

University of Cambridge Museums

*Building Connections - loneliness & isolation,  
cultural engagement & older people*

**Evaluation Report 2019-2021**

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*I feel like there is a piece of me inside this painting now, as if I  
have walked in the garden myself*

Feedback, participant, 2020-21

# Building Connections: Executive summary

## Challenge

To improve older people's wellbeing and reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation through shared engagement in art and culture.

The project had two objectives: To contribute to the psychosocial wellbeing of older people living in Cambridgeshire particularly those likely to be affected by loneliness and social isolation, and to shift perceptions of the Museum—to enable participants to see it as a place for everyone as co-creators of a social and cultural community.

## What We Did

- Formed partnerships in housing, residential care, clinical and supported living settings, we were guests in people's homes, their shared spaces and places of care.
- Welcomed people to the Museum, a space that is different from the everyday, giving them new experiences as a museum participant rather than audience member, providing a sense of ownership, and belonging.
- Facilitated interactions and connections through engaging participants with arts and culture, inspiring conversations, self-expression, movement, and the sharing of responses in a social context.
- Encouraged participants to share thoughts, feelings and imaginings on the art and artefacts in a supportive group environment.
- Guided participants' learning, through engaging them with different art forms to develop a greater understanding of arts and culture.
- Through exploring objects and artworks together encouraged people to take notice of what they feel and see.
- Invited participants to work with the facilitators to co-create the programme activity.
- Invited participants to improvise movements and express themselves through movement in response to the music and art.



Figure 1: Building Connections practice model

## What we achieved

Over the two years of Building Connections funding despite the challenges of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns the delivery team achieved the following outputs:

- Direct, sustained programme activity in 19 settings, enabled through 9 partnerships.
- 10 additional settings / relationships are now part of the wider legacy programme; the 'Age Well' network newly established to support care homes and similar settings through the provision of CPD opportunities, free resources, and museum visits.
- A total of 245 workshops were facilitated by the programme team. This included 175 since the beginning of the Covid pandemic.
- 1909 attendances by older people across the settings took place.
- 225 older people, in supported or clinical settings took part in the workshops on a sustained basis. Since the Covid outbreak this included members of Cambridge Older People's Enterprise and patients supported by Arthur Rank hospice.
- 9070 older people and care professionals engaged with the programme materials and resources such as the *Relax, Look & Imagine* guided film and postcard series, and/or bedside activity newspapers, extended art activity packs and online training.
- 2042 older people and care professionals (again in supported or clinical settings) indirectly benefitted through the dissemination and sharing of high-quality reproduction artworks, displayed in communal areas, and sent to people's homes in art packs.
- 2,207+ sector colleagues engaged with the programme through presentations at 6 conferences, including the International Council of Museums in Kyoto, 5 blog posts for the University of Cambridge Museum Consortium and two articles in professional publications.
- An estimated 50% of direct beneficiaries lived in the Cambridge City area, with the remaining 50% coming from the wider Cambridgeshire area.
- Six volunteers were recruited for the programme, two were able to be active before the pandemic changed the delivery model.

## What We Learnt

- Participants joined the groups to be with other people and because they wanted to learn about and how to do, something new.
- Involvement with the museum groups created a sense of community and connection to others.
- Participants learnt new skills to help them choose how they could encounter art and developed a greater understanding of arts and culture.
- Confidence increased as participants gained new skills and knowledge through joining the groups.
- The dance element of the group was valued for the mental and physical health benefits.
- Participants were engaged and absorbed when focussing on the artworks.
- The groups provided something to look forward to and were found to be enjoyable and uplifting.
- Participants were grateful the sessions kept going through the lockdowns, liked the telephone format and being part of a smaller group.

- Evaluating the programme in clinical settings and residential care homes was not possible with the resources available.
- The questions about lockdown and loneliness allowed people to talk through their thoughts and responses to loneliness before answering a direct question about their own experience of loneliness.
- Respondents appeared aware of the risks of loneliness and made the effort to keep in contact with family and friends, and to keep themselves busy.
- The enforced separation from other people during lockdown with uncertainty because of the pandemic for some resulted in emotional and existential loneliness.

## Key Messages from the Evaluation

- *Dance and Time with the Museum* provides interaction and connection, learning and stimulation, increased self-esteem, engagement, an embodied experience and stimulates emotional responses.
- *Dance and Time with the Museum* addresses the Five Ways to Wellbeing and enhances the psychological wellbeing of older people through giving enjoyment, increasing self-esteem and confidence, providing meaning and a sense of accomplishment.
- The demographic data collected relating to age, health status, and living arrangements indicated that nearly 80% of the participants who took part in the evaluation were at high risk of being socially isolated and experiencing loneliness.
- The Longitudinal Survey of Ageing (ELSA) question on loneliness found that over 50% of participants experienced loneliness often or some of the time.
- Older people are cognisant of the risks of loneliness and can develop strategies to maintain social connections and interaction.
- The Campaign to End Loneliness Scale identified low levels of social loneliness in the evaluation group.
- The programme introduced a new audience to the museum, who gained knowledge about the museum collection and confidence in expressing their opinions to the wider group.
- Facilitated conversations about art and artefacts enhances social interaction and social connectivity.
- Engaging participants and partners in the co-production and development of, and adaptations to the *Dance and Time with the Museum* programme was key to the successful maintenance of the Building Connections project throughout the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.
- Conference phone calls combined with art packs sent via the postal system are an effective alternative for engaging older people with arts and culture, when face to face sessions are not viable.

## Areas of enquiry going forward

- What specific factors, in this work, contribute to people's protective strategies re loneliness and isolation?
- Where, when and can this work reach those affected by sustained loneliness and isolation?
- Are there specific health and wellbeing outcomes that engagement with different collection items can enable?

- What factors are inhibiting the effective measuring of impacts made?
- How can impact be better understood and communicated, with limited resources, on a sustained basis?
- If framed in the field of brain health could the impact of this work be better understood?
- What adjustments could museums and their spaces make to facilitate this work better? Could these adjustments improve the museum as whole for all visitors?
- What more can we learn about the interplay of enabling factors in making the desired difference, practice and conditions?





*The movement relaxes you and gets you ready for looking at the paintings, you relax and forget your worries*

*I especially loved, loved, the dancing...when we did this...together (it) was amazing, made me so happy ... it really did*

*It's made you look at museums differently ... it is very easy to whistle around and just not look ... it used to be quite a stuffy thing to do but now it's very much more enjoyable*

Feedback, participants, 2020-21

# University of Cambridge Museums

## Building Connections

### Introduction

Loneliness and social isolation are known to have a negative impact on well-being and quality of life (Windle et al 2011). University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) Building Connections project aims to improve the wellbeing of older people and reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation through engaging older people in arts and culture. The project has two objectives: To contribute to the psychosocial wellbeing of older people living in Cambridgeshire particularly those likely to be affected by loneliness and social isolation, and secondly to shift perceptions of the Museum –to enable participants to see it as a place for everyone as co-creators of a social and cultural community.

Building Connections has two strands of activity. The first, *Dance and Time with the Museum* that started as a partnership with Cambridge City Council Independent Living Service sheltered housing schemes. Part of the innovation of the project was the co-design of the activity with participants (older adults) and the expansion of the model to test it in a wider range of settings including residential care homes, day centres and health settings and in sheltered housing. The programme takes place in community settings and at the museum, and has at its core the shared exploration of, and the making of personal responses to, museum collections. Beginning with relaxation, participants are invited to take part in a guided slow look at a museum artefact which prompts exchange and shared learning. For some groups the sessions end here, as this is enough – this is *Time with the Museum*. For others, it is extended with a further invitation for people to select music to reflect their feelings about the artefact and step into a movement-based response – this is *Dance with the Museum*. The second strand in Building Connections is the work with *Broadening Horizons*. Building on longstanding partnerships, UCM worked with City Council Community Development Officers to organise visits to the museum for potentially isolated adults. Participants came to the museum for a facilitated visit led by an expert educator or curator and were encouraged to talk about the museum artefacts, enjoy social interaction with refreshments and on some occasions the opportunity to participate in creative activities inspired by the collection.

The programme started in January 2019 with the delivery team contacting key staff working in potential settings for the interventions. The programme of activities was piloted across a range of settings and locations to test for feasibility of delivery, ready to begin in March 2019. The settings were chosen to reach older people in a spectrum of supported living environments to understand where and how the programme could best have impact, the settings included: Addenbrookes Hospital older people's wards, the Arthur Rank Hospice day service for service users and carers, two residential care homes, two day centres, eight independent living services sheltered housing schemes across Cambridge City and the wider area and two community centres. Over the two years of Building Connections funding despite the challenges of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns the delivery team achieved the following outputs:

- Direct, sustained programme activity in 19 settings, enabled through 9 partnerships.
- 10 additional settings / relationships have now become part of the wider legacy programme; the 'Age Well' network newly established to support care homes and

similar settings through the provision of CPD opportunities, free resources, and museum visits.

- A total of 245 workshops have been facilitated by the programme team. This includes 175 since March 2020 and the Covid pandemic.
- 1909 attendances by older people across the settings took place.
- 225 older people, in supported or clinical settings have taken part in the workshops on a sustained basis. Since the Covid outbreak this has included members of COPE and the patients in the hospice.
- An estimated 50% of direct beneficiaries live in the Cambridge City area, with the remaining 50% coming from the wider Cambridgeshire area.
- Six volunteers were recruited for the programme, two were able to be active before the pandemic changed the delivery model.
- 9070 older people and care professionals have engaged with the programme materials and resources i.e., the *Relax, Look & Imagine* guided film and postcard series, and/or bedside activity newspapers, extended art activity packs and online training.
- 2042 older people and care professionals (again in supported or clinical settings) have indirectly benefitted through the dissemination and sharing of high-quality reproduction artworks, displayed in communal areas, and also sent to people's homes in art packs.
- 2,207+ sector colleagues have engaged with the programme through presentations at 6 conferences, including the International Council of Museums in Kyoto, 5 blog posts for the University of Cambridge Museum Consortium and two articles in professional publications.

In July 2019, the delivery team and the evaluation consultant met to co-create the Theory of Change and to develop the evaluation framework for the Building Connections programme, agreeing the evaluation methods to be used. However, with the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in March 2020, the programme delivery and evaluation were adapted, and the changes are outlined later in the report.

