





WELCOME TO THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT NEWSLETTER MARCH 2025







Spring has finally sprung! We are all emerging like small animals from hibernation after the dark winter months! A huge thank you to those of you who continued to knit, crochet and sew for KfN during the cold winds, gales, rain and snow. You have helped tremendously to get our waiting list down and we hope to get to the end of it during 2025.

But we need to keep going because there are therapists on our list who have been waiting for nearly 3 years. And of course we all know that there are hundreds, possibly thousands, of therapists who didn't manage to get their name on the list and who are desperate to receive our items after that.





What's in this Newsletter?

_	
4 3	
	Intro
1-2	HILLIU

- 3 Latest KfN news and requests from Clare
- 4 Star letter from a therapist
- 5 THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT SPRING EFFORT!
- 6-7 Article amazing knitting records!
- 8 "Why I make items for Knit-for-Nowt", quotes from you to us
- 9 New patterns
- 10 Tips for makers and Val's Tip of the Month
- 11 Sewing up and embroidery love it or hate it??!
- **12-17** Recent FEEDBACK from therapists
- 18-19 GALLERY Recent toothies
- 20 GALLERY Octopi
- 21 GALLERY crochet triceratops
- **22** GALLERY sewn monsters
- 23 A frog's tongue!!
- 24 Safety checks you can make yourself
- 25 Summary of all items we make choose any you enjoy!
- **26** End page and contact details



LATEST NEWS

STATS:

Number of therapists supplied since November 2022 (when waiting list opened):

1518

Number of therapists still on the waiting list:

288

Number of organisations supplied in total so far since we started:

2952

Notes from Clare:

- Please remember, as I mentioned in the previous Newsletter, that Sara, owner of Black Sheep Wools yarn shop www.blacksheepwools.com is offering all Knit-for-Nowt makers a 10% discount. If you haven't been sent it, please apply to Clare for the discount code. Then you can order quoting the code either on the phone, online, or in person, and you will get 10% off your purchases. Code is valid for the whole of 2025.
- Thanks to those of you who are including in their parcel the Trade Name of the stuffing used. Please could everyone remember to do so, as it makes the job of admin so much easier for me, thank you. I need the name eg. Hobbycraft, Habico, Trimits, Hollowfill etc.
- For a full list of all organisations/individuals which have been supplied with our items go to the website page "Quotes from Recipients". You can then look for your own region
- If you want to find out how the waiting list is doing, the number of therapists waiting can be found on the "Waiting List Information" page of the website, which is updated regularly
- Just a reminder that all technical knitting and/or knitting pattern questions are best directed towards Val please on knitfornowtnewmakers@gmail.com
- Many folk ask me what size our items need to be ideally because it's amazing how items which are knitted from exactly the same pattern can vary a lot in size when made by different makers! If I mention that an item is perhaps on the small side, people often, very understandably, are thinking, "But I followed the pattern faithfully!" I'm told by those in the know (not me!) that this can be caused by an individual knitter's/crocheter's tension, the size of needles combined with that tension and also the type of yarn, as yarns marked DK or Aran do vary tremendously in their thickness. So all of these factors (or a combination) can be the cause of items ending up too small. Our worry monsters and our animal and robot worry eaters are designed to be able to be used in a whole class or group therapy situation where there will be multiple worry papers posted into them, so they need to be large. Recommended size is a minimum of 12" and a maximum of 17" (measured from top of head to bottom of body, not counting the legs). Items aimed at individual children can be smaller (although they don't have to be!) eg. abuse, disability. The only ones which are designed specifically to be smaller are the Body Image pair because they count as one item and therefore take up much more room in the boxes.

