

POEMS IN THE WAITING ROOM

Summary

- Poems in the Waiting Room (PitWR) is an 'Arts in Health' charity registered in the U.K.
- We supply poetry cards for patients to read while waiting to see the doctor. Cards are distributed, in bundles of twenty, four times a year.
- We currently reach 1 in 10 of all NHS General Practices (GPs) in the UK.
- Poems chosen for the cards include both well known and new writing.
- A practising psychotherapist approves the choice of poems to make sure they are suitable for patients to read in this setting.
- There is no charge to the patient or the health service.
- No claims are made for the health benefits of reading poetry.
- The aims are to promote poetry, to make patients' visits more pleasant and to express appreciation to health service staff for their care.

Growth

Over one million poetry cards have been made freely available to NHS patients and staff since the scheme launched in 1998. PitWR is the most extensive arts in health programme in the NHS. It was also described in a House of Lords debate as the most widely read national poetry publication.

Around 1 in 10 of all NHS GP waiting rooms now receive our card. We welcome requests to join the scheme from NHS GPs and similar health service units. There's no cost - all that is needed is a contact name and address. Growth of our scheme is now mainly by word of mouth.

About Us

Poems in the Waiting Room is a UK Registered Charity (1099033). Trustees provide professional advice on psychotherapy, executive editing, production and distribution of the poetry cards. All work is done on a voluntary basis.

Funding

The prime source of sustainable funding is the Friends of PitWR scheme. Friends are encouraged to make regular donations, and receive a free copy of our Collected Edition, plus a newsletter and copy of each poetry card by way of thanks. Since its launch in 2008 the scheme has grown to include over 480 Friends, many donating to support a waiting room in their area.

Grants have been used to support the card in local areas. For example The Emerton Christie Charitable Trust supported the card in the Carlisle and Newcastle localities, and the Ashley Family Foundation in Wales.

Collected Edition

A Collected Edition (1998-2010) has been published covering all issues from autumn 1998 to winter 2010: the price is £16.50 (inc. p&p) direct from Poems in the Waiting Room.

Research

We have explored the impact of our work through surveys and research. Studies are published as a series of PitWR Research Notes on our web site. The major findings of this research programme are that poetry may act as an adjuvant to medical care; that our poetry selection appeals widely across a range of social conditions; that some nine in ten poetry cards are taken away by patients and that the card enhances patients' satisfaction. Finally, if PitWR served its proposed target of some two thousand waiting rooms benefits to patients would outweigh the cost by eight to ten times.