

Being creative  
makes you feel good

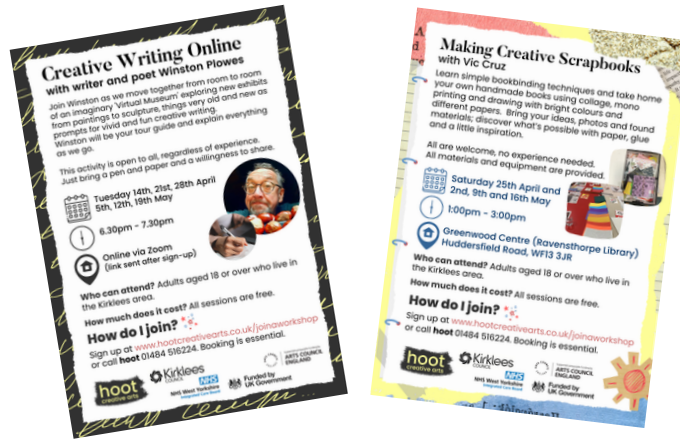
Patchwork by Helen S



**OUT OF THE BLUE**  
**Quarterly Report**  
**QUARTER 1 / APR- JUN 2026**

# Summary

This quarter we debuted our new online creative writing group on Tuesday evenings. This is aimed at people who cannot attend weekdays 9 to 5 but still want to feel good from engaging in creating activity.



We were out and about at Carers Day, Brunswick Centre, LAB project and the Compassionate Culture Conference this quarter as well as **hoot** participants' artwork being on display in Dewsbury Town Hall.

Social media channels saw a rise in engagement across all platforms – Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn – and we worked in partnership with Working Together Better to use social media to promote and showcase the Carers Day event in Greenhead Park.



I like being shown and guided in trying new things with sound, patient instruction. Being immersed in creating, trying to achieve a satisfactory piece of work, even if it's simple.



# Challenges

We had one member of the delivery team off long term sick this quarter which can initially present a staffing challenge. However delivery continued seamlessly with all team members helping out as needed and groups enjoyed getting to know different team members.

# Highlights

## hoot at Carers Week

Musician Rob Crisp led a wonderful songwriting workshop in Greenhead Park during the Carers Week Working Together Better event.

**hoot** also had a publicity stand there and footfall was high with lots of people engaging with us.



## The Calico Dress

As a follow on from the Red Dress exhibition, we are now part of 'The Calico Dress'.

**Hoot** groups used their creative ideas and skills to fill a full panel on this dress that will be on public exhibition as part of Woven 2027



## Compassionate Cultures Conference

We were at the West Yorkshire Compassionate Cultures Conference 2026 where we had a stall, meeting and chatting with so many incredible partners and organisations from across the region. With over 450 people attending, it was a brilliant opportunity to connect, share ideas and learn from the inspiring speakers and demonstrations throughout the day.



“ Very well explained and fabulous resources available. Kind and caring safe space. ”

## hoot artwork at the Town Hall

Our Dewsbury group created pieces of art inspired by their favourite facets of Dewsbury. The group took a walk through Dewsbury together taking notice of the detailed architecture in the town, much of which evokes the previous history of industrial revolution.

The art created from these memories and observations is in an exhibition on display at Dewsbury Town Hall which is a real accolade for the group.



“

I used to write a lot and really got out of the habit but find it super therapeutic so thank you for helping me get back in the swing of it!

”

## MUSIC

We had a new guest artist – Marion Smith – working in Dewsbury this quarter. The group really enjoyed using music to tell stories with and trying out improvisation with Marion providing structure for them to play within. Rob followed this with Strumming and Drumming in both Dewsbury and Huddersfield. The groups used ukeleles, guitars and djembe drums to create a rhythm and melody that gets topped with lyrics.

The Digital Music group is becoming very popular and participants are working to create graphic scores that they then play digitally. This group usually use headphones to create their works and have tended to be quieter but with numbers increasing the group now has a really strong sense of community and attendees enjoy having a cuppa during the break and taking their headphones off for a chat!

