



WELCOME TO THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2022



“Do you think they’ll split us up??”



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LATEST NEWS FROM KNIT-FOR-NOWT

Congrats! You have now got the waiting list down to

188 and counting!

We're getting there! However, as you know, the demand across the UK is huge, and as our service seems to be unique there are signs now that when we re-open the waiting list we may be swamped again. From a knitter's point of view this is a bottomless pit, so your items will be needed well beyond the end of this list. Your work is absolutely amazing, and it's the one addiction which is a very good thing to have!!

A huge "thank you" to those who donate to us regularly, which makes a big difference.



See pages 9-11 for our brand new patterns, which will be such fun to knit or crochet. Once again a huge thank you goes to our talented pattern makers for all their hard work.

Points to note for our worry eaters, whether monsters or animals:

- The ideal height of the monster is between 15" and 17" measured from the top of the head to the bottom of the body, not counting the legs. We like our items to be large. Please don't make it over 17" though otherwise it won't fit easily into the despatch boxes.
- The arms on your monster should be a maximum length of approx 9" (this is a safety rule).
- Please stuff the item nice and firmly (with approved toy stuffing) as if not then the stuffing tends to work its way to the bottom over time, making the item not as long-lasting.
- The eyes on a monster are very important for a child-friendly facial expression. Please ensure that your monster has black pupils in the centre of the eyes.
- Please watch Utube videos on how to sew up the seams on a monster neatly, it's really easy once you know how. And please keep your stitches tight so no stuffing is visible.

An explanation of a new policy regarding disability items.

After a lot of thought the trustees of Knit-for-Nowt have decided that from now onwards the charity won't make our animal worry eaters with any form of disability. We still need worry monsters with disability and also monsters with abuse marks, as the therapists have told us how useful they find both those types of items.

The original idea behind having disability animals was that animals can be born with a disability, however several people have pointed out that some folk may assume that the animal's disability might have been caused by abuse or injury. We already don't make animal worry eaters with abuse marks because it could be far too upsetting for a child, so we feel this could be similarly upsetting. The difference when we make monsters with disability and other monsters with abuse marks is that they are fantasy characters, whereas our animals are representations of real animals.

If you have made a disability animal worry eater in the past don't worry, it has been donated and has been of much use – we have never had any complaint or problem from the therapists at all about this. This decision is purely one resulting from further thought.

USEFUL LINKS

- Summary of all items needed by Knit-for-Nowt link:
<https://www.knitfornowt.org/donate-knits> Scroll down the page to find a list
- Updated list of all therapists and teams supplied so far by Knit-for-Nowt
<https://www.knitfornowt.org/quotes-from-recipients>
- Worry Monsters and Animal Worry Eaters patterns link:
<https://www.knitfornowt.org/worry-puppet-patterns>
NB. If you are already on our team of registered knitters please apply to Clare for the password to access all patterns if you haven't been given it. We're sorry, but we don't allow access to our patterns to anyone other than our registered knitters
- Hand Puppets patterns link:
<https://www.knitfornowt.org/new-knitted-puppet-patterns-page>
- Recommended and suitable stuffings links:
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
For other stuffings please check with Clare for their suitability, thank you
- All previous Newsletters link: <https://www.knitfornowt.org/about1>
- FAQs link: <https://www.knitfornowt.org/faqs>
- Utube video on how to sew up seams neatly link, (others are available if you Google it) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObuZwHImDCI>

ZIPPY MONSTER GALLERY

Thanks so much to those of you who have had a go at our new Zippy pattern, and for braving the zip even when you weren't sure you could do it! Val's excellent and very clear instructions for inserting the zip have made all the difference, and many knitters have found it not nearly so daunting as they had at first thought it would be! Here are some of your Zippies. Apologies if your item isn't featured, it's never deliberate. Let Clare know and she'll include your item next time.

