



CraftCafé



Creative Solutions to Isolation & Loneliness

Social Return on Investment Evaluation

Summary Report
August 2011



**Social
Value
Lab**



**Impact
Arts**



Introduction

This study focuses on the impact of the Craft Café; a pilot programme from Impact Arts that seeks to reduce the isolation and loneliness experienced by older people, to enable them to make positive lifestyle changes associated with ageing and, ultimately, to bring about a better quality of life.

The evidence contained in the report is based on a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis, an accepted method of measuring the social and environmental impact of activities, projects, and programmes and of placing a monetary value on them. The focus of this SROI analysis is on the impact of the Craft Café during 2010/11.

The context

All available data points to a rapidly ageing population in Scotland; a trend that is set to continue. As the number of older people in the country increases, more are living alone, on low incomes, and socially isolated. Social isolation and loneliness are consistently associated with reduced health and wellbeing among older people.

There is also emerging evidence that demonstrates the positive relationship between active engagement in the arts by older people and the maintenance of their physical, mental, and social well-being.

At the same time there is growing evidence to show that extra spending on services that promote the health, well-being and independence in older people can prevent or delay the need for higher intensity (and more expensive) care. Prevention in this context is clearly better than cure.

The Craft Café

The Craft Café was conceived by Impact Arts as a safe, social and creative environment where older people can learn new skills, renew social networks, and reconnect with their communities.

Activities are intended to foster the intrinsic joys of creativity, artistic expression, and learning. From this older people experience greater confidence, self-esteem, interest in life, often feeling more engaged and more involved. This in turn gives people the confidence to see and do things differently and leads to raised expectations, inspiration, and motivation to make important lifestyle changes.

The Craft Café programme is currently being piloted in the Castlemilk and Govan areas of Glasgow in partnership with Cassiltoun and Elderpark Housing Associations. In these areas of multiple deprivation there is a high percentage of older tenants living alone and facing exclusion from social and cultural life.

Since first opening its doors in 2009, with support from the Scottish Government's Wider Role funding programme, the Craft Café pilots have engaged with over 100 people aged between 50 and 90 years old. During 2010/11, a total of 72 older people attended the Craft Café (43 attending in Govan and 29 in Castlemilk).

The Outcomes of the Craft Café Programme

The study shows that the Craft Café pilots have given rise to a number of important positive outcomes.

For the older people that participate

- * Through the activities participants feel stimulated and inspired, leading to a sense of self-worth and fulfilment
- * Participants make new friends, form better and stronger relationships, and are therefore less lonely
- * Regular attendance brings mental stimulation, a more positive outlook, and reduced levels of anxiety and depression
- * Over time participants become more confident, more independent, more active in their community, leading to a better quality of life
- * Participants start to take more regular and more vigorous exercise as a result of attending
- * Participants take greater notice of their health and reduce harmful behaviours (e.g. smoking, drinking, and poor diet)

For the family members of participants

- * The new interests and motivation of the older person leads to more conversation and a better relationship for family members
- * The companionship and interests provided through the Craft Café means that family members worry less about their loved one
- * The group support offered by the Craft Café means that the older person requires less attention by the family
- * The creative output of the older person leads to increased appreciation and interest in art among family members

For partner Housing Associations

- * The publicity gained from the programme and association with Impact Arts leads to improved Housing Association profile and reputation
- * A more settled, satisfied, and involved group of older tenants enables the Housing Association to provide a more efficient service

- * The catalyst of the Craft Café leads to a more vibrant programme of activities for older people and greater demand for tenancies
- * The stimulation, interaction and wellbeing derived by older people enables them to sustain an unassisted tenancy for longer

For the National Health Service

- * The therapeutic value of attendance of the Craft Café brings about a reduction in the symptoms of anxiety and depression
- * The companionship and positive outlook brought about means that participants reduce or stop smoking completely
- * The improved physical and mental health of Craft Café participants leads to a reduced frequency of GP attendance

The Social Return on Investment

The SROI analysis shows that the Craft Café programme has been highly effective and created social value for each of its main stakeholder groups.