## The Building Connections: Theory of Change

The Building Connections programme was designed to engage participants through arts and culture facilitating interactions and social connectedness between older people.

The Theory of Change describes the activities that take place in the session, the intermediate outcomes believed to happen because of participating in the programme, and the assumptions regarding the casual link between the outcomes and activities. Through this process the team mapped the relationship between the activities delivered and how they may help to reduce loneliness and social isolation in older adults. The Theory of Change for the UCM Building Connections programme is outlined below and presented in Figure 1.

### Our Activities: What do we do?

- **Use of Space:** Welcome people into a space that is different from the everyday. To give people new experiences as a museum audience, so they feel comfortable and have a sense of ownership and belonging.
- **Connect:** Facilitate interactions and connections through arts and culture, inspiring conversations and sharing of experiences in a social context.



- **Share:** Facilitators encourage participants to share thoughts on the art and artefacts in a supportive group environment.
- **Learn:** Expert facilitators guide participants' learning, engaging people with different art forms to develop a greater understanding of arts and culture.
- **Look:** Through exploring objects and artworks together, people take notice of what they feel and see.
- **Create:** Participants work with the facilitators to co-create the programme activity, and improvise movements in response to what they see and hear.
- **Move:** (*Dancing in the Museum only*): Participants are invited to express themselves through movement in response to the music and art.

### Assumptions: What we think will happen in the sessions:

- **Emotional Response:** Participants will experience enjoyment, happiness, and inspiration as a result of taking part.
- **Increased self-esteem:** Participants will share their views and their responses will be valued and validated.
- **Interaction and Connection:** Participants will interact and connect with others in the group, forming new friendships.
- **Learning and Stimulation:** Participants will learn about the art and artefacts and will be stimulated and challenged.
- **Engagement:** Through participating, people will be absorbed and experience 'flow'.
- **Embodied experience:** Through dance, the participants will be physically active and expressive during the sessions.

### The intermediate outcomes: – what happens to older people through taking part in the programme?

- **Emotional Impact:** Participants experience an emotional response to the programme, feeling happy and uplifted and inspired.
- **Connected to others:** Participants feel connected and part of a community, forming new relationships and a sense of belonging.
- **Feeling valued:** Participants feel they are listened to and that their views are relevant and valued.
- **Feeling informed:** Participants learn about the art and artefacts, learn about themselves and about others in the group.
- **Feeling Positive:** Through 'doing' and creating meaning together participants feel more confident and look forward to things. They feel more positive.

From the Theory of Change an evaluation framework was developed and the evaluation methods were determined following guidance from *Building Connections Fund: Guidance on evaluation for grant holders* (New Philanthropy Capital, 2019). The evaluation used a mixed methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative data collected using the following methods: a questionnaire including demographic details of participants, and standardised measures of loneliness and wellbeing, and facilitator diaries. Interviews and group interviews were undertaken with participants in year two of the programme.

## Ethical Issues

As an evaluation, research ethics approvals were not required, however, to ensure GDPR compliance a participant information sheet was given to participants at the beginning of the programme to inform them how the data gathered for the purposes of evaluation would be managed and stored. It also gave them the opportunity to give consent for their data to be used for this purpose and to opt out of the evaluation if preferred. The participants gave their consent for data use as part of the registration process for the programme.

Theory of Change		
<b>Ultimate Goals -</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Contribute to the psychosocial wellbeing of participants living in Cambridgeshire, particularly those affected by loneliness and social isolation.</li><li>To shift perceptions of the Museum, helping people to see it as a place for everyone as co-creators of a social and cultural community.</li></ul>		
Activities	Assumptions	Intermediate Outcomes
<b>Space</b> Welcome people into a space different from the everyday. Provide new experiences as a museum audience in a comfortable environment that offers a sense of ownership and belonging.	<b>Emotional Response</b> Participants will experience enjoyment happiness and inspiration as a result of taking part.	<b>Emotional Impact</b> Participants experience an emotional response to the programme feeling happy and uplifted and inspired.
<b>Connect</b> Facilitate interactions and connections through arts and culture, inspiring conversations and sharing of responses in a social context.	<b>Increased self-esteem</b> Participants will share their views and their responses will be valued and validated.	<b>Feeling Valued</b> Participants feel listened to and that their views are relevant and valued.
<b>Share</b> Facilitators encourage participants to share thoughts on the art and artefacts in a supportive group environment.	<b>Interaction and Connection</b> Participants will interact and connect with others in the group forming new friendships.	<b>Connection to others</b> Participants feel connected and part of a community, forming new relationships and a sense of belonging.
<b>Learn</b> Expert facilitators guide participants' learning, engaging people with different art forms to develop a greater understanding of arts and culture.	<b>Learning and Stimulation</b> Participants will learn about the art and artefacts and will be stimulated and challenged.	<b>Being Informed</b> The participants learn about the art and artefacts and learn about themselves and about others in the group.
<b>Look</b> Through exploring objects and artworks together people take notice of what they feel and see.	<b>Engagement</b> Through participating, participants will be absorbed and experience 'flow'.	<b>Feeling Positive</b> Through doing and creating meaning together, participants feel more confident and look forward to things. They feel more positive.
<b>Create</b> Participants work with the facilitators to co-create the programme activity and improvise movements in response to what they see and hear.	<b>Embodied experience</b> Through dance, participants will be physically active and expressive during the sessions.	
<b>Move</b> (Dancing in the Museum only) Participants are invited to express themselves through movement in response to the music and art.		

**Figure 2: UCM Building Connections Theory of Change**



*When I look at the picture's I get into it. I feel I'm part of it ... I am not afraid any more ... now my brain is working ... I never thought I would be interested in art; I do feel confident now*

*I look into the picture ... and try and pick up details. In the past I went to look at a pretty picture and walked past ... but I have, since we've been doing this, developed a way of looking at a picture, trying to interpret what's going on*

*It's lovely to have your mind refreshed, so we don't sink into our own little worlds*

Feedback, participants, 2020-21



## Methods

### Year One: Data collection (pre-covid)

Data was gathered at a programme level to determine how many sessions of each strand (*Dance with the Museum*, *Time with the Museum*, *Broadening Horizons*) took place, the locations of sessions, number of participants, numbers of staff and the constituency of delivery team. According to the Campaign to End Loneliness, certain factors are associated with a high risk of loneliness in old age. These include age (the older you are the more at risk of loneliness you are), men are less likely to experience social loneliness than women, people in poor health, living with a chronic condition and people living alone are also at more risk of being lonely and socially isolated. Therefore, for the purposes of the evaluation participants who gave consent were asked for demographic details including age, gender, marital status/living as a couple, living arrangements, health status and whether they had a disability or limiting condition.

The Campaign to End Loneliness' measurement tool and the 'UCL Museums Generic Wellbeing Scale' (6-item) were initially chosen by the delivery team to evaluate the programme and combined into a Generic Wellbeing tool (see appendix) to assess the self-reported impact on participants. To test the assumptions of the Theory of Change three additional questions were added to gather data on whether participants feel 'valued', 'informed' and 'able to share' during the activity. The UCM generic wellbeing tool was completed at the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the October-December 2019 term. The evaluation did not start until October 2019 as the first 6 months of the programme consisted of establishing contact with local organisations and venues and piloting the activity with different groups to co-create a form of activity that met the needs of the participants.

To support the on-going delivery and development of the programme, and to provide evidence regarding the assumptions made about the programme in the Theory of Change, at the end of each session the facilitators completed a diary which included a summary of the session, anecdotes/comments from participants, reflections on the sessions such as positive aspects of session, level of interaction between participants, engagement with activities, and difficulties encountered/what could have been done better.

## Results

### Year One

A total of 61 sessions took place with 752 attendances, of these, 53 sessions were *Dance with the Museum* and *Time with the Museum* with 610 attendances, and the remaining sessions were part of *Broadening Horizons*. The sessions were delivered across Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, in different locations including residential care homes, day centres, an acute hospital and a hospice.

The evaluation took place in five of the settings with 40 participants consenting to complete the questionnaires and provide demographic data.

### Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant ages ranged from 65-90 years (Mean= 78.5, SD= 6.7), with three quarters (76.4%) of the sample >75 years. Many more women than men completed the questionnaire 29 (72.5%) women and 11 men (27.5%). Five (12.8%) of the participants

were married or living as a couple, seven (17.9%) were single and 27 (69.2%) were widowed or divorced. Thirty-one (81.6 %) lived alone, 4 (10.5%) lived with a partner) and 3 (7.9%) lived with others (not a partner). In terms of health 14 (35%) described their health as good or very good, 15 (37.5%) described their health as fair, and 11 (27.5%) described their health as poor or very poor. In addition, 23 (57.5%) stated that they were living with a disability or limiting condition.

### **Loneliness scale data**

At Time 1 (the 1<sup>st</sup> session) the self-reported loneliness scores ranged from 0-12 (with the higher scores indicating loneliness) the mean score was 2.8 indicating a low level of self-reported social loneliness. At Time T2 the mean score was 1.5 again a low level of self-reported loneliness. This is a small change and although the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test did indicate a statistically significant change at the 0.05 level, the effect size was very small indicating that the change was not meaningful. Furthermore, if an individual scores 0-3 on this scale it is unlikely that they are experiencing a sense of loneliness.

To assess whether the participants met the project brief, i.e., were at risk of loneliness and social isolation, using the demographic data we created a loneliness index based on existing evidence from the literature and the Campaign to End Loneliness. The data relating to age, gender, marital status, health status, disability/limiting conditions and living conditions were recoded to enable an index of loneliness to be created.

Developing an index of loneliness:

Ages of participants were grouped and scored as follows: > 75 years =1, 76-85 years =2, and 85+ =3,

Gender Male =1, Female= 2

Marital status: married =1, single =2, divorced/widowed =3,

Health status: good/very good =1, fair =2, poor/very poor =3

Living arrangements: Lives with partner=1, lives with others= 2, lives alone= 3

Disability/limiting condition: No= 1, Yes=2

The loneliness score was calculated by adding together the scores from each of these domains.

Age group+ gender+ marital status+ living arrangements+ health status+ presence of disability/limiting condition = loneliness score.

Therefore, an individual who was female, older than 85 years old who was widowed or divorced, experiencing poor health and a disability, or limiting condition and living alone would achieve the maximum score of 16. This would indicate a high risk of social isolation and potential loneliness.

