

Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF) Progress report

Name of project: It's My Plan

Project Lead: Mark Richardson

Sub Group overseeing project: PCA group

Project Targets from original bid:

- To work with 16 people with learning disabilities in a series of 14 creative workshop sessions
- To explore the concept of ownership of Person Centred Plans
- To work on the life stories of the participants
- To develop a wish list (in musical form) for the future ambitions of participants
- To create a CD of music for each participant and a compilation CD of all the music produced to be used as a resource across the City to inspire people with learning disabilities and their staff in the Person Centred Planning process.

How the project will do this work:

Carousel will recruit a group of 16 participants with learning disabilities who use day services across Brighton and Hove.

Each group of 8 participants will take part in a series of seven workshops lead by 4 musicians with and without learning disability from Carousel's Shut Up and Listen! Music programme.

Through music, over the course of the series of workshops, the participants will explore their life stories, their future plans and how they want to use their Personal Plans to inform their lives.

All of the participants will record the songs and music they create onto a CD

How much 2009/10 LDDF money the project gets: £10,200.00

Name of person completing this report:

Julia Roberts (Carousel, Programme Manager)

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What the project has done up to April 2010:

Carousel recruited x 16 participants in the project, who were identified and supported by 4 different day services (SCOPE, Grace Eyre, The Belgrave Centre and Buckingham Road Day Centre) and one individual who does not access day services. One of the outcomes of the project was that participants were in new, unfamiliar groups through which they met new people in the community.

We delivered two seven week series of weekly workshop sessions; each with a group of 8 participants. The participants consisted of an exactly equal male/female split and a total of 5 wheelchair users.

The workshop sessions were delivered by 2 learning disabled tutors, James Hearne and David Arnold, both trained by Carousel and supported by two members of Carousel staff; Sarah Hamlett (Carousel's Live Arts Co-ordinator) and Richard Phoenix (Carousel's Music Facilitator). Sadly and suddenly, David fell ill and died before the second course was completed. James continued in the role of tutor, supported by Richard and Sarah.

The workshop sessions engaged participants in a series of creative activities through which they explored their lives and their aspirations. These included group discussion, song writing, music making and visual arts activities. The courses culminated in the production of a CD compilation of songs written and performed by the participants. Copies of the CD were distributed to all participants. It is hoped that the CDs will be used by participants as a means of them expressing their wishes for their care plans. Copies of the CDs will also be made available to the LDDF for distribution around the city to raise awareness of the issues around person centred plans.

One of the outcomes of this project is the development of the skills of the learning disabled tutors. For James, this has been an opportunity for him to work in this capacity for the first time and he has shown himself to be a good role model demonstrating empathy and skill in communicating with others. He has found it hard to adjust to the commitment of being in a work role (for the first time) but this has been an excellent learning experience for him. James also led a presentation made to the PCA group on 19th April. This was the first time he had made a formal presentation of this kind and he did so extremely well.

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For the Carousel staff, this project has been a model of working creatively with a group of individuals with a vast spectrum of support needs and has been an excellent opportunity for them to extend their professional skills in working with people with profound and complex disability. The results have been very satisfying. The use of technology (for example, Ableton Live software) has proved to be very empowering and effective in terms of access and interpreting sound to create music.

The feedback from the participants and their support workers has been extremely positive. One carer commented that it was the first time ever that one participant had engaged in a group activity.

Here are a selection of other quotes from participants and carers;

“Brilliant. I liked singing and played electric guitars, keyboards and the square thing. I liked both in a group and on my own. I am pleased with my song. And that’s it. Best in the world.”

Adam Fitch

“Graham has really enjoyed this course. He was able to engage in all the activities on offer. It appeared that his favourite activity was using the musical instruments. He was smiling and verbalising throughout this activity. He also appeared to enjoy watching everyone else’s mime behind the big screen. Graham’s mood was happier and calmer while in the session and for a prolonged period afterwards.”

Support worker

“Alan has seemed to enjoy himself on the course. It has been a great chance to get out into the community and take part in a course where he has something tangible to show for it at the end, which he can show friends and family. It is nice for him to have CD evidence of his excellent work which he can be very proud of. The course has enhanced Alan’s teamwork skills and has given him the chance to show off his keyboarding talents and also his singing, to people outside of the day centre. It has also given Alan the opportunity to meet new friends and socialise. It has been a brilliant, fun course!”

Support worker