



## RAY, BELFAST:

POET, ALLROUNDER,

I write poems. This gives me a creative outlet that I really need and feel I'm lacking. I've recently started to be more disciplined about writing as I really enjoy it but need to make time for it.

I also love reading poetry and have attended a few poetry readings this year. I read poems for family and friends and sometimes connect with other poets. I also collect records and have an Instagram account for sharing photos and information on my record collection. I connect with some people on Instagram through love of music.

I also like photography and have a camera with detachable lenses that I enjoy experimenting with using the manual settings. There is something satisfying about getting a good shot not using a phone or automatic settings. All of these activities are organised by myself, although I have attended a short writing group in the past and would like to do more of this or start my own writing group for myself and others.

● **Practical Support:** Looking to go to the next level.

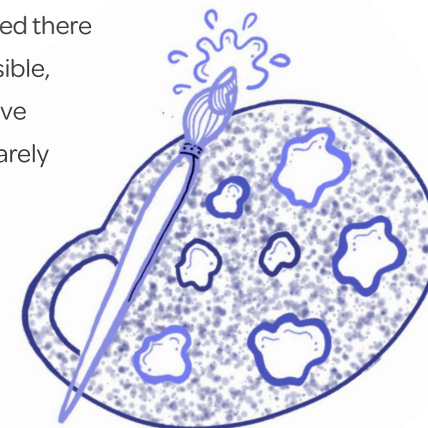
## ANONYMOUS:

ARTIST-CRAFTER:

I'm disabled, in chronic pain, largely housebound and often bedbound. I have a range of arts and activities I enjoy that vary depending on my pain levels, mobility and materials available. These include painting, nature art, poetry, decoupage, playing ukulele and listening to music online. Bedbound Crafts I do include zine making, collage, jewellery making, journalling, knitting, origami, paper cutting and sketching, particularly zentangles. When I can sit up at a table, crafts include papier-mâché sculpture using kitchen towel and glue, making 3D paint and dried flower/grass landscapes, blowing eggs and painting them, recycled crafting and making floral garlands and wreaths. I use the Heritage Crafts Association Red List to find new crafts to learn. Crafting helps me make gifts for friends and connect with other artists when I share my creations on social media (though much of the time, I keep the art to myself - it's about pain relief and mental health benefits more than validation).

In an ideal world, I'd love to create free quarterly bedbound crafting packs to help others ease their pain through art, with a connected pen pal 'club' but money and energy make this hard to do. Crafting material swap hubs would also help make arts and crafts more accessible to people on low budgets, as many disabled people are. It would be great if more creative events were available online too - when the pandemic started there were so many more creative things that were accessible, from shows to creative classes, but many people have stopped doing this now, forgetting that some of us rarely or never get to leave the house.

● **Connections:**  
Looking for more online opportunities and connections.





## KEVIN, SE LONDON:

### ARTIST-MAKER

I'm a middle-aged man, I've always been interested in art and making things but went through a long period after leaving school right into my twenties when the creative juices weren't flowing - which I put down to having the worst job I ever had.

I began making my own cards in my late twenties and have continued to do so to this day. I have several ideas which I work through one year at a time. The 2020 lockdown Christmas card was extra special. I knew it would take ages so I started in March and gradually embellished each one more and more during the year whenever I was in the mood. As it happened I had had my loft opened up the year before in 2019 so I had a dedicated creative space. It was my sanctuary and my refuge, and still is.

The new landlord at a local pub is keen to promote artistic activity which is very helpful as one of the main barriers to creativity is affordable, preferably free venues that are outside the influence of the local council who are very controlling.

**Practical Support:** Looking for independent spaces.

## LOKIFAN, LONDON:

### WRITER

I'm a 32-year-old cis woman; I'm bisexual, white, I'm from London, and I teach English as a foreign language. My main creative activity is writing. That's a combination of writing stories (whether original or fanfic) and writing 'roleplay', where I co-write fanfiction with a friend. He writes from the perspective of one character, and I write from the perspective of another, and we make the story together.

I mostly just write and post my stories online myself, but I also take part in organised activity. For example, I write for festivals and zines. I enjoy it, it's a fun hobby, and helps me meet others and connect with people through fandom - people comment on my stories, or I comment on theirs, and we sign up for particular events. It makes me feel valuable when other people comment or leave kudos to say they enjoyed my work - I get an email from the Archive Of Our Own, a fanfiction archive, every day with some 'kudos' (likes) for various stories, left by readers.

**Validation:** Looking for encouragement and critical feedback from peers.

**Connections:** Looking for connections within like-minded community.

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## ANONYMOUS:

CRAFTER

I'm in my 50s from an Asian background but born and raised here. My mother was skilled in the 'homely' arts i.e. knitting, dress-making, embroidery, tapestry and cooking but pressure was put on me to succeed academically and she passed down none of her skills to me apart from knitting. Unfortunately, I am nowhere near as expert as she was and I think I would have been able to tackle more ambitious projects now if I had been guided and supported as a child. However, in the last four years or so, knitting has become an intermittent but satisfying hobby for me, thanks to the support, drive, acceptance and encouragement of the Knit Your Socks Off group in Slough - a beautiful, non-judgmental community - and I have pushed myself further than ever because of them. It's an escape from the everyday, a sense of elation and achievement after learning a new piece or completing making an item and pleasure and surprise that my doing these things - which were viewed as frivolous or something else I had to succeed at - has worth and brings joy to others.

● **Validation:** Values support and encouragement from community.

## AMANDA, READING:

MAKER

Originally from New Zealand, I'm a mother in my 50s working on a freelance basis from home. Arts and culture have always been important to me and form some of my earliest happy memories. My parents encouraged us to paint, draw, dance, take photos, put on plays and make our Christmas presents. My mother taught me to sew as a young child, which led to me making my own clothes and eventually running a bespoke tie business. It was so satisfying seeing people wearing my designs with pride. I've always enjoyed visiting galleries, museums, festivals and other arts events. They're an incredible source of inspiration. Recently, the Platinum Jubilee Street Party was a catalyst for me and my daughter (and the rest of our street) to create outfits, decorations, games and a giant commemorative 'picture' frame. There are many more classes and creative learning opportunities available now online, but it doesn't replace the benefit of meeting people in person. Now that I have more free time, I want to develop my ceramics skills and take art classes.

● **Navigation:** Looking for opportunities to develop skills.



## ANONYMOUS:

WRITER-MUSICIAN

I am a 24 year-old man based in Glasgow and working in the music sector while studying for a degree. When I have time I like to write both poetry and prose. This is something I've always been interested in but wasn't able to make a habit of until I met other people who shared my interests, even though I tend to write alone, knowing that there are other people I can share my creativity with makes my work much more focussed. I attend workshops and readings every now and again. Sometimes I share my own work, but often come just to listen and support my friends. Having safe spaces (whether formal or informal) to share our work helps build a sense of community.

● **Connections:** Values safe spaces to share work with others.

