

Spotlight on: Creativity during Covid-19



During the pandemic, communities found many ways to cope and to express themselves – here, we'd like to share some examples of people using their creativity and artistry to tell their story of life with Covid-19.

Nichola, a member of Harrogate District Disability Forum, shared these reflections on lockdown as part of International Day of People with Disabilities 2021:

Lockdown for me was a time to:-
 Feel part of a collective society.
 Reflect.
 Slow down.
 Be myself.
 Help others.
 Start a new hobby.
 Not be judged.
 Show others that for some disabled people, lockdown is life.
 Bite my tongue.
 Laugh.
 Cry.
 Breathe cleaner air.
 Hear the birds singing
 Meet my new neighbours.
 Be thankful for friends and family.

[International Day of People with Disabilities 2021 | North Yorkshire Partnerships \(nypartnerships.org.uk\)](https://www.internationaldayofpeoplewithdisabilities.org/)

Young people working with North Yorkshire Voice and Creative Engagement team (North Yorkshire County Council) created raps:

Lockdown rap 1

This is my life lockdown at sixteen
 Thought it would be easy, flow a slick stream
 It's like my future's been ripped out my hands
 Worked this whole time up to my exams
 I punched a wall, my fists were clenched
 All this work up to now, but exams were wrenched
 What I need is to be given a chance
 To prove myself and sit my exams
 To be a master chef or joiner
 I need the knowledge
 So let me get my future and get to college

