

Beamish Crees

Susan Tron

[Text: Susan Tron, Community Development Officer, Durham Community Action & Cree Coordinator]

Images [Graphic skyline image across bottom of page. Logo with County Durham Together Partnership logo and Better for everyone strapline]

[Video: Susan sat in armchair in Beamish's Clover Cottage]

[Susan: I'm Susan Tron, I work at Durham Community Action and I'm the Cree Coordinator for the Public Health Crees in County Durham. We very much value their expertise, so we would never presume that we would want to tell them what to do, we want them to tell us what they are going to do. We want to support them in any way we can, to be able to do that and that is what the network is there to do.

Public Health provide all the public health and health information about the different campaigns, DCA provide all of the voluntary sector information and The Crees give us really, really rich information from the communities in County Durham.

We get all of this rich data from them and I as The Cree Coordinator, when I listen to them and I do evaluations with them every six months, I start to feel really responsible for the information they are telling me. They say Susan, this guy has stopped going to the doctor, this person has stopped self-harming, or this person doesn't take their prescription medication anymore because they don't need it. The last time we did it, it showed that being part of a Cree reduced the odds of suicide by 33% and mainly I put that down to the longevity of the people in The Cree.

They will all tell you that it is a lifeline, they will come here for years and years. We, public health, DCA or The Crees themselves – they never limit the length of an attendance that someone has and that's quite difficult to be able to sustain funding to keep a project like that going but somehow with the Cree network, we've managed to work towards achieving that and I think that's why its so successful. People make friendships in them and that's what they rate most highly from everything coming to The Cree is the friendships they make. Reducing isolation, reducing anxiety, all these amazing, wonderful benefits for not very much money. So, it's a very good value for money service and it's so wide and encompassing of so many different services as what you'll find is they all do something differently and as I said at the beginning that what we value. We value their expertise, their way of doing it because they know what works.

[Images: County Durham Together Partnership logo]