



WELCOME TO THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2022



It was a huge achievement to finish at last the very long waiting list from September 2021, well done to all who sent in items and a big “Thank you” from all the therapists. You are such wonderful, generous people and you have helped so many children during the past year. We now have to redouble our efforts and start all over again! Can we do it again? Yes we can!

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LATEST NEWS

The waiting list

As predicted, when the waiting list was opened at the beginning of November there was an avalanche of requests, amounting to over 1100 in a couple of days. We decided that it was better to leave the list open and see what happened. The requests are still coming in, but have slowed down and we now receive a few each day. All those requesting items are told to expect at least a year's wait from now onwards, and all have now had an answer telling them that they are on the list.

This need for our items we feel stems from three main reasons:

1. Our items are unique and aren't available anywhere else. KfN seems to be the only charity providing items such as disability monsters, abuse monsters, body image ones etc., and hand puppets in the form of happy/sad families and professionals are not anywhere else to be found
2. The quality of our items is very high. Therapists have repeatedly said that they saw other colleagues using our items and saw for themselves how beautifully made they are
3. Budgets are very tight. There are worry monsters available for sale on the internet (although not in the forms that we make), but organisations which are helping children can't afford them, and certainly not in the numbers that they require

So, rather than trying to complete a waiting list as before, we are now in the position of having a never-ending list, which means that your items are going to be needed long into the future!



What types of requests have come in?

Here is a summary of the types of therapists and cases they're dealing with:

- **Social Services Child Protection teams:** these include those frontline workers who have the difficult job of facing up to the appalling abuse and/or neglect of children. Many work in safeguarding and have contact with court proceedings when children are not deemed to be safe at home and are therefore either fostered or adopted
- **Educational Psychologists:** they are highly trained professionals working with all sorts of mental health issues in children and young adolescents including risk of suicide, self harm, acute learning disabilities and autism
- **Children's Counsellors:** again highly skilful professionals with full training dealing with all manner of mental health issues, and also often cases of abuse and trauma
- **Play Therapists, which include Art Therapists, Drama Therapists and those working with animals for therapy:** the training is a degree course of several years. They often visit several schools helping children come to terms with abuse/neglect, bereavement, anxiety, depression, eating disorders and issues such as selective mutism (where a child won't or can't speak to certain people).
- **Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs):** they're at the front line, working in schools alongside teachers and teaching assistants and they are often the first ones to discover the problems a child may be experiencing
- **Special Educational Needs (SEN) therapists,** working both in mainstream and in Special Schools with children with often very complex difficulties. They also work with children with severe physical and/or learning disabilities
- **Specialist Mental Health Occupational Therapists:** work with children and families in a wide range of settings
- **Family Liaison Officers:** coordinate and manage the day to day work of the pastoral team in school. They oversee the emotional well being of the whole school and provide support to children, families and all staff



When there are so many requests for items why does Knit-for-Nowt operate a waiting list for knitters? Surely as many as possible are needed?



Our pattern maker and knitter Val has kindly offered to help by managing our waiting list of knitters. Her new title is “Knit-for-Nowt New Makers’ Mentor” for which there is now a separate email address.

She writes:

Knit-for-Nowt is only a very small charity, run single handed from a family home, with about 500 registered makers working away, all at their own speed, all over the country. The power of social media is such that when it became known that we had 1000+ requests to try to fulfil, lots of kind-hearted people showered us with handmade items. As with all charities that depend on individual donor skills, sadly a large number of donations were not fit for purpose. Our recipient therapists etc and the children deserve a good standard and we always try to meet that. We also have to abide by the requirements of Trading Standards. Although we never charge for our items, we are still the providers and are held responsible for their quality and safety by law.

All these items that are not fit for purpose take up a great deal of time, as their donor’s kindness must still be acknowledged, and tactfully discouraged. If possible more work must be done at this end to make items usable, or at worst they must be disposed of, which is such a waste of effort, materials, time and kind intent. It was to try to stem this that we called a halt to accepting all new makers indiscriminately and recently have started asking willing volunteers to send a trial item and offer them a period of mentoring as they became familiar with requirements.

Results of the 2022 Knit-for-Nowt Lucky Dip Competition

Many thanks to all who entered this year's Lucky Dip competition, for which Knit-for-Nowt received 278 entries! All those items are going to help worried children and have been donated as normal.

The winning numbers were picked out of a hat by Emotional Literacy Support Assistant Sarah Wilson at Cherry Burton Primary School, East Yorkshire on Monday November 28th 2022.

