



WELCOME TO THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2022

Congratulations on almost completing the waiting list of just under 1,000 requests, received back in September of last year.

You have done a fantastic job and huge thanks go to all those who have contributed items and for keeping going despite Covid, heat waves, family responsibilities, holidays, garden weeds (!) and all the other things that get in the way of crafting! We are planning to open up the waiting list again imminently, but we need your help to do so!

APPEAL!

WE ARE NEARLY THERE!

REQUESTS REMAINING:

Teams needing MONSTERS: 40

Teams needing HAND PUPPETS: 28

CAN YOU HELP PLEASE?

Every single item you make goes to a therapist helping multiple children, so each one is vital. Now the autumn evenings will be drawing in we hope you feel like getting out the knitting needles again! Please settle down with a nice cuppa and your feet up and KNIT, KNIT, KNIT! Or SEW, SEW, SEW!



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LATEST NEWS

REQUESTS

There are many workers who tried last year to get their names down, but failed to do so before we had to close the waiting list again. Before we can open it we need to fulfil the remaining orders. Those therapists who are still on the list have waited a year now, so let's see if we can help them.

I hope that we'll be able to make a collective effort to make the items they need. However it's the high quality of the things that you make which counts. This is why our items are so popular with those working with children, so please take your time and don't rush to complete as many items as possible as quickly as possible, because this can impact the overall quality of them.

FACEBOOK

We have a main Facebook Page which is open to the public, and also a private Facebook group which can only be accessed and seen by KfN registered knitters who wish to be in it. We have "hidden" our group so that it cannot be seen by the general public, it's just for us!

Q: How do therapists know when our waiting list is about to open again?

A: FACEBOOK page for the general public

When therapists ask if they can request some items or ask when the waiting list will be opening up again they are told that the only way to find out is to "Follow" on our main Facebook page, (Knit-for-Nowt isn't on any other social media site). For those not au fait with Facebook, this simply means that the person "following" us will get alerts when anything is posted on that page. The date when the list will open is displayed on there in advance so that therapists know when they can apply. They then apply via the website. We now have just over 6,000 people who are "following" our Facebook page. This shows the extreme need, so we can confidently predict that the requests will not dry up any time soon!

Q: Is there anywhere I can get help if I have a knitting/crocheting/sewing question?

Answer 1: FACEBOOK PRIVATE GROUP for our knitters and makers

Many thanks go to Val who continues to do a sterling job of running and moderating this group. Many knitters have told us how much they appreciate being in the group, where you can get tips and suggestions, advice about your knits/sewing and can see pictures of people's work. It is a very kind and inclusive space, with no negativity at all, and it's

totally up to you as to whether you want to post comments, questions or pictures on there – many knitters/sewers just like to observe. The encouragement that knitters give to one another is really lovely and spurs everyone on to more achievements. If you are not on Facebook you won't be able to see what people are saying on there, but it is a great example of how Facebook doesn't necessarily have to be a bad thing. Facebook sometimes gets a bad press (quite understandably!), but it can be incredibly useful and is a real bonus for Knit-for-Nowt. If you wish to join our Facebook private group and you are a registered knitter with us please let Clare know. You can use a pseudonym on the site if you prefer. The group cannot be seen by anyone except the members of it.

Answer 2: If you're not on Facebook you can email Clare and she will refer you to one of our pattern makers, who will then get back to you directly. Your email address is only ever given out to pattern makers/experts on our team.

A real cutie by Helen!



NEWS FLASH!

THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT LUCKY DIP COMPETITION IS BACK!



We have a brand new competition for autumn 2022

This competition is NOT JUDGED and is free to enter. It's open only to knitters, crocheters and seamstresses already registered with Knit-for-Nowt.

Knit, crochet or sew an animal worry eater, a robot or 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! The difference this year is that we're including monsters along with animals, and also appealing to our wonderful seamstresses to enter too.

Let's see if we can create the BEST GALLERY EVER on the website!

