

The Sewing Rooms
Gladden House, 17 Gladden Place
West Gillibrands, Skelmersdale
Lancashire, WN8 9SX

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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Award-winning social enterprise launches Patchwork Buddies programme



Lancashire-based The Sewing Rooms is proud to announce an Awards for All grant for new community sewing project

With a rapidly ageing population, loneliness is a growing problem faced by the UK's health and social services. And with the link between loneliness and ill health well-established, it is ever more important that all aspects of wellbeing, including and especially mental health, are considered for members of the community over the age of 50.

Key risk factors for loneliness include being on a low income, in poor physical or mental health, and living alone or in isolated rural areas or deprived urban communities. [1]

Directly addressing that risk is The Sewing Rooms' Patchwork Buddies programme. Patchwork Buddies is a free, ten week course for women over the age of 55 who are at risk of isolation. The course brings the women together to create new communities of talent, friendship, resilience, connections and wellbeing.

Using high-quality donated fabric, each Patchwork Buddies session covers different sewing skills and works on the creation of large, communal craft pieces such as throws and wall-hangings.

The combination of training and personal development opportunities help address known barriers to wellbeing, including low levels of confidence, poor literacy levels, mental and physical health problems, lack of work experience and criminal records.

The Sewing Rooms is already working closely with the local probation and mental health services to fill an identified need for creative community training services, and Patchwork Buddies further extends that expertise with a focus on older women.

All Sewing Rooms programmes provides participants with skills, information and confidence to pursue further training and employment opportunities, including self-employment.

If you're an organisation with an opportunity to commission and display a piece of community artwork, please get in touch. We'd love to have the Patchwork Buddies considered for the piece. Alternatively, if you're interested in joining a Patchwork Buddies group or recommending someone to us, we'd love to hear from you.

Courses are running throughout 2016, with start dates of 9 May, 5 September and 7 November. To book, please email Paula on paula@the-sewing-rooms.co.uk or call 07501726586.

ENDS

[1] http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/7666327/PUBLICATION

Notes for editors:

- **About The Sewing Rooms:** The Sewing Rooms is a social enterprise, a business that trades to tackle social problems. Our goal is to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities we work with, as well as improve peoples' life chances. We do this through bespoke training workshops and a manufacturing department that makes curtains for private and corporate clients.
 - We exist to make a difference to the communities where we work, and while we earn money through trade just like a normal business, what we do with that profit makes all the difference.
 - We do business by putting people and the planet first. We reinvest the money that our business makes into the communities around us. We don't have shareholders, and we can't sell out to big business, which means that we are able to focus solely on what we do best – using our skills to make our communities better places to live and work.
 - We work particularly closely with groups and individuals who may be isolated, long-term unemployed and at risk of developing mental health problems. When possible, we also offer trainees employment opportunities in our curtain-making and upholstery workshops.
- **Get involved!** There are a number of ways to support and get involved with our work.
 - *Volunteering:* If you have a particular skill and some time, we would love to work with you to find a way to share it with our local community.
 - *Creating:* If you have ideas but not the machines or skills to complete them, come by and we will work together to make your ideas a reality.
 - *Donating:* Whether it is clothing or furniture, if you have items that are no longer of use to you, we would be happy to use them in our training programmes and for potential upcycling.
- **Contact us:**
 - The Sewing Rooms**
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