## SINGING

We welcomed back Jade Harris this quarter who led the singing group in beautiful harmony songs from around the world.

Following Jade we worked with a new artist to **hoot** – Colleen Whyatt. Colleen themed the sessions as Sunshine Songs and the group worked together to write and sing songs based on the coming of summer.

## VISUAL ARTS

Debbie Allsopp – a lecturer in fashion at the University of Huddersfield as well as a community artist – worked with the Huddersfield group towards the Calico Dress project. Debbie is involved with this 2027 Woven exhibition and the group worked on beautiful patches to decorate the dress that will go on display next year.

Sally Barker led the Tuesday Huddersfield group in traditional ceramics – people used slab building and various techniques to create a wide range of pottery structures.

The other Visual Arts groups – on Wednesday and in Dewsbury – focussed on Springtime Art. The groups used tissue paper to create beautiful and delicate pieces celebrating the Spring season. They laminated the tissue paper with glue, building up semi transparent layers which they then embellished with writing, drawing and embedded with petals, seeds, aromatics and flowers.

Patchwork by Tilly



## CREATIVE WRITING

The group initially worked with poet Sammy Weaver to explore The Elements – a series of workshops using earth, wind, air and fire for inspiration. Marianne Matusz then delivered sessions based around Sparking Joy. The group thought about things in their life – however big or small – that to some degree brought them joy in life and wrote pieces based on this.



“ This course is so inspiring and encouraging. The sessions are really accessible for people to continue in their own time without having to make a big financial outlay. I've really enjoyed coming to these sessions for me own mental wellbeing and feel boosted after. ”

## OUT OF HOURS

We debuted a new evening group this quarter – Creative Writing launched online on Tuesday evenings. Attendance is still bedding in but we hope that numbers build. Rose Condo worked with the group to write pieces inspired by Yorkshire and Yorkshire poets. Winston Plowes also worked with the group and delivered the Virtual Museum – together the group move from room to room of an imaginary museum exploring new exhibits from paintings to sculpture, things very old and very new as prompts for vivid and fun creative writing.

On Saturdays we ran Creative Scrapbooking sessions with artist Vic Cruz in the Greenwood Centre at Ravensthorpe Library. Attendance was strong and the group enjoyed using collage, mono printing and drawing to make their own personalised unique book to take home.

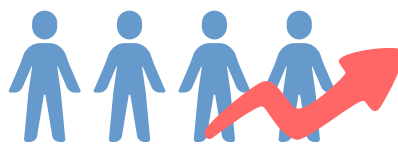
You Can  
You Could  
You Won't

Won't You?  
Could You?  
Can You?

Will You?