Please make your Zippies either with or without a disability/bruises – all types are needed



If you're really not happy doing the zip please make the monster to this pattern but without the zip, as the pattern has other features which have made it an improvement on the old one we had before. If you can knit some pants for your monster it's a great advantage, although we do have a stock of them to add in an appropriate colour.

ELSA therapist, Primary School, Cardiff

We held an NSPCC pants assembly this morning, Zippy was a great resource to have alongside the NSPCC videos. The pupils then had great fun designing their own pants whilst having a chat with Zippy and telling him "what's in your pants is private Zippy!"





NEW FEATURE – THIS MONTH’S TIP FOR MAKERS

Mary, who made many of our patterns, has a tip for you to make knitting the arms on Toothy monsters easy (optional – see what you think!)

Mary says:

“For Toothies I knit the arms sideways as it's a lot quicker without having to keep turning the work. I find sewing them up easier too as the cast on/off edge is firmer than row ends. I tend to use them back of work side out as it's not so noticeable that the knitting is sideways, and the seam doesn't show so much. I use single DK yarn on 3mm pins, with 55 sts and 14 rows. See below for a picture of a monster showing this.

Another tip is that sometimes as filling for the arms, I cut a strip about 3" wide from white felt, roll it up and roughly stitch it. Then I sew the knitted arm over it, sewing on the right side of the work. This makes a more durable but flexible arm.”



Kelly – therapist, Primary School, South Yorkshire

I've just received my worry monsters and oh my gosh! I LOVE them!!!! They are all so brilliant!! Please thank the knitters for me! "Toothy" has properly made me smile today!! I love the wackiness of him!!! He makes me happy... such talented ladies...Thank you so much! xx

BRAND NEW PATTERNS now on the website

KNITTED ROBOT by Jean O'Brien

Won't the children love this one, with all his dials and wires!

Go to the Patterns for Worry Monsters/Animals page on the website



New -CROCHET OWL

By Sally Galloway



New - CATERPILLAR

Hand puppet by Maureen



New - ANIMAL WORRY EATERS WITH THEIR SMALL PALS

On the advice of a Play Therapist we have produced some mini versions of the Pick and Mix animal worry eaters in the form of hand puppets. The idea for these came from our knitter Fran. They are made in exactly the same colours as the large animal worry eater, and will be donated with them in pairs. The hand puppet is **totally optional**, but just gives added use in therapy when used together with the large stuffed item. Val and Mary have made these new little hand puppet patterns, which are now incorporated into the patterns for the “Pick and Mix” animal worry eaters. When you’ve made your animal worry eater you might have some yarn left over and this is an ideal way to make use of it!

If you prefer to just knit puppets singly these hand puppet patterns now also appear separately on the “Patterns for animal hand puppets” page of the website

Here are some pairs that Fran made when she first had the idea.



And these below are the ones for which patterns are now available on the website.

Patterns for the hand puppets have been added onto the bottom of the Pick and Mix animal worry eater patterns.





CROCHET

Please continue to make your wonderful crochet items, we are increasing the number of patterns available: we have three toothy monster designs, caterpillar, frog, cat, pig, and our newest one, the owl (which you'll find right at the bottom of the website page "Patterns for Worry Monsters")



Tina – Special Needs school, Birmingham

Oh my goodness I have just received my parcel. I am overwhelmed at what you have sent and am feeling very emotional with the time and effort that has gone into making these beautiful monsters. Can you thank all of the wonderful people that have knitted these xxx thank you so, so much x

GALLERY – A SELECTION OF ITEMS RECEIVED RECENTLY

Again, if your item isn't here it's never deliberate – if you'd like one of your items to be included in a future Newsletter, please let Clare know.



HAND PUPPETS <https://www.knitfornowt.org/new-animal-patterns-page>

Here are our new HAND PUPPET DESIGNS which you can knit singly if you prefer just to knit hand puppets – we need any number of any of them you choose – lots please!

