



## WELCOME TO THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2023

We start with a huge THANK YOU to you if you've donated any items to Knit-for-Nowt, you are all stars. We live in a very troubled world and the fact that you've made the decision to use your knitting/crocheting or sewing skills to help children that you'll never meet is the most amazing thing. It proves that there is in the UK a big fund of goodwill and sheer kindness and generosity which is very special. Thank you on behalf of all the therapists and children and let's continue to help them in their very important work.



"What's your name?" "I'm Crabby" "Oh no, you seem very friendly to me!"



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## LATEST NEWS

Autumn is nearly upon us and with the days shortening and the temperature cooling it's the perfect time to get your knitting needles/crochet hook/sewing machine out and make some items for us! We have lots of exciting new patterns in the planning stages, another of our ever popular autumn Lucky Dip Raffles and we continue to receive a huge amount of positive feedback from the therapists. A big thank you to those who have donated items during the summer.

### CLOSURE OF THE WAITING LIST

As you may know from the website, at the end of July we decided to close our waiting list again. The estimated wait time is currently a minimum of two years for the last requests we received before closing the list, and we think it's unreasonable to ask therapists to wait longer than that, so it will give us a chance to catch up.

### STATS:

- The numbers waiting for items went up from over 1300 at the time of the last Newsletter in June to over 1800 until the list closed in July.
- We've given out just over 500 boxes since last November, each box containing a minimum of 5 monsters and approx. 80% of those also containing puppets sets.
- We still have over 1300 therapists waiting.

### THERAPISTS' FEEDBACK

Therapists continue to be completely stunned by the skill and originality you display, and many of them send heartfelt messages of thanks, too many to fit into the Newsletter, but you'll find a selection on pages 18-24.

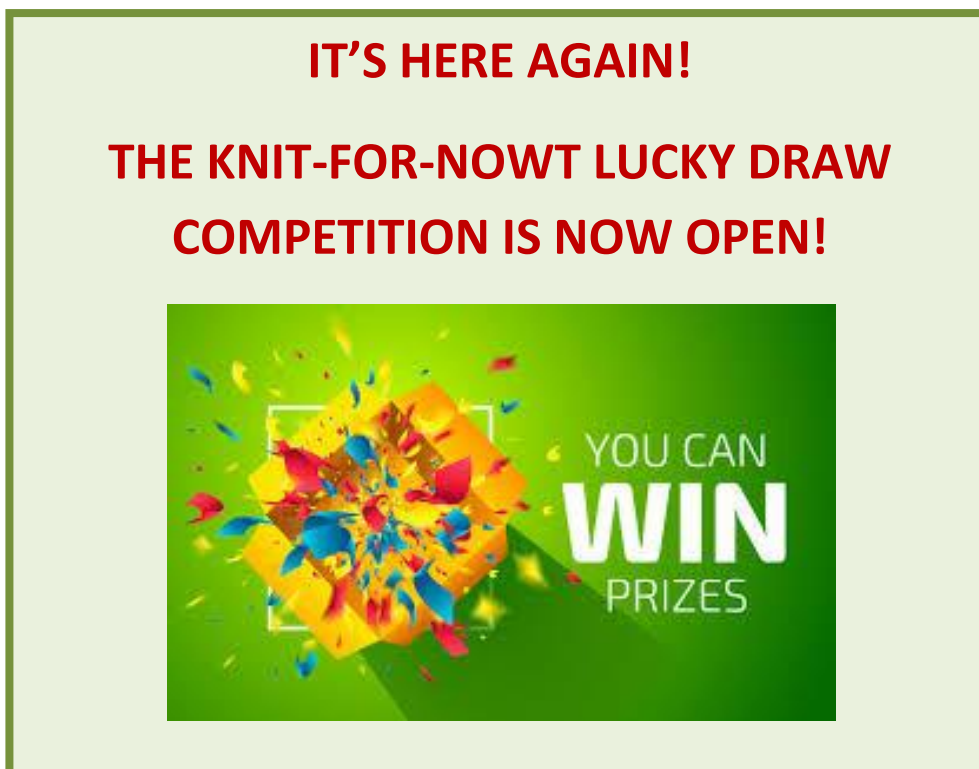
**OUR WEBSITE GALLERY HAS HAD A MAJOR REVAMP!** More recent pictures are now on the main Gallery of the website!

### NEW KNITTERS/CROCHETERS/SEWERS

Since the end of last year we have had 243 applications to become part of the team.

### A REMINDER OF OUR FACEBOOK PRIVATE GROUP

You may be new to KfN, or not be aware that we have a private Facebook Group which all registered knitters are welcome to join. It's hidden from the general public's view, so the only folk that can see it and take part are you! It's such a friendly, inclusive group, with knitters and makers posting pictures of their work and receiving encouraging support. It's also a great place to ask questions or give useful tips. Please let Val or Clare know if you'd like to join (you need to have a personal Facebook page first though).