Piece by Joe

# The numbers

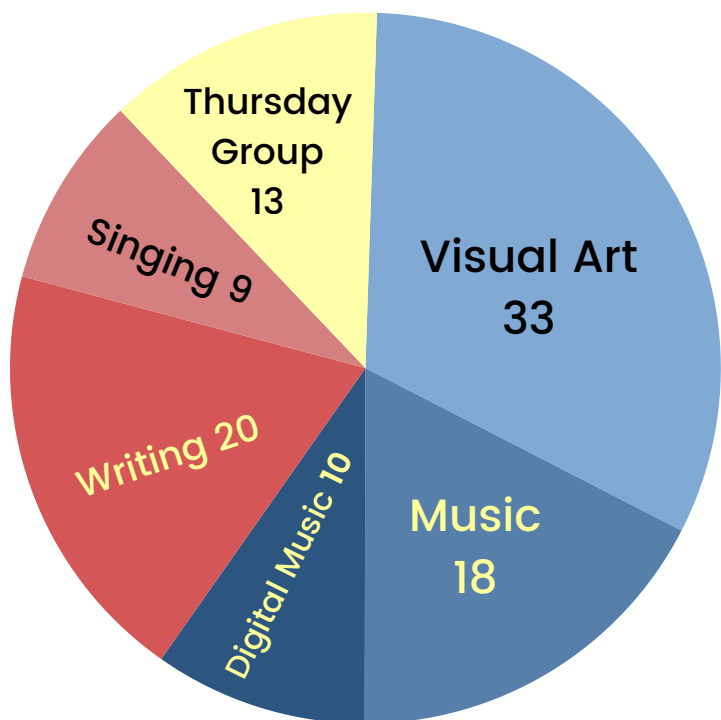


**154** people using the service

**75** referrals to sessions 

**88** in-person sessions 

**36** individuals at **WELCOME!** sessions

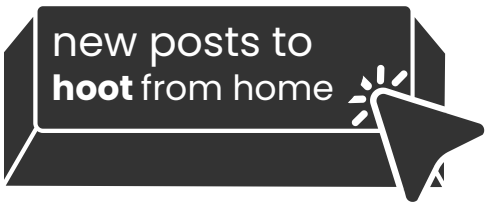


**4**  weekend sessions in-person

**10**  evening sessions

**2623**  hours of contact with participants  
*including Outreach & Awareness Raising*

## Online sessions

**61**  new posts to **hoot** from home

**10** online creative sessions 

**14**  hours spent offline continuing being creative average per person

## People



**48** people with autism, dementia, or a disability 

**104** people over 35  
22 people under 35 

**34%** **64%** **2%**  
Male Female Non-binary

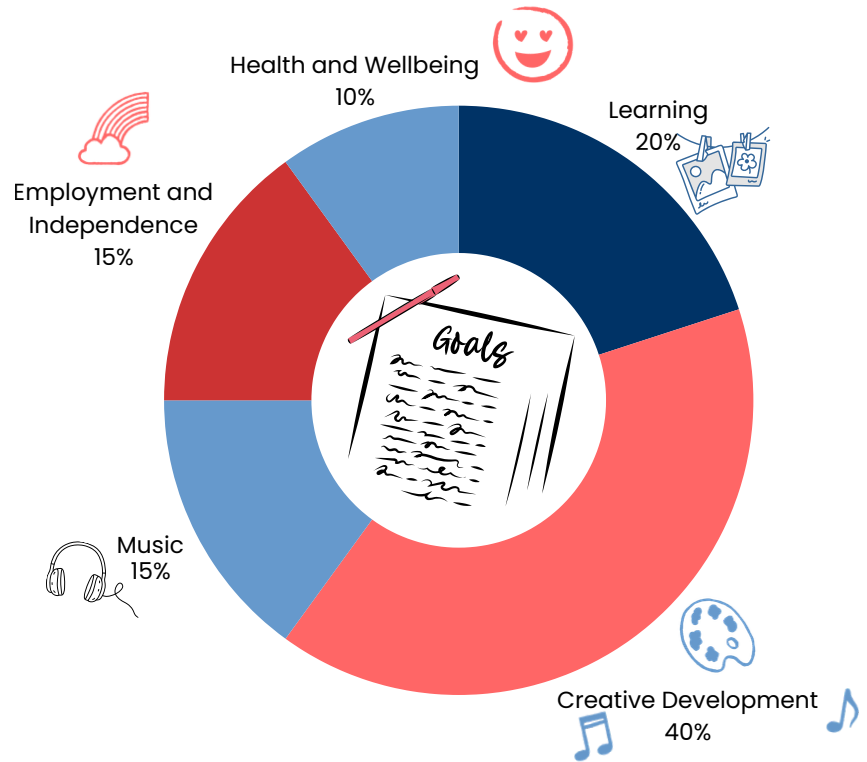
# Outcomes & Evaluation

We continued to collect a variety of data to give us a solid body of information to triangulate and assess the impact of attendance at **hoot** on wellbeing.

## Goal Setting

People were setting and reaching goals this quarter through their wellbeing plans – a one to one conversation with a Creative Support Worker.

Overall the goals set reflect a person-centred focus on creativity, skill development, wellbeing and future independence, with creativity acting as both a source of personal fulfilment and a potential pathway towards employment opportunities.



## Creative Development



Ceramics work, wet felting, exploring new creative mediums, continuing creativity despite shoulder injury.