10 winners each receive a £20 voucher to spend in the online shop "Black Sheep Wools" <https://www.blacksheepwools.com>, and the owner of the shop, Sara, has very kindly donated two of the vouchers, for which we're very grateful.

From left to right, Knit-for-Nowt "new makers' mentor" and pattern designer Val; ELSA Sarah Wilson; and organiser Clare. And Clare with some of the children in the school's "Rainbow Room", a dedicated space for helping children with their emotions



The entries have been divided into two brand new Galleries on the website, one for monsters and the other for animal worry eaters and robots.

You can view the items that you entered on the following links:

<https://www.knitfornowt.org/lucky-dip-gallery-1>

<https://www.knitfornowt.org/lucky-dip-gallery-2>

Because so many of your items are displayed on the website now, this Newsletter doesn't contain the usual picture galleries. Please go to the links above for inspiration!

**WINNERS OF THE LUCKY DIP, WHICH WERE PICKED OUT AT RANDOM
(the competition wasn't judged)**

175 Laura in Worcestershire



184 Fran in County Durham



271 Lesley in Hampshire



147 Madeleine in Devon



34 Marion in Lancashire



120 Katharine in Warwickshire



41 Lynne in Yorkshire 129 Rachel in Derbyshire



153 Katie in Surrey



4 Cathy in Kent



Shelley, ELSA, Primary School, Suffolk

I thought I would share with you that Toothy the Worry Eater and Toffee Teddy were very busy yesterday. I'm told by a 5 year old girl with separation anxiety that Toothy gives the best hugs due to his long arms. Toffee has a 'friendly face' said a seven year old boy whose Mum is poorly, "he helps me to relax by sitting with me".

I have also used the puppets of professionals to support a child who has different agencies in her life, it helped to explain the process.

Amazing work knitters/makers, you are making a difference ❤️

NEW PATTERNS ADDED RECENTLY!

Knitted Worry Seal by Madeleine

Seals can be in grey, brown or silver and baby seals are usually white for the first few weeks of their lives. So you can choose which to knit



Crochet Whale Shark by Rachel



Crochet Octopus by Rachel



Octopus Worry Eater



with Toothy & Doodle (for scale)



Upside down for packing?!
(tentacles will squish close to body 😊)



We also now have plans for a knitted version of the whale shark and octopus, and Val has an idea for a knitted Unicorn Worry Eater. A reminder that if you have an idea for a new pattern, please contact Clare first before making your pattern, in order to ensure that no-one else is working on the same idea!

Abuse monster by Mary and Val

As abuse monsters are used on a one-to-one basis with an individual child we decided that we should have a pattern in a smaller version than our normal range, although larger ones are still very welcome. We recommend a black eye, and then two other bruise marks, one on the head and one on one upper arm. You can embroider them or attach pieces of felt, instructions for which are included in the pattern. Sadly we now have many therapists who need these because they are dealing with cases of abuse or trauma.



RECENT REQUESTS FROM THERAPISTS

These give you an idea of how your items help.

Lynne, West Midlands

Message: Hello, I am a counsellor/play therapist/family practitioner working in the West Midlands with children and families in inner city areas. I work for a charity myself. I have a Queens Award for my voluntary work in the community. I understand how your lovely worry monsters are oversubscribed. Could you please consider me for one in the future. I promise it will be well loved and cared for by children 5 - 12 years old. And of course by me. Keep up the good work. You give people like me hope for a brighter future.

Deborah, "Roundabout" Charity, Surrey

Message: Dear Team. 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. Thank you so much

Justyna, London

Message: Dear Knit-for-Nowt, my name is Justyna and I work as an *ELSA and **EAL Assistant in a large, 3-form-entry primary school in South West London. Our school has two ELSAs and a very, very long waiting list :) We both bend over backwards to meet the needs of our children in the ever-changing environment: our school is very large, wonderfully multicultural with a large number of children with special educational needs and EAL children who are making a huge effort every day to learn English that isn't their first language. Since last year we have welcomed a number of Ukrainian children that I'm honoured to work with on a regular basis. I have put in a request for both worry monsters and hand puppets as we're now in the process of putting the finishing touches to our ELSA room but either will be gratefully received.

**ELSA: Emotional Literacy Support Assistant*

***EAL: English as an Additional Language*

Paula, Norfolk

Message: Good evening. I am now pastoral support/ parent advisor /nurture/ safeguard at our school of approx 200 children. A couple of years ago we were lucky enough to get your small puppets which helped hugely especially in my safeguarding role. Now my role has developed I cannot stress enough how much your worry monsters would help in my other roles: from the children who are anxious and can't always speak up to an adult, to the selective mute child, the child who may have difficulties at home, the child who is being bullied, to the child whose scared to have the light off at night. There are SO many uses for them and I currently have an old battered one who had seen better days. These were mentioned on my ELSA course to help children and the possibility are endless. I have finally got a nurture room where these could be available to allhere's hoping however long we have to wait. You're all amazing. Thank you in advance.