The range of scores for the sample population (n= 36) was 8-15. 8 (22.2%) participants scored less than 12, but the remaining 28 scored over 12, with 10 of these scoring over 14 on the index indicating that they were at *high risk* of experiencing social isolation and loneliness. The demographic data collected relating to age, health status, living arrangements etc., therefore indicated that nearly 80% of the participants were at high risk of being socially isolated and experiencing loneliness. This is an important finding as although the Campaign to end loneliness scale did not identify loneliness in the sample population, the programme was indeed reaching a high-risk group.

## Wellbeing scores

The UCL Museum Wellbeing scores at T1 (n= 40) ranged from 6- 30 (M=25.2) with higher scores indicating high levels of wellbeing. At T2 (n=30) the scores ranged from 19-30 (M=26.9). This change was not statistically significant, but it is worth noting that more than 10 participants scored the highest possible score for wellbeing at T1 thus reducing the likelihood of a statistically significant change between T1 and T2 being found.

The Total Wellbeing scores (for the nine questions) at T1 (n= 39) ranged from 6- 42 (M=33.97) with higher scores indicating high levels of wellbeing, but some participants did not complete the three additional questions hence the UCL wellbeing score was unchanged. At T2 (n=30) the scores ranged from 28-42 (M=36.9), representing an increase between T2 and T1 of nearly 3 points, however this change was not statistically significant.

## Qualitative feedback from the facilitators' diaries

The initial data analysis of the facilitators' diaries was conducted by the team. Following reading of each transcript the team discussed and identified themes from the data and developed a coding framework. For simplicity the Theory of Change headings are used with example observations and quotes from participants recorded in the facilitators' diaries to illustrate the findings at this stage.

## Assumptions about what we think will happen in the sessions

This describes what the facilitators saw in the sessions and what they recorded in their diaries.

- **Emotional Response:** Participants liked the music from *Pride and Prejudice* with 'On the Brink' they said it was dramatic, and as though something was 'building'. *"I was unhappy when I arrived but now I am very happy"*
- **Increased self-esteem:** Participants who have been with the programme from the start were effective in facilitating the small group discussion.
- **Interaction and Connection:** *"It's something different looking at the art, I've enjoyed talking about it. Its interesting hearing everyone's different opinions"*
- **Learning and Stimulation:** Throughout the sessions there was lots of sharing and listening, everyone was given the space to express their thoughts and observations. *"All the group wanted to know who the artist was, and when and where they were from"*
- **Engaged:** They all really enjoyed the slow looking- I could see them looking intensely as I was speaking. *"I've never enjoyed looking at paintings before-normally I prefer objects, the more you look into it, the better- really excellent!"*
- **Embodied experience:** We moved very easily into dance and everyone joined in, participants really owned the session and the movement. There was also non-verbal communication as people danced together and mirrored each other's movements.

## The intermediate outcomes: – what happens to older people through taking part in the programme?

Here examples are given of what was observed in the sessions demonstrating what happened to the participants because of taking part.

- **Emotional Impact:** *"Everyone was talking and listening and sharing ideas, they were interested in the music, and about how it made them feel"*

- **Connected to others:** *"I live alone and don't talk to people, so these conversations are really important to me"*
- **Valued:** *"People were confident enough to trust their own voice"*
- **Informed:** *"I wanted to know if the stones 'meant' something- they could be spiritual and special, like Stonehenge, especially as Spencer had made such a feature of them."*
- **Feeling Positive:** *"These sessions are the highlight of my life."* D. was impressed by how much her clients took away with them, they were still chatting about it over lunch.

From the diaries there is supporting evidence that the assumptions as to what would happen in the sessions did indeed occur, and in addition that participants would experience emotional impacts, and feel connected to others, informed, valued, and positive because of taking part.

## Summary of year one

The first year of the evaluation process enabled the co-creation of a Theory of Change for the Building Connections programme of activity. The demographic data suggests that older people who are at high risk of social isolation and loneliness are being reached by the programme. Although the changes in loneliness and wellbeing did not demonstrate a meaningful statistically significant change in participants' levels of social loneliness or wellbeing because of taking part in the activities, there was a positive trend indicated with small increases on both measures. The fact that the Campaign to End Loneliness Measurement tool did not pick up high levels of social loneliness may be due to several factors. For a start this is a relatively new tool that has not yet been used extensively in practice. In the case of this current evaluation, participants were asked to complete the scales at the end of the session which may have meant that the positive experience of being with the group changed their perceptions of their current friendships and relationships at that moment in time. In addition, members of the delivery team reflected on the stigma of loneliness, and that as participants were often assisted to complete the questionnaires by the delivery team and volunteers, in such circumstances people may not like to admit that their relationships and friendships are not as they would like them to be. It is also the case that the positive wording of the tool may lead people to under-report their feelings. However as can be seen in the section reporting finding from the interviews, there are other reasons which may explain why this tool did not identify loneliness in this group of participants.

The diaries were a useful method of capturing data about participants' responses to the sessions and for the purpose of developing the session delivery. The facilitators' observations were of variable length and depth, but the data analysis sessions were a useful learning experience which enabled reflections on the type of information to record and how best to record what was observed. Following this the proforma for data collection went through several iterations and the format changed, providing more space to record anecdotes from participants.

Year one of the programme was a learning and development stage in the sense of establishing the activities in a range of different settings. The evaluation process was developed throughout the programme and pragmatic decisions were taken to facilitate the collection of data and to minimise the burden on the delivery team, participants and partners. For example, the delivery team felt that the questionnaire was too long to use in practice and decided to remove the three questions relating to being



valued, listened to, and able to share. Evidence on these three items were gathered via the facilitators' diaries and later interviews with participants. A challenge that was not able to be resolved was the use of the tool in care home and clinical settings. Here the partners were unhappy about the use of the tool on a one-to-one basis due to high levels of cognitive impairment, health fragility and a general sense of it being inappropriate. As a result, individual monitoring of participants experiences was not possible within these settings. As such the team worked with partners to explore how the team could gather feedback, and this occurred in the form of plenary sessions. So, whilst the quality of the experience for individuals couldn't be assessed, the delivery team and partners could reflect on the level of engagement, which along with demographic data recorded can provide some insights. This will need to be considered for further evaluation of similar programmes in the future.



*You feel like you're not one person, you are one person in it all together. And you know, you've got freedom to say what you think ... there's no right or wrong way of saying anything*

*I look forward to those people ... what they say... just makes you feel good in yourself*

*It takes away you concerns and sometimes I forget my pain because I am so absorbed*

Feedback, participants, 2020-21

## Year Two Delivery and Evaluation in Lockdown

In March 2020 the delivery of the programme was affected by the pandemic and all face-to-face delivery had to stop. Following consultation with stakeholders and participants the programme team quickly adapted the programme. Changes included: group phone sessions- for sheltered housing residents (bi-weekly, with artworks to choose from, posted to participants), group zoom sessions with the hospice service users and carers, one to one support for activity co-ordinators in care homes, correspondence with participants, care homes and day centres and group phone sessions with COPE (Cambridge Older Peoples Enterprise) as part of their Talking Together programme. Resources were also developed including a series of guided films which were made available via the museum website, post cards and A3 table sheets of images used in the sessions, with a specific set of these created for use on the wards, and through the dedicated Facebook page across Addenbrookes Hospital, and extended activity guides for activities coordinators and care staff. Museum visits were organised for care homes when lockdown eased during autumn 2020. Work with the City Council Community Development Team was unable to continue during the first phase of the pandemic due to staff redeployment and a shift in focus regarding their roles and the needs they were serving, but a remote offer including art activity resources by post and some live online sessions were delivered later in the year.

### Evaluation methods year two

At the next data collection point (June -July 2020) telephone interviews were conducted with the sheltered housing residents who were taking part in regular conference call sessions. Additionally, interviews took place with the lead staff member for the programme from the Independent Living service and from one of the Care Homes. Instead of using the Campaign to End Loneliness scale participants were first asked the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing question – How often do you feel lonely? (Hardly ever or never/some of the time/often) This is a direct measure of loneliness which measures prevalence of loneliness, and it was followed by a question as to how this changed since Lockdown? Three further questions were then asked

1. How has Lockdown changed the way you think about loneliness?
2. Do you think about loneliness, and does it worry you about becoming lonely?
3. How has the Lockdown had an impact on your social life?

These changes took place partly for the reasons discussed above with the original scale not identifying loneliness in the sample group, despite the anecdotal feedback from the practitioners and the high risk of loneliness associated with their demographic characteristics and living arrangements. Following the findings from the first round of data collection it had already been decided to review the data collection methods to try and better capture the experiences of participants. With the pandemic and lockdown, it was felt particularly important to try and capture the impact of the resultant isolation and the participants experiences and understanding of loneliness at this time.

In addition, the questions relating to participants' experience of the sessions were also changed to try and link more specifically to the Theory of Change anticipated outcomes, and because of the changes to the programme delivery. For example: 'Looking at paintings and talking about them with other people makes me feel more

connected to others', and 'I feel my opinions are valued by the group'. A Likert scale was used to record the responses (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). The interviews were undertaken by members of the museum team, who took notes on the questionnaire if participants expanded on their answers to any of the questions. A copy of the revised questionnaire used in June-July 2020 is included in the appendix. In addition, some of the participants were also invited to take part in a 'conversation with a purpose' where the questions were asked about motivation for taking part in the session and about the changes to the programme because of the pandemic.

At the third and final data collection point (January 2021) the questions were further refined to reflect the situation at the time and to minimise burden on the participants. A copy of this questionnaire is included in the appendix.

Preliminary data analysis of the interview data was conducted by the museum team, and this was followed by a thematic analysis using NVivo (a qualitative data analysis software package) by the external evaluator.



## Building Connections: End of programme findings

In the following section the findings from the interviews are presented supplemented with data from the facilitators' diaries exploring how the programme met the assumptions and anticipated outcomes of the Theory of Change. This is followed by an exploration of participants experiences and understandings of loneliness in relation to the impact of lockdown presenting data from the interviews.