## **We have a brand new competition for autumn 2023**

Once again our ever popular Lucky Dip competition is now up and running. This competition is **NOT JUDGED** and is free to enter. It's open only to knitters, crocheters and stitchers already registered with Knit-for-Nowt.

**Knit, crochet or sew a worry monster for Knit-for-Nowt**, and if your item is picked out in our raffle you'll win a prize. Even if not picked, your items will be guaranteed a place on a new Competition Gallery on the website for all your friends and family to admire!

We were so grateful to all of you who entered last time because it made it possible to create such a wonderful couple of Galleries on the website. These are so important because not only do the therapists see the items that you've made, which gives them an idea of what they might receive, but also any makers who are joining us for the first time are invited to look at these Galleries to give them inspiration. Viewing each other's items like that is always so beneficial to all. No-one minds if you borrow ideas from other people's work, in fact it's encouraged! The animal Gallery from last year will stay put, and the monsters Gallery will be replaced by the new 2023 one.

**PLEASE ENTER!** Full details and rules are displayed below and are also on the website. **NEW FOR 2023 – THIS YEAR THE ENTRIES MUST ONLY BE WORRY MONSTERS - SEE BELOW FOR THE TYPES ACCEPTED.** But please continue to make your wonderful animals, puppets etc. because we still need all of them.

## LUCKY DRAW RULES

- Your worry monster must be knitted, crocheted or sewn using one of the patterns on the website: <https://www.knitfornowt.org/worry-puppet-patterns> or for sewn items <https://www.knitfornowt.org/new-sewn-items-page> (No animal worry eaters, robots or hand/finger puppets). Use the password to access the patterns or contact Clare. Worry monsters can be standard, or body image pairs, pregnant, angry or for abuse or disability, or any of our sewn monsters and Mojoes
- Items must adhere to the safety rules displayed on the website
- Minimum height from top of head to bottom of body, (not counting the legs), must be 12", (maximum height 17") – except Body Image pairs, which ideally should be no more than 12" in height, and abuse monsters can be less than 12" if preferred.
- Deep pocket which must be the mouth (not tummy pocket)
- The item must be stuffed with approved stuffing, and have stuffed arms and legs
- Any colours of your choice – but keep them bright
- Body Image or any other pairs of items will be classed as one entry
- Any number of entries are permitted – enter as many as you like
- Please label clearly each item you wish to enter, giving your full name, email address and the word "Competition"
- **This competition is for worry monsters only**, no animals, robots or hand or finger puppets can be entered, but please do continue making those if that's what you prefer to make – we still need them, and how!
- **Competition closing date... Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November**. Please ensure that you get your item to Knit-for-Nowt by this date
- **Lucky Dip choice** will be made during the week beginning 27<sup>th</sup> November by a Senior therapist
- **Prizes: 10 lucky dips picked out each win a £20.00 voucher** to spend in the online shop Black Sheep wools, please see <https://www.blacksheepwools.com>
- **A photo of your item** is guaranteed to be in a new Competition Gallery on the website, whether you win or not! (The previous Monsters Competition Gallery has now been removed). No need to photograph your item, we'll do that at this end, we'll give it a raffle number, and then immediately donate it, so your work will get to its recipient in exactly the same time frame as normal
- **The first name and county of the winners**, along with larger photos of their items, will feature in the next Newsletter and on the website

For these details again please see the new "Competition 2023" Page on the website. (You'll need to enter the same password that you use for the patterns). By entering an item or items you are agreeing to these conditions





**Rebecca – therapist for children living in residential care, Derbyshire**

**“I’ve just received my items. I feel so emotional they made me cry!!**

**They are absolutely amazing, and after a really tough week, to receive one with pants for the NSPCC “Pants Programme” couldn’t have been a better monster that I need for one of my young people.**

**They will be so valuable and I shall be able to use them with so many children.**

**Thank you to you and all of the wonderful knitters.”**



**DAILY TELEGRAPH 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2023**

**“Youngsters more worried and less confident after damage to emotional development”**

Lockdowns damaged the emotional development of almost half of children, a study has shown. Parents said that they appeared more worried, more easily lost confidence and were more prone to tantrums and low moods after Covid lockdowns.

The findings have emerged in the first study of its kind into the effect of lockdowns on children’s behaviour and emotional development, after a survey of more than 6,000 parents in England by the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Institute of Education.

Dame Rachel de Souza, the Children’s Commissioner for England said: “It is vital that the right social and emotional support is made available to allow children the chance to recover and go on to achieve all that they want to. As we come out of the shadow of the pandemic, the extent of the crisis in children’s mental health is becoming more and more evident.” Anne Longfield, who served as Children’s Commissioner during the pandemic, said: “The impact of the pandemic on the wellbeing and development of many of our children is extremely alarming.”