They are now all on the “Patterns for Animal Hand Puppets” page of the website



STUFFED HEAD HAND PUPPETS

Could you make some hand puppets sets with stuffed heads like these which Lynne has made? They are so very effective. Instructions for making the head in two pieces so that the stuffing is fully enclosed are in the Muslim Dad or Muslim Mum patterns on the website – you can use those instructions in any hand puppet if you wish to stuff the head, including the professionals sets.



FUN WITH HAND PUPPET JUMPERS!!

In the last Newsletter we featured some fantastic hand puppet jumper designs. Here are some more ideas from Sue J, who has enjoyed enhancing her hand puppets with her own different stitching ideas. The therapists love all the little details included on hand puppets, so give your creativity full rein!



THE EVER-POPULAR PROFESSIONALS!



Amanda – ELSA/Pastoral Care, Infant School, Hants

"I just wanted to send you an e-mail with regards to the gorgeous puppets you recently sent us.

I can't thank you and all your knitters enough. The family hand puppets have been a god send - helping children 'talk' through using them. It stops them feelings so 'on the spot' and enables them to act out or discuss their issues in a less direct way.

The 'professional people' puppets are absolutely amazing. A child's father recently had heart surgery, so the doctor and nurse puppets helped me help her. Another child's father has gone through the judicial system, so the judge and social worker have been a gift to help them.

There are so many ways you can use puppets with children to help them open up about difficult subjects and situations they find themselves in, and we at the school can't thank you enough."



DESIGN YOUR OWN HAND PUPPET CHARACTERS!!

Owing to copyright we can't make patterns of commercial characters, but creating your own similar items is fine. See how inventive Maureen has been! A qualified Play Therapist said recently that they use as wide a variety of hand puppet characters as possible, so please use your creativity. When making worry monsters, unless you've run the idea past Clare we prefer you to stick to our own patterns as they have specific features needed. But with hand puppets please "do your own thing"! (The pictures below are just ideas)

Little Red Riding Hood, the wolf and Grandma



Fairy

Pirate

Gruffalo



Goldilocks and the 3 bears

Peppa Pig

Harry Potter



Kirsty, therapist working with children and young people pre-trial who have experienced sexual violence, Kent.

"I just wanted to say a heartfelt thank you for the exceptionally kind box of gifts you sent me today. I am overwhelmed by your generosity!! AMAZING!! You are all stars!! A thousand thank you's xx"



Body Image monsters designed and made by Helen in Somerset

MOJOs REMAIN A VERY POPULAR ITEM FOR THERAPISTS – thanks so much to our wonderful seamstresses for continuing to supply them.



The designer of Mojo, Kath, made these to the same idea as the “one large, one small” knitted animals which we’re featuring in the “New Patterns” on page 11.



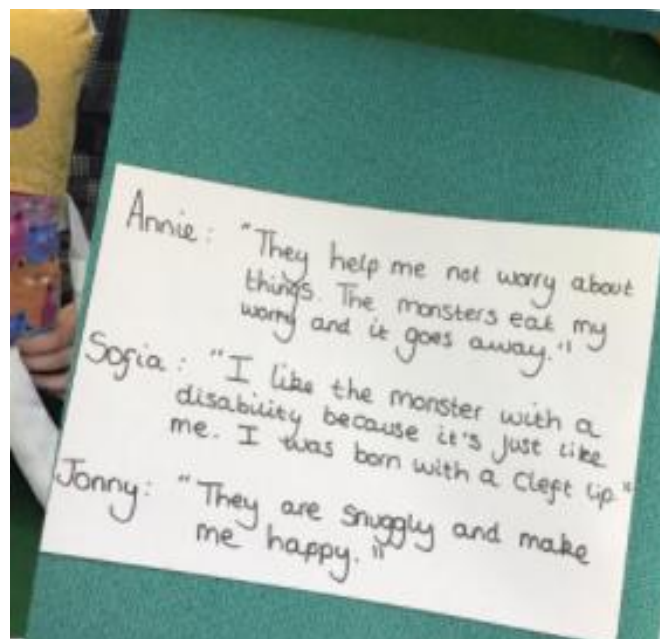
OWL-UVLY!