STAR LETTER

Matt, CEO and Therapeutic Practitioner, Cambridge Acorn Project

I am just writing to express my deepest thanks from everyone at Cambridge Acorn Project for the amazing donation of worry monsters, emotional toys and therapeutic animals - the octopus has had particular resonance with everyone in the team and will become the centrepiece of our new therapeutic youth club for primary age children which will be starting in January! We do quite a challenging job and quite often we find ourselves likening it to a war, particularly when we are battling the many systems which are supposed to support traumatised children when they have been through awful experiences. We often feel quite alone and frustrated in this battle and I have to say that you provided us with our very own Dunkirk moment when the box of toys was shared with the team a couple of weeks ago, as it gave everyone such an incredible lift and the emotion in the room was very palpable and strong. It really gave us all a very strong sense that we were not battling alone! So this is just a small way of saying a massive thank you to you, not just for the amazing donations, which I know will have a dramatic impact on children and young people that we work with, but also on ourselves to know that we are supported and valued by such an amazing organisation as your own. As noted, the octopus has had a particularly powerful impact on the team and takes pride of place in the team room and in team meetings!



The main reason for writing this letter is, again, to express our profoundest and deepest thanks for this incredible and amazing donation and the invaluable and priceless moment it provided us as a team to know our work is so valued and supported. Thank you so much for the inspiration that you have provided for us and the young people that we work with.

THE KNIT-FOR-NOWT BIG SPRING EFFORT!!

As you'll have seen on page 3 we currently still have 288 therapists still waiting. This list was nearly 2,000 requests long back in November 2022 and you have worked amazingly hard to get it down this far.

But the ones still on the list have now been waiting over 2 years, and our target is to supply all of them before the end of 2025 so that no-one will have had to wait over 3 years (which is quite long enough anyway!)

So we want to thank all those of you who are supplying items regularly in such great quantities and huge thanks for your loyalty to this charity. To anyone who hasn't donated in a while please could you consider doing so now?

CAN WE FINISH THIS WAITING LIST by the end of this year?

YES WE CAN!

PLEASE HELP US – EVERY SINGLE ITEM YOU MAKE GOES TO HELP AN INDIVIDUAL CHILD OR MULTIPLE CHILDREN AND WILL BE USED FOR YEARS TO COME WITH SO MANY.



AMAZING KNITTING RECORDS!

The most people knitting

Do you enjoy knitting with a group of friends? The National Federation of Women's Institutes managed to set the record for the most people knitting simultaneously in a single location. This was set by 3,083 people at the Royal Albert hall in London, UK in May 2012. Amazing!



The longest scarf knitted whilst running a marathon

Whilst running the Kansas City Marathon (in Kansas City, Missouri, USA) David Babcock managed to knit a scarf measuring a whopping 3.70m (12ft 1.75in) while still finishing the run in 5 hr 48 min 27 sec. in October 2013.



Largest knitting needles

Did you know that there is a world record for the largest knitting needles? Jim Bolin, in Casey, Illinois, USA created a set which measured 3.98m (13 ft 0.75 in) long and with a diameter of 8.25 cm (3.25 in). Jeanette Huisinga then used them to knit a 10×10 tension square to prove the needles are functional.



Fastest crocheter

Did you ever stop and wonder how fast you crochet? Or challenge yourself to see how many stitches you can create in 60 seconds. Lisa Gentry of Monroe, Louisiana, USA did just that, managing to set a record of 5,118 stitches in just 30 minutes! That is the equivalent of 170 stitches per minute!

Longest scarf knitted by a team

In May 2002 work started on a scarf for Ty Hafan -The Children's Hospice in Wales. 2000 knitters took part in this three-year long project to create a scarf that measured an amazing 33.74 miles (54.29km) Upon completion the scarf was sewn into blankets for 'Feed the Children'





WHY I MAKE ITEMS FOR KNIT-FOR-NOWT – quotes from you

I always hope to raise a smile with my designs or at least provide a talking point for therapists & support workers. It must be hard to know how to begin a conversation with so much distress in these children's lives

Oh I'm so very glad you like them — And I'm so thankful to be able to help in some small way in these increasingly tough times for so many children and young people - it's heartbreaking. It's heartening to know that KfN is a source of encouragement and hope for so many on the front line.

I love making the little guys I send you, and it means so much that they will be used and loved. I must admit I can't resist giving them a few cuddles myself before I pack them off to you!

I just wish I could do more. When you read these letters from the therapists it is so sad. Thank you for sharing with me the desperate need for puppets.