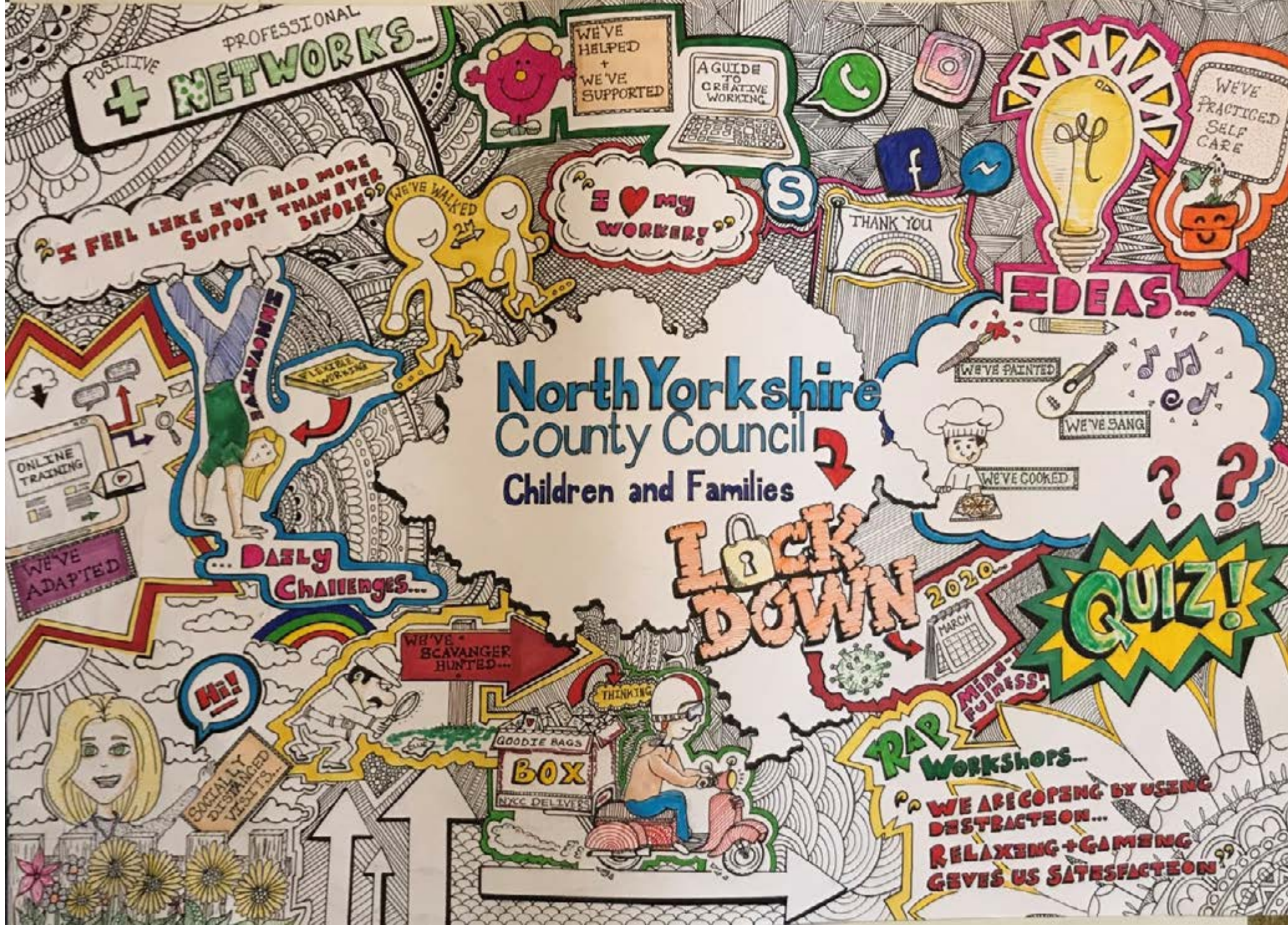
Lockdown rap 2

It came from overseas, put us into lockdown
 I never thought Covid would arrive in this small town
 I felt annoyed I wasn't given the information
 About why we had to stay in isolation
 My whole world turned upside down
 In bed all day and it is night I am around
 Didn't take long until I started getting bored
 Our questions to the government just keep being ignored
 Gaming was my way to socialise with my mates
 The only way from these walls I could escape
 Back to school now, my lockdown had stopped
 It was a shock to my body clock
 Finally going back to school, felt like a dream
 Being around other's boosted my self esteem
 It feels so important to be around different faces
 Virtual is fine but we need to be in the same places

Y.C. Lockdown Rap

Covid 19, another day more stress
 When our lives are so busy we actually needed less
 It's like a boring weekend, times never been so long
 There is no separation, it's all merging into one
 Living at home with someone who is high risk
 No hug or contact, touch is something that I miss
 It felt like I was walking along the right track
 Then a tornado turned me upside down,
 no turning back
 Frustrating, annoying, stressful and tricky
 Times never been so hard but we are living history
 We are coping by using distraction
 Relaxing and gaming gives us satisfaction
 Young Carers here giving us that linking connection
 With activities and distractions, they have been perfection
 We feel like everything is coming back too fast
 Why aren't you learning from the recent past?

Young people talking together about their experiences of lockdown – graphic reporting



Exclusively Inclusive – Photo Voice: 'The world as we see it' photography project

Exclusively Inclusive is a voluntary community group based in Craven: [Compass - Organisation: Exclusively Inclusive \(compasshub.com\)](https://www.compass-hub.com/)

The group worked with Our Creative Connections to undertake an inclusive photography project in Skipton during 2021 – Photo Voice: 'The world as we see it'.

Here's the story of the project, written by Exclusively Inclusive members:

Our Photovoice project was our first foray back into the world of face to face get togethers following the restrictions brought by Covid.

We felt an excitement about being back together but a nervousness as we felt out of practice.

This project brought people within the group together to share their stories, experiences and become even better connected and we felt very much that we were on a journey - of self discovery as well as providing an opportunity to give insight into our world.

Our exhibition 'The World as We See It' was held at the Skipton Town Hall. Visitors to the exhibition commented on the impact of the photographs.

During the project we produced some powerful photographs representing things we were passionate about.

Looking at each other's work inspired discussion around such important topics as being labelled, not being listened to, being pushed into doing things we didn't want to and so on, as well as the importance of friends and relationships and independence.

Many of the pictures were pieces of art in their own right.

Many of us actively work on developing self confidence to express our views and helping, supporting, enabling and encouraging others to speak up, speak out and have their say.

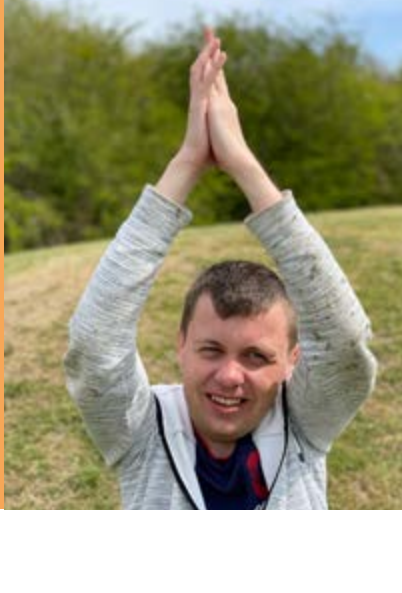
We discovered over time, and certainly in conversations during our Photovoice project, that you can at times be very eloquent, a confident self advocate but then still be marginalized, labelled and excluded in your daily life.

Our Photovoice project provided a perfect opportunity to explore these issues and ultimately "speak out" loudly, using our powerful images to express ourselves.

We are very grateful to North Yorkshire County Council and Craven District Council for their support in enabling us to share our work with a wider audience and to Chris Chinnock of Our Creative Connections for being alongside us on our Photovoice journey.