ANONYMOUS CASE STUDIES AND NEW FEEDBACK

Becky – Lead Manager of a Counselling Service

Liz in Surrey knitted Toffee the Teddy for us and he met a 10 year old girl today who has a number of worries, her mum and dad have recently separated and her best friend is moving schools so she is experiencing lot of change and anxiety. We wrote her worries on paper and fed them to Toffee for him to eat and enjoy 😊 It was lovely seeing the client hug Toffee and she was enamoured by the work that had gone into making him and grateful he would take her worries from her. So a massive thank you to Liz!

Today "Mojo" made by Jan in Derbyshire met a 6 year old girl at her school. The girl was adopted and then sadly her adopted parents separated, so she splits her time between them both as many children do. She was referred for being angry and not understanding the consequences of her actions and so we used "Mojo" today to think about how others might feel when she is angry, and whilst they might seem angry on the outside maybe actually underneath it they feel sad. Thank you Jan for creating "Mojo".



Year 6 pupil, aged 10, from a school in Wales writes:

Today I saw the Worry Monsters sent to my school by Knit-for-Nowt. They are great!! We feel comfortable talking to them. Sometimes it's hard to explain to an adult how you are feeling or what has happened. We can use the secret pockets to write down our feelings, so that we don't need to say the words out loud. The facial expressions are funny, so if a kid is feeling upset the monster would make them smile.

My favourite one is the Disability one. It can be used to show that everyone, no matter who they are or what their disability is, will be included in school. This monster could also be used to help the other kids understand how to show you care if you see a disabled person. After all, we are all different and should all be celebrated for who we are!

Today I used the monsters to act out something that happened at playtime. Mrs P didn't tell me, but I know that she knew I was talking about me. It didn't matter though, as Shhhhhhhh..... I wanted her to know it was me because talking to Mrs P makes me feel safe. The monsters will make all the kids feel safe. Thank you.



Maria – Head Teacher, Primary School, Wallasey

“Theo has been off school poorly and was upset and worried coming back to school, he told the worry frog about this and his worry disappeared and he had a great day!”



Debbie, ELSA therapist, Primary School, Dorset

Subject: Brilliant!!!!

Message: I just wanted to say you are amazing - all the fantastic knitters and seamstresses. I am blown away by the beautiful, gorgeous monsters we have just received and which will help our children in so many ways. Thank you, thank you, thank you xxxx

Lynne, ELSA, Primary School, Aberdeen

They've arrived!! Made it safely to my house 😊. When I saw them I almost burst into tears, they're just brilliant- I couldn't be happier. The kids will love them. Please, from the bottom of my heart can you pass on my thanks to all of these lovely crafters who make these amazing 'monsters', their kindness to do this & attention to detail.

Katie, ELSA, Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan

OH MY GOODNESS. I want to cry, my worry monsters are so beautiful. They will all be so loved by all my ELSA children, especially the disability and body image ones! I cannot wait to get back to school to use them.

Natalie, Norfolk

Our SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) was delighted with the Worry Monsters to the extent that we've launched them as part of our whole school well-being. Please thank the ladies who knitted them for us. The frog has had quite a fill of worries!



Beverley – ELSA and THRIVE practitioner, Primary School, Suffolk

Thank you for the amazing worry monsters, we are so grateful! As I am an Elsa and also a Thrive practitioner...and they are already being put to good use. I have one year 4 child whose mum is dying and she likes to come and check in, and is able to use the worry monsters as she needs them. I also have a year 3 child who suffers from anxiety and he has chosen one to have in his class so that the whole class can use it.