I'm so pleased my last set of Toothies are ok and do hope they'll be of great comfort to the children they meet. I lost my father suddenly when I was 13 and so understand the turmoil an experience like that causes. Hopefully, with the help of your wonderful scheme, the Toothies and their friends, plus the amazing therapists can guide those children needing stability, control and comfort in their lives. We can all make some difference.

I suppose I already knew I was addicted to KfN knitting, but more proof this morning when I found myself finishing and attaching my ape's first arm and hand while still in my dressing gown!

"Miep" Gies, the incredible woman who hid Anne Franke and her family during WW2 lectured after the war on how we can all be a little light in the darkness. I think of all your contributors as being little lights creating a bigger one which you shine into the terrible darkness in which these children live.

It is a joy to be able to do this and contribute something towards the way KfN is making such a difference in children's lives.



NEW PATTERNS

As mentioned before, we do ask that you please run past us any new ideas for patterns before embarking on making them, as it's important that all patterns are needed by the therapists and we can't know if we don't ask them first! We now have a really comprehensive selection of patterns so the only new ones we are accepting are those needed/suggested by the therapists specifically.

Rachel's new pattern for crochet hand puppets with stuffed heads is now on the website. The pattern is superb, so we hope you'll have fun making these, they are very much needed



OCTOKITTY!

A new pattern by Dawn for a hand puppet version of the octopus worry eater has now been added on to the end of the octopus pattern. A hand puppet alongside a larger worry eater was requested specifically as it has use in therapy



USEFUL TIPS FOR MAKERS

- Liz says: for anyone like me who has trouble sourcing buttons for hand puppet eyes locally, I can recommend "Totally Buttons" (online) who supply the small, 2 hole buttons in various colours including green, which I've used for a Froglet or two! You can order any quantity and I've found delivery to be very quick.
- Another knitter advises that Sirdar Snuggly Snowflake is good for beards!

VAL'S TIPS OF THE MONTH! OUR FAVOURITE PASTIME – YARN BUYING!

It's always more satisfying to be able to see and squish before buying, but buying online is the convenient option if you haven't got the time, mobility or availability locally.

Here are the six biggest online yarn suppliers. If you have favourite brands it's always worth comparing prices between them and looking out for their special offers. Factor in the postage costs. Be wary if a price seems too good to be true: check it's not just a 50 g ball.

- Black Sheep Wools: keep in mind that KfN members can ask for a 10% discount. Postage free on orders over £30. £2.95 postage up to 1.8kg
- Wool Warehouse: Postage free for orders over £30. Smaller orders, £2.95 Evri: £3.45
 Royal Mail
- The Wool Factory: postage free over £30 (check for offers on postage)
- The Knitting Network: Postage free over £35. Uses Royal Mail. Guarantees same day despatch up to 4 pm weekdays.
- Love Crafts: Postage free over £40. Probably the biggest but can be more expensive. Always best to look out for their offers.
- Laughing Hens: Postage free on orders over £50. £3.50 for smaller orders. Tends to be at higher end of price range, but always worth a look.



SEWING UP AND EMBROIDERY – LOVE IT OR HATE IT??

Val writes:

I've just seen a sticker on the back window of a car that said, "It's okay not to be okay." So here's my version. "It's okay not to like sewing up."

If you are one of those people who puts off sewing up, have no confidence in being able to embroider good faces, or cast on the next thing rather than finishing off the last, then give yourself a good pat on the back for every item you've sent to KfN.

I could offer you tips, like working in a good light, getting organised before you start, having a picture in front of you if what you're doing is not clear in your head, sew up in small bits as you go along and so on. But I think I'll offer a different approach and say, "Take pride in your sewing up."

Take pride both in the work itself, and in yourself for doing it.

Sewing up is what makes a few pieces of knitted or crocheted fabric into a useful and attractive completed item. No matter how perfect your knitting or crocheting is it's the putting together that gets the end result. It's where it all takes shape. It's the final achievement and the finished article. So take pride in your sewing up.

