

## Arts in Mental Health Co-ordinators Annual Report Sept. 2021.



### **1. Introduction.**

The Arts in Mental Health Co-ordinators at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Tim Sayers and Lydia Towsey, have been in post since 2007. The post was initially an Arts Council England funded pilot but following the overwhelming success of the pilot the co-ordinators have now been firmly established within the Trust for several years. This report reflects on the achievements of the co-ordinators over the last twelve months and outlines their plans for the future.

### **2. Background.**

- The Co-ordinators have been very successful in attracting external funding into projects that they undertake and been innovative in finding ways to introduce sustainability into their work.
- They are dedicated to delivering a programme of artistic projects, in partnership with other organisations, across in-patient areas and the community, involving a range of different service users of the Trust.
- They have been highly successful in engaging 'hard to reach' and vulnerable mental health service users, continuing to expand their services to encompass new areas of the Trust.
- Their work is essential in delivering an evidence-based recovery focused model of care, allowing service users to develop positive creative identities whilst engaging in meaningful activity, leading to becoming more of an inclusive part of the communities in which they live.
- The Co-ordinators are dedicated to a programme of research and evaluation of their work, with outcomes contributing to the growing body of evidence that arts in mental health can play a significant role in mental health recovery.
- They have become a very much valued service within the Trust and have promoted a positive image of the Trust, and our service users, to other organisations and the wider community.

As with most services the Arts in Mental Health Co-ordinators have faced a massive challenge in diversifying their projects to continue to deliver arts activities that benefit our service users despite the impact of the Covid pandemic. This report will highlight the online services that they have delivered during this period and the work that they have undertaken on mental health wards at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit and elsewhere.

### **3. Summary of projects.**

Our work can be broken down into two broad categories: NHS delivered 'in house' projects and projects delivered in partnership with outside agencies (voluntary, statutory and third sector).

#### **Remote Art Project.**

Delivered in partnership with BrightSparks: Arts in Mental Health Group, who secured circa £41,000 funding from Leicestershire County Council and Arts Council England. A 'lockdown' project dedicated to supporting our more vulnerable service users during this difficult period. The project involved professional artists working over the phone and via email with participants, supporting them to create art, music, comedy, creative writing, and other creative work, whilst also providing more general social support.

The funding also supported the delivery of a series of Online Arts Workshops and five Online performances as part of our whole online delivery during the lockdown.

As part of this project, we recognized the need to support mental health service users with accessing online activity, and accordingly were successful with funding to supply tablets and ongoing support to several isolated, vulnerable service users.

#### **WORD! Online Broadcasts.**

Delivered as part of our Remote Art Project, with further funding provided via WORD!'s core Arts Council England budget. This Lockdown outreach project enabled us to deliver bi-monthly online events, involving service users and a broader audience.

#### **Every Brilliant Thing.**

An on and off-line project delivering weekly inspirations for all artforms which are displayed on-line via a Facebook page. This project has proved to be incredibly successful with over 300 people involved and a massive collection of works displayed and archived as part of the project.

We are now looking to produce a publication which will display artworks from all involved and will be distributed to all to the service users involved with the project and the wider community.

#### **Service User Participatory Artists**

We have a programme of development of service users to become participatory artists for our service, with a view to them moving on to more regular long-term employment. We are very grateful to The Carlton Hayes Charity who have supported us with this work.

The Comedy Asylum has successfully moved a service user on in the last year and is employing three service user participatory artists at present.

Our Creative Writing Groups regularly employ service user participatory artists and is successfully trialing someone at present.

Our Arts Groups also regularly employ service user artists with our ArtSpace Group being successfully led by a previous member of the group at present.

And a member of our Smoothie Sound System who was previously an in-patient at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit has recently commenced delivering DJ'ing sessions on the unit.



### **The Glenvale Gallery, Westcotes Gallery Space, Bradgate and Evington Centre Reception Area Exhibition Spaces.**

The Glenvale Gallery is located at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit and is dedicated to displaying exhibitions of service user art, which then move onto our gallery space at Westcotes Health Centre. We also stage a programme of smaller service user art exhibitions in the reception areas at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit and Evington Centre.

We also regularly stage exhibitions at The Attenborough Arts Centre whilst contributing pieces to their own in-house exhibitions. Our exhibition spaces have been closed during lockdown but have progressively been reopening over the summer.

### **Ward Music Sessions.**

During Lockdown and subsequently, Tim has been successfully delivering music sessions on Griffin Ward at The Herschel Prins Centre, The Belvoir PICU, wards at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit and at Stewart House. These involve playing guitar and performing, but also the distribution of song sheets for patients to singalong if they wish. The sessions have proven very popular with patients + staff alike and have also proven to be a very good outreach opportunity with patients continued involvement with our projects post discharge.

