

COCKTAILS IN CARE HOMES – PROJECT ON PAUSE FROM END OF JULY 2020.

FAQs

What is happening?

We are scaling back Cocktails in Care Homes and then closing down the programme in July.

Despite our best efforts we have recently been unable to secure enough funds to continue as we are.

We are currently running parties in 18 care homes and extra care schemes across London. We will run parties in all of them as planned in March. From April to June we will run monthly parties in eight care homes:

These parties will end in March:

- Bankhouse (4 March)
- Muriel Street (4 March)
- Charleston House (5 March)
- Lennox House (12 March)
- Rose Court (12 March)
- Penfold Court (18 March)
- Lawnfield House (19 March)
- Roseberry Mansions (25 March)
- 20/26 Mildmay (25 March)
- Rathmore House (26 March)

These parties will end in June:

Silk Court, Westport, Elgin Close, George Mason Lodge, Lingham Court, 73 Mildmay, Norton House, Queen's Oak.

I'm a volunteer – can I still go into the care home and see the residents I've got to know?

We are keen to make this possible and are in discussion with the care homes and care schemes, to see whether they can offer you support to keep volunteering and find out what their processes are. At the moment this volunteer management is part of what Magic Me offers to the care home. Contact Phoebe if you want to talk about this.

Are there other volunteering opportunities with Magic Me?

We will be looking for other ways to meet the need for intergenerational projects in evenings and weekends – times when we know that people living in care homes have the least to do and suffer most from loneliness and isolation. We recently ran the Inside Out Festival which was funded by Waltham Forest Borough of Culture & L&Q Foundation which ran over a number of weekends in Autumn 2019. Sign up to our regular Magic Me newsletter where we will put out calls for volunteers as and when the opportunities come up.

Is there anything I can do to save Cocktails In Care Homes?

In the short term we will continue with the plan to take a pause in July to evaluate and gather information on how we might be able to make the project more sustainable in the future. The amount of funding we need currently to sustain the project with 18 care homes is substantial and

therefore small donations, although welcome to Magic Me generally and for other projects, will not help get Cocktails in Care Homes back in the form it is in now.

The cost of the project last year was £101k – this covers two salaries, overheads, supplies, themes, induction room hire, travel, training, insurance, expertise, etc.

What will happen to the equipment box at the care homes?

If the care homes want to use the Cocktails in Care Homes equipment to hold parties for their residents we are happy for them to keep the equipment and existing supplies.

Why is this happening?

When we plan our projects we plan them against forecasted funding as well as actual committed funding. Because we are not supported by central government our fundraising is always ongoing. Our funders mostly specify which project or what activity funding is for – so for example we have different funders for our Arts & Ages, Quality Street, Artworks and Artists' Residencies in Care Homes programmes and some for the core costs of running Magic Me. What we don't have is enough funding to sustain Cocktails in Care Homes in its current form. In the past we have been able to subsidise the project from our core funding but this isn't possible at the moment.

Is Magic Me in trouble?

No, although we will always be reliant on ongoing fundraising and forecasted funding coming in, we have robust financial processes and our other projects are not under threat.

However, we are always in need of funds and if you are interested in helping with this please do let us know.

Why didn't you see this coming sooner

Cocktails in care homes has four different funding streams from care providers, trusts and foundations, corporates, and fundraisers. This creates a high degree of complexity. Different funding streams having different time scales and end points and in some cases only funding specific parties. We could see that we needed to get more funds in and we continued to work up to the last minute to save the project. We took stock in January (as this is the time we sign contracts with care providers) and made the decision to end the project in July in a managed way as we didn't have sufficient funds secured, or in the pipeline, to sustain it.

Why did you start a new party only in January?

The agreement for the party in Peckham was signed at the end of October after a long search for a new party in South East London. Whenever we have started to hold parties in a new care home or scheme we have piloted them for 3 months, to test that they go well in the new setting and that we can attract enough volunteers. The party in Peckham will continue to the end of July. Adding this new party did not make the difference between our continuing Cocktails or not, as the costs of each extra party – drinks, nibbles, expenses – is not a large amount of the budget.

Could you not have continued in fewer homes with the funding you had already secured?

The largest costs of the project are salaries and other overheads, in the long run having less parties will not save enough money to make the project feasible. We are scaling back the number of parties in the short term. Much of the funding we had secured was given by funders who support charitable

work in particular areas of London. We have been working to find a plan that fulfills the commitments we have made to them and this thinking has informed our choice of the parties that will now continue into the summer.

What about the cocktails team? Will they still be at Magic Me doing something else?

Unfortunately we haven't been able to reallocate Phoebe and Sarah's time to any other projects.

Phoebe will be taking redundancy in mid-May. A formal redundancy consultation is still ongoing with Sarah.

We are very grateful to them both for their expertise, care and hard work both for Cocktails and for Magic Me generally.

Can I fundraise for Cocktails in Care Homes?

We would love you to fundraise for Magic Me generally – this will help us to develop new projects and to look at ways to bring Cocktails in Care Homes back, if we can. But we can't take donations specifically for Cocktails as the project won't be running and the money would then be 'restricted' and couldn't be used for anything else.

Is there anything else I can do?

Please come to the remaining parties and help us celebrate the amazingness that has been Cocktails in Care Homes with a great outburst of joy that people will remember and take as an inspiration into the future.

We'd love to hear from you about your experiences of the project, any special moments or stories you'd like to share with us (and a wider audience) – the project has been running for 10 years and leaves a great legacy we want to capture that and share it and hope that it will inspire other organisations to consider similar projects both in London and elsewhere.

Please continue to talk to people about the project and what a great experience it has been, what benefits it has brought to the residents and staff, we have already seen that the influence of Cocktails in Care Homes as an idea has sparked others to try things in care homes across the UK – we'd love that influence to continue, because Cocktails in Care Homes is so much more than just turning up on a Wednesday or Thursday to have a drink or two. It is the idea that people who move into care settings don't lose their sense of fun, don't lose their desire for a laugh, a dance, a bit of karaoke. They still want company and conversation and to be able to have a party – their enjoyment of a full and happy life is a fundamental human right and by continuing to celebrate Cocktails in Care Homes we continue to get that idea out into the world and to set expectations on the care sector that those rights will be honoured.

Why are you doing it in two phases?

We believe that Cocktails in Care Homes will have a future and already leaves an important legacy not just in terms of direct impact on participants but also in thought leadership about what is possible and can be achieved in care homes. The majority of the parties will end in March. In April, May, and June a number of parties will continue. A number of factors has affected the choice of which parties will continue including geographic spread (to accommodate volunteers from parties no longer running) and financial commitment from funders (where funds have been allocated for specific parties) as well as results of discussions with providers on when they would like the parties to end. These last three months of parties will provide us with an opportunity to gather more

information from all the people involved which will help to evaluate the project and how it might go forward into the future.

I've seen an article about Cocktails in Care Homes implying it is still running? Is it back?

You may see Cocktails in Care Homes still featured in press and media articles as a great example of volunteering and of engaging care home residents, press releases will have been sent out mentioning the project long before this decision was made and you may still see the project mentioned in press and media over the coming months. Sadly this doesn't mean we have been able to reinstate it, just that the journalists didn't check with us before printing their article.