The author of the report, research economist Andrew McKendrick, said: “Wider evidence outside of our study has shown that this kind of disruption to children can have long-lasting consequences. We are seeing these impacts at present in children, and mental health referrals are higher than before the pandemic.”



## KNITTERS' THOUGHTS – “WHY I DONATE TO KNIT-FOR-NOWT”

- “When I think of all the children who are suffering today it saddens me, it’s nice to be able to help knowing that my monsters are being used for children who are suffering and hopefully they will help with some of their troubles. The letters from the therapists are very moving and show how much all the monsters and puppets are appreciated.”
- “I have fibromyalgia so I don’t go out much. Sometimes I feel "on my own" but with my knitting I feel a lot better. Just getting the wool ready for each monster makes me smile and gets me thinking about others, which helps with my pain and low mood.”
- “My monsters are making a difference for children around the country and thanks to KFN you have enabled me to feel part of something significant and to be part of something good. The joy I get from making the bright and cheerful monsters makes my days go from pain to joy, my knitting goes everywhere I go.”
- “I just want to say that the KFN charity has helped me use my time productively and is helping me with my health and wellbeing; it has made a huge difference in my life.”
- “Because I buy wool when it's on sale and the poor postman keeps having to come to my house with it, he asked one day: "Can I ask what you are knitting with all this wool?" (It's got wool on the box.) And when I showed him the photos and told him about your charity he was amazed. We are now the talk of the sorting office!”
- “I’d just like to say a big, big thank you for the wonderful Newsletter. I always enjoy them, as they’re so full of updates and feedback from the professionals. Makes it all worthwhile. And I love the photos of the monsters, puppets etc. It’s really interesting to see how we all interpret the patterns in so many different ways. Amazing! It’s so wonderful to read the feedback from the therapists and to know that our knitting and sewing makes such a difference. I am totally in awe of these professionals and have no idea how they cope with working with such sad and awful cases.”
- “Making things for KfN gives me immense satisfaction. I have to confess that I had a little cry last week when I read the post about closing the waiting list and how long it would be to clear the current list. It was the reality of the overwhelming task that we are facing and the children on the other end of that reality - it just really gets to me sometimes. Anyway, I issued a challenge to myself to send something to you every week for 8 weeks, even if only some finger puppets. So now I have actually voiced my challenge to you I have to stick to it!! More Mojoes are in production as well as a sewn monster, and a couple of neglected Zippys requiring arms and legs.”
- Having seen a mass of WhatsApp photos recently from my daughter, of my own grandchildren and a niece’s children all having a great time together on holiday I am more than ever aware of how comparatively extremely lucky they all are - and of how so many children are not nearly so fortunate. So that’s why I’ll still be at it with yarn and needles for as long as I can - at least it makes me feel I’m doing something, however little, to help.



## PATTERNS CURRENTLY IN THE PLANNING STAGES

1 Our wonderful crochet pattern maker Rachel is currently planning crochet patterns for hand and finger puppets to match her worry eater designs – wow!



2 Val is working on some hand puppet people who have big opening mouths. These were requested by the same therapist who asked us for an angry monster, which we have supplied. Here's her message:

*"I am an NVR practitioner. We deal with conflict in families where the child has taken control of the family rules, usually by means of aggressive escalation and coercive control. We try to reverse this by working systemically with the family as a whole. We often find that the young person does not hold the capacity to understand the emotional impact on themselves or their families. Work with monsters and puppets would enable us to do that in an indirect subliminal fun way, in a situation that is more often than not crisis led."*

*\* NVR is an innovative form of systemic family intervention, which has been developed for aggressive, violent, controlling, and self-destructive behaviour in young people. It can help parents/carers to re-establish a warm, loving and containing parental presence.*

3 A "Dentist" hand puppet is being developed – it will have a large, oversized toothbrush in its hand!

4 We have exciting plans to add another monster to our current two designs for knitted worry monsters (Toothy and Zippy) with a completely new design, currently being designed. I can't tell you any more about it yet, except that it will have big feet and toes!!

## ZIPPY IS HAVING A MAKEOVER!

Good news! Val is in the process of adapting the Zippy pattern to make the zip insertion a bit easier. When the pattern's ready it'll be put on the website with the edited date so that you'll know it's the new one. Please keep your eye on the Patterns for Worry Monsters page of the website; **until it's ready please continue to use the present pattern**

## WELCOME TO ZAPPY, ZIPPY'S SMALL FRIEND!

A new pattern for the mini version of the Zippy monster in hand puppet form is currently being worked on and will be available along with the edited version of Zippy soon.

