

# High Life Highland Libraries

## Making 'Sense' of Communities: A Case Study

Happiness



After reading about the success of the sensory initiative 'The Happiness Programme' (<https://social-ability.co.uk>) in Northern Ireland public libraries, it inspired High Life Highland to think about how we could use the programme to meet the needs of hard-to-reach groups in the Highlands.

The service successfully secured funding, through the Public Libraries Improvement Fund, subscribing to a one-year pilot. So began our sensory journey.



## Project Aims

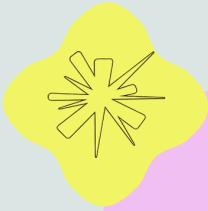
The aim of the project was to improve the lives and well-being of people, in the Highlands, by engaging with hard-to-reach groups and providing free accessible activities that had the potential to encourage customers back into our libraries, to attract new audiences and to show the diversity of events and activities that our libraries offer.

The portability of the sensory resources allowed the service to deliver sensory activities, not only within towns, but within remote areas of the Highlands of Scotland ensuring inclusion for all, especially those with poor transport links.

The project was delivered at 8 main libraries, Inverness, Inverness Royal Academy Library, Fortrose, Culloden, Portree, Dingwall (including Ullapool, Gairloch and Lochcarron), Thurso and Wick, Fort William, and from those libraries it was taken out to other locations including Schools (ASN supported pupils), Nurseries, Nursing/Care homes and Community Halls.

We delivered 210 sensory activities over 10 months, recording over 2181 interactions.

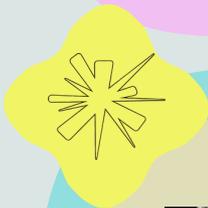




## Sessions

Staff visited 4 Care Homes, delivering 4 sessions to 44 residents and positive feedback was received. One staff member at a care home said:

**“Improved participants mental and physical dexterity as well as a feeling of wellbeing”**



Resident’s feedback included:

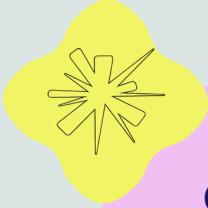
**“It’s amazing!”**

**“Makes you happier than reading the paper”**

**“I feel completely tranquil”**

**“Brilliant fun”**

**“So relaxing”**

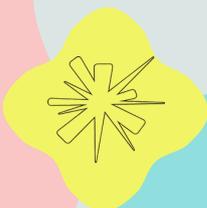


## Community Partnerships

We engaged with NHS Highland, Neurodevelopmental Services and Adult Learning colleagues, who encouraged families from the local Asylum Seeker and Refugee communities to get involved which helped support integration and overcome language barriers

Staff visited 5 nurseries and schools and delivered 6 sessions to pupils at an ASN supported school, some with multiple disorders e.g. speech, hearing, visual impairment and physical disabilities. Staff also encouraged home schooled pupils to take part in the project.

18 young volunteers helped to support the events which gave them the opportunity to learn new skills and work with a diverse range of people.



## Positive Feedback

The project also supported pupils during exam time and feedback was positive:

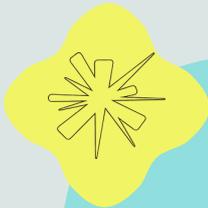
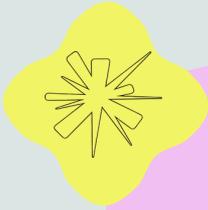
**“Helps me to relax in between studying”**

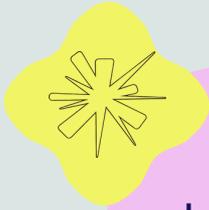
**“So much potential, so much to explore, we did socialise more than usual”**

**“It encouraged us to talk to each other as well as dealing with the feelings of losing at table hockey. We had to use teamwork in the reaction game”**

**“In a very busy time of rushing towards S1 and P1, it’s great to come here and have time together to relax and laugh. We can’t wait to come back!”**

# Happiness



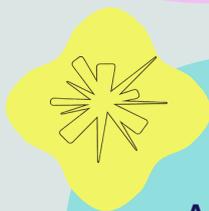


## Lessons Learned

The main challenge came with regards to the portability of the projector when moving it to different libraries each month. We solved this by making sure the projector was well wrapped in packaging and securely stored in a crate, before being transported on our Library delivery van. We created a checklist of all the projector parts to ensure that it arrived complete each time we moved it on.

In some areas Wi-Fi connectivity was poor but this didn't stop the projector from operating, it just meant that updates couldn't take place automatically. This didn't affect the user experience. The technical support we received from the Social-ability team was second to none.

Due to the light quality (brightness) in some of our libraries it could be difficult to see the activities clearly. To alleviate the problem, we invested in a gazebo which could provide a darker space that could travel with the projector.



## And to the future...

As a result of the projects success and the number of participants we engaged with, specifically hard to reach groups, we made the decision to subscribe to the Happiness Programme for another year.

Our aim is to incorporate sensory activities and programmes into other initiatives such as High Life Highland's Green Libraries and Nature Clubs. The sensory projector will continue its exciting journey through the Highlands of Scotland.