### Assumptions and Outcomes: Evidence for the Theory of Change

The questions from the UCL Museum Generic Wellbeing Scale were adapted for the interviews, and in addition questions were asked during interviews to directly explore the extent to which the programme met the *Assumptions* made as part of the Theory of Change and whether the anticipated *Intermediate Outcomes* were experienced by the participants. The findings are therefore discussed under the following headings: Interaction and Connection, Learning and Stimulation, Increased Self-esteem, Engagement, Embodied Experience, and Emotional Responses. This is followed by an outline regarding people's motivations for taking part in the sessions and their response to the changes in the programme due the pandemic.

#### Interaction and Connection

The programme activity '*Time with the Museum*' was designed to facilitate interaction and connection through arts and culture, inspiring conversations, and the sharing of experiences and emotional responses in a social context. It was planned that during the sessions the participants would be encouraged to share their views and would interact and connect with others in the groups forming new relationships and deepening existing ones. Outcomes of this would include the older people feeling connected to others in the group and as though they are part of a community, forming new relationships and a sense of belonging; participants would also feel as though they are listened to and that their views are relevant and valued.

Twenty-nine of those interviewed responded to the question 'Looking at the paintings and talking about them with other people makes me feel more connected to others' and of these 27 agreed or strongly agreed that the activity made them feel more strongly connected to the group. There were two people however who disagreed with this statement one of whom felt they saw things differently from the rest of the group because of a visual impairment. In terms of whether people felt their opinions were valued by the groups, 28 again agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case with one response missing from the data.

Involvement in the sessions was valued because participants felt to be part of a community and included as one of a group. This was particularly the case for one of the participants in the groups who the facilitator noted in their diary had commented how they lived alone and didn't talk to people so that the conversations were very important to them. Participants talked about being part of a group or in a club.

*It's a bit of a club, you sit around and enjoy the painting and being part of the community what the artist intended; we talk to each other it's really lovely to get together, it's a pleasure - you can see so much in the paintings.*

*Fun you always learn something new, and you feel you're one of the group and that's important.*

*Relaxed, inspired and it makes me feel included to be part of a group. The paintings start to open up to me when I hear other people's ideas and thoughts.*

Being in a group also gave the opportunity for ideas to be shared and for people to bounce ideas off each other. The facilitators' reflections on the sessions supported this with it noted in the diaries that everyone in the group was talking, listening, and sharing ideas, with people given space to express their thoughts and observations. The facilitators had also noted how well people in the groups listened to each other and were sensitive and responsive to the opinions expressed by others. From the participants' perspectives hearing others' thoughts and opinions about the paintings was felt to help to get to know each other better and to gain a better understanding of people in the group. It was also the case that the more they met they also became closer and 'more integrated' with the others in the group.

*People enjoyed it and the more we met we became more integrated together and more interested.*

*It's just nice to hear how different people feel about the paintings and their opinions and we get to know each other better.*

Discussing beautiful things with people in the group was seen as a way of overcoming the separation imposed by lockdown.

*Human contact is vital to us, conversations with friends are very special, especially discussing beautiful things. Even though we are far apart But being apart doesn't matter when we are looking at beautiful things...*

These interviews were undertaken towards the end of the first lockdown of 2020, when the sessions had moved from in-person participation in groups, to participation via a conference telephone service. Despite being physically separated the telephone sessions enabled people to feel connected to the others through the conversations mediated by the artworks, sharing their opinions on what they could see, and listening to the views of other participants. This was further confirmed at the follow up interviews in January 2021 which took place during the second lockdown when all the participants interviewed stated that taking part in the programme had helped them to stay connected.

From the data therefore the assumption regarding interaction and connection was met and an outcome of participating in the sessions was that respondents felt part of a community and connected to others. Connecting to others is one of the five steps of the Five Ways to Well-being (NEF 2008) and is an important factor in reducing social

loneliness because it builds a sense of belonging. Feeling to be part of a group is also an element of Relationships, one of the five building blocks of Seligman's theoretical model of wellbeing, the PERMA model (Seligman and Diener 2004).

## Learning and Stimulation

During the sessions, museum staff as expert facilitators guide the participants' learning, and engage people with different art forms to develop greater understanding of art and culture. Through this process participants can learn about the art and artefacts in the museum and are stimulated and challenged through the discussions. The anticipated outcome of this is that participants will feel informed about art and culture, but also learn more about others in the group because of the conversations generated by discussion of the art works. All the questionnaire participants either agreed or strongly agreed that since joining the museum programme they now understand more about arts and culture than they did previously.

Nearly half of the participants described looking at the art works and learning about them as a new experience including some who said that they had never been to the museum before.

*I have never been to the museum before I joined the programme and I really love going there.*

In addition to being something new it was also seen as an opportunity to do something different and to broaden the mind.

*Once you get there and once you are involved again, your brain is being worked because you're doing something entirely totally different or seeing something entirely different which seems different from normal life*

*It broadens your mind doesn't it? You talk about things that had I not gone on this programme I would have probably said oh, you know the Fitzwilliam- its nice paintings and that - and that would have been it you know...*

Others reflected on how they had learnt to look at pictures more closely

*I've never really looked at pictures... but this has introduced me into looking at pictures at looking what they depict if that makes a sense. I don't look at the picture, I look into the picture... and try and pick up details. In the past I went to have a look at a pretty picture and walked past... but I have since doing this developed a way of looking at a picture, trying to interpret what's going on in the picture.*

The sessions were felt to be informative and stimulating, with it being described as 'opening up another world'. Not only did participants learn from each other through their discussions, the museum staff were perceived to be full of enthusiasm and good at explaining about the artists' backgrounds and the art works.

*Extremely interesting, the presenters are full of enthusiasm, and they enthuse you. It's made me look at the pictures much more in depth and thought more about them.*

*We have such good explanations and looking at the painting with others helps to reaffirm what I can see.*

*It's an eye opener all the time, no matter how much you know, there is always more to know or discover*

In the follow up interviews in January 2021 all but one of the participants felt that the programme was stimulating, and some commented on how it gave them something different to think about. One of the respondents felt that they had learnt more about art than they had ever known, and another remarked:

*Made me think about art more and look at art differently. It's been really nice. I like to hear all the different descriptions about the art, we all see it differently.*

Learning about the artworks through conversations guided by the skilled presenters was therefore appreciated as something new which could broaden the mind and also helped participants to look and think more closely at the pieces of work. Being absorbed and learning is linked to both Engagement and a sense of Accomplishment, elements of the PERMA model (Seligman and Diener 2004). Learning new skills can improve wellbeing through providing a sense of purpose, and helping to connect to others, it can also boost self-confidence and raise self-esteem (NEF 2008). Examples of how this was achieved in the sessions are discussed in the following section.

### **Increased self-esteem**

The facilitators encourage participants to share thoughts about the artworks and artefacts in a supportive group environment. Through sharing with others, the older people interact and connect with others in the group – so forming new friendships, but also getting to know others better. As people can share their views and are listened to by others present, they feel that their opinions are relevant and valued by others in the groups. In the interviews 28 participants agreed or strongly agreed that they felt that their opinions were valued by the group. People reflected on how much they felt that they had learnt and that they were encouraged to share their views, with the points they made validated by others in the group.

*It's people voicing their opinions sometimes you look at a picture and somebody says something, and you think Oh...now I didn't look at it that way. So, you can you know, it helps you to see a different way of looking at them.*

*We are encouraged to share our point of view and it is valued. You listen to our opinions, and they are all genuinely taken into account, even though we all have different views.*

*I feel everybody's opinion is valued and it makes you look at it closer because someone else sees something different to you*

Some participants described themselves as not being artistic, having not previously been interested in the arts, but through the sessions that they had gained new knowledge and were as a result more confident in expressing their opinions to the group.

*Yes I do, I've never been an artistic person but I felt they were listening to what I said and I just learned so much when I was attending the group.*

*I didn't think I was an arty person and I would have been a bit shy. It was a real eye opener to me, that we were helped along with a little bit of knowledge so I could share my thoughts and it makes you feel good.*

*Sometimes when I look at the pictures I get into the picture. I feel I'm part of it and I do thank you. I am not afraid any more I have got a tongue and I can talk,*

*but now my brain is working [...] I never thought I would be interested in art, I do feel confident now.*

The sessions had empowered people enabling them to feel more confident in expressing their views. However, it was not just learning more about the art that made people feel more confident, it was also getting to know others in the group and to feel on an equal footing with them.

*Sometimes I think I'm not intelligent enough and they can see things I can't see but now I think there is no right or wrong we're all about the same; this has been a change for me, I have got much more confident now... I think we are all the same.*

*You feel as one. You feel like you're not one person, you are one person in it all together. And you know, you've got freedom to say what you think... there's no right or wrong way of saying anything.*

Whilst self-esteem is not directly listed as an aspect of the Five-ways to Wellbeing, it is something that learning a new skill can enhance. In addition, the ability to share with others is a form of giving and as people become more confident and able to share more with others this will have an impact on their overall wellbeing. Similarly, the sense of accomplishment through learning something new, and the strengthening of relationships through having one's opinions valued by others in the group also contributes to wellbeing.

## **Embodied Experience**

When the sessions took place face to face, participants were invited to express themselves through movement in response to the music played in the sessions and the art that they were viewing. The intention was to encourage the older people to be physically active and share an embodied experience. It was noted in one of the facilitator's diaries how the duets between participants in the dance part of the face-to-face sessions promoted high levels of engagement and set up a series of sequences which when combined created one dance. Whilst three participants did not enjoy the dance and movement element of the programme the remaining respondents did, although one commented that they didn't feel comfortable in the gallery space where they could be seen by the general public. Others really enjoyed the dancing in the sessions, and despite it being different from what they were expecting it was described as fun and 'a laugh' and very enjoyable.

*I especially loved, loved the dancing...when we did the dancing together. Oh I loved doing that, that was amazing. That made me so happy to do the dancing it really did.*

*You get us to throw our arm up and throw something else round the other way... or your leg or half your body, whichever you want us to do... and then everybody sits back and thinks, ok, we're all crazy together, this is great...*

For some though there was a sense of awkwardness and self-consciousness doing the dancing in front of people they didn't know and that they didn't want to make a fool of themselves.



*With the dance sometimes I feel a bit of an idiot waving my arms...if I close my eyes it is really relaxing*

*It was just a bit awkward doing it in front of people you don't really know... and can you still do it sort of thing!*

*I found it difficult at first because I felt self-conscious but after a while I got used to it. I am not so keen on it when we are doing it in the gallery and everybody's looking at you, but its ok in the Friend's Room*

However, it was also recognised that moving and dancing was relaxing and good for both the mind and body, helping them to forget their worries.