Katherine, Lancaster

Subject: Request for hand puppets please

Message: Hi, I am a trainee play therapist studying with PTUK and have almost finished my certificate level, starting a diploma in Feb 2023. I have been waiting for your waiting list to open up again so that I can request some hand puppets please. I shall use them with my clients who are primary aged children in a school setting. I am particularly interested in the professionals but would be thrilled with any of the puppets on offer. I have seen the designs online and am so impressed by the work of your knitters and seamstresses. Thank you so much for all the hard work - it makes such a difference having access to such fab resources. Warm wishes.

Michelle, Solihull

I am one of the Directors for Ordinary Magic CIC, a not for profit children's mental health and well-being service in Solihull. We work with families, children and local schools offering many services which include 1:1 work, nurture groups, play therapy, talking therapy and workshops. We also run groups in the community to support SEND children and parents, children with disabilities and so much more! We feel our organisation would benefit from these amazing knitted worry monsters to use with our therapists as well as our group work. We'd love to have these on offer for the organisation to offer to the children we work with.

FEEDBACK FROM THERAPISTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED OUR ITEMS



Louise, Children's Social Care, Lancashire County Council

Hi Clare, as promised wanted to send you some photos of the social work teams that have benefitted from the collection of worry monsters & puppets you sent. I have distributed them out across all our 'Children In Our Care' Teams here at Lancashire. These teams cover the whole of Lancashire and support 2000 Children who are looked after, who are now going to benefit from these resources. So children who do not live with their birth families, and have suffered significant harm and trauma. The 16 teams (90ish Social Workers) are based/cover Pendle, Hydburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale, Chorley, West Lancashire, Preston, Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre and all the surrounding areas up to the borders of Lancashire.

They are all so so thankful to the knitters who have made these. They really are invaluable in supporting children to share worries and to understand the concerns which professionals have about them and the decisions that have/are being made in their best interest. They help them process difficult things that have happened and help them express their wishes and feelings.

Workers have been literally blown away by the quality, detail and clearly love that has been put into each item we have received! The multi function use of the worry monsters, so having pants for the NSPCC rule, the cuts/bruises for abuse, and zip/pocket for worries are amazing. The detail that has gone into the puppets, children holding toys, professionals having lanyards, and having families of different ethnicities has been incredible.

I know you have me on the waiting list for more, I wanted to make it clear that these would be distributed to other teams/functions within Children's Social Care. So for example we have 21 Child Protection & Court Teams, who are now rather envious of what our 16 children in our care teams have got - so I would love to be able to share some amongst those social workers to utilise next.

With thanks again Clare & I hope these photos keep your knitters motivated to keep making them!!



Linsay – Play Therapist, Warrington

Oh my – Clare! My worry monsters have arrived and I am beyond words – they're AMAZING! Thank you so, so much. I can't wait to use them. The PANTS ones are such a good idea as I have to teach that a lot. Thanks so much to all of your knitters. It's lovely to know there are so many fabulous people who give their time to help our children xx

Emma, Family Support Advisor Primary School, Berks

They have been a huge hit, especially the ones with the changing emotion faces. Some children find it much easier to physically show the emotion with the worry monster than voice it, and this gives me a great opening to try and engage with words. The Monsters have been on visits to the classrooms and some are reluctant to return to my office...

Mary, ELSA, Primary School, Hull

OMG the postman delivered a large box this morning, I am so excited. The worry monsters are outstanding! I cannot wait to get back to school start using them. What a fantastic idea the inclusion of disability monsters I love, love, love them. I can't thank you enough. The children and staff love them, they are an invaluable resource which I use with the children every day. Thank you so much and keep up the fantastic work

**Jo, ELSA, Primary School, Kent**

Hi, I've received my lovely set of worry monsters today and they are wonderful. So beautifully made, and I love that it says who they are from. My school children will definitely benefit from confiding in these monsters, giving them hugs, talking through them, using them in role play and they are just a great addition to our sessions. Thank you so much...these mean so much...you are all so, so kind in all you do xx

Stella, ELSA, Junior School, Hampshire

Our wonderful worry monsters arrived today & they are fabulous. I've used them already! Today I used them for a child to show them that they couldn't carry all those worries by themselves, and that if they shared the worries it lightened the load... giving our heads room to think about learning. They're a great resource. What generous kind hearted people you and your team are. Thank you all very much.