**NB. Notice that Zappy doesn't have to have the same number of stripes as Zippy, as making the stripes just 3 rows deep means no tying in of lots of ends!**



## KNITTERS' TIPS AND IDEAS



- We think Ria's idea for making the eyes on a monster stand out works really well
- And Carol has used the "stuffed eyes" technique to great effect. She's also included the black pupils in the centre of the coloured eyeballs. Black pupils always bring the monsters to life, so, whichever technique you've used for the eyes, **please try to always make the innermost dot black. And if you use a very small white dot on the black as a highlight it's very effective**

### How to stop your horns flopping! (Not a sentence you hear every day!!)

If you use mattress stitch to attach the ears/horns on your monster you'll find that stitch is really useful for stopping them flopping forward. Also it's advisable not to sew the bottom of the horn up before attaching it to your monster. If you leave it open you can sew right around the bottom of the horn, attaching it all the way round in a circle. Here's the link again to a useful video demonstrating mattress stitch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObuZwHImDCI>

We do recommend the use of mattress stitch for all seams on monsters, especially the back seam of a monster because it is so incredibly neat and you can use any colour of yarn – it just doesn't show up at all! It's arguably just as easy to achieve as any other type of stitch that you may be used to using. Baseball stitch works better when sewing up hand puppets.



## **The Learning Curve, (or 'Who's going to save me a job?')**

by pattern maker Val Holmes

What a lot we've learnt since the Knit-for-Nowt journey started. When I joined KfN in 2017 it had already made the leap from distributing blankets and baby clothes after a therapist had asked Clare, "Would one of your knitters be able to make a worry monster?"

The first worry monsters were stuffed knitted tubes with a pocket sewn on the front and a couple of buttons for eyes. Now I think we have cause to be proud of our range of patterns and the reputation we have for the quality of our items and the unique service we provide. But we've all been through a learning process to reach this point.

Some of you will know that my house is the first port of call for items from new makers, but it is also the repair shop for knitted items that just need a stitch here or an addition there to make them safe or look just right. As one of the pattern writers, this is a learning experience for me because it helps me to realise when a pattern could be clearer or techniques more efficient. But what can we all learn from the jobs that crop up most frequently in the repair shop?

1. Eyes create the personality of a monster or a puppet. Plain button eyes have no life or expression. I use button eyes on puppets, but always a four hole, black button sewn with white thread to create a highlight and bring the eye to life. Monsters look so much better with eyes either made from felt, a white base layer, blue, brown or green second layer, and a black centre with a white highlight, or, in the case of a Toothy monster with knitted or crocheted eyes, the black centre and white highlight are the finishing touch. Safety eyes are welcomed too, giving no cause for safety concerns
2. Mouths: the place I most often do a quick repair is the corner of a mouth. If you can get a finger through the corner of a mouth or the end of a zip, then a child can pull out the stuffing.
3. Sewing on the extras: arms, legs, ears and horns that are attached with a single line of stitching soon fall off. Mattress stitching around both sides of every appendage makes them secure.
4. Misplaced extras: eyes look better at the midpoint of the face, not up in the hairline. Arms should be at the sides at shoulder level, not on the front, or the back, or at ear level.
5. Stuffing: understuffing, overstuffing, or obvious not approved stuffing, (upholstery stuffing is very noticeably heavier than toy stuffing).
6. Loose hair has to be removed and replaced.
7. One thing I can't improve on is loose tension in either knitted or crocheted items. I can darn or duplicate stitch small areas where stuffing is accessible, but whole bodies take too much time. If your stitching is very loose the whole item might have to be ditched!

Can you save me a job? Pat yourself on the back. You've been part of the learning curve.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

**We'd like to ask if you'd PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING SAFETY CHECKS ON YOUR ITEMS**

You all make the most incredible items and for the vast majority of the time they are super safe, thank you for the checks you already make on them. This checklist might help to reassure you that you've checked over all aspects of your item, as it's so easy to forget one or two of them! We've all done it!

- 1 Have I used an approved stuffing? Check the recommended stuffings document at the end of this Newsletter or contact Clare
- 2 Have I left any pins in? It's best to use the larger headed pins but even these can become lost in the knitting
- 3 Are all the attachments nice and firm? Pull strongly on all attachments, including any buttons – really pull! They must be absolutely secure and unable to be pulled out by a small child. Secure again anything you're not happy with



- 4 Is the hair secure? Between first finger and thumb pull on each and every strand of yarn attached eg hair to ensure that none can be pulled out by a small child
- 5 Have I left any holes in my work? Check your item for holes in the stitching where stuffing could be seen through. In particular this can happen at the top of the head on a monster/animal, or at the sides of the mouth pocket/mouth and where you increased the stitches. If you find any holes please sew them up!
- 6 Is anything too long? Check that any choking hazards such as ropes, strands, ribbons, yarn, or lengths of arms/legs are no longer than a maximum of 9"
- 7 Ooh, what's that pong??! Has my darling pet been lying on my work?? Have a good sniff! Ensure there are no strong odours which might affect asthma/allergy - these can include cooking smells, smoke, pets or even strong disinfectant. If the odour is strong please don't use washing powder/fabric freshener but instead rinse in fresh water and/or hang out on the line. Or has my pet left dog/cat hairs on my work?