Clare adds:

SEWING UP LARGE ITEMS AND ATTACHING LEGS AND ARMS

The easiest and neatest way to sew up the back of the body, the legs, the arms and of attaching the legs and arms is to use mattress stitch. It's brilliant because you can use any colour of yarn you like and it won't show up!



And please watch YouTube videos which are very helpful - Google "Mattress Stitch in knitting"

And it's best not to sew up the top of legs or arms before attaching to the body – instead use mattress stitch and attach the limb round in a circle.

EMBROIDERING FACES - TIPS

- Please use embroidery thread rather than yarn
- Please put the mouth quite low down the face if it's too close to the eyes it looks odd!
- Please try to learn either stem stitch or back stitch for the mouth

RECENT FEEDBACK FROM THERAPISTS



Educational Psychologist, Monmouthshire Educational Psychology Service

Please see above a photo to share with your wonderful volunteers. Please let the volunteers know how grateful we are. Many of the monsters were named after the volunteers who knitted them! We know that the worry monsters will be put to good use by ELSAs to support children in Monmouthshire. It was love at first sight for many ELSAs and their worry monster! We look forward to hearing about their work at future ELSA supervision sessions.

Sharon - Primary school therapist, North Yorks

I received the best delivery ever today! Thank you so much, they are even more amazing than I thought they would be. So much time, thought, effort and love has gone into them all. Please pass on our thanks to the wonderful knitters. They will be cherished and well used at school – I love them! Thank you for all you do to bring these little bundles of magic to children in need and those who help them.

Paula – Emotional Literacy & Drawing & Talking Practitioner, Primary School, Berks

I just wanted to say a massive thank you for your delivery, we are over the moon with them, so please pass on our gratitude to the wonderful ladies that have contributed to our parcel.

Our theme in our safe space is "Ocean of Emotion" so the Octopus is perfect

Mary - THRIVE practitioner, Oxfordshire

The puppets have arrived safely and I have no words to express how grateful we are and how much our students will benefit from them. Thanks again to you and your wonderful team. You are all absolutely AMAZING! x

Hayley - ELSA, Primary School, Dorset

Wow Clare!! I've just received my box of monsters and puppets, they are absolutely amazing. Words cannot describe how grateful I am. Thank you so much x

Leah - ELSA, Primary School, Norfolk

I CAN NOT THANK YOU ALL ENOUGH! (*The capitals were Leah's!*). The order has just arrived and the items are so beautiful!

Mair - ELSA, Primary School, Cardiff

I just wanted to let you know that I have received my package today. I am absolutely thrilled with the quality and range of items. I cannot wait to introduce them to the children next week and start using them. Thank you so much, this service is really amazing.

Clair - ELSA, Primary School, Birmingham

Please know that the kids really do benefit from everyone's generosity and it restores my faith in humanity.



The above picture is Melanie from "More than Grandparents" charity, Sunderland. It supports kinship children who are children who have been removed from their birth parents and placed with family membership due to Safeguarding concerns.

I just wanted to say a huge thank you. We received our worry monsters today and they are all incredible. I already know of a family who will receive two of these immediately for their 18 month old twins who were placed with their grandparents.



This week Laura came into school to do an assembly on the Worry Monsters. The children got to meet the Worry Monsters, do some breathing exercises and talk about what they do if they have worries. It was a great assembly and the children found it very engaging. Such a pleasure to deliver these beautiful, hand knitted worry monsters from Knit-for-Nowt. Can't even cope with how gorgeous they are and we hope that that they really help to ease children's worries

Ali - TA and ELSA, Junior School, Bristol

I would like to say a massive thank you for the amazing delivery I received today!! I opened the box in my classroom (a *SEMH unit for Key Stage 1 pupils) and it was as though it was Christmas Day! The children absolutely adored all of the knitted products and I was blown away by the quality and quantity! I can't wait to get started with them and incorporate them into our therapy sessions. Please pass on my thanks to your wonderful knitters!