*Yes, because you're doing it in a group and its good for your mind and body*

*The movement relaxes you and gets you ready for looking at the paintings, you relax and forget your worries. I do enjoy it and I enjoyed dancing in the museum.*

Physical activity is good for physical health and fitness but can also have an impact on mental well-being. Attending the sessions in themselves is a form of being active according to the definitions within the Five-ways to Wellbeing. The dance element of the sessions is a physical form of activity which encourages movement to the music and the expression of emotion in response to the music being played and the images themselves. The telephone sessions could not include the same degree of physical activity, but participants were encouraged to stretch as part of the relaxation and warm up at the beginning of the sessions. In the interviews in January 2021, the majority of those interviewed agreed that they felt better physically after the telephone sessions. Significantly, most comments relating to the movement element of the sessions referred to the relaxation and how they felt more relaxed following the session.

## Engagement

Through exploring the objects and artworks together people take notice of what they feel and see. All the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Museum programme had helped them to see more in the paintings than they did before they joined the group. Participants described how they spent more time looking at each picture and they looked more deeply into each image and notice more things in them than they would have done previously.

*You look at them and you see a picture... but if you really look at it you then see lots of other things as well... things you didn't think you'd see...*

*Before you'd look at a painting, but you didn't really see it properly. Now I look more slowly.*

*Before I used to look at a painting just briefly but now, I'm looking right into it, to find out what's going on.*

It was certainly the case as the sessions progressed that the facilitators saw evidence of participants looking more carefully at the pictures. For example, throughout the programme the language used by participants changed when describing what they saw, and how they compared different pictures with ones that they had seen previously in sessions. Through learning to look at the pictures more deeply participants became more involved in and more engaged with the art.

*The more I look at them the more the colours are popping out...It's really nice. Because some of them I thought were boring, but actually I don't know if there's any one I find boring now... I haven't been staring, just casually looking and then suddenly seeing a bit more on that one and a bit more on another...*

*Involved, it makes you notice things you haven't seen, it makes you focus. We see more in the paintings we notice more; we look deeper now than we did at the beginning*

By participating in the sessions, the older people would focus on the artworks and the group discussions and would be absorbed and experience 'flow'. All participants agreed/strongly agreed that they felt absorbed in the session, with some describing how they didn't think about anything else and were able to forget their concerns and even in one case forget their pain.

*Yes, because you concentrate on the pictures and forget everything else.*

*It takes away your concerns and sometimes I forget my pain because I am so absorbed*

*Last time I was able to see you.... was when I had just gone through a dodgy patch. We sat in there and those two minutes of talking to everybody and looking at a painting... that was when my mind was clear. I got nothing else to think about.*

Taking notice is one of the five ways to wellbeing and being invited to look slowly at the artworks enabled them to see details that they may not have previously paid attention to. Participants were engaged and absorbed concentrating on the images, engrossed in the experience so they were able to forget about worries and pain this is described within positive psychology as 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 1998) and contributes to happiness and positive affect both linked to subjective well-being.

## **Emotional Responses**

One of the assumptions made in the Theory of Change was that the participants would enjoy taking part and that they would feel happy and uplifted. From the 29 people who were interviewed in July 2020, 23 strongly agreed and four agreed that they felt uplifted through taking part in the sessions, with two responses missing. In the diaries the facilitators noted a range of responses to different artworks and the music used in the sessions, some images were challenging, and some of the music was described as sad, but participants also said they were happy. In the interviews the sessions were said to be very enjoyable and relaxing, and respondents described how they had a laugh with others in the group

*I love it I love coming to the session*

*I've enjoyed all of it, we've had company and a good laugh too*

The enjoyment stemmed from being in the museum and seeing all the artefacts but also from joining in with others

*The most enjoyable thing was when we went to the museum to see all the artefacts and painting, it was quite fantastic actually*

*It makes me feel really happy and that we are all joining in together*

The sessions also provided something to look forward to and some reported that they came away from the sessions feeling light-hearted and this lasted beyond the session itself.

*I look forward to it, to the phone call and the pictures, once you come off the phone, you're still thinking about it and it lifts my mood it stays with me, it brightens our day up.*

*I found it very enjoyable something to really look forward to. Carrying on doing stuff helps your minds, helps your spirit.*

These findings are important particularly as these interviews took place at the end of the first lockdown. In the follow up interviews in January 2021 when the second lockdown was in place all the participants stated that taking part in the sessions helped them to stay positive, and all of them said that they looked forward to the sessions, with comments like *'Its cheered me right up', 'I've had enough of the TV' 'I enjoy the sessions I look forward to them' 'I've been fed up it's been nearly a year now, but it has been lovely to share in the group'.*

Positive emotions such as enjoyment, happiness and inspiration are not explicitly mentioned in the five ways to well-being but are considered to contribute to a sense of wellbeing within Seligman's theoretical model of well-being. Having something to look forward to also provides a sense of purpose and can give meaning and this is also an element of the PERMA model.

Overall, the findings therefore are synonymous with all five aspects of the New Economics Foundation (2008) Five Ways to Wellbeing. In addition, there is some congruence with Seligman's theoretical model of wellbeing. Seligman's model (PERMA) seeks to explain human flourishing and wellbeing, and consists of five building blocks, Positive emotions (enjoyment, happiness, and inspiration), Engagement (being absorbed and learning), Relationships (feeling part of a group, and being valued), Meaning (a sense of purpose) and Accomplishment (sense of Accomplishment through learning something new). In addition, it is also the case that these findings support the assumptions and outcomes which contribute to the Theory of Change.

In the following section the older people's motivations for joining the sessions are considered, followed by a discussion of how participants experienced the changes to the programme brought about the pandemic.

## Motivations for joining the group

Participants were asked what it is about the sessions that motivates them to be part of the programme, and three main themes were identified from the responses to this question: Being with others; Educational and stimulating experience; and Enjoyment. However, it is also worthwhile to note that there was usually one or more of these motivations given by each of the participants.

*I really enjoy thinking about, wondering about the paintings; I never did this before. We will be talking about the art and I'll talk to other people about it afterwards. I really look forward to it and each week I wonder which painting we are going to look at. We have a nice time; when this is over, I'm going to go there (where the paintings were created e.g., Southwold) I'm going to go with a painting set and I'm going to look at it for myself, I'm going to take a photograph and send it to you!*

In this example the participant enjoys thinking about the painting, and talking to others about the paintings, but is also inspired to try painting for themselves. Another participant talks about being with others in a group and how looking and talking about art is new to them and the sessions have provided a new interest.

*I just love being in groups of people, being together. I have not had the opportunity to look at or talk about art before which is something I have wanted to do for a long time. It has opened-up a new interest for me which I will now always have with me.*

For other respondents being with others and sharing an experience, was a primary motivation

*Friendship and enjoying a shared experience*

*It's a very happy experience, everyone's always pleased to see each other and everyone's very welcoming and supportive.*

*Sharing with the group, when I can hear what other people have to say and what their opinion is of them.*

Participants valued the educational aspects of the sessions, both from the point of not having previously been into the museum or being unfamiliar with looking at paintings and statues. Learning to look at art in a different way, and feeling mentally stimulated but relaxed in the environment, as the way in which the sessions were provided made the space more accessible

*It definitely made you look at museums differently, and paintings if you are not used to looking at them, because it is very easy to whistle around a museum and just not look... so intensely at the picture and statues and various things... yes it's nice and it's not stuffy as it used to be... it used to be quite a stuffy thing to do but now it is much more accessible. Very much more enjoyable.*

*It's an educational programme for people who have never had art before, or never been in art before and it makes people look into the paintings. Instead of*

*saying there's a pretty picture and walking away... which I used to do regularly I had no interest in it. Now I can stop and look at it...*

*In my opinion it's very good and its good exercise for your brain. I'd like to get back to the museum as it's such a lovely social event, it gets you out and you get to talk about the paintings. Well worth it...*

One of the aims of the programme was to increase accessibility to the museum, to welcome people into the space, and provide new experiences in a comfortable environment and create a sense of belonging. From the above the Building Connections project even with the changes due to the pandemic would appear to have achieved this aim.





*They (Relax, Look, Imagine films) have opened-up conversations we've not had in years, given us something to talk about - we're on our own most of the time*

*I look forward to ... the phone call and the pictures, once you come off the phone, you're still thinking about it and it lifts my mood it stays with me, it brightens our day up*

*I thought we would all gabber on and talk over each other and that would be difficult. We did listen and we all took it in turns- it was fantastic- way better than I could have imagined*

Feedback, participants, 2020-21

## Changes to the programme due to the Pandemic

When the interview participants had joined the programme, the sessions were face-to-face in a community venue with additional visits to the museum. With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown the museum team acted quickly and changed the delivery of the sessions. The team contacted participants living in sheltered housing to determine the most acceptable form of virtual delivery and found that for most people the telephone would be the easiest way to engage with sessions in a group. Therefore, regular fortnightly group phone calls using the Phone Coop system were organised, and residents were posted copies of the artworks to be discussed in the session. Alternative methods of maintaining contact with other groups were used but the interviews were conducted with the residents from the Independent Living Service and the methods used for other groups are outlined elsewhere. To capture the views of the participants living in sheltered housing about the change to the programme the final question asked in the interviews was "The programme has changed because of the pandemic- what have you enjoyed and what has surprised you"

It was found that the participants were very grateful that the sessions had been able to continue and appreciated that the museum team had maintained the programme when other group activities had all stopped. People did say that they missed going to the museum and doing the sessions in the museum space, describing it as a fabulous place, and they also missed socialising in person with others in group and couldn't wait to get back to the museum

*Having them in the hall was lovely and coming to the museum, but during this time the best way we could have it was with the phone calls, or nothing, and I'd rather have the phone calls than nothing. But my favourite is being together and seeing each other.*

*I've enjoyed all the phone calls, it's been brill being able to talk to people and I've thoroughly enjoyed it and I can't wait to get back to the museum.*

The phone sessions were felt to be better than they expected and were valued because they enabled people to keep in contact with others who they wouldn't otherwise see, and they could be connected to others and not feel so cut off by lockdown. Some even described how during the phone calls they could imagine everyone sitting around together in the room, and the faces of other people in the group.