RULES

- Your animal worry eater or 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> **(The competition is not for hand or finger puppets)**. Use the password to access the patterns or contact Clare.
- 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
- Deep pocket which must be the mouth (not tummy pocket)
- The item must be stuffed with approved stuffing, and in addition 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 animal worry eaters and worry monsters only, no 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 26th 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 28th 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 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 Christian name and county of the winners**, along with larger photos of their items, will feature in the next Newsletter

Please see the Competition TERMS AND CONDITIONS on the new "Competition 2022" 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

THIS MONTH'S TIP FOR MAKERS - SEAMS

Many knitters are skilled at sewing up seams neatly, but some items arrive with “higgledy piggedy” seams, particularly the back seam of a monster. If you think you might be in that category and are not confident of being able to sew up your monster neatly, please watch a YouTube video such as the one on the following link, as it's actually really easy to make the seams look good. We want our items to look professional and of a high standard.

Here's one link - ignore the adverts at the beginning, they only last a few seconds. The most useful demo for us when sewing the back seam of a monster is near the end of this video:

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

This picture shows how the centre seam has been sewn up using a different coloured thread, which, if you use this mattress stitch, is completely invisible, meaning that you can sew up with any coloured yarn, and it makes sewing up stripes really easy!



NEW PATTERNS ADDED RECENTLY – all are on the website

CROCHET ROBOT by Rachel



CROCHET DOG by Anne-Marie



CROCHET BODY IMAGE MONSTERS by Sally



COCHLEAR IMPLANT by Madeleine

Knitted and also a sewn version in felt



COMING SOON! BRAND NEW DYNOSAUR WORRY EATER PATTERN by Val.
This is "ANXIOUSAURUS"

NB. All registered knitters will receive an email when the pattern goes up on the website



SHOULD I MAKE MY MONSTER SCARY OR FRIENDLY?

ANSWER: either please! Feedback from therapists has repeatedly said that they can use both types of monster in their work. Most of our monsters inevitably should be friendly, but the occasional scary one is very useful.

SCARY!



FRIENDLY



GALLERY - ZIP- ZIP, HOORAY! (Sorry, terrible pun)



GALLERY – DISABILITY

It's suggested that you make a half leg or arm, or missing hand or foot. This is only meant to represent disability in general. Therapists may use it with disabled children, or more often the monster will be used for educating children about inclusivity.



GALLERY - SOME BEAUTIFUL BODIES! BODY IMAGE GALLERY



GALLERY - TOOTHY GRINS (some monsters have left their teeth in a pot by the bed!)



GALLERY - SEWN CELEBRITIES!



NEW SEWING PATTERN is now on the website

Helen has adapted her sewn monster pattern, with lots of new ideas and tips, especially for making the zip even easier! <https://www.knitfornowt.org/new-sewn-items-page>

If you're happy doing the old pattern please continue with it, but if you found the zip a bit tricky then do try this new version – you can see from the pictures that the zip is wider.



GALLERY – THE MORE THE MERRIER!

It's incredibly helpful if you can knit multiples of any items. It's lovely to have animals of different colours, or they can all be the same colours (as they are donated to different therapists), it's your choice. A special thank you goes to the makers of these multiples.





HAND PUPPET “PEOPLE”

When hand puppets are requested Knit-for-Nowt provides each therapist with a happy/sad sided family set of 6 (Mum, Dad, Gran, Grandad, boy, girl) which can all be pale pink or cream faces, or any shade of brown yarn for the faces, but not black yarn thanks. The heads can be stuffed or unstuffed but please see the patterns for stuffing the heads so that the stuffing is fully enclosed. We also provide a set of “professionals” puppets: doctor, nurse, police, judge, social worker, teacher and “professional in a suit”, which can be used as a judge, advocate or other professional that the child might come into contact with. The professionals in that set don’t need to be two sided, just a happy smile on one side of the puppet. **Please could knitters note that all puppets, including the boy and girl puppets, should be made to fit an adult hand so that the therapist can use them.**

This beautiful set was made by Lynne in West Yorkshire



And look at these amazing jumper designs in miniature by Alice



AND COMING SOON - EXCITING NEW HAND PUPPET PATTERNS!



