



empowering marginalised artists and writers

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CREATIVE FUTURE PRACTICE EXAMPLE
for the
All Party Parliamentary Group for Arts,
Health and Wellbeing

Project Title: CREATIVE FUTURE CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

Aims and Objectives:

The project aim is to engage marginalised people - defined as those who lack opportunities due to mental health issues, disability, health, identity or social circumstance - in creative activities to improve their creative skills, health and well-being. This aim is central to Creative Future's Theory of Change - to engage those who are excluded and suffering from poor self-esteem/health and, by using creativity, increase skills, reduce isolation, create high quality artistic work which results in publication or exhibition. As skills, knowledge and support networks increase and public validation via publication and exhibition is gained, people progress on their recovery journey, increasing in self-esteem/well-being. This results in taking people from the margins to the mainstream - artistically, socially and economically. It challenges the perceptions of marginalised people's potential, changes individual perception from 'person with a problem' to 'person with potential' and challenges the exclusivity/elitism of the art world - introducing new artists and new audiences to the mainstream.

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Funding sources:

The project is funded by a variety of funders including: Arts Council England, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Crawley Borough Council, West Sussex County Council, BUPA Foundation.

Timescale and delivery dates:

This project is ongoing but the data reported here relates to workshops delivered between April 2015- March 2016.

Workshops are delivered in a variety of ways. There are regular twice monthly drop-in workshops of two hours, aimed at encouraging initial engagement, at Crawley, Brighton, Horsham and Worthing. Workshops focussing on specific professional development skills (e.g. How to organise an exhibition, Creative Writing at the Museum - resulting in publication, Creating your own website) are workshops of four/five two hour sessions delivered once or twice a year. One off hourly workshops such as 'Meet the Writer/Artist' are talks delivered by artists/writers with experience of marginalisation that occur four times a year.



Creative Future is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee
Charity number: 1132889 Company no: 6891365

Context:

It is vital that the workshops are delivered in a fully accessible setting in a place that is friendly, welcoming and accessible by public transport. Many of the participants have high levels of anxiety, paranoia and poor mental health. It is important that the place is familiar (such as a library or community resource), that the staff/facilitator is welcoming and non-judgemental and that facilities are fully accessible for all types of wheelchairs/disability.

Location/ setting:

The workshops are delivered in: libraries, art centres/studios, IT suites, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, community centres. They are delivered across Sussex in Crawley, Horsham, Brighton and Worthing. Participants access the venues by public or private transport for which they can apply for a limited bursary to subsidise the cost of travel.

Description of the arts activity

Drop-in groups are open to everyone whatever level of ability or experience. Session content is decided within the group with guidance from the tutor and includes experimenting with: painting, collage, monoprinting, life drawing etc. Creative writing groups experiment with prose, poetry and scriptwriting. All sessions give time for participants to feedback on each other's work if so desired.

Professional development workshops - such as 'Creative Writing at the Museum' - focuses on creative writing inspired by artefacts at the Brighton Museum and Art Gallery and results in a publication of selected written works sold at the Museum shop. 'Organising an Exhibition' enables participants to organise, curate and show their work in an exhibition at an established gallery with a well-attended preview.

Details of the project participants

Participants are adults in Sussex aged 18+ with mental health issues, physical or learning disabilities, homeless people, substance misusers, offenders and ex-offenders, refugees, long term unemployed, the elderly, travellers, carers, care leavers, and people from LGB&T and BME communities. They access the project via: self-referral, referral from support workers/support services. We advertise the project via a twice yearly activity brochure, monthly e-newsletters to 2000+ people, social media postings to 9000+ contacts including many key/case workers/social workers, probation officers and mental health workers.

Case study

Yvonne discovered Creative Future in 2012 after picking up a brochure at her mental health clinic, during recovery from a breakdown. She contacted us directly. That year she attended 'Organising an Exhibition' where she first exhibited her work. In 2013 she was accepted onto our mentoring programme where she published her artwork in a Creative Future booklet (which sold out) and ran a stall at our Impact Art Fair. She has consistently sold work at exhibitions, participated in workshops and courses, given talks to inspire others (including for Grassroots Suicide Prevention) and delivered workshops for us and Sussex Partnership Trust.

Project management

To reduce barriers to engagement Drop-In and 'Meet the Artist/Writer' workshops are free and professional development workshops are low cost (£15/£30 per course). Workshop data, photographs, evaluation forms and publication/exhibition of works is always done with the consent of participants.

Workshops are run by highly experienced facilitators, experienced arts professionals with teaching qualifications and experienced with working with marginalised people. They are regularly supervised and observed by the Operation and Programme Manager and are provided with administrative support by our Executive Administrator and Office Assistant.

Costs per participant: The 2015-16 workshop programme cost approximately £36,810 and engaged 313 participants. This equals £117 per person. (*Day care for people with mental health problems costs £4,500 per person p.a. (PSSRU). Mental health problems costs the UK £77 billion p.a. (OPDM)*)

Evaluation methods and findings

During April 2015-March 2016 we delivered 38 workshops/courses consisting of 160 sessions (317 hours total) to 313 individual participants. They were delivered at 20 venues. From the feedback forms completed at these workshops we know that:

- **85%** of our service users reported increased *skills, wellbeing and confidence*
- **75%** felt attending workshops *reduced their isolation*
- **72%** reported our services were very or significantly *helpful in their mental health recovery*—vs. 34% for medication

- 68% felt engaging in Creative Future activities *helped manage their mental health issue*

Activity impact on mental health and well-being

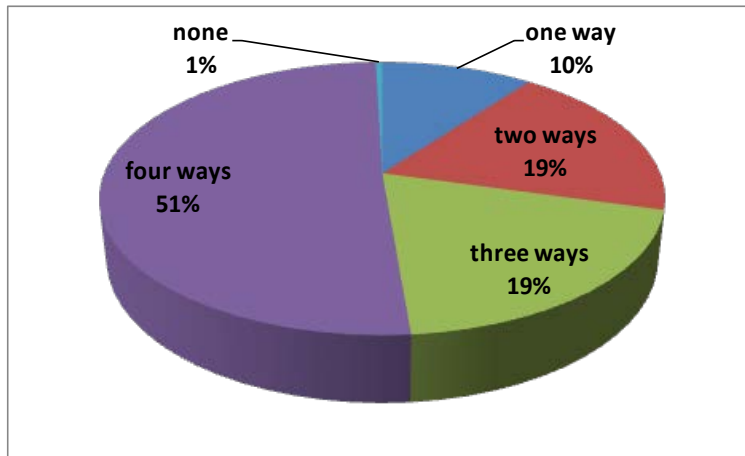
Our services enable participants to engage in four of the NHS' recommended 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' i.e.:

1. **Connect** - engaging with others
2. **Take Notice** - reflecting on experiences
3. **Keep Learning** - learning a skill
4. **Give** - being a volunteer

These 'ways' or strategies help develop emotional resilience that enables participants to better manage their mental health problems.

Workshop participants were asked to tick how many ways of the NHS' 'ways to wellbeing' the Creative Future workshop helped with, their response was:

- 99% declared that the Creative Future workshop helped them with 'ways to wellbeing' improving their mental health resilience



"Six weeks of this class was better than a year of therapy!"

Paul, writing course participant

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