## COULD YOU PLEASE MAKE US A SET OF HAND PUPPETS?

90% of therapists need these, in the form of a happy/sad sided family set (Mum, Dad, Gran, Grandad, boy, girl) and also a “professionals” set (doctor, nurse, police, social worker, teacher, professional in a suit and judge). But lately the orders have had to be held up for many therapists because of a lack of them. We certainly don't want our regular supplies of wonderful worry monsters, animals etc to suffer as a result of everyone switching over to puppets, but if you might consider knitting us a set alongside your other, larger items it would help tremendously. They are such fun to knit too!

Could we just remind knitters that using embroidery thread for the mouths is far more effective than using yarn – if you split it from its original 6 threads into just 3 threads it's easy to work with.

Here are a few pictures to give you some ideas for outfits





## WHY NOT TRY VARYING YOUR STITCHES ON THE JUMPERS OR DRESSES OF THE FAMILY PUPPETS?

Although it's absolutely fine to make your hand puppet family members in stocking stitch, if you'd like to try out some new, different stitches from the ones you're used to using, a hand puppet family is the perfect set to have a go. For fun why not just branch out and try a few enjoyable stitch patterns for the jumpers! Here's a video link to inspire lots of ideas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sZfRhztD8>

And to learn how to do different stitches on the jumpers/dresses on your puppets:

<https://sarahmaker.com/knitting-stitches>

Here's just a very small selection of the huge number of different stitches you could try:





Val's set of professionals – we constantly need more of these sets please

Plus a judge in robes too if possible – we know that children don't see judges in their robes as the judge will more likely meet the child wearing a suit or normal clothes, but the therapists have told us that the puppet will help them explain to a small child what a judge looks like in court.



If making the stethoscope puts you off please make your doctor without one, as in the picture. Although we know that doctors nowadays don't always wear the white coat, (although some do), we feel it's a good way to make it clear that it's a doctor. Alternatively please put your doctor in scrubs, which you could make exactly like the nurse but without the collar and with no pockets. Theatre scrubs are often green or blue. A lanyard is always welcome on doctor, teacher and social worker and you can "laminare" it with ordinary selotape!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Clare and Val are hoping to attend two of the following events. We'd love to meet up with any KfN knitters/makers at them. If you'd like to attend and have a good chinwag over a cup of tea please email Clare and we'll arrange a time and place to meet. Pure indulgence and a great treat for any crafter!!

### 1 "Yarndale"

<https://yarndale.co.uk/>

It's on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September at Skipton Auction Mart, Gargrave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 1UD

**Clare and Val are planning be there on the 24<sup>th</sup> September (Sunday) from about 12 noon.** Please note though that you need to book a time slot for entry before you come so you'd need to buy your ticket in advance online. The time slots are there to ensure there isn't a great rush of people at the beginning. Some of the time slots are already fully booked. Once you are admitted to the show you can stay as long as you like until it closes.

### 2 The Harrogate Knitting and Stitching Show

<https://www.theknittingandstitchingshow.com/harrogate>

16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November at the Harrogate Convention Centre, Kings Road, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG1 5LA.

**Clare and Val are planning to be there on 19<sup>th</sup> November (Sunday) from about 12.00 noon.** Tickets can be bought in advance or on the door on the day.

Or if you're not able to get up to Yorkshire **(but sadly Clare and Val will not be at this one).**

### 3 The Knitting and Stitching Show, Alexandra Palace, London

<https://www.theknittingandstitchingshow.com>

5<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> October

### 4 Another really useful website is <https://beingknitterly.co.uk/uk-yarn-festivals>

This site lists lots and lots of yarn events across the UK – there MUST be one near you!!

# THE LATEST FEEDBACK FROM THERAPISTS

We start this time with an actual case study. We rarely receive any of these, making this one very special.

**Case Study by a MBACP (reg) Integrative Psychotherapeutic School Counsellor with young people (YP) aged 10-18 (& staff) Peripatetic Remote Counsellor with YP aged 9-25.**

I'd like to start by saying a huge thank you to the wonderful knitters and seamstresses who lovingly created our new friends. The children I introduced them to (initially to name them/for me to watch their first impressions/reactions) were delighted and had obvious favourites. I continued to use one particular monster with a 13-year-old who I'll go into more detail about in this study.