*SEMH = Special Educational Mental Health needs

Alison – Play Therapist Shetland Women's Aid

Just wanted to let you know I've been using the family puppets with a client working through the bereavement of his Dad among other things. He's been using the puppets giving them different voices and directing the play in telling me what my puppet would be saying and doing. He said today that he finds his sessions 'very helpful'. The amount of detail on these puppets and the way we can flip them from 'sad' to 'happy' face has been really effective. Thank you so much.

Maria - "The Listening Ear" charity, Bournemouth

I used 'Huggalot' (a beautiful purple octopus) in a therapy session today and my client absolutely adored him. The note that came with him said he was knitted by Dawn F in Wilts. Could you please pass on my thanks to Dawn as her time and love in creating the worry octopus was so appreciated by both me and my client. He really does give the best hugs!





Joanna - Home School Link Worker, ELSA and Mental Health Lead, Junior School, Surrey

A heartfelt thank you for all the lovely items sent to us. We have an ELSA (emotional literacy support) in both schools and my role as Home School Link Worker and mental health lead will put all to good use. The parcel arriving made our day and money is tight so having these items for therapeutic work is very helpful, the children will really benefit.

Assistant Head, SENCo & Nurture Manager

Last year, our Educational Psychologist very kindly donated 5 of your dolls to our school to help support the work I do in our school's Nurture provision.

Although our school is one of 3 in a 'leafy' village suburb of Walsall, we have historically been known as the 'pauper' school and have always had a much higher level of deprivation alongside a higher level of safeguarding that unfortunately often comes along with such.

The children I work with primarily have experienced trauma, bereavement or in some cases neglect or abuse and with the expertise of our own safeguarding manager, we do what we can to help these vulnerable children as much as possible.

I have made it a priority to contact you now just to say how much I appreciate all the hard work your team do in making these dolls and that they have helped me immensely tackle some difficult conversations with children in need over time. They help give children comfort and the confidence to talk about their worries – it is then lovely to see the children use them with care when having free choice, role play or story time.



Nicola, ELSA, Junior School, Cumbria

I thought I would share a picture of some year 3 children getting to know our new worry monsters. Thank you so much to each and every person involved. They made the children so happy.



Michaela – ELSA, Junior, Infant and Nursery School, West Yorks

Here are a couple of photos of our children using the wonderful monsters you knitted for us. The children absolutely love them!



David, Head Teacher, Primary School, Aberdeen

We are writing to thank you for our wonderful delivery of Worry Monsters that you gifted to our school. It is clear to see they are made and sent with love and care. The dolls are settling well into their new life well and enjoying making friends with our pupils. The Worry Monsters are a great resource to help all children in school with any worries they may have. Please pass on a very big thank you from everyone here to the kind ladies that knitted them for us. I have included a photo of them enjoying time in one of our classes.



Above - Sue, ELSA, Hampshire

I cannot thank you and the wonderful knitters for the most beautiful worry monsters, finger puppets and puppets I received a few days ago. To say they exceeded my expectations is an understatement! They are quite simply amazing and I know the children will love them when they see them after half term. There are no words to express my thanks and gratitude for this wonderful gift, I feel so honoured to have received them - please pass on my thanks to all the wonderful volunteers, what they do is truly amazing and really makes all the difference to our children.

GALLERY – TOOTHIES

As always these pictures are included at random and if your item doesn't appear it's never deliberate. If you wish a pic of your item to be in a future Newsletter please tell Clare





GALLERY – OCTOPI!

NB. This pattern now incorporates an "Octokitty" hand puppet





Julie made this family set of triceratops crochet hand puppets (pattern is incorporated into the triceratops worry eater pattern). A lovely idea and what fun to make!

Or please crochet Chomp, Munch or Scorch with hand puppet – the patterns are superb!



GALLERY - SEWN MONSTERS

Many thanks go to our wonderful seamstresses who make the much needed Mojos, worry eaters and hand puppets. Your skill is amazing and so important to the charity.



Could you add a pink tongue to your frog worry eater?? What a great idea from Margaret in Northamptonshire



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

We'd like to ask if you'd PLEASE DO THE FOLLOWING SAFETY CHECKS ON YOUR ITEMS

You all make the most incredible items and for the vast majority of the time they are super safe, thank you for the checks you already make on them. This checklist might help to reassure you that you've checked over all aspects of your item, as it's so easy to forget one or two of them! We've all done it! All items are safety checked again before being sent out.