GALLERY – LITTLE AND LARGE

Clare had an extensive conversation with a qualified Play Therapist, who told her that it was really useful in therapy to have a small matching item to go with the large worry eater. Thanks to all those who have made these – it's a good way of using up spare yarn in the colours you used for the larger animal! Here is a selection:



RECENT RECIPIENT FEEDBACK

A full list of the workplaces which have received our items is available on the website page “Quotes from Recipients” <https://www.knitfornowt.org/quotes-from-recipients>

Laura – Intervention team, Primary School, Wrexham

Laura’s request: Hello Knit for Nowt and all you wonderful people who provide these fantastic tools to help children and young people open up and talk about their feelings and emotions. My name is Laura. I work in a primary school and I am part of an intervention team, and we withdraw children from time to time from class to talk about their emotions. But most recently I have started to do a “nurture” lunchtime. I haven’t got any money or funding for this, it’s something I am running myself and I use mindful colouring, drawing and active listening for children and young people to open up. But when I saw your worry monsters I knew these would be perfect for the children and young people that I work with. I would be so grateful if you could add my name to the list. I have worked at this school for over 20 years, and what keeps me there is the children. Some don’t always have the best start in life and if I can help them in any way in the time I spend with them, from breakfast club to after school club and during the school day, I will try my best. Thank you for taking the time to read this request.

After Laura received her monsters:

I have just received my worry monsters and I am overwhelmed at how amazing they are.....I can’t even explain how useful these are going to be in my ELSA sessions with the children I work with from ages 6 to 11! They are going to benefit the children so much. I have a worry monster at my nurture lunch time sessions with children aged 10-11 but some are so reluctant (to take part) as I only have one monster. But now these are so interesting and unique and you can slip a note in them without anyone seeing. They are brilliant! Thank you again

Kirsten – ELSA, Infant School, Hants

Oh my goodness... Wow!! I honestly can’t thank you and all the lovely people at Knit-for-Nowt enough for the amazing box of worry monsters that arrived this morning. You are all very talented

and super kind 🥰. These monsters will be cherished and used to bring some much needed calm feelings to many that have additional emotional support for various reasons. Once again thank you for all your precious time.

Jenna – Junior School, Notts

Our box arrived in the post today. Thank you so much, I am absolutely overwhelmed with the love and care that has gone into them! I can’t wait to show everyone when we get back to school! I’m the senior mental health lead and mental health first aider. We will definitely put the monsters to good use. We also have an ELSA and a ‘Time to Talk’ practitioner within our school who will make good use of them too – your charity is incredible!

Alison – Pastoral Lead, Primary School, Bolton, Lancs

Just to let you know that monsters arrived yesterday and I am in love with each and every single one of them. I know that each monster will have a list of children to see after half term. I love the monster wearing ear defenders. We have an ASD provision at our school for children with Autism and quite a few of them wear ear defenders. Just perfect. I can't wait to show them off to the staff too. I'm going to have to keep them under lock and key because they will soon disappear. I will send an update once I have started to use them. Thank you to you and your team.

Fay – Family Support Worker, Primary School, Hereford

Wow... just wow! The monsters are incredible, thank you so much. I was talking with an upset child who had finished sharing his worries or so I thought. I asked him to help me to unpack the monsters and we had a lovely time discovering each one. The child began opening up to further concerns and it was lovely to have these now out in the open and to be able to support him as he now needs. I now plan to invite the children that I have under my radar as I think they will enjoy meeting the monsters too. The body confidence and 'pants' monsters have particularly stood out to me, thank you so much.

Kirsty – ELSA lead, Primary School, Wakefield, Yorks

We would like to say a massive thank you for all of your kindness sending the worry monsters to our school. They are used on a daily basis. We have a nurture room called "The custard room" and they live in there; children use them and leave their worries with the monsters. This morning a child was struggling to come to school, they used a worry monster and put their worry inside, this helped them share their worry and they was able to continue with the school day. We have named them and they have a very special place within our school.

Kirsty holding some of our monsters

Tricia – Primary School, Tyne and Wear

I would just like to say a huge Thank You to you and all your knitters. A massive box arrived this afternoon with some absolutely amazing worry monsters, I am overwhelmed.

