# **Self Care Forum Self Care Innovations Award 2021**

# **Award Application Form and Eligibility**

***The Self Care Forum is inviting applications of good practice and innovations in self care, personalised care, and social prescribing that have made a difference to individuals, groups, or organisations.***

**Who can apply?**

This invitation is open to everyone, whether you are an individual, a community champion, an employer, GP practice, Local Authority, school, college, business, or services organisation (public, private, or charitable). For a guide, see examples table below.

**£500 bursary**

The winner will receive a £500 bursary to spend on a self care related initiative and the top entries will be included on the Self Care Forum website to share best self care practice and excellence. The winners will be announced during the UK’s National Self Care Week (15 – 22 November) as part of its launch and promotional activity.

Closing date for admissions: **31st July 2021.**

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| Examples of possible initiatives | If specific health-related conditions were targeted, they might include |
| * 2020’s Self Care Week activities * Coronavirus related self care * Signposting to services * Protecting mental health and wellbeing * Promoting self care to the shielded population * Self care for the elderly or other specific groups * Self care introduced by employers * Local authority population or community initiatives * Pharmacy initiatives * GP initiatives * Self care education by schools, universities, or community groups such as Scouts, Guides etc * Empowering vulnerable groups | * Long-term conditions * Obesity * Diabetes * General health * Nutrition * Exercise * Mental Health * Self-treatable conditions/minor illness |

## Please use the form below to tell us about your self care initiative.

If you are typing directly into the form, do not worry if the box extends beyond the page – it will continue onto the next one.

## Title and contact details.

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| Title of Initiative (This should describe your initiative using 50 words max)  Pencil Me In was created in 2020, providing creative wellbeing retreats to promote self-care, prevention of mental health problems and to encourage people to pencil themselves in their diary as well as others. |
| Name of Organisation and Region (please state context, ie general practice, community care etc)  Pencil Me In – Staffordshire  Non-profit Organisation set up in 2020. |
| Name of person/team/individual being nominated  Aimee Bramwell and the Pencil Me In team |
| Contact name for entry  Aimee Bramwell |
| Contact email for entry  [Pencilmeinstaffs@gmail.com](mailto:Pencilmeinstaffs@gmail.com) |
| Timeframe and dates of initiative  Pencil Me In was launched in Feb 2020 just before the pandemic began. We delivered 3 creative wellbeing retreats since then which adhered to restrictions and legislation, two which were charity retreats provided for critical care and front line NHS staff from our local hospital. The third was a community retreat promoting self-care and mental wellbeing within the community of Staffordshire. The first charity retreat was held in October 2020 and the next charity retreat and community retreat were provided in June 2021 as soon as restrictions allowed. |
| Date of submission  7/7/21 |

## Problem(s) and how you tackled them.

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| What was the problem you were trying to tackle? (max 200 words)  Aimee is a mental health nurse within Staffordshire, when her sister a respiratory nurse tried to take her own life her own mental health deteriorated. This was when she realised how difficult it was to find an affordable, enjoyable day out in Staffordshire where you can attend alone or with support and focus on replenishing from every day stresses. Aimee was aware of the pressure the local mental health NHS services were under and after speaking to many members of the public , nobody seemed aware of any local services that focused on providing affordable retreats that promoted self-care guidance and some well deserved time out.  Aimee wanted to share her knowledge based on simple strategies that improve our mental wellbeing, which included positive psychology, mindfulness and creativity. She also collaborated with local businesses giving them chance to share their skills during the retreats such as yoga, sound therapists and nutritionists. |
| Please give a brief description of your self care innovation (max 250 words)  To provide creative wellbeing retreats/workshops to communities and organisations within Staffordshire and surrounding areas. The retreats include wellbeing sessions such as: mindfulness and meditation  Guest speakers such as psychologists, nutritionists and occupational therapists  Yoga, sound baths and other holistic therapies  Creative sessions hosted by local creatives and artists  So far our retreats have been styled beautifully by the Pencil Me In team with flowers and props within a beautiful restored orangery. Aimee pays attention to all the small details that stimulate our senses and make people feel they are truly being cared for and focused on throughout the day. We provide lunch and goody bags to take home as an extra special touch. |
| What challenges or barriers were you faced with and how did you solve the problems or overcome the barriers? (max 250 words)  COVID of course was a significant barrier that prevented retreats going ahead but when restrictions were eased Aimee had risk assessments completed by health and safety professionals and liaised with environmental health accordingly. Funding was also an issue, the retreats needed a venue and resources so we reached out to local businesses for sponsorship and applied for grants. This was difficult during the pandemic as local businesses were struggling but a lot of research was done and we were able to fund all retreats. |
| Did you collaborate with other partners or organisations, if so, who were they?  We collaborated with many different local businesses who provided hour sessions on the day as mentioned above. But our main organisation who we were extremely proud to work with to provide the retreats were University Hospitals of North Midlands trust and charity. We are now applying for funding to provide a retreat for Women in Defence at our local Royal Air Force base. |

