

HELLO!

WELCOME TO THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022



Angela – Play Therapist, Potters Bar, Herts

**“I was blown away. There is so much love in those
worry monsters”**



After a long winter of sitting by the fire (heating bills allowing!) and knitting, crocheting or sewing, Spring has finally sprung! Once again, huge thanks if you have supported us through the past three months. With your fantastic help we are gradually whittling down the waiting list, which last September stood at just under 1,000 requests. See the “News” page for a progress report.





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LATEST NEWS

We're proud to announce that you have managed to get the waiting list down to

382

Your needles have been absolutely flying, and it's such a great achievement to knit and sew so many items in such a short time.

WORRY MONSTERS (See Page 18 for a summary of all)

Each therapist is sent a box with an average of 5 or 6 worry monsters, and, depending on what you've supplied, that will include:

- An animal worry eater
- A large monster with deep mouth pocket
- A monster for disability
- A monster for abuse
- A pair of body image monsters

And at least one of those will have pants to help with the NSPCC "Pants Programme", which helps educate children to keep safe, and also aids the recovery of abused children. Other specific monsters can sometimes be included if available eg. sewn Mojo

HAND PUPPETS (See Page 18 for a summary of all)

Worry monsters are only half the story though, as we have given out literally thousands of hand puppets. The box of items donated to each therapist needing hand puppets consists of:

- A happy/sad sided family hand puppet set; Mum, Dad, Gran, Grandad, boy, girl
- A set of "professionals"; doctor, nurse, judge, "professional in a suit", police, social worker/teacher

And the following if available at the time:

- Bully/internet groomer puppets
- Emotiknits
- Other specific puppets as needed eg. pregnant, transgender, identical pairs (see the full list of items we make later in the Newsletter)
- Animal puppets and finger puppets if available

Notes and requests this month

- As you'll know, if you are in our present team of makers your email address is held in Knit-for-Nowt records. It will be kept confidential. However, if you have a knitting or other technical query/problem to which you'd like an answer or some help, from now onwards your email will be forwarded to one of our pattern makers for specific advice. They will then get back to you directly.
- Or you can ask your question on our Facebook group. This group is a "closed" group which means that only the members can see the content. If you haven't yet joined it, but you wish to, please could you let Clare know first before you apply. If you are a current KfN knitter you'll be accepted. If you have friends who wish to join KfN or the Facebook group we're afraid that's not possible at the moment. We are currently operating a waiting list for knitters who wish to help, in order to keep the workload manageable.
- Pins are needed when fitting zips and sometimes when sewing up your item. Please consider treating yourself to a new set of coloured headed pins, as they are far more visible than the silver headed type, and so they're easier to spot if left in.
- Please be aware that, because our articles are for use with children, we are not allowed to donate any article which is sent to us anonymously, so please do remember to put a note in with your Christian and surname, plus your email address, thank you. If you realise you've forgotten, please email Clare.
- CHUNKY YARN does tend to stretch once the item is stuffed. If you do choose to use chunky please do ensure that your stitches are tight enough so that no stuffing is actually even visible through them. Otherwise over time the stuffing can work its way out and is a risk to small children. Sadly if your stitching is too loose we can't donate the item. Using smaller needles may help.
- EYES on monsters – unless using safety eyes, which are the ideal, please try always to make a white oval, then a black circle on top of that and then if possible a small white highlight. This gives your monster/animal far more personality and appeal. It's amazing what a difference to the overall effect it has.
- If you're not very confident of your sewing up skills (!) there are YouTube videos which are very helpful and can result in the seams being completely "seamless"! Here's one that might help, but there are others available too.

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

Rochelle, Surrey

Message: Hi, I have been working as a Play and Creative Arts therapist in this most amazing local school community for the past 15 years. I work with 8 local primary schools and 1 special needs school and I use Play and Creative Arts to provide mental and emotional wellbeing support to children, parents and staff in the local community. I have been trying for years to get your lovely worry monsters and puppets and have never had the luck. So I am thrilled to be applying. I would very much appreciate it if I could receive some from your collection. I can only say that it will go on to benefit thousands of children in my local community. Many thanks in advance.



NEW PATTERN – “ZIPPY” THE WORRY MONSTER

has joined us and is now on the website!

Why the zip?

You may be wondering why we are phasing out the old worry monster pattern and replacing it with a brand new one from pattern maker Val. This is as a result of feedback from the therapists who tell us that the zip is particularly useful. The child feels that the worry is completely contained and can't get out! This is advice from those at the sharp end of things, dealing with very serious issues, and so we must always be guided by them. We try very hard not to imagine what they'd want, but simply to ask them!

Apart from its zip, Zippy has a few other slightly adapted features which all add to its child appeal, which is so important for getting the child to open up about their worries. Thank you so much to all those who have said they'll have a go, it's much appreciated because we'd like to be able to include a zipped monster in every box, which is not possible at the moment.

