raise awareness of the issues Gypsy/Travellers face, as well as reducing isolation among the community

Moving Minds Exhibition

The Moving Minds exhibition was created by MECOPP and Gypsy/Travellers from across Scotland and is a collection of storyboards and picture boards. Gypsy/Traveller contributors use their stories, poetry and photographs to describe their life experiences. The exhibition provides a wealth of fascinating detail about a much-maligned and misunderstood community and challenges the stereotypical image of Gypsy/Travellers. It also looks at the impact that prejudice and discrimination has on mental health and wellbeing. We exhibited for a week in the Grassroots café and then a further two weeks at the Corran Halls. The Moving Minds Exhibition aims to educate and raise awareness of the issues Gypsy/Travellers face, and hopes to reduce prejudice and discrimination towards the community. This in turn should have an impact on health and wellbeing.

Health and Wellbeing 'Get Together'

The Health and Wellbeing 'Get Together' gave carers from the Gypsy/Traveller community, and their families, the opportunity to come together in a relaxed, informal and social setting, and to take part in a day of relaxation and social time, whilst introducing them to a number of support organisations capable of assisting them in their caring role. The day provided a much needed opportunity for the community to come together alongside support agencies in a positive and informal environment. It also provided a vital opportunity for partner agencies to engage with community members and pass on information about local support services.

Our participants were carers from the Gypsy/Traveller community and their families.

We estimated that 40 people attended the storytelling event; over 500 people saw our exhibition and 50 carers and their families attended the wellbeing day.

Our events were very successful in terms of both numbers attending

"I feel calmer and happy as soon as I saw everyone, seeing the kids have a great time makes me happy."

"Feeling a lot better since I came in, I was feeling anxious and stressed out. But I had a massage and tapping therapy and really enjoyed it"

What were the health benefits?

- Reduced isolation
- Increased confidence
- Lowered stress and anxiety levels
- Overall improvement in wellbeing
- Gypsy/Traveller carers felt more empowered
- Increased knowledge of, and confidence in support services within the community, therefore more likely to access health and social care services.

Where there any unexpected outcomes?

Greater awareness of issues affecting Gypsy/Travellers by the general public, and partner agencies.

Contact details for your project:

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