## Learning



Learning new skills at **hoot**, understanding music composition, embracing "happy accidents," developing confidence in creative processes

## Music

Creating an album of compositions, improving composition knowledge and skills

## Employment and Independence

Exploring a business selling T-shirts, prints and creative work, diversifying income opportunities



## Health & Wellbeing

Exercise for wellbeing, maintaining creativity for mental wellbeing, managing challenges related to shoulder injury

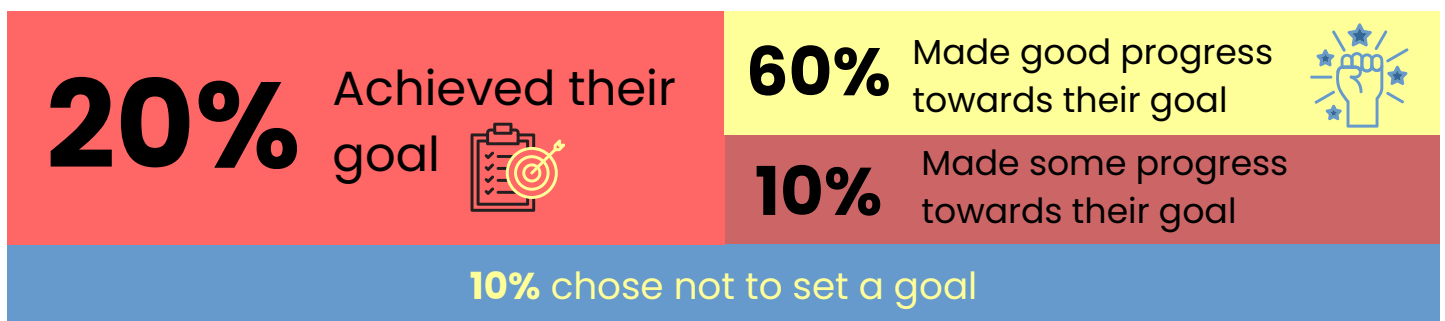


## Moving towards goals

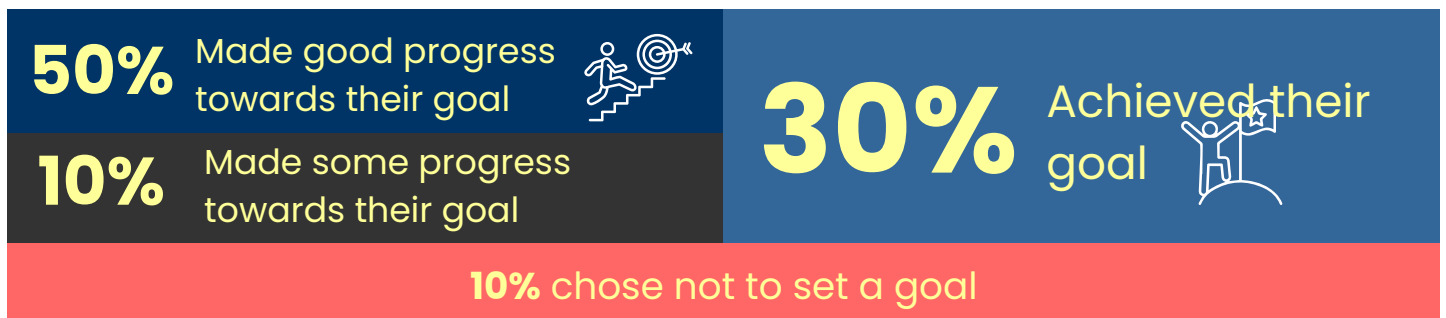
We have a wealth of data from people describing how they are steadily moving towards their goals. Examples include steps within **hoot** – regular attendance, trying out new things, talking to new people etc – but also outside of **hoot**. Previous signposting during the Wellbeing Plans has come to fruition. Participants have tried West Yorkshire Print Works, Recovery College, Globe Arts and Holmfirth Art Week.

There is also evidence of growing independence and self-management. Individuals reported organising their schedules to accommodate creative activities, sourcing materials independently and planning travel arrangements to make their goals a reality.