Our monsters were – Body Image x 2, Zippy, Monster with disability, but were renamed “Clanger & Baby”, “Peter Crouch” and “Muggle”.

*(NB. These are the monsters chosen to use for this study, however the therapist also received other items from us).*



The children in the photos are aged between 11-14 years and all felt comfortable to handle and cuddle the monsters.

A young person (YP) who I will refer to as “A” loved the monster who represents disability. She didn't know why it was her favourite except that it had kind eyes. “A” has “Downs” and was adamant this monster be named Muggles. She cradled it and said; ‘you're always kind to people aren't you'. I interjected that I thought that is how *she* tries to treat everyone and she was chuffed to receive this compliment.

Interestingly none of the young people were vocal about this monster having a smaller arm.

The YP who insists on the worry monster “Baby” (often referred to as ‘my baby’) being present in his sessions will be referred to as “E”. This young man finds relating and friendships challenging, and struggles to accept that his needs/feelings aren't always the priority for everyone else. Our

sessions are encouraging him to trust a new adult in life and we have used many creative interventions (including role play) to explore day-to-day scenarios he finds challenging/provoke anger that can lead to self-harming.



A lot of his anger/resentment of his world and sometimes the people around him stem from the understandable 'why me?' questioning response. Baby will be a mascot/mate throughout his counselling journey.

The delivery of my worry monsters seemed divine-timing with E's sessions beginning shortly after. Baby's presence is now familiar and comforting. Whenever we return to the past/infancy in our conversations, he will gently take Baby off the table (sometimes cradling or rocking it) and will make remarks like 'you're ok baby' or 'I've got you, my baby.' The challenging young man that he can be just isn't there in those moments. Having this transitional object is helping to soften his reactions/reflections and provides a physical distraction to maybe uncomfortable eye contact or as an aid for deeper younger inner child reflections.

Note - we have siblings in the school that will require therapeutic support in the form of pre-trial therapy. I am thankful for the puppets which were included in my pack; I just know how much use these and all the other monsters will have over the years! Thank you, a million times, over!

**Alis - Educational Consultant for children receiving alternative provision due to trauma.**

Just wanted to say how delighted we were with the puppets and what a selection! Thank you so much. They will be well used with our children who come to us to access alternative provision when they are struggling at school, usually with social and behavioural needs.



Just wanted to share a picture with you of one of our children exploring the emotions puppets. She was able to talk about a range of emotions using the puppets as a starting point. She loved the colours and was able to identify what each puppet represented. We had an interesting discussion about the multi coloured one and what it means to feel 'mixed up'. She loved the yellow and turquoise colours of the happy and calm puppets. She went on to represent the puppets in biscuit form using icing and decorations (pictures above). Many thanks once again.

**Sandra – ELSA, Kent**

I have just received my parcel of worry monsters. I cannot believe how amazing they are. The standard is absolutely fantastic.

**Samantha – Creative Arts therapist, Bristol**

Wow! My puppets have arrived. I am thrilled. I work with children in a variety of settings who have experienced complex trauma. I can't wait to use them. Thank you so much!! In particular the people puppets are ideal as part of my portable kit! THANK YOU! Almost burst into tears! X

**Jennifer - Counsellor and works with 3 charities in Scotland, Child Bereavement UK; Held In Our Hearts and Pregnancy Counselling and Care.** Her main areas are bereavement, perinatal and care, both involve working directly with children. She's setting up a new service for children and adults in an area of high deprivation.

I just wanted to let you know my box arrived. I am blown away by the volume of items, the quality and dedication of so many talented people. Thank you, thank you, thank you, I am so incredibly grateful. I can't wait to show the team and trustees and start using the items with our families xxx



**Peter - Dramatherapist working for a charity in Somerset called We Hear You. It supports people (including children and young people) who are affected by cancer and other life-threatening conditions.**

**I wanted to let you know that the worry monsters have now arrived and they are AMAZING! Thank you so much – the whole team is absolutely delighted with them!**



**This is some of the We Hear you Team holding them: from left to right: Barbara, Gwen, Gemma, Peter and Helen.**

**Karina - Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist, London**

**Karina's request:**

**I am an integrative child and adolescent psychotherapist. I work with children and young people aged 4-17 in two different charities. I specialise in using the arts (sand tray art clay puppets) etc. The worry monsters and hand puppets would be an amazing resource. Thank you**

**And after she received your items:**

**A huge thank you to you and your team of knitters. I couldn't believe my eyes when I opened the box that arrived. Your handiwork is incredible. What an incredibly talented team of knitters you have. The thought, love and work that has gone into making the puppets and characters is mind blowing. I did not imagine such things could be created and I cannot wait to distribute these to use in the school therapy rooms and family centre in which I work. They will provide such valuable resources for the children that we work with. Once again many, many thanks to you and your team of amazing knitters.**