*Even on the telephone we can all speak and it's really nice to be linked up and keep in touch really nice to be able to talk about the paintings*

*I was just so delighted to be able to continue with this, as all my other groups and activities just stopped. Feels like we weren't cut off when lockdown happened. It is so lovely to discuss with people whose faces I can imagine.*

The phone sessions involved fewer participants than would normally attend the face-to-face sessions. However, this was valued by participants as it was felt that there was more opportunity for everyone to contribute to the discussions and that people were more willing to speak in a smaller group, with people taking turns and allowing others to speak.

*I've found it very good on the phone, people say more than they might in a bigger group. It's been a real joy with our group*

*I think it's concentrated it more on the phone. In a large group if you are going to get your two pence worth in it's not so concentrated... on the phone you have to speak a bit more clearly so that everyone else can hear... so people got their points over a bit better... I thought that was quite nice... I never did anything like that before on the phone.*

*I thought we would all gabber on and talk over each other and that would be difficult. We did listen and we all took it in turns- it was fantastic- way better than I could have imagined.*

Prior to the sessions the participants were sent the pictures in advance so they could look at them beforehand and have them readily available when the discussions were taking place, it also reminded them what they had seen in the museum and receiving the pictures was much appreciated by the participants.

*Because you sent us the pictures in advance, that was lovely, we've been able to look at them a lot more and we have had time to digest, sit and study the paintings before the sessions and it's been lovely to look at them since. We're not going into it blind you have studied the picture and have an idea of what you might say it has been very enlightening.*

*They've reminded you of what you've seen in the museum it's lovely to have your mind refreshed, so we don't sink into our own little worlds.*

In the follow up interviews in January 2021, when asked whether there was anything else they would like to say about their experience of the programme, several participants commented on how they liked the postcards that they received in the post. One of the participants had also framed two of the pictures and had them on their bedroom wall and described how they inspired memories and imagination. This indicates how in addition to the immediate impacts on individuals taking part that the programme also has a longer-term impact, with people keeping the images, and reflecting on how they had learnt more about art and that this had expanded their horizons.

The aim of the overall programme was to foster connections and to help reduce loneliness and social isolation in older people. The section above has provided examples of how the sessions may impact on the individual subjective wellbeing of participants and enhance social connections between members of the groups. In the following section the concept of loneliness is explored from the perspectives of those living in sheltered housing taking part in programme.

## **Understanding Loneliness**

From the original sample of 36 participants, 29 individual interviews were undertaken (June-July 2020). In response to the ESLA question on loneliness 13 reported hardly ever feeling lonely, 11 felt lonely some of the time, and five participants often feel lonely.

When asked how lockdown had changed the way they think about loneliness there were a spectrum of responses with some stating that they hadn't really thought about it or that it didn't bother them, and they were used to being on their own. Others

described how they kept in contact with others and talked about phoning friends or seeing neighbours in the street or garden.

*I don't think it has? I have adapted my life around lockdown. I am physically fit so have been out every day and seen people. I feel as though I have been in control.*

*We've got this lovely garden and about 6 of us get outside in the garden for a chat. But I am aware of other people being locked away and trapped.*

This wasn't the only participant to reflect on others who can't get out

*You think oh yes, I'm in lockdown but I talk to my neighbour, so we share our thoughts about it. I feel for people who can't get out at all, so I knock on their door to say hello through the door, and I ask them if they need anything.*

Similarly, others made a point of visiting people on their own, and there was recognition that loneliness is a problem.

*Loneliness is like a depression it gets hold of you ... the best you can do is to try and fight it as best you can, that's why your friends and neighbours are important, and we should always try to put a smile on people's faces*

In response to the question, do you think about loneliness? 20 respondents said they thought about it and of those who expanded on their answer to this question four referred to the community in which they lived for example one person living in sheltered housing commented.

*I'm lucky living in this complex [...] We are told to stay completely in our flats, but we have a way of working around this – do our washing at the same time, and we meet for an hour every afternoon as we always do. We have looked out for each other during this time.*

On the other hand another person living in sheltered housing remarked in response to the question as to whether loneliness worried them said. ...

*Yes, it worries me, we haven't had any ILS here for yonks, we've been virtually on our own. I think there's a chance of my depression coming back, I'm still up and down, I haven't been out of the gates at all, but we do have a lovely garden...*

All the participants were asked whether they worry about loneliness, and out of the 29 interviewed, 15 replied that they did worry about it. Whilst a number of respondents described how they don't mind being on their own, others talked about the need to keep busy and to have things to look forward to.

*I think about it, but you've got to make the most of it, look ahead find things to do.*

*....one aspect of loneliness is you think every day is going to be the same but if you think you have got something to look forward to it really helps with loneliness.*

Those who referred to family, used the phone and video calls (zoom, Whatsapp and Skype) to keep in regular contact. Similarly, the phone was used to keep in regular daily contact with friends.

*I do think about it, and it does worry me. However fortunately I am a very positive person and have good friends who I make sure I am in daily contact with.*

One woman who lived with her husband worried about being on her own and how she would cope

*Yes, in a way it does, I like company and I'm lucky to have my husband, I have friends who are on their own and I think about how I would cope [...] It makes me frightened.*

Whilst this person was thinking of others and what may happen, someone else had been shielding and people who had visited them before hadn't been able to during lockdown and as a result they had felt very lonely at times.

This first set of interviews were conducted towards the end of the first lockdown (June/July 2020) and participants were asked how their social life had changed during the lockdown period. It was interesting to note how many of those interviewed had had very active social lives before lockdown, attending regular clubs and groups activities, including the *Time with the Museum*, church events, bingo, lunch clubs, and coffee mornings. The majority of those interviewed referred to how their social life had contracted because the lunch clubs, and various activities they would normally attend had had to stop because of lockdown. Words such as 'drastically', 'completely', 'extremely' and 'totally' were used to describe the changes to their lives. Common responses to this question included:

*Yes, my social life has changed, before lockdown I spent lots of time meeting friends and going for coffees. I also attended lots of groups including this one and did volunteering.*

*Extremely 100% changed, most days I've got somewhere to go, I used to play bingo and go to the social club at Arbury for lots of groups, most days I had something to do, most days things going on. The first couple of weeks I think we were all in shock about it, it's really alien, it's been a little bit nerve wracking, but I don't feel isolated now I can have my family bubble.*

*I miss everything, the Fitzwilliam, the lunch club and going down the club. Where we live there is lots going on and now there's nothing ... my diary is full of blank pages.*

Despite the challenges of the lockdown period the respondents described strategies that they adopted to prevent themselves becoming lonely. For example, one person joined a club for pen friends and started writing to people, another spent time drawing and painting, whilst another was building a model railway. This links with the idea of keeping busy mentioned above and having something to do.

*I am a doer; I've got to be doing something. I've had jigsaws and paintings on the go. I have had your museum art session, and Kettles Yard has been getting us to do creative things weekly*

For others, it meant keeping in contact with friends over the phone, and a few described how they looked out for others

*I was brought up to look after people who might be alone and make sure they were okay. In our close we have a good network, we check in with each other to make sure we are all okay.*



*We try and keep in touch with other people in the complex here, because there are some people... that are very lonely, and just to have a chat over the phone, about what we have been doing.*



*you're never too old to learn. I've found paintings to be such a wonderful, wonderful ... I can't think of the right word - it's a distraction - a lovely distraction from your problems*

*I really enjoy thinking about, wondering about the paintings; I never did this before. We will be talking about the art, and I'll talk to other people about it afterwards. I really look forward to it*

Feedback, participants, 2020-21

## Summary

From these interviews whilst 13 of those interviewed reported hardly ever feeling lonely, 16 participants experienced loneliness some of the time or often. It is interesting to note that most of the respondents reported that lockdown hadn't affected how lonely they felt. This indicates that although the Campaign to End Loneliness scale used in the first round of data collection identified low levels of social loneliness with people being content and satisfied with existing friendships and relationships, participants could still have felt lonely at times. However, respondents appeared aware of the risks of loneliness and made the effort to keep in contact with family and friends, and to keep themselves busy. Although the opportunity to attend organised events and activities face to face had stopped, participants kept engaging and interacting with Time with the Museum and other available on-line activities.

## Interviews January 2021

In January 2021 the country was once again in lockdown when follow up interviews were conducted with participants. This time 24 people were interviewed. The interview questions were adapted to capture the changing context and the order of the first two questions were changed in response to feedback from the interviewers

1. Do you think about loneliness? Does it worry you?
2. Do you feel lonely? If so, how often?  
(Hardly ever or never /some of the time / often)
3. How has the Pandemic changed the way you think about loneliness?
4. How have your social interactions changed during the Pandemic?

There was a noticeable change in tone in the responses to the first question regarding whether people thought about loneliness. The staff conducting the interviews reported that the participants were happier to respond to the three open questions and the one closed question. The change to the order of the questions was also felt to allow people to consider and reflect more fully on the situation they were in. Although there were fewer than half (11 people) of those interviewed who said they thought about loneliness, two answered 'yes and no' and seven said they didn't think about it, but the answers were more extensive and reflective on the current situation than previously. Those who said they didn't think about it referred to family (including living with a spouse), friends and neighbours, or liking their own company. However, of those who did think about it and were worried by it there were three people in particular who appeared to be very isolated

*They [government and local authority] have no concept of what it feels like to be on your own in a little flat. Basically, apart from your neighbours and the time that you can spend in the lounge with others, it really horrible. I mean now, I am not seeing anybody at any time.*

*I couldn't go out, it really hit me, spending all day in the flat. [...] You can go for days without seeing anyone and you can then feel flat and depressed- I am fed up with all this.*

Again, as in the previous interviews there was an awareness that loneliness can be a major problem for older people, and concerns were expressed about others. A couple

of participants referred to worrying 'about' loneliness but that it didn't worry them, which presumably means they were conscious of it as a problem but that it doesn't affect them personally at that time. There was reference again in this round of interviews to keeping busy, being occupied, and having a routine.

*I do get lonely- try to keep busy with art, knitting. With lockdown it's not safe to go out for a walk with a neighbour.*

*I do think about it, but it doesn't worry me. I have my routines which keep me occupied and are a way of coping with that.*

Two of the participants in the sheltered housing group were very engaged with cultural activities and mentioned several organisations providing virtual activities including the museum, Kettle's Yard and Cambridge United. These activities were valued and were seen as something to look forward to.

