



A lifetime of specialist care

**PRESS RELEASE**

**24 December 2018**

**Hospitals' arts team awarded over £70k to help  
patients tackle loneliness with song**

**Project funded through the Building Connections Fund Youth strand,  
delivered by the Co-op Foundation**

Young patients with cystic fibrosis (CF) at Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals are set to benefit from an innovative new project, after the hospitals' arts team was awarded more than £75,000 of funding.

Young people aged 13 to 25 will be offered face-to-face singing workshops while they are in hospital and, for the very first time, have access to a brand new online 'singing portal' so they can continue to reap the benefits of singing when they return home.

As people with CF are told to avoid close contact with other people who have the condition due to the risk of cross-infection, *Sing for CF* will allow them to join virtual singing workshops – enabling those who would not be able to sing together in real life, to do so online for the first time. rb&hArts, the hospitals' arts team, has been awarded £78,707 towards the project from a fund tackling youth loneliness.

Experts believe there may be physical benefits from singing for people with cystic fibrosis – it encompasses breath control and vocal exercises, which are included within conventional physiotherapy regimes.

rb&hArts will recruit five young ambassadors with CF to have training in leadership skills and play a key role in jointly creating the project with staff.

Patient experience project manager, and arts lead at rb&hArts, Karen Taylor, said:

“Singing in groups is an effective way to support people promote their social, physical and mental wellbeing. We know that young people with chronic health conditions experience

frequent and long hospital admissions. Isolated from friends, family and their community, they are more likely to experience periods of loneliness.

“Having young people leading the project will also help us develop more effective youth-centred creative services: they will also create and run a conference, ensuring the findings from *Sing for CF* are widely shared with others seeking innovative approaches to reducing loneliness in young people”.

Funding has been awarded from the £2m Youth strand of the Building Connections Fund, a partnership between government and the Co-op Foundation.

It is part of the wider £11.5m Building Connections Fund that will support more than 120 organisations to increase social connections and create a sense of community and belonging.

The remaining £9.5 million of the Building Connections Fund is being delivered by the Big Lottery Fund.

Minister for Loneliness, Mims Davies, said: “There is no one cause of loneliness and therefore no one solution. That is why we are working alongside a broad range of businesses, voluntary organisations and local councils to ensure that those who feel alone are best supported.

“From new digital communities, to sports classes that bring people together, this fund will go a long way to achieving that goal. I am committed to encouraging open conversations around this sensitive topic to reduce the stigma and create an environment where everyone is better connected.”

Co-op Foundation is the Co-op’s charity. Its Belong network of partners connects and empowers young people to tackle loneliness. It also works to strengthen local youth services and combat the stigma of loneliness.

Jamie Ward-Smith, Chair of the Co-op Foundation, said: “By partnering with government on the youth strand of the Building Connections Fund, Co-op Foundation is supporting groups of young people most affected by loneliness to strengthen their connections and sense of belonging, and build their confidence and skills.

“We look forward to working with all our partners over the coming years, helping them to tackle youth loneliness at a community level and boosting our joint understanding of loneliness.”

Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals Charity, which funds rb&hArts, is one of 22 organisations receiving grants from the £2m fund, which is targeted at organisations supporting young people in more deprived areas of England or with specific circumstances that increase the risk of loneliness.

For more information on the Co-op Foundation, visit [www.coopfoundation.org.uk](http://www.coopfoundation.org.uk)

For more information on rb&hArts, visit: [www.rbht.nhs.uk/arts](http://www.rbht.nhs.uk/arts)

**Ends**

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**Notes to editors:**

**About Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation**

Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust is the UK's largest specialist centre for the treatment of heart and lung disease. Working from two sites, Royal Brompton Hospital in Chelsea, West London, and Harefield Hospital, near Uxbridge, the Trust has an international reputation for the expertise of its staff, high standard of care and research success. Experts at the Trust help patients from all age groups who have heart and lung problems and provide some of the most complex surgery and sophisticated treatments available anywhere in the world.

The Trust is the UK's largest centre for the treatment of adult congenital heart disease and is the country's leading provider of specialist respiratory care. Over the years the Trust has been responsible for major medical breakthroughs, such as the UK's first combined heart and lung transplant. It established the UK's first adult service for cystic fibrosis, which is now one of Europe's biggest treatment centres for the condition, and has pioneered the use of primary angioplasty for the treatment of heart attacks. Today the Heart Attack Centre at Harefield has one of the fastest arrival-to-treatment times in the UK, a crucial factor in patients' survival.

As a member of the Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC), in collaboration with Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare Trust and The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, the Trust helps to drive innovation and improved care for over 1.1 million patients each year in North West London, by aligning the research, education and clinical services of the partner organisations. For further information, visit [www.rbht.nhs.uk](http://www.rbht.nhs.uk)

**About rb&hArts**

rb&hArts delivered through Royal Brompton & Harefield Hospitals Charity is the Trust's dedicated arts department, manages a programme of activities and commissions to enhance the Patient Experience and promote wellbeing through the arts for patients, their families, staff and the local community. rb&hArts has been developing a number of innovative singing for health programme supporting patients while in care and outpatients.

- Singing for Breathing started in 2008 and is the longest running British Lung Foundation accredited singing for lung health group. It offers physical warm ups, vocal coaching, breath management techniques and peer-support as well as group singing for people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease . It aims to offer an inclusive and fun approach to improved self-managed for people with long-term conditions.
- Vocal Beats supports young patients on Rose Ward, the Paediatric ward of Royal Brompton Hospital and adults (17 to 25) in Harefield Hospital with personalised creative music making and beat boxing sessions. Vocal Beats was recently featured in the BBC Celebrity Bargain Hunt.

**[www.rbht.nhs.uk/arts](http://www.rbht.nhs.uk/arts) #RBHARTS**

#### **About the Building Connections Fund Youth strand**

- 22 projects have received funding from the Building Connections Fund Youth strand - a partnership between government and the Co-op Foundation.
- Funding of up to £80,000, to be spent by March 2021, was available for projects that supported any groups of young people within the most deprived 30% areas of England or that mainly benefited young people with any one or more of the following circumstances:
  - Being a carer
  - Being unemployed or precariously employed
  - Experiencing bereavement
  - Having a disability or long-term health condition
  - Having been in the care system.

#### **About Co-op Foundation**

- Co-op Foundation is the Co-op's charity, set up to help communities UK-wide work together to make things better.
- Co-op Foundation is the leading funder of projects tackling youth loneliness in the UK. Its 'Be-long' programme aims to connect and empower at least 5,000 young people while also strengthening youth services and tackling stigma associated with loneliness.
- The Foundation also provides interest-free loans and grants to eligible organisations looking to grow sustainably-funded community spaces.
- Co-op Foundation is a working name of Co-operative Community Investment Foundation, a charity registered in England and Wales (1093028) and Scotland (SC048102).
- [www.coopfoundation.org.uk](http://www.coopfoundation.org.uk)



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