We are a large school with lots of anxiety issues and one thing we have started as a whole school is a worry box which is accessible to everyone in the main corridor. I have put one of the worry monsters here... it has only been there for one day but I checked on it at lunchtime and his tummy was full, I also observed a year 5 child who is normally very quiet using it, so I think this is going to prove to be very popular.

Thank you for the amazing service you provide, the worry monsters are so unique and the children have fallen in love with them all, they are going to be put to such good use!! A big thank you to all the amazing knitters who make them, they are providing such an amazing resource that means so much to the children!!

Sarah, ELSA, Primary School, Cheshire

Oh my goodness Clare, I've had to message you as my box has just arrived. They are beyond my hopes, absolutely gorgeous and so excited to get into school with them on Monday. The children are going to love them so much. Thank you. The biggest thank you, they've actually made me a touch emotional! Sarah xx

Sian, ELSA, Primary School, Cardiff

These wonderful worry monsters arrived at my home on Friday and I can't wait to introduce them to the children in our school on my return. I am simply blown away with what I have received and am so excited to start using them. Thank you to everyone who works so hard to provide such amazing items to use with children. These will help to make such a difference. From the bottom of my heart, thank you ❤️

Kerri, ELSA, Primary School, Kent

Wowza. They are amazing! Now the entire school staff think I've lost it, as I was like a kid at Christmas. Thank you so SO much!! I can't begin to tell you how much we all loved them – children too! Incredible. Really, a lovely kind and wonderful thing you do.

Claire, Primary School, Belfast

The worry monsters arrived safe and sound to Northern Ireland. They are just beautiful!!! Thank you so much!! The people who made these are so talented and absolute angels.

Julie, ELSA, Primary School, Lancs

Our monsters have arrived!!! They are even better than we could have imagined. Many thanks. Myself and the other ELSAs in school are really looking forward to using them in our sessions.



Sally, Assistant Head Teacher, Primary School, Northants

I just wanted to say a massive THANK YOU for our wonderful Worry monsters that arrived this week! I had ordered them without telling my Emotional Literacy Support Assistant so she was blown away when she and a couple of our children opened them yesterday morning. They are fabulous and made with such care and attention to detail. Please pass on our thanks to the amazing people who make them. They really will be very well used and a much treasured addition to our ELSA room.

In these pictures you can see the delight in their faces! It's just wonderful. Once again - thank you so much. I can't wait for our hand puppets now!



Hayley, Primary School, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

They are being used daily, which is brilliant to see and hear. They all have nicknames and we are delighted to see children going to them with a worry or having a chat and a hug or even reading them a story!!!



Tracy, Wellbeing practitioner, Primary School, Wales

Today I received my box of Worry Monsters from Knit-for -Nowt.

I would like to share a little about the school I work in and how your Worry Monsters will help our children. My role is to support the wellbeing of the children at our school. The school is situated on the outskirts of Cardiff. We are a busy but friendly school with just over 300 pupils on roll, plus 80 children in our nursery unit.

Returning to a normal routine following two year of Covid, we are seeing the impact it has had on the children's mental health. Some children returning to school are experiencing increased anxiety and some behavioural problems. The pandemic has brought up many new unexpected challenges to children's mental health and wellbeing. The disruption to their routine has been stressful, they have been bored, lonely and confused. It is more important than ever that we give the children the tools to learn that they can control their feelings, and that their feelings do not control them.

The monsters will be an incredible resource for school. I will be using the Worry Monsters to help children externalise their worries and anxieties. The Monster as a creature is separate from themselves, so helps children to view their worry as an external being. When children view their worries as a separate being, it becomes easier to challenge them or ignore them altogether. Once the monster has eaten a worry, as practitioners we have the opportunity to read, understand and discuss the worry shared with an adult.

The worry monsters you create will have such a positive impact on the children. It's wonderful to have the opportunity to let you know that your monsters will play a huge part in helping the children discuss and reduce their anxieties and worries. The dedication and workmanship shown by the Worry Monsters knitters is exemplary. The standard of every monster is unbelievable.