*As long as you have something to look forward to. I look on my calendar, and I think, mmm, last week it was Kettle's Yard, this week it's you, next week it's Kettle's Yard, so it's not so bad. I do think about all the things we are missing, and will we ever get back to it?*

Phone calls also remained an important way to stay connected to family and friends, and although a couple of people spoke about seeing families as part of a bubble, others said they missed seeing their families and were still reliant on the phone and for some this also meant video calls to keep in touch.

Participants were asked the ESLA question 'How often do you feel lonely?' and 14 said they feel lonely some of the time, eight were lonely hardly ever, or never, and two felt lonely often. This is representing a greater proportion of the sample feeling lonely some of the time or often, indicating that loneliness was more prevalent at this time. The ESLA question was then followed by the question 'How has the pandemic changed the way you think about loneliness?' Two respondents felt that that it was highlighted, and that lockdown emphasised it because they couldn't go and visit friends, and another described how speaking to the family on the phone made them realise the loneliness.

*When the family ring it is lovely, but you also start to realise the loneliness. I have a new great grandson and I haven't met him yet.*

Seven of those interviewed said they didn't think about it for themselves but were more aware of the loneliness of others.

*I think about it for other people – I do think about it for other people, a friend is 87 and she has no one. So, I call her to check on her. Loneliness, I don't worry about it for me, but I do worry about it for other people.*

*It makes me think more about the people I know who are affected and alone.*

*It's depressing. I think for many people it would cause serious depression, and be mentally for them, very very difficult.*

One participant remarked on the loss of freedom due to the imposed lockdown, and for another, the pandemic and the resultant lockdown have taken away choice. Having chosen to live alone and previously been able to go out and about they hadn't thought about loneliness before except when friends had died, but now they do think about it.

*I've mostly chosen to live alone, but now I am forced to be alone, and I don't like it.*

This sense of being trapped also emerged in other respondents' interviews with comments about *'not seeing anyone, not being able to go out' and 'I feel like a caged animal'*

*Because of lockdown, not having much freedom. I don't like the mask so that stops me going out at all.*

In response to the question how has your social interaction changed during this pandemic? People talked about how everything had stopped, meaning their different clubs and activities and they were no longer able to face to face meetings.

*Not socialising the way I did before. I was always out. I was hardly ever at home, I had clubs to go to, I'm a treasurer of one, meals 'ladies who lunch' - that all stops*

*Totally before I would be meeting up with people 3 or 4 times a week and I miss that, but we keep in touch with lots of phone calls and that's very helpful.*

Keeping in touch by phone, was mentioned by over a third of those interviewed as a way of maintaining social interactions.

*Switched from seeing people and going to clubs and meeting up to catching up with family and friends on the phone and WhatsApp*

*All the organised social groups have stopped, but I try to keep in touch with people, have a chat on the phone. I am lucky to have a ground floor flat, so I can have a wave and a chat through the window.*

Conversations through the window, and also on the stairs were also mentioned by other participants, as was meeting others in the garden the previous summer when the weather was better.

*A lot I can't go out to any of our social groups or clubs, but I have kept in touch on the phone. We had a bit more social interaction earlier on in the summer when we could get out in our gardens, but we can't do that now in the winter.*

In the first interviews it was noted that participants had developed strategies as a way of coping with the lockdown and so this was explored in more detail in this second round of interviews. Keeping busy and having a routine was again perceived to be important.

*Having a routine is very important. I go for a daily walk, sometimes I meet a friend for the walk and we talk about books and exchange books. I like reading, doing crosswords, I used the small local shop where I know the people. Keeping busy.*

*Keep positive and busy and I try to get out for a walk, I have a local and daily national paper and I have a go at the crosswords. I like to read, knit and crochet and I leave the TV to the evening.*

The daily walk featured in a number of responses and reading, puzzle books, and crosswords were common pastimes mentioned as were different craft activities such as knitting. Keeping the mind occupied and staying active also featured

*We try to stay active; we do jigsaw puzzles. We look up people's histories – like the artists we talk about [in the workshops]. We try to keep our minds going.*

*I read and I have my iPad. I do bits and pieces to keep my mind busy for distraction*



## Summary

In the first period of data collection the Campaign to End Loneliness scale was used to try and assess whether those taking part in the sessions were lonely, and whether the museum activity made a difference to levels of loneliness. In the second round of data collection at the end of the first lockdown whilst over half of those interviewed did report feeling lonely some of the time or often, generally the tenor of the interviews was more positive with people talking about being in control, keeping active, and keeping in contact with family and friends. The timing of these interviews coincided with the end of the first major lockdown period, and this may have an impact on the responses. The first lockdown was in spring/ summertime and the weather was particularly good at that time so people could go outside and into the gardens. In contrast the final round of interviews were in January 2021 with short days and very wet weather. Whilst participants still talked about keeping busy, keeping in contact with friends and neighbours, it was notable how much concern was expressed for others who may be lonely due to the lockdown. Some also talked about being trapped, and such enforced separation from other people may result in existential loneliness, particularly in times of such uncertainty because of the pandemic.

## Strengths and Limitations of the Evaluation

The Theory of Change was co-created by the museum staff, and an external partner involved in the programme with support from the external evaluator. It was developed following an initial pilot stage of the programme so the staff had good knowledge and understanding of the programme delivery, how the sessions would run and the possible impacts on participants. Demographic data was collected from participants which enabled the development of a risk index for loneliness, and this demonstrated that the programme participants met the Building Connections brief, with the majority being at high risk of loneliness and social isolation. The mixed methods approach to data collection ensured that it was possible to explore the how and the why of the impact of the sessions rather than looking to just quantify the potential impacts of taking part.

The museum team decided initially to use of the Campaign to End Loneliness scale to assess levels of loneliness in the participant group. This was chosen in preference to some of the other measures also recommended by the NPC Guidance (2019) because it was felt that the wording used in this scale was more positive. However, this is a relatively new scale which has not been used much in practice and only measures social loneliness. In the second phase of data collection the ESLA was used. This is a direct measure of loneliness and has been validated against other indirect measures of loneliness and is recognised as being a good indicator of the prevalence of loneliness.

This was a responsive evaluation which meant that as the programme delivery was adapted in response to the pandemic the data collection methods could be matched to the needs of the evaluation. The UCL 6-item wellbeing measure was not felt to be specific enough to the programme and the questions added to the questionnaire to try and capture outcomes anticipated by the Theory of Change were felt to make the questionnaire too long. Therefore, a new scale was created which asked questions to look at impact in relation to the Theory of Change, the response to these questions and accompanying comments made by the participants provide a more detailed analysis of the impact of the sessions on the participants.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to use the scales in care homes or clinical settings and therefore the perspectives of a relatively small proportion of the people who joined the sessions were captured. Similarly, because of the restrictions due to the pandemic and lockdowns the programme as it was originally designed could not be fully evaluated.

## Conclusions

Despite the pandemic the museum team were able to deliver a sustained programme of activity, reaching 225 older people across a range of settings as direct beneficiaries engaging with the programme. A broad range of resources were disseminated through different media, potentially benefitting more than 10,000 people as indirect beneficiaries of the museum's offer. The data collected has informed our understanding of living through a pandemic and lockdown, and the impact of social isolation on the loneliness in older people. The group interviewed, in more 'normal times' maintained an active social life attending clubs and activities and meeting up with friends each week. The first set of interviews indicated that the participants had developed coping mechanisms to deal with lockdown, and the potential risk of loneliness, by keeping in contact with friends and family, keeping busy and attending group activities virtually where possible. In the later interviews the responses were less positive, concerns were raised about others and the potential for loneliness. It would be interesting to explore this further, as to whether it raised awareness of their own vulnerability if they became infirm in the future.

It is evident from the findings that the assumptions and intermediate outcomes contributing to the Theory of Changes are largely met. People interacted with others and felt connected to the group, they learnt about the art works and were stimulated by what they saw, people became more confident to express their opinions of the artworks, and share with others in the group, they participated in the dance and movement when the sessions were face-to-face, and the relaxations during the group telephone calls. Finally, they experienced a range of emotional responses to the art and the music, feeling uplifted, happy and a sense of joy in taking part.



*one aspect of loneliness is you think every day is going to be the same but if you think you have got something to look forward to it really helps*

*once you get there and once, you're involved, your brain is being worked because you're doing something entirely totally different ... from normal life... that is the expanse you need*

*the more that you develop interest in other things, the more that your life is giving you a reason for actually being there*

Feedback, participants, 2020-21

## Appendix

### Building Connections

Thank you for joining us today and agreeing to help us with our evaluation. Before we start, we would like to ask you a few questions to enable us to measure how helpful our services are. You can choose to answer all or none of the questions and choosing not to answer will not affect your access to any of your services in any way. When answering the questions, you could take account of the following:

- There are no right or wrong answers
- We would like you to be completely honest
- In answering the questions, it is best to think of your life as it generally is now (we all have some good or bad days)

### These three questions are asking about your everyday life

1) I am content with my friendships and relationships				
Strongly disagree 4	Disagree 3	Neutral 2	Agree 1	Strongly agree 0

2) I have enough people I feel comfortable asking for help at any time				
Strongly disagree 4	Disagree 3	Neutral 2	Agree 1	Strongly agree 0

3) My relationships are as satisfying as I would want them to be				
Strongly disagree 4	Disagree 3	Neutral 2	Agree 1	Strongly agree 0

## Generic Wellbeing Tool

When answering the questions, you could take account of the following:

- There are no right or wrong answers, we would like you to be completely honest
- In answering these questions, we would like you to think about the session today
- 

<b>1) I felt happy</b>				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
<b>2) I felt engaged</b>				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
<b>3) I felt comfortable</b>				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
<b>4) I felt safe and secure</b>				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
<b>5) I enjoyed the company of other people</b>				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
<b>6) I talked to other people</b>				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
<b>7 I feel my opinions are valued by the group</b>				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
<b>8 I learn something new when I attend the group</b>				

None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5
9 I feel able to share my views and opinions with the group				
None of the time 1	Not very often 2	Some of the time 3	Very often 4	All of the time 5



## July 2020: Interview guide for participants: Dance and time with the Museum

We would like to ask you a few questions to enable us to measure how helpful the Museum programme is to you. You can choose to answer all or none of the questions- choosing not to answer will not affect your access to any of our services in any way. When answering the questions, you could take account of the following:

- There are no right or wrong answers
- We would like you to be completely honest
- In answering the questions, it is best to think of your life as it generally is now (we all have some good or bad days)
- You don't have to answer any question you don't want to

With your permission we would like to record your answers on audio recording device- this is so we can capture what you say as accurately as possible we would use any information you give us in a way that people could identify you. Is this, ok? – if not please please feel free to say so and I will just write down what you say.