- 1 Have I used an approved stuffing? Check the recommended stuffings document you were sent, or if you haven't received that then please contact Clare
- 2 Have I left any pins in? It's best to use the larger headed pins but even these can become lost in the knitting
- Are all the attachments nice and firm? Pull strongly on all attachments, including any buttons really pull! They must be absolutely secure and unable to be pulled out by a small child. Secure again anything you're not happy with

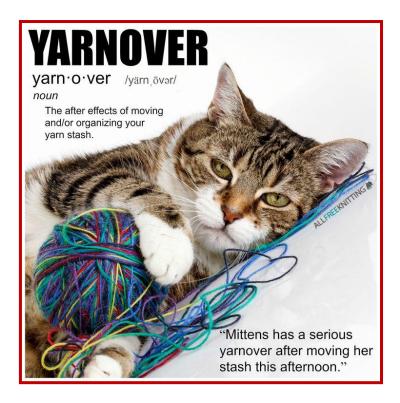


- 1 Is the hair secure? Between first finger and thumb pull on each and every strand of yarn attached to ensure that none can be pulled out by a small child
- 2 Have I left any holes in my work? Check your item for holes in the stitching where stuffing could be seen through. In particular this can happen at the top of the head on a monster/animal, or at the sides of the mouth pocket/mouth and where you increased the stitches. If you find any holes please sew them up!
- Is anything too long? Check that any choking hazards such as ropes, strands, ribbons, yarn, or lengths of arms/legs are no longer than a maximum of 9" (not counting feet or hands)
- Ooh, what's that pong??! Has my darling pet been lying on my work?? Have a good sniff! Ensure there are no strong odours which might affect asthma/allergy these can include cooking smells, smoke, pets or even strong disinfectant. If the odour is strong please don't use washing powder/fabric freshener but instead rinse in fresh water and/or hang out on the line. And please check for dog/cat hairs on your work

Some of our makers have trouble accessing the internet and those who are new to KfN may not have spotted the summary of all our items which appears on the "Donate Items" page of our website. So for those people here's the summary again:

SUMMARY OF ITEMS NEEDED

- 1 Worry monsters Choose from "Zippy" (has a zipped mouth) or "Toothy the Worry Eater". Sewn ones welcome too. Please note the recommended dimensions in the patterns and please stuff these firmly with approved stuffing.
- 2 Animal Worry Eaters or Robot worry eaters please ensure that you make a really good, deep pocket and please stuff these firmly with approved stuffing.
- 3 Sewn Mojo monsters the knitted version didn't prove so popular, but the sewn version is just about the most popular item requested. Please stuff these firmly.
- 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. No disability animals thanks.
- 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. No abuse animals thanks.
- 7 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.
- 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. Please make them all to fit an adult hand, including the boy and girl.
- 9 Hand puppet families as above, but specifically Muslim or Asian
- Bully hand puppet and Internet groomer hand puppet
- 11 Pairs of identical hand puppets for Play Therapy work these could be "people" or animals
- "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 "Emotiknit Colour Puppets": our very own pattern different colours represent different emotions
- 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.
- 15 Transgender hand puppets (one side male, one side female)
- 16 Finger puppets use any pattern you like, they can be people or animals
- 17 Pregnant monster and pregnant hand puppet



We don't get hangovers, we get yarnovers!

Huge thanks again go to all KfN knitters, crocheters and sewers, you are amazing people and the therapists all want to thank you from the bottom of their hearts for your kindness

LET'S SEE IF WE CAN FINISH OUR WAITING LIST BY THE END OF THIS YEAR!



Clare Allan

Knit-for-Nowt

March 2025

www.knitfornowt.org email: knitfornowt@gmail.com 07538 157487

If you're on Facebook we have a private hidden group for makers where you can get advice, post pics of your items and generally support one another

If you'd like to join it please apply to Val on knitfornowtnewmakers@gmail.com