Val tells us that the zip really isn't difficult and the pattern has full instructions and pictures to help, plus

you can always contact her via Clare if you get stuck or need help.

But if you prefer not to try the zip, please convert to doing the Zippy pattern without it, as Zippy has other improved features as well. Or we always need Toothy the Worry Eater, the Body Image monsters, pregnant monster, or any of our animal worry eater patterns, none of which have a zip.

Please always ensure that whichever pattern you knit, you always make the mouth pocket extra deep, so that if the monster is used in a whole class situation or in group therapy there will be plenty of room for multiple worry papers.



NEW IDEA FOR A DISABILITY MONSTER – by Jean in Croydon



Some new instructions on how to turn your monster into a disability one with removable limbs are now on a document on the website, on the “Patterns for Worry Monsters” page. As you can see, the limbs just slot over the stumps, making the monster very versatile, as it can be used in multiple ways. You can use these instructions with any of our monsters to convert them into ones for disability, except toothy, (he needs to have nice thin arms so this technique doesn’t work so well on him!)

Toothy continues to be a very popular monster, crocheted or knitted!



BODY IMAGE WORRIES

It's important to combat negative body image because it can lead to depression, shyness, social anxiety and self-consciousness in intimate relationships later in life. Negative body image may also lead to eating disorders. We're told that children as young as 5 are exhibiting signs of worry about their body image, and throughout childhood nowadays social media can be a very strong influence on the way children feel about themselves. Our Body Image monsters in pairs, with one monster much wider than the other, are a tremendous help for therapists helping to combat these worries.



BODY IMAGE MONSTERS

See these wonderful creations showing how our pattern still leaves you so much scope for creativity - they're all so different! Knitters have varied the pattern very slightly, but also items can turn out to be very different in size, according to your knitting tension, combined with the size of your needles and the yarn used.



SEW YOURSELF HAPPY

Please make us a sewn worry monster, they're fun to make!

If you can sew and you have a sewing machine, please consider trying some of our fantastic sewing patterns. Helen's pattern, below, encourages the use of bright, child-friendly fabrics, making monsters with a zip at the mouth pocket.



Or could you make a Mojo monster for us?

Mojo, designed by Kath in Nottinghamshire, is the most requested item of all, probably because of the multiple facial expressions which are so useful, particularly when helping autistic children, who have trouble identifying emotions. We are always short of these. The pattern has three fold-over flaps and isn't difficult, just a bit fiddly doing the faces!



ANIMAL WORRY EATERS – a huge success story

Animals continue to be some of our most popular items, both with you the knitters and with the children and therapists. We now have a really good selection to choose from. We recommend the use of double DK because of the tightness of the stitches, which means they are super safe. But if you prefer to use single DK, Aran or chunky, please ensure that you can see absolutely no stuffing through your stitches – it should be invisible for safety. Please make the mouth pocket really nice and deep, to accommodate multiple worry papers, thank you.

The “Bear” Necessities!



The Owl and the Pussycat



Bunny Bonus





If a picture of your item hasn't appeared this time it's not deliberate, just a question of space available, so if you'd like to see one of your items in the Newsletter please let Clare know and it can be included next time.

HAND PUPPET CREATIVITY

Alice has transferred her jumper making skills to make miniature versions in her hand puppet family members! Amazing!



WE ARE VERY SHORT OF PROFESSIONALS SETS – PLEASE HELP!!

All patterns for these are on the website – stuffing the heads, as Marina's done here, is optional. If using stuffing in the head, please refer to the instructions for safely enclosing it, which you can find on the patterns for hand puppets page of the website, just above the Muslim hand puppets patterns, thanks.



Sewn professionals are also really needed. Chris and Judy are regular makers of these, and their puppets are always beautifully sewn. See below for Chris's set and Judy's "Professional in a Suit".



WHAT STUFFING SHOULD I USE?

Knitters quite rightly are concerned to use the correct, approved stuffing in their monsters and/or puppets' heads, but it's often difficult to tell online whether stuffings are really suitable. The old CE label has become the UKCA label after our leaving the EU, and there are various different BS markings covering flammability and cleanliness/toxicity – all very confusing! When posting items, please confirm to Clare which stuffing you have used.

The following are at present, (@ March 2022), available online and are approved for our items. You may use others which you find with the correct markings.