### Loneliness Questions

The Dance and time with the Museum was funded by a special government fund aiming to reduce loneliness, and I am just asking you some questions about your experiences recently

4. How often do you feel lonely? Hardly ever or never/some of the time/often  
How has this changed since Lockdown?
5. How has Lockdown changed the way you think about loneliness?
6. Do you worry about becoming lonely?
7. How has the Lockdown had an impact on your social life?

### Questions about the sessions....

1	Looking at paintings and talking about them with other people makes me feel more connected to others	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
2	I feel my opinions are valued by the group	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
3	I feel confident in sharing my thoughts on the paintings/objects with others in the group	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
4	Since joining the Museum programme I understand more about arts and culture than I did previously	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
5	The Museum programme has helped me to see more in paintings than I did before joining the group	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)

6	I feel that my involvement in the Museum programme has helped the programme develop the into what it is today	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
7	When I join the Museum programme I am absorbed in the session and able to forget my concerns	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
8	I enjoyed the opportunity to move and express myself when I went to the Dance and time in the Museum sessions	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
9	Joining the Museum programme sessions makes me feel uplifted	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
10	The Museum programme sessions has helped me to go to know more people, better	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)
11	I would recommend the Museum programme to other people I know	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree)

### A conversation with a purpose

Complete the following statement...

- How would you describe the Museum programme sessions to a friend or neighbour?  
*(Probe –what difference does taking part make to you? How does it make you feel? How have your relationships with other members of the group developed?)*
- Talking about paintings during the sessions and listening to others makes me feel?  
*(Probe: Have you changed the way you talk or think about paintings since you joined the sessions? E.g. are there new words or phrases that you use now to describe paintings?)*
- What is it about the sessions that makes you want to take part or motivates you to be part of the programme/group? (why is it important to you?)
- The programme has changed because of the pandemic, what have you enjoyed and what's surprised you?  
*(Probe: Do you think not having the dance or music has made a difference to how you feel about the programme?)*
- We are constantly looking to improve the way we deliver our Dane and time in the Museum sessions; what changes do you think we could make?

January 2021

1	<b>Looking at paintings and talking about them with other people makes me feel more connected to others</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
2	<b>I feel my opinions are valued by the group</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
3	<b>I feel confident in sharing my thoughts on the paintings/objects with others in the group</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
4	<b>Since joining the Museum programme I understand more about arts and culture than I did previously</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
5	<b>The Museum programme has helped me to see more in paintings than I did before joining the group</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
6	<b>I feel that my involvement in the Museum programme has helped the programme develop into what it is today</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
7	<b>When I join the Museum programme I am absorbed in the session and able to forget my concerns</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
8	<b>I enjoyed the opportunity to move and express myself when I went to the Dance and time in the Museum sessions</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
9	<b>Joining the Museum programme sessions makes me feel uplifted</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
10	<b>The Museum programme sessions has helped me to go to know more people, better</b>	Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree
11	<b>I would recommend the Museum programme to other people I know</b>	(Strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree

## **Interview guide for participants: Dance and time with the Museum**

### **Loneliness Questions**

The Dance and time with the Museum was funded by a government programme especially aimed at considering the risks around loneliness. We would like to invite you to help us by think about recent experiences of this:

- 5. Do you think about loneliness? does it worry you?**
- 6. Do you feel lonely? If so, how often?**
  - **Hardly ever or never /some of the time / often**
- 7. How has the Pandemic changed the way you think about loneliness?**
- 8. How have your social interactions changed during the Pandemic?**

### **Questions about the sessions....**

### **A conversation with a purpose**

#### **Complete the following statement...**

- 6. How does taking part (in the Museum programme) make you feel? How would you describe the relationships in your group?**
- 7. Talking about paintings during the sessions and listening to others this term made me feel.....**

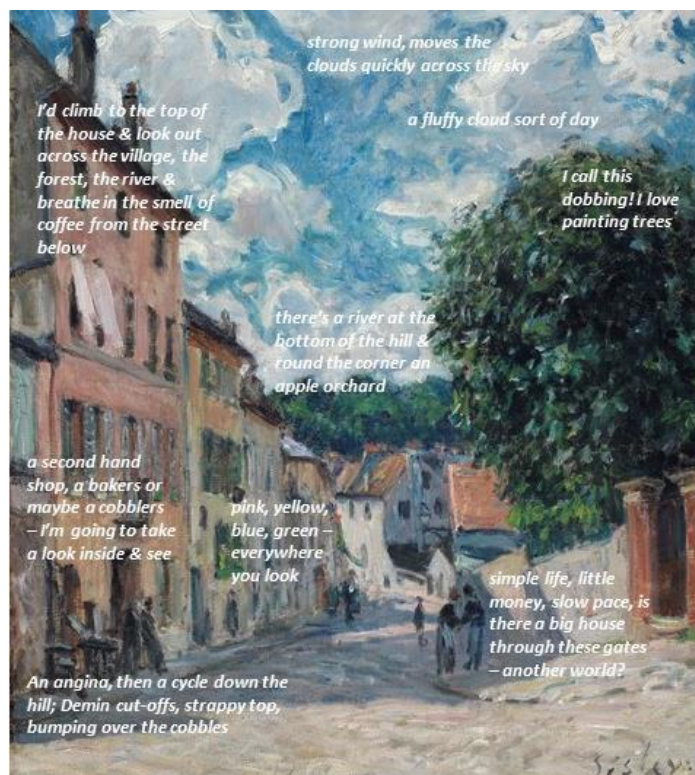
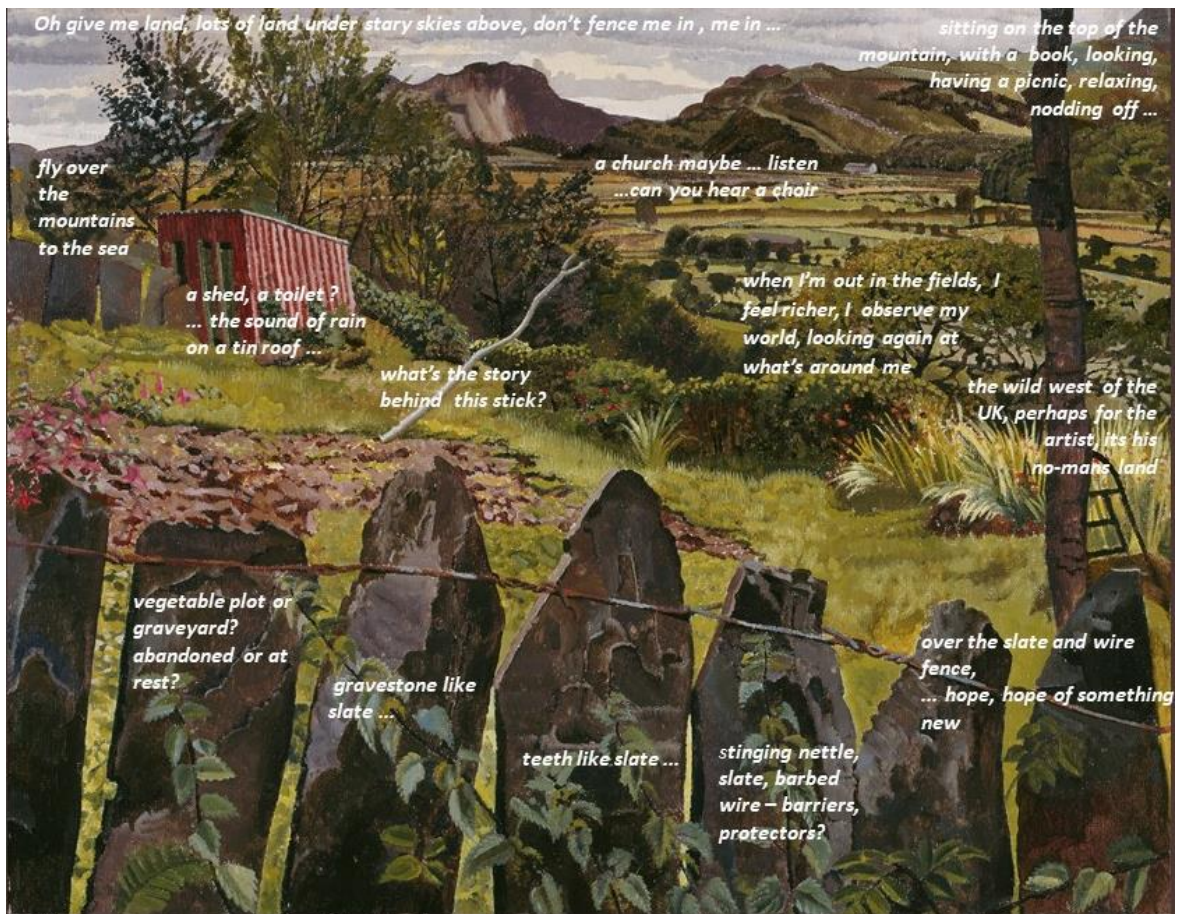
*(Probe: Have you changed the way you talk or think about paintings since you joined the sessions? E.g., are there new words or phrases that you use now to describe paintings?)*
- 8. What is it about the sessions that makes you want to take part or motivates you to be part of the programme/group? (why is it important to you?)**
- 9. The programme has changed because of the pandemic, what have you enjoyed and what's surprised you?**

*(Probe: Do you think not having the dance or music has made a difference to how you feel about the programme?)*
- 10. We are constantly looking to improve the way we deliver our Dance and time in the Museum sessions; what changes do you think we could make?**



## Artworks & imaginings ~ examples of participant responses

### Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) Landscape in North Wales 1938



### Alfred Sisley (1839-1899) A street in Port Marley 1876