Following a successful application to the Raising Health Charity we have purchased Sound Production equipment which has been used as part of a project on Phoenix Ward at The Herschel Prins Centre. We commissioned a Sound Production Engineer to deliver the sessions with Tim producing a short video for the benefit of patients involved.

Some of this music activity has been specifically instigated to address issues identified around difficulties engaging younger male patients in therapeutic activities within our mental health environments.

We also have a Carlton Hayes Charity funded programme of supplying musical instruments to wards.

### **Potential Unlocked.**

We have been working in partnership with Soft Touch Arts to deliver a programme of artistic activities, with associated exhibitions and activities, to improve the health and well-being of prisoners at HMP Leicester, HMP Stocken, other regional prisons, and people serving Community sentences. LPT were successful in securing circa £100,000 funding from Arts Council England, with Soft Touch securing further additional funding, to deliver this three-year project. This work was subject to three research projects which were delivered by De Montfort University and The University of Leicester. This project was highly disrupted by the Covid pandemic but has now been successfully completed with the delivery of a well-attended Online event where research findings were shared, and an online exhibition visited.

We are now in a planning stage with Soft Touch Arts as to how we might carry this work forward into the future.



### **ArtsCafe + ArtSpace.**

Popular weekly informal arts workshops, taking place at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit and The Attenborough Arts Centre, targeting people with severe and enduring mental health problems, and dedicated to the production of exhibitions, artworks for display, and for publication. We are successful in engaging considerable numbers of in and out-patients in a range of artistic activities within these groups, introducing them to a rolling programme of projects involving a range of highly talented guest participatory artists. Both these groups have been closed during the Covid pandemic, with ArtSpace at The Attenborough Arts Centre now reopened with restricted numbers.

### **Ward Improvement Arts Programme.**

In partnership with Soft Touch Community Arts Organisation and funded by the Carlton Hayes Charity this programme is delivered by the highly talented participatory artist Jim Jackson. He has worked with in-patients to design and produce artworks on walls and fences of wards at

The Bradgate Mental Health Unit, The Willows, Stewart House, and Mill Lodge. The project is now due to undertake work on wards at The Herschel Prins Centre.



### **The Comedy Asylum.**

Award winning comedy project that culminates in yearly shows as part of Leicester Comedy Festival. BrightSparks: Arts in Mental Health Group were successful in securing circa £185,000 from the Big Lottery Fund in late 2016 to expand the project and have delivered the following over five years;

- Annual Comedy Asylum workshops and show as part of Leicester Comedy Festival.
- Delivery of comedy workshops at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit and other LPT in-patient units.
- Delivery of comedy courses at The Leicestershire Recovery College.
- Expansion of the project to Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, and Northamptonshire.
- On-going evaluation of the project.

This project has continued to be very successful during the Covid lockdown, with well attended Online workshops, telephone support via the Remote Art programme, and small face to face groups when possible. With easing of restrictions weekly face to face groups are now taking place at The Attenborough Arts Centre with associated performance staged at The LCB Depot in late August.

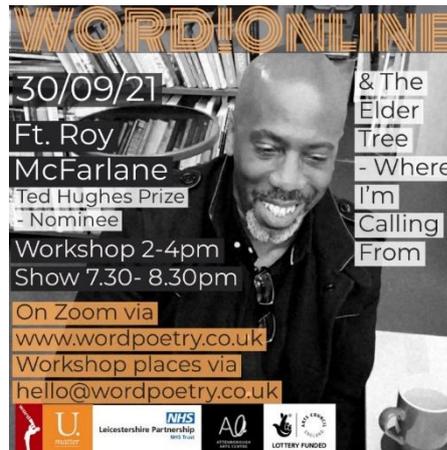
The project has also been successful with an application to the Baring Foundation to deliver a pilot School of Comedy project where comedy is being used to improve the emotional wellbeing of school children.

As part of this project, we are working with Adam Ainsworth, Programme Leader - Drama, at De Montfort University to facilitate longitudinal research around the effectiveness of The Comedy Asylum in successfully delivering recovery focused care.

### **WORD!**

WORD! is a Leicester based voluntary organisation, delivering one of the longest running poetry events in the UK, alongside an expanding programme of other activities. The organisation is nationally unique in being co-produced by LPT and is an exceptional example of mental health partnership working, with many of our performers and audience coming from our mental health community.