## Short term goals



## Long term goals



“ I thoroughly enjoyed the activity and learnt new techniques & methods related to scrapbooking and bookbinding. ”

“ I like the generosity of the staff and their support. I feel it is a very safe space – safe enough to have my pieces of work listened to and look forward to the kind and insightful responses. ”

We continue to ask the KPI questions quarterly with a concise version being asked at our out of hours sessions. Combined results as follows:

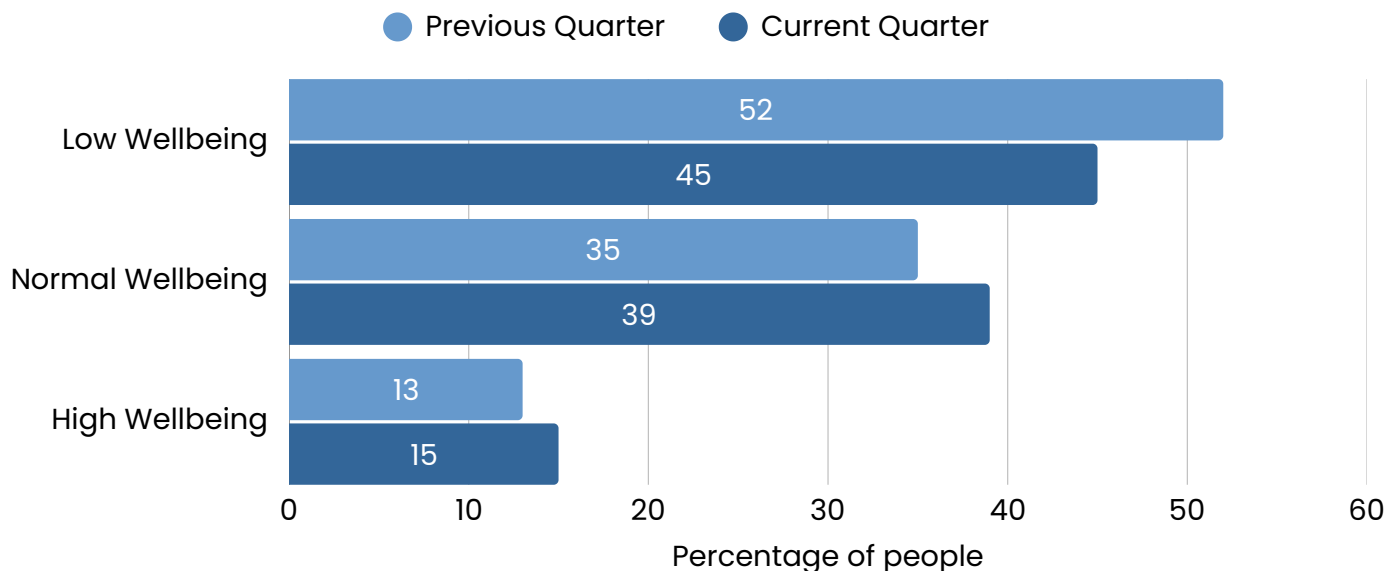
**90%** feel their health and wellbeing has improved because of attending **hoot** activities.

**90%** feel that being a part of **hoot** helps them to be a part of the community and to reduce social isolation.

**85%** feel that they have been listened to and involved in planning the support they receive and any goals they have set at **hoot**.

“Very open and accepting atmosphere, well lead by the artist. Really feels like there are no wrong answers. Also it's really nice to get feedback when I post things on **hoot** from home.”

We also collected SWEMWBS data (using 7 standardised questions about wellbeing) and the results are in the data excel. The headline figures are:



As in previous quarters – and as we might expect as a mental health organisation – the average self-rated wellbeing score for OOB participants from a scale between 7 and 35 is 21, the national average is 23.

# Volunteering with hoot

This quarter we recruited and trained 4 new Group Support Volunteers for groups in North and South Kirklees, 3 of whom have now started in groups with a fourth awaiting their DBS certificate before starting.

