

RIGHTS

Made Real in Care Homes

Recognising, respecting and responding:

*promoting human rights
for residents of care
homes in Scotland*

Anderson's Care Home

Introduction

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Made Real in Care Homes

Rights Made Real in Care Homes is an exciting project, funded by the Life Changes Trust and delivered in partnership with Scottish Care and the University of the West of Scotland.

The overall aim is to improve the quality of life of those living in a care home and to help support staff to not only recognise, but embed, human rights in their everyday practice.

The funding supported the development of seven creative and innovative projects and ways of working that will benefit people living with dementia and show others how to make rights real in care homes. All partners in the project are committed to ensuring that older people, including those living with dementia, have a right to maintain strong connections with family and friends, with their communities and with the things that matter to them regardless of where they live.

The Life Changes Trust invested £135,000 to support these seven projects across Scotland to promote the inclusion and participation of care home residents with dementia in a meaningful way. Scotland's new health and social care standards state that everyone in Scotland deserves to receive the care and support that is right for them. Each of the funded projects was designed to show how these standards can work in practice.

In order to showcase good practice in the care homes, particularly in relation to observing and promoting people's human rights, we have produced a collection of stories from the projects which show that adopting a human-rights based approach is not something people working in care homes should view with anxiety, but instead recognise that it is about building on many of the attitudes they currently possess and activities they currently practise.

The overall aim of the project and the stories is to inform and encourage workers in care homes across Scotland in their efforts to meet the new health and social care standards and provide care that recognises human rights, promotes people's dignity and demands only the highest-quality level of service.

This story is from Anderson's Care Home, Elgin

Filled with song and laughter

Anderson's Care Home, Elgin



'Music is massive in Anderson's'
says Yoni Lefevre.

Yoni is a researcher from the Innovation School at Glasgow School of Art and she's referring to a charitable trust care home in Elgin where she worked on a project called the 'Anderson's Experience'.

'Our goal was to bring communities and care together through music,' Yoni explains. ***'So we really tried to explore what role music can play in the care home context.'***

She describes how the project used a rights-based approach to redefine 'care home', both within Anderson's and more broadly. Working with residents, staff, families and the wider community, the project team first explored perspectives of care homes and collected stories about them from various public locations in Moray.

The next stage was to dig deeper into people's understanding of what it means to live in, work at and visit Anderson's. ***'Based on that understanding, we then collectively explored the role of communities and care through music,'*** Yoni says.

Sarah Granitza is activities co-ordinator at Anderson's. She agrees that music plays an important role in the care home. There was already a wide range of music activities involving nursery-age children, for example, and schools, as well as entertainers coming in to play for residents. ***'So we decided music was definitely the approach to take in this project, working with Yoni and her colleague, Dr Tara French.'***

The year-long project began with observation – Yoni and Tara making themselves familiar with the home, its residents and staff. A 'pop-up' event was staged, where people – including an actor from the TV soap Emmerdale who happened to be visiting – were asked about their impressions of Anderson's when they first walked through its doors. Common descriptions were homely with a warm atmosphere, and staff who appeared welcoming and caring.

A round of interviews followed with residents, staff and volunteers in an attempt to capture the essence of Anderson's from multiple perspectives. Another pop-up event, this time in the foyer of a local hospital, gathered views of care homes in general. Most were negative, although where interviewees had experience of a care home, opinions tended to be more nuanced and realistic.

Several workshops were then planned where thoughts and ideas around music were explored with residents, family members and others. The suggestion of a programme of community music sessions evolved from a workshop involving volunteers at Anderson's. The result was three full days of music activities to try out all the ideas to emerge from the three workshops.

'The goal was to explore the role of music in the care home and to give people a different, more meaningful experience when participating in music activities,' Yoni says.

Those three activity days were intense but offered the opportunity to work in small groups across Anderson's five separate units.

'The small group sessions were great,' says Sarah. *'All of a sudden, residents were up and dancing. It was an amazing thing to see just how happy people were.'* The sessions also helped Anderson's cement its reputation as a home rather than a care home, she adds.

The project then delved further into stories regarding music and its place in the lives of individuals resident in Anderson's. Yoni says: *'We did one-to-one sessions about "music and me", where we asked, "What are your top three songs? Can you share your memories of those songs and how they make you feel?" These sessions enabled us to explore with residents the personal meaning of songs on a deeper level.'*

She adds: 'One of the things we had figured out is that Anderson's is really integrated into the local community already. But an added value of critically reflecting on the role of music was to consider how we could make those interactions with the community more meaningful.'

‘For example, instead of asking people to come to the home to perform their songs, why not ask them to perform songs that are actually related to specific residents, or which can trigger certain kinds of memories?’

From that came an idea to map old songs of Scotland – I Belong to Glasgow and The Northern Lights of Old Aberdeen, for example – which linked residents to places significant to them.

Often care home residents can seem like passive audience members in musical activities – being performed to and with little input into the structure of the session. But the project team strove to ensure that music activities in Anderson’s became much more interactive as well as meaningful.

Yoni explains that children coming into a residential home can sometimes feel a little awkward if they know none of the residents and the residents don’t know them. At Anderson’s they tried different approaches to encourage interactivity, with children and residents working together to make percussion instruments, for example, or the children singing songs based on randomly chosen items picked from a basket by residents.

A highlight of the three-day musical programme was a performance by ‘The Wandering Scotsman’. Musician Bill Mullen lives in America but grew up in Dundee and his wife has a relative in Anderson’s. He responded to a social media post where the home asked anyone interested in being involved in the music project to get in touch.

Sarah says: *‘It was an absolute honour to have him play. Everybody was just blown away by the atmosphere and was so happy.’*

In a post on his website, Bill wrote: *‘From the first song the whole place was filled with song and laughter. It was fantastic. I was so impressed.’*

The success of the project has prompted Yoni and Tara to produce the [REMIX Toolkit](#), a resource that describes music-based activities designed to enhance and explore the role of music in a care home.

*Yoni says: **'Using these tools can help staff and volunteers to build empathy and understand a person's background and life story. We want to share it now for everyone to use.'***

Although much has been achieved as a result of the project, there's no question of Anderson's losing momentum.

'It's great to see how much has gone on as a result of the project,'** Sarah says. **'But we're still only at the start, I think. It's been a long journey to this point but we're definitely on to something special.'

Rights secured:

✓ **Right to freedom of expression**

Article 10, European Convention on Human Rights

✓ **"...I can direct my own play and activities in the way that I choose, and freely access a wide range of experiences and resources suitable for my age and stage, which stimulate my natural curiosity, learning and creativity." Note that this Standard is written for children, however, it is equally applicable to adults.**

Health and Social Care Standards, 2.27

✓ **"I get the most out of life because the people and organisation who support and care for me have an enabling attitude and believe in my potential."**

Health and Social Care Standards, 1.3

✓ **"I can maintain and develop my interests, activities and what matters to me in the way that I like."**

Health and social care standards, 2.22