Sabrina, Primary School, Manchester

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the fabulous parcel. Each puppet and worry monster is simply amazing and we are so appreciative of the time and effort that has gone into creating such a useful resource. We simply cannot wait to start using them and allow children to express themselves.

Michaela, ELSA, Primary School, Gloucestershire

The box arrived today and caused a great deal of excitement! They are truly wonderful. Each class teacher picked their favourite worry monster for their class. The worry monster with the changeable face is perfect for my ELSA work with our children needing support identifying their feelings. The puppets are super too. The set of professionals puppets fits perfectly with one of our Early Years Foundation Stage themes and the family ones will be a great addition to our ELSA resources for those children dealing with problems at home. Please pass on our thanks to all your volunteers, their work is amazing.

Lorna, ELSA, Primary School, Gloucestershire

Received my present today and I am totally blown away! Thank you and the knitters so so much. They are absolutely incredible, I'm over the moon. I rushed into the staff room to open them all and all the staff were drooling all over them. I can't wait to introduce them to the children after half term. I think we'll have to have a naming competition. I will of course send over bits and bobs as and when I do activities / use them, but for now, you can just have a very happy ELSA with them!!





An example of a perfect cat worry eater

Features which are desirable are: strong coloured stripes, safety eyes, perfect muzzle and paws, stuffed firmly, nice and big size, deep worry pocket. Thanks to Jane for this one.



HAND PUPPETS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

Because they are smaller they often get overlooked and rather overshadowed by the wow factor of their larger friends the worry monsters/animals! But these small hand puppets really do pack a punch when it comes to therapy. We are repeatedly told how useful they are, and you can read that for yourself in the feedback section. As adults we might find it hard to appreciate just how important these little items can be in many ways:

- breaking the ice with a child who is reluctant to engage with a new therapist
- finding out what the problem is when the child won't tell them
- working through difficult issues by role play

If you haven't already, please read what a Children's Psychologist says about this on the website page <https://www.knitfornowt.org/why-do-puppets-help>

CAN YOU HELP BY KNITTING SOME HAND PUPPETS SETS PLEASE?

Last time we opened the waiting list the vast majority of requests came from ELSAs in schools, most of them requiring just the worry monsters. This time we have far more requests from psychologists, Play Therapists, Counsellors and all other types of therapists dealing with extreme trauma and serious issues, and almost all of those have requested both worry monsters and our hand puppets. This means that we need far more sets than before.

Just to remind you, or if you didn't know, the puppets are best donated by you in complete sets and this saves a lot of time when dispatching them. Therapists are always offered a happy/sad sided family set along with a set of "professionals". If you're not sure what those consist of please see the website <https://www.knitfornowt.org/what-sorts-of-puppets-are-needed>

and also then <https://www.knitfornowt.org/new-knitted-puppet-patterns-page> (using the Password). Please contact Clare if you haven't got the password yet.

And if you normally donate worry monsters/animal worry eaters and/or animal/character hand puppets please continue to do so. If you can manage to add a family or professionals puppets set in with your other items that will help a lot, but we certainly don't want all knitters to switch to only making hand puppets or we'll end up short of the worry eaters!

HAND PUPPET GALLERY Here are some ideas to inspire you!

Notice all the different ways that hair can be done, yet still attached safely.

Please use our own patterns for your hand puppets as they've been so carefully thought out. You can still use your creativity to add personal touches, different outfits, accessories and hair. Making them can be such fun and very worthwhile when you see the end result. It's also very useful for using up those odds and ends of yarn that have been in the drawer forever!





Please note that girl and boy puppets need to fit an adult's hand



AND FINALLY.....

**THE LATEST NUMBER OF REQUESTS IS.....1,190
AND COUNTING**

Our waiting list remains open and we continue to receive requests every day, so this time it's likely that we will not get to the bottom of the list like we did last year, we'll just keep going!

Reminders:

- A full list of the therapists and organisations which have received our items is on the website. Please go to the following link :
<https://www.knitfornowt.org/quotes-from-recipients>
- Therapists who work independently, visiting many locations will not normally feature on the list.
- Please remember to include your surname along with your first name and your email address in your parcel
- In case of damage in the post, items need to be enclosed in plastic inside cardboard boxes or brown paper parcels
- Please let Clare know if you change the type of stuffing you're using



Now that winter is upon us what could be better than sitting knitting?



KfN wishes you a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas and we look forward to more of your amazing creations in 2023!

Merry Christmas



Clare Allan Knit-for-Nowt

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