

# Exploring feelings and emotions through puppetry

**The need** – We are all facing a profound challenge to meet the emotional health needs of children. This not only affects children’s wellbeing but their ability to learn and their attainment at school. Many schools find that it is the quieter and less expressive children who are at greatest risk of being overlooked.

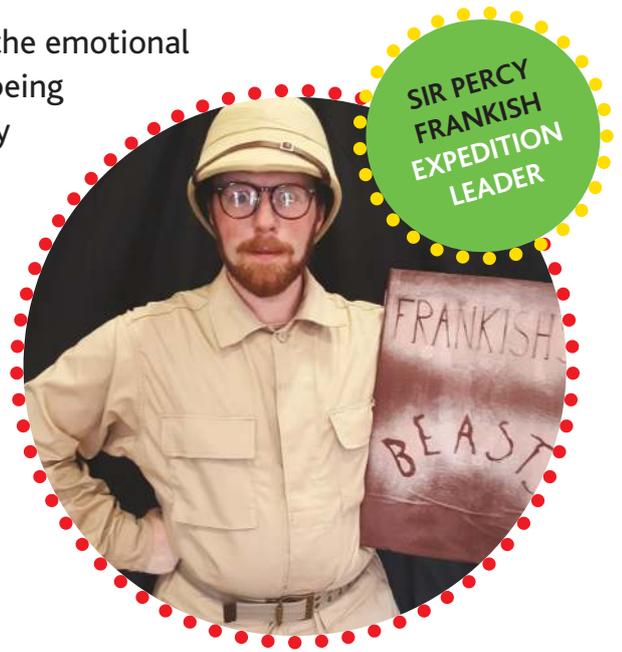
## Our response – our aims

In response to this challenge here at **North East Wellbeing** we have initiated a partnership to use the creative and expressive potential of puppets to open-up this world of feelings and emotions. We have called our programme **Curious Beasts**.

Our aim is to help children to become more self-aware and more confident in themselves and as a result to become more successful learners.

## The benefits and impact

The programme is proving to be effective and our approach allows us to measure the impact of **Curious Beasts** and to provide specific outcomes data to schools.



## Curious Beasts – the four stages of our programme

1

### Puppet Workshop

The puppets have each been designed to represent one area of social and emotional wellbeing. The children find it easy to relate to the puppets and this helps them to identify their own needs.

2

### Children's Needs Assessed

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) approach is used to assess children's social and emotional needs.

3

### Nurture Groups

Nurture groups held at school for selected children help small groups of children to talk about their feelings and emotions. Practitioners use social stories to help the children develop emotional literacy.

4

### Family Support

The family support stage helps each child's family to engage with Curious Beasts and become comfortable talking about feelings and emotions.

# Exploring feelings and emotions through puppetry

## How does Curious Beasts work?

Our four-stage programme enables children to participate over a sustained period and to develop their self-awareness and confidence.

The programme kicks off with the **Curious Beasts puppet workshop** held in school for groups of up to 20 children. The children's responses (SDQ's) are then reviewed with the school to agree upon those who will take part in the rest of the programme.

The **nurture groups** and **family support stages** are led by our skilled practitioners who pick up on the themes explored in the **puppet workshop** and tailor each session to the needs of the children.

## Curious Beasts – the puppets

The **puppet workshop** takes the form of an expedition led by **Sir Percy Frankish** who introduces the children to six curious and wonderful beasts who appear in turn in the performance tent.

Children meet and interact with each character as part of the adventure. These range from the small, fragile and insect-like **Yellow Tipped Brankist** through to four-feet-tall, furry and friendly **Arnumuth** who many children enjoy giving a hug.

Our puppets are designed to bring to life the kinds of feelings and emotions that children will be experiencing. Children respond in various ways to the six different characters so that they recognise their own feelings and emotions in a safe and non-threatening way.

The puppet characters then provide a common element or 'through-line' throughout the four stages of the **Curious Beasts** programme.

These puppets are designed and operated by specialist puppet artists from our partners **4M**. These are not simple 'glove puppets' but rather exciting and enchanting characters who come to life in our special stage set.

**Our partnership** – **North East Wellbeing** is an education charity helping vulnerable children improve their life chances through creative education programmes.

We are working in partnership with Newcastle-based puppet specialists **4M** and national children's charity **Action for Children**. Together we are offering **Curious Beasts** to schools in the North East of England.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call us on **07799 060323**  
email [director@northeastwellbeing.co.uk](mailto:director@northeastwellbeing.co.uk)

[www.northeastwellbeing.co.uk](http://www.northeastwellbeing.co.uk)