During the Covid pandemic we have worked in partnership with WORD! In delivering Online WORD! shows alongside well attended weekly Online Writing Workshops.



### **Bradgate Writers Group + Showcase Collective.**

Weekly creative writing groups taking place at the Bradgate Mental Health Unit and The Attenborough arts Centre. Facilitated by Lydia, volunteers Peter Buckley, Jonathan Hurley, Brandon Oliver, and a range of guest facilitators. These popular projects engage large numbers of in-patients and out-patients, and are dedicated to the production of publications, combined with service user performances. Both these groups have been closed during the Covid pandemic, with the Showcase Collective at The Attenborough Arts Centre now reopened with restricted numbers.

### **Everybody's Reading Festival.**

Leicester's festival of books and reading, the two principal objectives of the festival are to promote reading, literacy and associated wellbeing to the people of Leicester, with an emphasis on engaging vulnerable people. We have been members of the Festival Committee since its' conception in 2008, when Lydia was first responsible for directing the festival. Since that point we have continued to be involved with delivering various projects as part of the festival. The festival hasn't taken place for the past two years because of the Covid pandemic.

### **Look-a-Lady Ukulele (LALU).**

This project targets South Asian women in weekly ukulele-based workshops at Peepul Enterprise in Belgrave. Project LALU aims to empower female expression, contribute to cultural cohesion, and improve English literacy. LALU continues to be closed because of the Covid pandemic.

### **Smoothie Service User Sound System.**

Weekly Sound System workshops that take place at Stayfree Music Studios at present, but that we are intending to move to The Bradgate Mental Health Unit so it can also benefit in-patients. This project is successful in targeting people from our BAME communities alongside

other service users with severe and enduring mental health problems. Smoothie continues to be closed pending reopening of the Bradgate Mental Health Unit for our service users.

### **Open Libraries.**

We are librarians to several open libraries around the Trust, including at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit and The Bennion Centre. We also supply books to the 'Book Lady' at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit.

### **Green Room Gardeners**

The Green Room Gardeners project has been closed during the Covid pandemic, but is hoping to reopen in due course with its work centred around our gardens at The Attenborough Arts Centre, Clarendon Allotments and The Secret Garden based at Glenfield hospital.

### **Sounds Inclusive.**

A fully evaluated project previously funded by The National Lottery which encompasses all our performance projects. It is dedicated to employing service users and professional musicians to perform on Mental Health Wards across the trust, conferences, educational venues and at community events.



### **The Packing Saloon.**

Taking place at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit, and working in partnership with Giving World Charity, we deliver weekly voluntary packing sessions of toiletry bags for NHS Trusts throughout the UK. This group remains closed pending the reopening of our space at the Bradgate Mental Health Unit.

### **Annual Open Art Exhibition.**

This massively successful and popular annual event, featuring individual and group works, normally takes place at The Attenborough Arts Centre, then tours to other exhibition spaces that we curate. We have been unable to stage the exhibition for the last two years but are hoping to reopen in 2022.

## **The Elder Tree**

The Elder Tree' project commenced in 2018 and is part of 'Celebrating Age', a programme jointly funded by Arts Council England and the Baring Foundation. The programme supports cultural spaces and organisations working collaboratively to achieve the following;

- Empower older people to help shape what's on offer and lead quality activities.
- Embed proven approaches to engaging older people as visitors, audiences, or participants in creative processes.
- Test and apply new ways to engage older people.
- Commission older artists or art that has relevance for older people.
- Showcase and celebrate art created by and with older people.

The project is currently in the process of completing its second publication which has involved many LPT Service Users who have met weekly at our Online Writer's Workshops.



## **Fosse Music Collective.**

Our very own band of service users meets weekly at The Fosse Community Centre and have successfully performed at several public venues, including at The Riverside Festival, Leicester in June 2019. The collective is dedicated to a programme of recording and performing but continues to be closed due to the socially interactive nature of the group and high risks associated with the Covid pandemic.

## **Artworks Projects.**

We continue to provide + display service user artworks on walls at different venues within LPT and for community venues. At present, we have been involved with providing a range of beautiful service user artworks to improve the waiting rooms + general environment at The Clozapine Clinic + ECT Suite at The Bradgate Mental Health Unit.

## **Education, Research and Development.**

We have successfully expanded our educational work and provide several placements for Mental Health Nursing students throughout the year. In the last year we have taken on and supported our first Art Psychotherapist student who so enjoyed the placement that she has carried on as a volunteer with our service. We are dedicated to a programme of evaluation

and research of our projects which builds on the increasing evidence base of the effectiveness of the arts in delivering recovery focused mental health care.