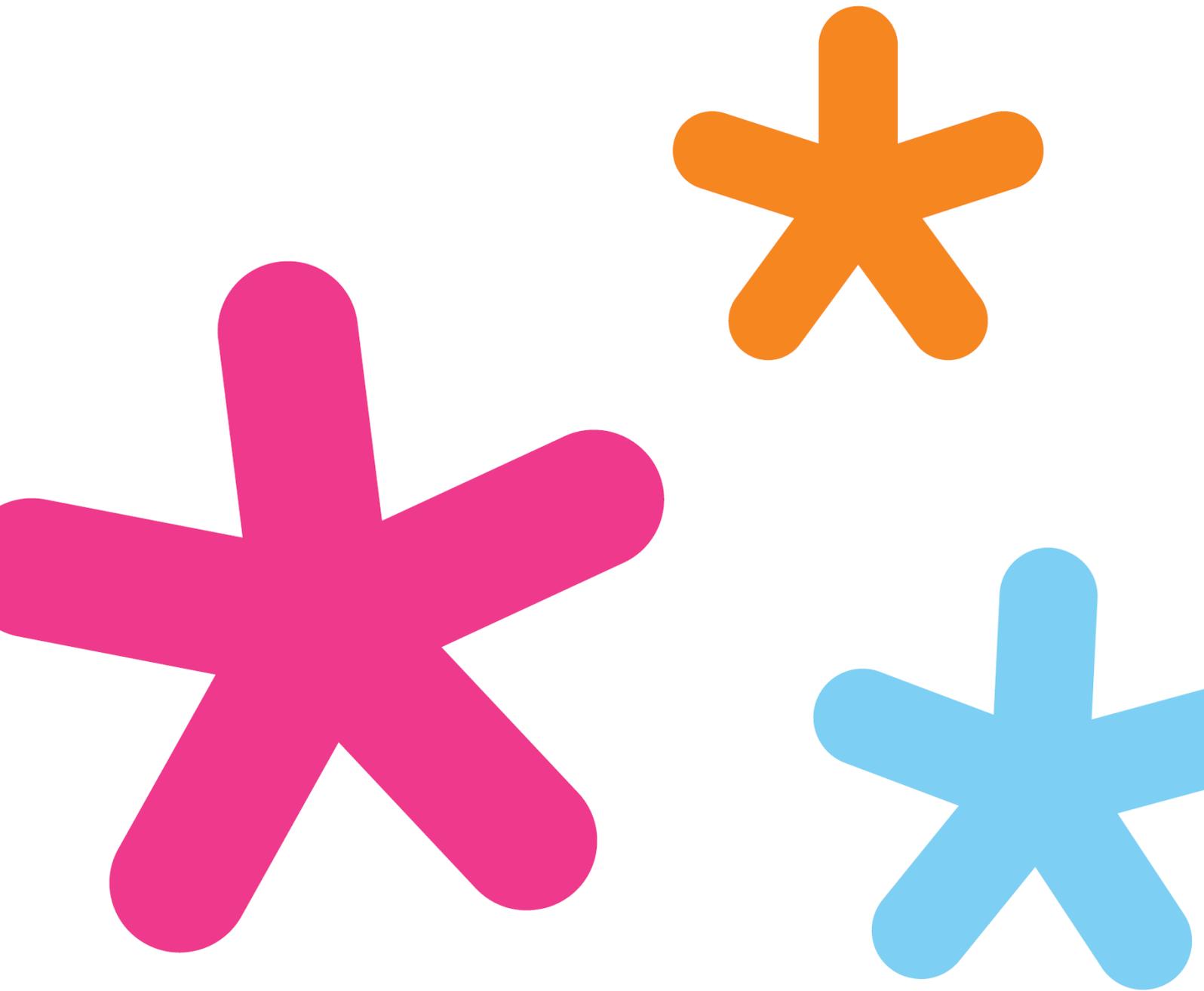
The analysis presented shows that the programme requires £1,170 of investment (direct and in-kind) per older person per year. This in turn creates a social value of £7,155 direct to each older person that attends during that year.

The analysis shows that overall the Craft Café pilots have created between £4.86 and £9.57 of social value for every pound of investment. Based on rigorous research and best assumptions, the report estimates a Social Return on Investment of £8.27 : £1.

Impact Arts is now at the point of considering ways to further develop and roll-out the Craft Café concept more widely across Scotland.

The SROI evaluation report concludes that any scaled-up programme by Impact Arts would provide an excellent opportunity for an appropriate 'investor' seeking to achieve a positive social rather than financial return. In particular the programme provides an opportunity for:

- * Housing Associations who wish to forge a stronger relationship with older tenants while improving their quality of life and enabling them to live longer and independently within their own home
- * The NHS which holds an interest in the securing the benefits of low-level and preventative support to older people and the associated downstream benefits on health service spending
- * Other investors who hold an interest in improving the circumstances for vulnerable and isolated older people living in some of Scotland's most deprived communities.



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