

An artful collaboration between Greenway Medical Practice, Kenmore Care Home and local residents in Kirklees



Altogether Better's model of 'Collaborative Practice' creates the conditions for collaboration between those working in health services and people from local communities, creating a fresh new space where change can happen and lives and services can be transformed. The work begins when the practice invites local people to gift their time as health champions, working alongside health professionals to reshape services.

Greenway Medical Practice in Kirklees, West Yorkshire, were keen to work with Altogether Better to develop this approach because they recognised that local people held the key to them being able to create new offers for their patients which would help people adapt, cope and live well.

Dr Andrew Cameron, Partner at Greenway Medical Practice, says, "Health and wellbeing is dependent on so much more than the odd ten minutes that a patient gets to spend with a GP, or the medication they might get prescribed. Increasingly we realise as a practice that we don't have all the solutions for our patients. Clinical time is becoming more pressured as demand continues to grow, and the NHS is struggling to cope. We have to find new ways to help patients stay well, needing traditional services less and so keeping things sustainable."



Running an art group for the practice was the brainchild of health champion and local artist Kerry Penny. Kerry says, "I believe that anything creative can have all sorts of benefits because it's so relaxing. It can really build your confidence as well."

Kerry was supported in setting up the group by fellow champion, Keith John Ainley. Keith is a landscape painter and together they began opening a room at the practice once a month, for anyone who felt drawn to an art group. Michelle Macrae joined as a champion a little later. Michelle says, "Art is what I really love to do. I went to art college, did a degree in animation and electronic media, and then an HND in illustration."

By collaborating with the practice team to develop the group and inviting patients to come along, these three artists are applying their talents, skills and experience in a new and exciting way – and their work has benefits for everyone involved.

Michelle works at Kenmore Care Home, a Leonard Cheshire home for adults with physical disabilities. Some of the residents also have learning disabilities, behavioural problems and mental health issues. She started to bring residents to the surgery for the art group.

The room the group was using wasn't ideal and Michelle realised there was a beautiful space at Kenmore which would be perfect. The activities room was once a sun lounge and has doors out onto a courtyard garden, with large windows which let in lots of light. Now the art group is connecting people living in the

care home and in the community. Other patients from Greenway Medical Practice come to the home to do something they enjoy in the company of the residents, in a lovely space.

The champions set out art supplies and people joining the group might pick something from a book to copy, or bring their own projects. Art and craft activities can have benefits for manual dexterity and concentration and taking part in group activities has mental and emotional health benefits too. The mood in the room tends to be peaceful, with an easy ebb and flow of conversation, laughter and concentration.

Kerry says, "It's about the relaxation of doing something creative, but it's also about spending time with people. Over time, you get to know people. I hope the people attending the group feel it is bringing something to their lives and enriching them in some way."

Welcoming these three artists as part of the family at Greenway Medical Practice shows the commitment of the practice to not just providing a medical service, but a health service. Their work impacts local people living in the care home and in the community, and makes life better for everyone.

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Altogether Better

Email: altogether.better@swyt.nhs.uk

Call: 01924 316394

Web: www.altogetherbetter.org.uk

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