We deliver a range of successful courses at The Leicestershire Recovery College and have continued this delivery on-line during lockdown.

In recent times we have become increasingly involved, as an example of best practice, with National initiatives to deliver increased arts in mental health work across the country, with our service being highlighted in a recent Baring Foundation Report 'Creatively Minded and the NHS' please see <https://baringfoundation.org.uk/resource/creatively-minded-and-the-nhs/>

### House of Circus.

The House of Circus was originally funded by the University of Leicester but is now an independent weekly circus workshops project which receives light touch support from ourselves.

### 3. Income 2020 - 2021.

Project.	Funder.	Sum procured.
Smoothie Sound System	BrightSparks.	£30
Service User Participatory Artists	Carlton Hayes Charity BrightSparks	£500 £2,000
ArtSpace + ArtsCafe	The Attenborough Arts Centre. BrightSparks University of Leicester Carlton Hayes Charity	£500 £492 £100 £400
Theatre Project.	BrightSparks.	£40
Sounds Inclusive.	BrightSparks University of Leicester. Carlton Hayes Charity	£70 £150 £3,700
Ukulele Ladies.	BrightSparks	£35
Fosse Music Collective.	BrightSparks	£70
Ward fence murals	Soft Touch Arts	£7,500
Smoothie	BrightSparks	£30

Painting for Wellbeing.	Leicestershire County Council.	£1,202
Green Room Gardeners.	BrightSparks Finnis Scott Foundation	£100 £1,000
Packing Saloon	BrightSparks	£37
Bradgate Writers Group	BrightSparks	£40
Showcase Collective	BrightSparks The Attenborough Art Centre	£330 £400
Potential Unlocked	Arts Council England	£32,000
The Comedy Asylum.	BrightSparks National Lottery Big Lottery Fund	£205 £52,140
Remote Art + Online work	Leicestershire County Council Arts Council England Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation University of Leicester	£16,450 £27,480 £5,000 £8,300
House of Circus	BrightSparks	£30
WORD!	General Income Inspire BrightSparks University of Leicester Arts Council England	£1,074 £200 £1050 £931 £39,978
<b>Total.</b>		<b>£203,564</b>

#### 4. Summary.

The Arts in Mental Health Team at LPT have made massive progress in 2020-21 with a considerable expansion in service delivery, mainly achieved through successful partnership working with several external agencies and project managers. We are recognized as being a proactive recovery orientated service which responds to identified service user needs, enjoying a very good reputation both within LPT, regionally, and increasingly nationally.

#### 5. Issues.

- The Covid pandemic has highlighted the role that Online Arts Activity can play in engaging a whole new audience of isolated and disengaged mental health service users. During the pandemic we have successfully delivered a range of online activity alongside considerable face to face work on mental health wards. Our challenge is to maintain this work while reintroducing our existing face to face activity.

- Another major issue continues to be the over popularity of our service which puts increasing pressure on us to deliver more projects whilst, at the same time, endeavoring to source funding to ensure the sustainability of our existing programme of work.
- There continues to be a lack of understanding in some quarters as to the value that the arts can play in supporting recovery in mental health care, this can lead to service users missing out on the opportunities that can be offered from our service.

## **6. Message from Marie McGranaghan Team Manager, Recovery Services, Acute Recovery Team.**

I am delighted and proud of how our LPT Arts in Mental Health Service is truly dedicated to delivering this diverse, unique programme of work for our most underrepresented and vulnerable people in the community.

It is a privilege and an inspiration to be able to support Tim and Lydia to continue to reach out creatively, and connect with people, offering in-reach to our inpatient wards and outreach to different areas in the community simultaneously.

Despite the constraints of the pandemic, they have adapted progressively to offer virtual platforms and innovative new ways of working, this will no doubt continue to grow and flourish after COVID.

We cannot underestimate the value and worth of how our Arts in Mental Health Service has made a difference to peoples lives, it has brought hope, purpose, and a sense of belonging, their work sits at the heart of Recovery.

Well done Tim and Lydia.

## **7. Quotes.**

'When I reluctantly agreed to attend one of these online sessions, I never imagined that they would become such an important part of my life.'

'I am so glad that I joined this art group, I have made new close friends and have found that through this group I have gained confidence, especially in group discussions.'

'I really enjoyed the workshops; they were fun and relaxed, and I felt my time there was productive. I am very grateful to everyone concerned, thank you.'

'The most important thing for me is that I feel safe, respected, and am in a place where I am not judged.'

**Lydia Towsey + Tim Sayers. Arts in Mental Health Co-ordinators**

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