## Impact and outcomes

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| Who was the initiative directed at and what were the benefits to the targeted group or individuals? (max 250 words)  The creative wellbeing retreats were initially directed at our local community for those who wanted to focus on self-care and replenishment. So many people reached out to say they really wanted to attend and spaces filled very quickly but then the initiative became much bigger then that when the pandemic arrived therefore we directed the retreats towards NHS staff who were working face to face with COVID patients. This was due to hearing colleagues and Aimee’s sisters horrific stories from the COVID wards so Aimee was extremely passionate about providing them free of charge to the staff whose mental health was deteriorating day by day. |
| Were there further benefits to you, your colleagues, your organisation or to a wider area such as the NHS? If so, what were they? (e.g improved job satisfaction, smoother running of facility, happier service users, better use of scarce resources, cost saving)  The feedback was that wonderful at the end of the first NHS retreat and the guests and the team had such an amazing day that we all cried together at the end. It was such a moving, well deserved day that they very clearly needed. The feedback forms were full of amazing comments, which led to further retreats being organised for more NHS staff. This was a really great result as more staff were able to experience the retreat and staff wellbeing was improved. The staff were really appreciative and pleased that their trust had allowed the retreats to be arranged and offered funding from the NHS charity to provide it.  The community retreat was also a huge success. 14 people attended and all fed back that they had experienced a really relaxing day with useful information to take home , which would help them to focus on making time for themselves. One lady stayed behind to say after an awful year, it was all she needed but her GP would only offer antidepressants. This was really valuable feedback to consider going forward. |

## Evidence

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| Please quantify the benefits of your initiative. (e.g. cost improvement, numbers of people helped, time saved)  We used SMART goals to analyse where we could improve following our first retreat. We saved money by asking for sponsors, the Pencil Me In team are all volunteers from Aimee’s family. Aimee’s mum decided the catering company originally used wasn’t cost effective therefore she completed food hygiene and catering courses and catered herself. It is a real family effort and we just wanted to make people feel cared for and relaxed. Local businesses were keen to support the retreats during the pandemic as we are all aware of the impact it has had on people’s mental health. |
| Do you have formal or anecdotal evidence of success? (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, informal feedback?)  We have around 50 completed feedback forms with very positive feedback.  Some quotes:  ‘it was an absolutely wonderful day, so relaxing, thoughtful and inspiring.’  ‘Aimee’s session was amazing, I’ve completely relaxed at a time when my world is so hectic’  ‘i feel like I’ve been on a spa day, I’m so sad it had to end.’ |
| What was the cost of this initiative in terms of time, money, and/or other resources? Please be as specific as you can  For the venue, catering, guest speakers, creative session, resources, planning and preparation, styling, gifts, yoga sessions, marketing, refreshments the cost was approximately £2000 for the day. |

## And, finally…

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| Are there any lessons you learned or top tips that you would like to share? (max 200 words)  When planning events that focus on self-care , make sure while preparing and providing you are also focusing on making time for you and don’t let the excitement take over, there’s always time to switch off and come back to the to do list later. Organise 15 minutes out your day, 3 times a day to prioritise self-care activities and make them 15 minutes non-negotiable, you will soon top up your energy bank and continue to be your most compassionate, caring, productive self. |
| Did you use any of the Self Care Forum’s resources? If so, please specify.  Yes, the research page is extremely helpful. |
| Why do you think this initiative deserves to win the award? (Max 100 words)  The Pencil Me In team haven’t helped many (yet). We are a very small team who are planning a community project where we hope to provide more retreats to vulnerable groups such as those in poverty, new mums, young people and carers. The prize would really benefit our project and contribute to providing creative wellbeing retreats to these more vulnerable groups who are more susceptible to mental health difficulties. |
| Do you have an image, materials or weblinks to supplement your application? Please supply no more than 2 images which may also be used to promote your application if successful.  Twitter - @pencilmeinstaff  [www.pencilmeinstaffs.co.uk](http://www.pencilmeinstaffs.co.uk)  There are lots of lovely pictures provided through these links, please feel free to use any. |
| Your application may be chosen to be uploaded to the “best practice” page of the Self Care Forum website to share excellence so that others might use the learnings in your application to empower more people. We will also include your email address so that people may get in touch with you. Please give us permission below by choosing a, b or c (please delete the two that don’t apply).   1. Yes I give permission for my application to be uploaded to the website with my contact details; |

We look forward to receiving your application. Please email your completed form to:

[selfcare@selfcareforum.org](mailto:selfcare@selfcareforum.org)

**About the Self Care Forum**

The Self Care Forum supports people-facing organisations in helping their communities and service users better understand how to self care. It is the leading independent provider of best practice around self care and the ‘go-to’ place for top quality resources, current opinion, and self care interventions in the UK.It is a charity and aims to improve public health by promoting self care at national policy level. It creates resources, runs the UK’s National Self Care Week, and supports robust research evidence.

For more information about the Self Care Forum please go to the website. [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org).