**Claire – ELSA, Primary School, Kent**

**Just received my monsters, I actually can't get the smile off my face, they are amazing and are going to be very well loved! Thank you so, so much!**

**Tammy - Social Worker working within child psychology with children who have experienced trauma, Greater Manchester**

Thank you so much for my box of worry monsters and puppets, I was overwhelmed when I opened the box and saw what was inside. You are amazing and the resources will help so many of our children who are struggling to communicate how they are feeling. Your team of knitters are all heroes ❤️

**Deborah - Roundabout dramatherapy Surrey**

I am co CEO of Roundabout and we were the grateful recipients of a pack of puppets and worry monsters from you some years ago. These were distributed amongst our team of 26+ therapists working in schools all over London. The puppets and worry monsters have been working very hard over the last few years featuring in many stories and dramatic enactments and some of them even appeared on Zoom over lockdown. We now have many new projects going on and new therapists who would love to be equipped with some of your amazing worry monsters and puppets for their work with children and young people. We would be really grateful and delighted if you were able to supply our charity with some more whenever you have the supplies. We can assure you that they will be shared widely and reach many needy children.

**Joanne – Head teacher, Primary School, Kent**

I just wanted to say a big thank you for the worry monsters that arrived today - the whole school has been blown away by them and they have exceeded my expectations! Staff have been fighting over their favourites to have in their classrooms!

**Heather – Counsellor/Play Therapist working in an underprivileged area of Newcastle**

My clients are children and young people aged from 3 to 11 as well as school staff and parents within the community. Most of the young people I see are affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as the loss of a parent through divorce/death/imprisonment, drug and alcohol abuse, neglect/abuse and, or trauma. I spend a lot of time building relationships with these children just to prove to them that people can be trusted and provide the correct level of care. The added resources of worry monsters will be very beneficial to this work.

**Alison – Counsellor specializing in Learning Difficulties, Wilts**

My box of delights has arrived! I am absolutely bowled over by the amazing creations. Heartfelt thanks to you and your team of extremely talented knitters.

**Donna – ELSA and Learning Support Assistant, Infant School, Bucks**

I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for the Worry Monsters you have so kindly knitted for me to use at school. To say I'm overwhelmed is an understatement. They are absolutely amazing and so beautifully knitted and sewn. I generally work with 4 - 7 year olds who have experienced and experience many challenges in their young lives and these Worry Monsters are going to be a tremendous resource for me and a source of comfort and support for them. Many of the children I work with have to deal with worries and anxieties (amongst other things) on a daily basis and the Worry Monsters are going to be amazing for them.

**Pamela – Children’s Counsellor, Primary Schools across Liverpool**

Just to let you know that my box of puppets and toys has now arrived .... and I'm absolutely bowled over!!!! Thanks so much for your generosity in terms of the number and range of items sent - and they're all of such an amazing quality! I just wanted to say big thanks - the work that you and your team do is absolutely invaluable.

**Janet - “I work as a Young Persons Therapist for the OasisProject in Brighton. We are a charity working in Brighton and Hove providing support and therapeutic services for children and young people affected by substance misuse in the family. I currently work with 8 young clients individually in Brighton and our Hastings branch who would benefit enormously from your wonderful imaginative puppets.”**

And after she received our items:

I and my colleagues wanted to say thank you so much for your beautiful puppets and Worry Monsters, we are absolutely bowled over by them. They are ‘WOW’ – we feel the love in every stitch – thank you and please thank the amazing team who contributed.

Giving our young, often dysregulated clients the means to regulate and feel safe in the therapy space is vital - the puppets and worry monsters will be a JOYFUL part of that process.



The picture shows Janet with colleague Steve

**Liz – Learning Mentor, Infant School, Rotherham, Yorkshire**

I just wanted to say how overwhelmed I was when I received our box of Worry Monsters today. The quality of the monsters is outstanding, and I know they will be loved by our children as well as helping them through really difficult times in their lives. Please thank everyone involved in this wonderful charity and let them know how much they are truly appreciated.

**Julie – Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner, Nottingham**

Our amazing worry monsters and puppets arrived today. I cannot begin to express my appreciation and that of the children, young people, and families who will benefit. I look forward to introducing the hand puppet family and professionals next week. I will forward their use and impact in due course, but in the meantime THANK YOU!!!!

**Amanda - Hereford, "Peapods & Stars" supports children (and their families) who have social and emotional struggles.**

I just want to say it is SO worth being patient and to wait for the waiting list to reopen. I did and when the box of worry monsters finally arrived I was blown away by how amazing they are. So beautifully knitted. The children love them and now they all have names. Such a wonderful organisation/group. Thank you from me and the children I work with.