HOLLOWFILL <https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/182637234827>



TRIMITS

https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07RR28NBP/ref=pe_3187911_185740111_TE_item

HABICO

<https://www.minerva.com/mp/1192018/450gm-toy-filling-stuffing-white>

HOBBYCRAFT

www.hobbycraft.co.uk – we have confirmed with them that the stuffing they sell complies

But please bear in mind that all these can be purchased from various different manufacturers, so you might want to shop around a bit. Please always look for the picture of the bag, with the BS numbers on it. All four of the above have the correct markings. The stuffing you use should have the following on the bag

BS5852 (fire safety)

BS1425 (cleanliness), and/or EN71 or BS 5665

SUMMARY OF ITEMS NEEDED

All patterns for the items below are now on the website

- 1 **Worry monsters** – Choose from “Zippy” (our monster with a zip) or “Toothy the Worry Eater”
- 2 **Worry Eaters (which aren’t monsters!)** – we now do cat, dog, bear, monkey, ape, rabbit, frog, elephant, pig, caterpillar, bee, owl – please ensure that you make a really good, deep pocket
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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**

RECENT QUOTES FROM RECIPIENTS OF OUR ITEMS

Sadie – Learning Mentor, Primary School, Bradford

Our monsters arrived yesterday and we're absolutely made up with them! Within half an hour of unboxing them, a child I support was instantly brought out of their anger episode after hugging one. The smile on their face was lovely to see.



Jo – Learning Support Assistant/pupil support and wellbeing, Defence Children's Services, British Military base, Germany

Hi Clare

Just a quick note to let you know that the worry monsters have been a great hit with all our children! We have had many worries posted, ranging from friendships to health worries, and even one Y1 child worrying about what happens to us when we die.

I have enclosed a picture of Eryn (Y5) who was recently worried about her best friend catching Covid and how that would impact on her and her family.



Lisa – ELSA, (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), Primary School, Cheshire

Just to let you know that my box of monsters have arrived today and I just want to say they are absolutely amazing. We've had tears and laughter from the staff today looking through them. I just know they are going to be perfect.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and just know that all your effort and hard work is very much appreciated.

Sonya – Wellbeing Mentor and ELSA, Primary School, Berkshire

A huge heartfelt thank you to yourself and your volunteers at Knit-for-Nowt. I am totally in awe of the fabulousness of the puppets I received, they are just wonderful and will make a very special addition to our resources. Thank you a million times, it's appreciated so very much xxx

Claire – Children's Counsellor, "Inclusion Hampshire"

Oh wow! I wasn't quite sure what to expect, but oh my gosh they are just fantastic. I will be taking some to our "Inclusion Hampshire" Education Centre tomorrow to be split between pre and post 16, and the others to my therapy practice. Please send huge thanks to the team of makers. I hope to send you some feedback in the future. For now I have attached a photo of me looking very pleased with my beauties! Kind regards, thanks and best wishes.



Emma – Pupil Referral Unit, Peterborough

OH MY GOODNESS ME the worry monsters arrived today. To say I was overwhelmed is an understatement. A few tears were shed. They are amazing. Thank you so much. They are really truly going to have a huge impact.

Thank you so much to Deborah from Yorkshire, Vanessa in London, Lynda in Durham, Rosemary in N Yorks, Mary in Suffolk
You heroes

Samantha - Child psychologist, Special Needs School, Hants

The Worry Dolls have arrived! They are so so beautiful and I feel humbled to have them to use at my child therapy practice, thank you.

Much gratitude and thanks to Jackie in Northern Ireland, Tracey in Kent, Liz in Essex and Pauline in Worcestershire. I have some younger clients who are going to be thrilled to meet them later today.

Best to you all, you are providing an AMAZING service.

Louise – Primary School, Surrey

The monsters (and bear!) arrived and are so lovely. They have generated lots of excitement and been welcomed by our pupils



Sonia – Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland

Message: I support children and young people who have been affected by domestic abuse through my work with Women's Aid as a Family Support worker. I would love worry monsters to share with those kids who are the most affected. Thank you.

Hi Clare thank you so much for the worry animals, the kids I work with are loving them and have their favourites picked lol. Again, thanks so much, all the hard work from your knitters is greatly appreciated x

**Sharon – Girls' Comprehensive school working with autism and learning difficulty**

Can I just say how totally AMAZING the worry dolls are. I'm a counsellor working with girls aged 11-16, and they are a massive hit, (and not just with the younger girls!) The service you offer is incredible. Thank you again so much!

Julie - ELSA, Primary School, Lancs

Once again thank you so much for the wonderful work you and your team are doing.

I can't stress enough how important your work is. Our worry monsters are already doing a fabulous job, and more often than not they enable the worry to be nipped in the bud.

We are really grateful...thank you xx

Donna – Pupil Referral Unit, Hampshire

The monsters are absolutely amazing and we are so thrilled! We have set them in all our therapeutic areas for the students to access as when they need to. We are not only super impressed by people's talent and generosity but at how thoughtful and considerate people are in regard to the therapeutic needs of young people.

I have attached a photo of one of our well-being practitioners Milly. Thank you again.



