FWinc Project Info – PANDEMIC Reflections

Target Group
The project is open to all aged 11+ but particularly targets young people in Buxton and its surrounding villages, aged 11-25, whose mental health has been impacted by the pandemic, whether through, for example, bereavement, trauma, isolation, loneliness, financial stress, loss of support or relationship breakdown, leading to increased anxiety and/or depression.

However, the project is designed to incorporate remote engagement, so whilst it will be promoted primarily in and around Buxton, others from throughout the High Peak are welcome to take part.

Aims
The project aims to:

- provide the opportunity to reflect on the past two years - to creatively explore and express thoughts, feelings and lived experience of the pandemic
- document and produce a personal and communal record of the pandemic for prosperity and future reflection
- develop the emotional and mental awareness of young people in our community
- improve mental health and wellbeing
- give participants the resources and skills to address and support their own mental health and build resilience
- give participants the experience of channelling emotions and mental distress into positive creativity
- create a sense of community and show participants they are not alone
- build confidence through sharing, learning and developing news skills
- facilitate the development of new friendships, support networks and intergenerational relationships

Objectives
We will achieve these aims by delivering a series of workshops, providing a safe space for participants to work through a series of activities and resources designed to help them reflect on the pandemic. Spaces at the workshops will be limited but we will share the resources online for further participants to engage remotely.

Participants will create a personal record and associated artworks and contribute to communal versions to create a community record. Workshops will be split into two groups, under 16s and 16+, for safeguarding purposes, but both groups will work on the same communal pieces.

At the workshops, we will also provide resources for further mental health support.

Personal records and artworks will be collated (anonymously) and analysed to produce visuals records, alongside the communal artworks, and shared online.

We will exhibit the communal pieces of artwork at the gallery, which the wider community will be able to contribute toward and interact with. Personal artworks can also be exhibited (anonymously) alongside by those willing to share their creations.

Funding
The project is supported by funding grants from the Postcode Places Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People's Postcode Lottery, a 5 Ways to Wellbeing grant from High Peak CVS and a grant from The Bingham Trust.

Subject to further funding, we hope this project will lead into a second project, 'PANDEMIC Perspectives' which will focus on creating artworks inspired by the outcomes of these reflections, as we move forward from the pandemic with new perspectives.