I cannot thank you enough for giving me a tool to help the future generation feel confident and courageous enough to open up to their anxieties, worries and fears - helping to restore their belief in themselves, so that they have the resilience to bounce back and pursue their academic abilities.

A “STRANDED” KNITTER.

Val, our pattern maker and knitter extraordinaire, tells of her Ozzie adventure!

When I checked in for my flight to Melbourne in February 2020 they were still asking, “Have you been to mainland China in the last two weeks?”

Of course not. I’ve been sitting at home knitting, as usual.

I was going to spend six weeks with family, and was armed with some luminous green yarn that William (6) had fallen in love with, and the appropriate colours to design the policeman puppets for the professionals set. I’d made the green teddy, and an outsized fluffy pink rabbit for Emily (4), and written up the policeman patterns when the world went pear-shaped and all the flights were grounded and lockdown due to begin at midnight.

My daughter thought of the essentials. “Have you got enough yarn, Mum?”

Five minutes walk away in the shopping plaza is a dangerous warehouse sized shop called Lincraft. It’s a bit like Hobbycraft with the addition of Manchester goods. That’s Australian for household linens. Though I’m only there 6 weeks in a normal year, I have a loyalty card and frequently earn \$10 off vouchers.

I scooted down the road and bought enough for a polo necked sweater for me (I’d only packed for summer), and the colours for nurse and doctor puppets.

Six lockdowns and nearly 20 months later, I had yarn from the dollar shops in the plaza: from Woolarium, my favourite shop on the High Street run by a lovely Yorkshire lass: and from Spotlight, another Hobbycraft lookalike. And still no planes.

Back in the UK my husband failed to notice a water leak and a quarter of the living room ceiling fell in, and there was nothing I could do about it.

Professional in a suit had joined the patterns on the website and Clare and I chatted on FaceTime and set up the Knitters and Makers group. I made a lovely new online friend, Mary Bendell, and our collaboration produced the eight Pick and Mix animal worry eaters. I’d test knitted dogs, cats, pigs, bees, owls and caterpillars. I’d also made a cover for a large easy chair from knitted rainbow squares and forty pairs of fingerless mitts for the Mother’s Day stall at school.

I’d only planned to make puppets for ease of packing, but in the end I had not only my two suitcases, but two enormous laundry bags full of prototypes to bring home.

I gave the children the choice of one each from the 30 or so they had been test driving as I made them. William, now 8, chose a velour teddy and went straight off to write out his worries and feed them in. Emily, now 6, chose the grey fluffy Bonbon rabbit pictured on the pattern. Much of the cheap acrylic yarn in Australia comes from China. Not only do they apparently tuck the start of the ball inside by hand, they roll it up into a tangled blob, sometimes so big that I once knitted a whole puppet from the tangle.

The yarn also smells odd, especially the fluffy sort. For a while I thought all the lockdown childcare and homeschooling exhaustion had caused a personal hygiene problem. Then I realised it was the yarn. "Are you sure, Emily?" I asked. "Doesn't it smell a bit to cuddle in bed?"

"It will remind me of you, Grandma." No comment.

I had my reply ready for when I finally checked in to travel home.

"Are you carrying any forbidden items madam?"

"Only monsters and body parts."

Sadly, no one ever asked me.

And my husband and neighbours put up bunting and brought flowers to welcome me home. And Clare was waiting with open arms: for 24 monsters and 148 puppets!

HAPPINESS IS



...knitting.





Once again, on behalf of the therapists and children, a huge “Thank You” to everyone who has sent in items to Knit-for-Nowt. Stephanie, a therapist working in Surrey sums it up, saying:

“These bring so much happiness to our children. I would like to say thank you so much for the joy you bring to the world. You probably don’t realise how many lives you have changed for the better and what a positive influence your hours of tireless work have on the world. The ripple effect is far reaching.”

So please continue to supply your wonderful items and have a
Happy Summer!



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

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