**Sue – ELSA and Pastoral Mental Health Worker, Berkshire**

Can I just say a huge THANKYOU! My parcel arrived today and it is incredible! I never imagined that we would be gifted so many wonderful characters!! I really can't wait until September now to show the children and see their reactions! Each and every one of you who are involved in this charity are amazing!

**Marie – Teacher of the Deaf, Preston, Lancs**

They're arrived. Absolutely bowled over. I'm dying to get back to work to use them with my kids. Thank you so much xxx

**Tammy – Lancashire Social Worker**

"I am a Social worker working within child psychology working with children who have experienced trauma. I thought I'd let you know that my new friends have been helping me support some very special children over the holidays.



Here's Walter, named by a child, getting ready to support him with the 'Huge Bank of Worries' book. I am so grateful for the lovely resources you sent me. I am more than grateful to all your volunteers, they do an amazing job and my new woolly friends will be busy helping lots of children and young people." ❤️



# GALLERIES

## A SELECTION OF YOUR WORK













## SUMMARY OF ITEMS NEEDED

- 1 **Worry monsters** – Choose from “Zippy” (has a zipped mouth) or “Toothy the Worry Eater”. Sewn ones welcome too. Please note the recommended dimensions in the patterns and please stuff these firmly with approved stuffing.
- 2 **Animal Worry Eaters (which aren’t monsters!)** – please ensure that you make a really good, deep pocket and please stuff these firmly with approved stuffing.
- 3 **Sewn Mojo monsters** – the knitted version didn’t prove so popular and it was more difficult to get good facial expressions, but the sewn version is just about the most popular item requested. Please stuff these firmly.
- 4 **“Body Image” worry monsters**, both in knitted and sewn versions, identical in height and colours, but one is fatter, one thinner.
- 5 **Disability monsters** – if only one leg or arm, please make a stump, it looks more realistic. No disability animals thanks.
- 6 **Abuse monsters** - simply add a crescent shape around one eye, (black eye), and some purple, red or black marks on the limbs by sewing on pieces of felt, knitting or embroidering them. No abuse animals thanks.
- 7 **Masks and pants for monsters** – if you send a set of them we can fit them on the monsters here, or you could make your own for your monster. Please now use the larger version of the pants pattern, which is on the website, as our monsters are now bigger than previously
- 8 **Hand puppet families with happy/sad sides** – Mum, Dad, Gran, Grandad, boy, girl, with siblings if you like. With faces in cream or pale pink yarn, or any shade of brown, but not black . Please make them all to fit an adult hand, including the boy and girl.
- 9 **Hand puppet families as above, but specifically Muslim or Asian**
- 10 **Bully hand puppet and Internet groomer hand puppet**
- 11 **Pairs of identical hand puppets** for Play Therapy work – these could be “people” or animals
- 12 **“Professionals” sets of hand puppets:** doctor, nurse, police, social worker, teacher, and judge in robes. We’d also like if possible a “professional in a suit”
- 13 **Animal or children’s character hand puppets** – feel free to use patterns available online. As it’s for charity we’ve never had a problem with that, but we’re unable to put them up on the website due to copyright.
- 14 **Transgender hand puppets** (one side male, one side female)
- 15 **Finger puppets** – use any pattern you like, they can be people or animals
- 16 **Pregnant monster and pregnant hand puppet**

## KNIT YOUR WAY TO HAPPINESS

- Knitting/crochet can boost confidence, self-esteem, motivation and mood
- Knitting has been shown to reduce anxiety, depression and even help in treating eating disorders, and it's said to be one of the most relaxing and calming activities that you can do.
- It can also stimulate the brain and keep you focused, improving memory too. When you're working on a project, hours can go by where you're just in the moment, enjoying the process
- There's proof that the act of knitting helps to calm and still the mind. The concentration required is a distraction and the yarn's texture and colour impact the mood. The rhythmic motions help your mind easily escape to calm places while providing the hands with something to do.
- Being able to "switch off" the mind even for a short time every day is so beneficial to well-being. The relaxed motions are very soothing. Sitting still to knit reduces your heart rate and lowers your blood pressure.
- The potential mental health benefits of picking up a knitting habit are endless.





Therapist for cases of abuse, neglect and self harm

“Unfortunately more and more cases of trauma are showing in our schools across the UK now. I always try to remember that at least these children have felt safe enough to turn to adults for support as that is always half the battle. Thank you so much, I know how much of a difference charities like yours make to our children and their families.”

## PLEASE KNIT, CROCHET OR SEW FOR US!

Knit-for-Nowt would be nothing without you, your items are invaluable! We want to get to the end of our waiting list as soon as possible and we still have **over 1300 therapists waiting**. In particular we want to thank those of you who send in items regularly, you are the backbone of KfN and SO kind. Until next time, Happy Knitting/Crocheting/Sewing!



Clare Allan Knit-for-Nowt

September 2023

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