Even though the school holidays have just begun I can't wait to get back into school to share these amazing works of art. I will share them with my colleagues and keep two for my school. I have

already picked my favourites  I'm delighted and can't thank you all enough. Great to see disability being represented too. I will of course get back to you when I have used one in a

session. Happy knitting 

Carla – Thrive Practitioner, Northumberland

Message: Hi Clare, I am a Thrive Practitioner and Learning Support Assistant. We have a nurture hub within school where we support all pupils with social, emotional, developmental and anxiety as well as behaviour problems. My setting offers support to these pupils through various different interventions. We have 4 fully qualified ELSA support assistants, 6 Thrive trained practitioners, an in-house counselling service as well as dog therapy. We are a middle school based in a small town with many of our pupils coming from low income families. The support we offer is delivered through specialised programs with the use of play therapy in order to support and nurture developmental delays (you can find more about this at Thrive Approach.com). We have developed strong links with supporting schools within our partnership, therefore offering support to children from as young as 2 through to 18. Within our setting we specialise in pupils aged 9-13 many of who have never experienced something as simple as a family day out. In order to help these children we often use resources to express emotions. If you could support us we would love to receive worry dolls and hand puppets to help support our pupils and future pupils through emotional experiences.

Tracy – Independent Children's Counsellor, Beds

Oh my goodness, I received them today – they are fabulous!!! So much has gone into making them, thank you so, so much. I have one bought one at the moment which is so worn out, as I have to take the children's papers out and put them in again next session, as it's shared between them all. Now any new children will have their own special one. It never sat well with me swapping their notes out! Once again thank you to all those that made this possible

Analyn – counsellor, Girls' Secondary School, Herts

The worry monsters have been so overwhelming, and I am just in awe of how much time and effort everyone had taken to put so much thought and love into each individual monster.

Sameena – Junior and Infant School, West Yorkshire

Dear Clare and all the amazing people involved with Knit-for-Nowt, I have just received the most amazing box of worry monsters and they're just incredible. So detailed and lovingly made, I was totally overwhelmed with your generous donation to our school. I know the children will respond so well to them and we are so lucky to have received them. The time, effort and love that have gone into them is clear to see. Thank you all once again and I will be sending you pictures of them in use, hopefully as soon as we return to school. I'm so excited and can't wait to show them to the children!

**Emma – ELSA, Primary School, Durham**

Oh my goodness!!! I've just arrived home from holiday to this wonderful box of items. School will absolutely not be able to believe it when we return in September!!! Thank you so very much, I'm absolutely buzzing!

Sharon – ELSA, Primary School, Devon

I'm sorry, I know that it's the weekend butOh, where do I start? I'm so emotional right now, as I know how much these precious worry monsters/creatures are going to help the children in our school. I can't stop looking through the box, they are all amazing. Please pass on to the knitting/stitching angels how much these have meant. I'm blown away by the amount you have sent, which will aid my colleague and myself in providing comfort and joy - and most of all give the children who need it the most freedom to be able to express their worries/anxieties to an amazing creature who will not judge them or make them feel uncomfortable. It will give myself and my colleague an extra tool to give the help and guidance they may need. Thank you so much, you have no idea how much this means. Bless you all and may you stay safe, keep healthy and have an abundance of happiness and blessings xxx

Rebecca – ELSA, Primary School, Worcestershire

I just wanted you to know what a huge success our worries monsters have been. The children absolutely love them and they have become indispensable. A huge thank you to you all.



Alison - Primary School, Essex

Thank you so much for the fabulous collection of resources we received to use in our primary school. They have already been shared with many of the children I meet with for Talktime. Toothy the worry monster is a particular favourite with the children and I find Mojo a really useful resource. Thank you to all of your volunteers who do such a wonderful job !

Mary - Primary School, East Yorkshire

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.

Caroline – ELSA, Primary School, Cardiff

I was so excited today to receive my box. One of my children who I see helped me to open them. It has been a hit from the off. The girl that I see is very closed and hard to get a conversation with. Not today - best session ever. She took a liking to the Teddy called Toffee, she was laughing and talking with it, and even said, "I think he is my best friend". Just wanted to share this with you. I'm so happy and can see that they are going to be a great hit. Thank you.

Diane - Specialist setting for children unable to enter mainstream school, Wales

Received my beautiful monsters yesterday, I am so pleased!! The amount of love and work that has gone into them is incredible. They are so appreciated and will bring so much fun and learning to the children. Massive thanks to all involved in this project xx

Hayley - Junior School, Hampshire

When I opened the box, I was amazed at the detail and different types of monsters that you had included. All the staff thought they were fantastic too and they got shown excitedly around the school. We knew these were a great addition to our school and would help and benefit so many children.