Faye – Henlow Academy, Beds

Thank you so much for our box of worry monsters. They arrived today and are ALL absolutely adorable! Thank you to all the amazing knitters – FAB! Thank you to Laura, Rose and Gerry the knitters.



Justine – Thrive Practitioner, Primary School, Cardiff

I just wanted to pass on my thanks for my recent parcel. I was totally blown away with the quality of the worry monsters, I honestly cannot thank you enough. They have been a huge success for specific children, one of whom is on a waiting list for a heart transplant. Please pass on my gratitude to the volunteers x

Sharon– Welfare Officer, Infant School, York

Wow!!! I have just received the delivery of worry monsters and they are fantastic, definitely worth the wait. Thank you to the Knit-for-Nowt Angels for making them. The children in my school will find these really useful in their sessions, and I appreciate the time, love and effort that has been put in to making each one x

Maria – head teacher, Primary School, Wallasey

I was overwhelmed when our package arrived. The monsters are way beyond what I was expecting. We will take lots of photos of our amazing children enjoying them and share them with you as soon as possible. Thank you very much for your kind donation, I know our children are going to benefit so much from them. Please pass on our thanks to your amazing team of knitters.

Sally - Infant School, Bristol

Thank you so much for our amazing monsters. They have already been put to good use. I have already used them for work with some individual children, one child really engaged with the cat. He insisted on giving the cat a comfy bed and he then sat alongside it whilst we talked.

The one with pants was used with the Nurture group yesterday to support the NSPCC pants lesson. He is now named Pantasurus!

I posted a picture of the monsters on our school Facebook page and families were very appreciative. Many thanks

Kate - Children's Counsellor, Wilts

I just wanted to message and say the biggest thank you in the world for my beautiful worry monsters. I had tears in my eyes opening them and seeing all the love and effort that has gone into making them. The children I work with are going to adore them! xx



Celia – Primary School, Salford, Manchester

I have so many Primary children since Covid that are so anxious that they will be used endlessly

Kelly – Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent

Thank you so much, they arrived in school this week. They are absolutely amazing, you should have heard my squeal of joy as the boxes arrived in my classroom!

Gemma – Child Psychologist, “Complex Family Team”, Camden, London

Message: Thank You Thank you Thank you

Dear Clare and the incredibly talented knitters (Ann, Jenny, Brenda and Ros),

I just wanted to say a HUGE thank you for my worry monsters! They have just arrived and I am absolutely ecstatic! They are so so wonderful and unique! Absolutely perfect for my work with children. I am going to share with my colleagues (Child Psychologists in Camden) and I know that they will be put to extremely good use in supporting our children! We're currently running lots of therapeutic programmes for individuals and groups - one called 'healing together' for children who have experienced domestic violence and abuse and another one for newly arrived Afghan refugee children...among others. These are going to be such a lovely addition to the sessions! A huge heartfelt thank you to you all (and the amazing charity 'Knit for Nowt')!

Tina – ELSA, Primary School, Somerset

I am in awe and lost for words, which I am very rarely, the hand puppets arrived this morning - thank you and your fab knitters from the hairs on my head to the nails on

my toes 😊 I love them sooo much, and I know the children I work with will too. They will so much be used and help so many children, words cannot say what that means. Can't wait to take them to school. At mo with covid we have a lot of staff and children going down with the virus, fingers crossed we will come through the other side and the worry monsters and puppets will be in great demand, not only for the children heee x. Please pass on my greatest gratitude to the brill knitters and u for all your kindness in supplying

me with these wonderful items to use and treasure always ❤️ Sending much regards and good wishes to you all xx Tina 😊 .



NB. A complete list of all teams/therapists who have been supplied with Knit-for-Nowt items is now available to download on the website page “Quotes from Recipients”.

Quote from the book of photographs, "People Knitting"

by Barbara Levine

"One of my earliest memories of my mother was watching her knit and listening to the sound of knitting needles constantly clicking. The combination of her intense needles click, click, clicking created an air in the room that signalled something important was happening. It is mesmerizing, even awe-inspiring, to see a ball of yarn transformed through some magical choreography of fingers and needles into items functional or fanciful."

Our service is proving a very important one to the therapists, and it couldn't run without you, the amazing knitters/seamstresses. As far as we know, there is no other service sending out these free items in the UK, and many of our items are very specific and not available anywhere else, which is probably why we get so many requests. But the main reason the therapists want what we make is because the quality of our monsters, animal worry eaters and puppets is really high, and the therapists all want to thank you so much for that. It's not possible to include all the heartfelt thanks we receive, but be assured that if it was all set down here we'd need many more pages of this Newsletter!

We still have many therapists waiting, so please do continue your fantastic work. Many thanks again to everyone.



Clare Allan, organiser, Knit-for-Nowt charity March 2022

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