"Looking back at my photograph (Key to my front door) I feel ecstatic. It's a powerful photograph. I remember feeling worried at the time because I didn't know what it was going to be like moving out of the family home into my own place"

Tom



"I enjoyed sharing and looking at one another's photographs, seeing things from each other's perspectives and exchanging views. I loved taking time out to think and reflect about things. If you are visiting the exhibition I would encourage you to take time to think about the images"

Sally



"I didn't feel like I had a voice and I know I'm not alone with that thought. Through this project I feel listened to, by the group who I feel understands me, and now, because my photo has been in an exhibition, and has been seen by lots of people, I feel heard and taken seriously. I am pleased the exhibition is going on tour, I'd say go to see it - it's not only good seeing the pictures and it can make you remember memories yourself."

Bev



"My photographs linked my family past and present plus I now love my dual nationality. We all have a story to tell this was the way to do it. This taking part in this project gave me a chance to reflect on my roots both sides of the North Sea plus to see how others see the world. I totally recommend seeing the exhibition you will get something of a view in the lives of our group as you see and hear their stories."

Raymond



Ryedale Carers Support – community quilting project: 'Home Sweet Home'

People supported by Ryedale Carers Support worked together with NYCC Adult Learning to express their experiences and feelings in the form of a beautiful quilt, using patchwork, felting, applique and embroidery. The quilters created a total of 36 squares, each square a personal story of what 2020 meant for them. Sarah Hendry, Co-ordinator at Ryedale Carers Support, added: "The overriding message is of hope and resilience in a time of great uncertainty. These wall-hangings are a positive reminder to us all that working together on a shared project is the greatest tonic."

You can read more about the project here: [Ryedale Carers Support - Country Show Libraries showcase crafty quilters' lockdown memories | News | North Yorkshire County Council](https://www.ryedalecarersupport.co.uk/)



Bishop Monkton photography project – 'Images of Isolation'

Bishop Monkton is a village near Ripon. During the pandemic, their local history group launched a project to capture daily life in photography and writing. The intention was document this piece of social history – not realising at the outset for quite how long it would continue. Organisers said they hoped the photographs and written reflections of villagers would be a "lesson for future generations". The online photo exhibition shows more than 400 pictures and written reflections, organised into sections to tell the story of the pandemic as it progressed. Section 10 takes a look at Omicron and the ending of restrictions, and shares their conclusions:

"One thing most people seem to agree on, though, is that the strength of community in our village has shone through and the people of Bishop Monkton have looked out for each other through a difficult and challenging period."

We've included a poem from this exhibition in the local report.

[Bishop Monkton Local History Group - Covid Exhibition \(chessck.co.uk\)](https://www.bishopmonktonlocalhistorygroup.co.uk/)

[Photo exhibition records North Yorkshire village life during Covid - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-56888888)



A Record and Reflection of Bishop Monkton and its Residents during the Covid Pandemic. These pictures, verses, reflections and videos were displayed and shown in the Village Hall over the 2021 August Bank Holiday weekend

The 10 Display Boards

Section 1 Welcome	Section 2 Covid Context & Stories	Section 3 Keeping Apart	Section 4 Keeping Busy	Section 5 Heroes
Section 6 Young Voices	Section 7 Bringing us Together	Section 8 Summer Reflections	Section 9 Late 2020 and into 2021	Section 10 Conclusions

Revival North Yorkshire – a poem

Before and After

In the years before Covid 19
 We were a happy little, rural team
 Memory Lane Lunches and music sessions too
 Vintage memorabilia, reminiscing's what we'd do
 But then the days of world wide changes
 Revival stopped turning its activity pages
 Immediately we knew what was needed
 Our people needed lots of things as well as simply feeding!
 Shopping and prescriptions and we delivered meals
 Lunch on legs were provided, instead of meals on wheels!
 With our staff and dedicated volunteers
 Phone and doorstep calls kept people cheered
 Our magazine lined people stay in Touch
 But for some on help classes were just too much!
 For Revival it was a time of innovation
 As it is was for many across the nation
 But sadly we dealt with what awful things
 Not new with Covid, just what older life brings
 When living alone your children all gone
 In chocolate box villages where no bus comes along

We've seen bereavement hoarding and hardship
 isolated carers watching loved ones slip
 All kinds of abuse and self-neglect
 Unheard, unhelped and but massive affect
 Isolation and loneliness and then depression
 Desperation sometimes leading to suicidal intentions
 Here in the Esk Valley there's only Revival on the ground
 To provide support and information –
 trying to turn things around
 And if we find our funding and are able to survive
 We will support NHS and social care and our villages will revive
 People will live at home for longer
 And our communities
 WILL BE STRONGER

[Revival North Yorkshire – Community Interest Company](https://www.revivalny.co.uk/)