One child grew attached to the monkey that we received and carries him around with him all day as his little bit of security and comfort, monkey even joins in with class lessons.

The rest of the worry monsters are in our nurture room and the children love to cuddle them and put their worries in them and we also use them in our nurture sessions. Wow, the children love them! They really are fantastic and I can't thank you and your volunteers enough, you're all wonderful! Thank you, thank you, thank you!

What sort of worries do our worry monsters and puppets help to alleviate in children?

Certain risk factors can make some children and young people more likely to experience mental health problems than others.

These factors include:

- **having a long-term physical illness**
- **a parent who has had mental health problems, problems with alcohol or has been in trouble with the law**
- **the death of someone close to them**
- **parents who separate or divorce**
- **experiencing severe bullying or physical or sexual abuse**
- **poverty or homelessness**
- **experiencing discrimination**
- **caring for a relative, taking on adult responsibilities**
- **having long-lasting difficulties at school**

Source – mentalhealth.org.uk



KNIT-FOR-NOWT – HOW DID IT START?

Clare writes:

I have been asked quite a few times by knitters how Knit-for-Nowt came into being. A few years ago I retired and was casting around for some voluntary work to do. One day I was walking around our village musing on this when suddenly an idea popped into my head. I've always loved knitting (although I am very much a beginner!) and thought I could knit some simple scarves to donate. But where should I send them? I suddenly realised that if folk wanted to donate knitted items it wouldn't be very easy for them to find out who was in need at any particular time. Maybe I could link knitters to organisations that needed items!

Initially the idea was to appeal for knitted blankets and clothes (cardigans, jumpers, scarves, hats etc.) and donate them locally. Having previously run a local toy charity with my husband, we had developed a list of contacts in Social Services and local voluntary organisations and so I started asking some of them if they'd like us to knit for them.

The need for clothes and blankets was great, but it wasn't long before one of the Social Workers asked me specifically one day (showing me a picture of a worry monster): "Could your knitters make anything like this? "I don't know" I replied, "what is it?" I'd never heard of worry monsters! But I soon became aware of their use in therapy and the huge difference that these can make to therapists helping severely worried children. Two weeks later I had another request. Could we make some hand puppets in the form of a family, with happy/sad sides to their faces?

It wasn't very easy to get permission to send these out, as I had to be visited by a Trading Standards Inspector who classified them as "therapy items", (rather than toys), and also get insurance cover. But once various issues had been sorted out I was allowed to go ahead.

Knitters responded keenly and I realised that if I concentrated on just monsters and puppets I could post them anywhere in the UK, so it didn't need to be just a local service. And via the website I started receiving offers of help from knitters all over the UK.

The advent of our use of Facebook changed everything. Once the therapists got wind of what we provide there was an avalanche of requests from all over the UK, necessitating a waiting list.

Well the rest is history! And I have to admit that it has somewhat taken over my life (but for the most part in an enjoyable way!). We have learnt a lot since we started, in particular how to make our items more appealing to children and useful to the therapists. Knit-for-Nowt now receives requests from many different types of therapist, including Child Protection social work teams, psychotherapists, children's Counsellors, Play Therapists and ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants), who are all highly skilled.

And our happy band of knitters range in age from 12 to 95!

Tracy, ELSA, Cardiff – received a box of our monsters in July.

“I think it’s so important for our future generations to grow up into happy, confident, resilient adults. Their emotional health and well-being is paramount to this. If we teach our children to be open and honest with themselves, speaking out about their feelings and having empathy towards others, I will have achieved my goal in life. Thank you again for the wonderful work you do.”



When you donate items to Knit-for-Nowt, even though you do so individually from your home environment, you are joining a warm, friendly and inclusive group of people who all have a common aim: to help children overcome their worries. We think of ourselves as a community of like-minded folk who love crafting, whether it’s knitting, crocheting or sewing.

Thank you to all who are in Knit-for-Nowt’s team, your help is invaluable, and without you we couldn’t exist.



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

www.knitfornowt.org email: knitfornowt@gmail.com 01377 270624 or 07538 157487