Our Graphic Design volunteer also began their volunteering with us, using their creative skills to develop our brand resources. They will initially be volunteering with us for 3 months with the potential to extend depending on their progress and preference.

Last but not least, we celebrated an incredible milestone for a second Group Support Volunteer who has also now been volunteering with **hoot** for 10 years. They recieved a handwritten thank you from the Board of Trustees and our Senior Leadership team along with a thank you gift for their commitment and support.



**68 hours**  
volunteering



**27 sessions**  
supported



I always feel lighter once I finish the group, it really lifts you up.



# Breathing Space / Thursday Group



This quarter the group have enjoyed a mixture of activities each week, ranging from social sessions, led by experienced volunteers involving friendly games, interactive discussions, peer support and a celebration of birthdays.

Creative Sessions have included:

- Chair Yoga, supported by Umbrella Yoga, promoting the importance of movement to support wellbeing, strength and co-ordination.
- Harmony and body percussion sessions from Jess Baker with the group responding positively to singing songs together and inputting on writing them.
- Ukulele and songwriting workshops delivered by Rob Crisp. The group tried a variety of ways of tapping, picking and strumming ukuleles then used these methods to create a song. They decided the ukulele tapping sounded like rain on a roof so created lyrics around that then spent a few sessions with Rob recording the songs. This culminated in the group receiving a CD; they really enjoyed hearing how great it sounded.

**Hoot** artists have learnt to incorporate some of the groups' well-loved weekly games as a warm up and to foster a feeling of the familiar; the regular "What's in the Box?" game functions brilliantly as an ice-breaker.

Alongside the activity and social focus, staff have also been promoting safety in monitoring the effect on individuals and promoting ways in which to stay well with dementia in such recent heatwaves.

“ I like coming up with lyrics and making songs as a group.  
The session was great and very entertaining. Lots of laughs.”

## Projects that complement and add value

Creative Pathways continued to deliver creative sessions across Kirklees to people with learning disabilities. OOB works in a complementary parallel with this programme to ensure that people are in a group that best matches their style and independence.



**20 sessions**



**175 attendances**



**350 contact hours**

# Visions



## Expanding the ways in which we showcase participants work

In Quarter 1 participants' work was displayed in the prestigious surroundings of Dewsbury Town Hall. The group took a trip to the Town Hall together and people spoke emotionally about how proud and valued they felt to see their artwork hung in this environment. We also now have a function for participants to donate their artwork to **hoot** to feature at events and promotions. We took the first piece of artwork out with us to the West Yorkshire Compassionate Cultures Conference 2026.

## Fortified delivery out of hours and in place-based settings to reach new participants/ communities

We continue with our offer in Kirklees Libraries and the learning over the last 2 years has led us to focus particularly on offers in North Kirklees. Ravensthorpe and Cleckheaton residents have reported that travel into Dewsbury town centre can be a barrier to access so the **hoot** offer in libraries meets a need for place-based delivery which is reflected in the attendance numbers and feedback.

## Evaluation & Evidence of Impact

We have spent time reassessing our evaluation methods and impact assessment evidence in order to maximise the case for **hoot** services and demonstrate the impact of attendance at **hoot**. By gathering a wealth of data – KPIs, SWEMWBS and goal-setting Wellbeing Plans – we can triangulate the **hoot** experience and make a solid case for how much difference **hoot** can make.

## Developing strong relationships with other organisations and delivering in partnership

We continue to deliver in partnership with our Working Together Better colleagues with Carers Week being a recent example of smooth and joined up delivery. Many service users from partner organisations expressed interest in **hoot** which shows the value of us continually promoting our services within the partnership as well as wider beyond.

Working as a Consortium Lead in the West Yorkshire Creative Health System led us to suggest that Proper Job and Third Sector Leaders host a 'Creative Health System Workshop for People with Lived Experience'. This work continues and **hoot**'s role as a partner in the blossoming Creative Health System should allow for effective advocacy and input from those with lived experience of mental health needs who engage with creativity.

### hoot creative arts

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