

# CREATIVE BRIDGES

PHOTOGRAPHY

ANIMATION

MUSIC

DANCE

FILM

DRAMA

USING **CREATIVE**  
ENGAGEMENT TO  
AID TRANSITION  
TO **INDEPENDENT**  
ADULT LIFE



# WHAT IS CREATIVE BRIDGES?

**Creative Bridges** explores ways to use cultural engagement to support young people with learning difficulties and/or social disadvantage to gain entry to the world of work. Our pilot programme established a need to fill a gap in provision between statutory education and next steps – work, further study or volunteering. The project is built on the foundation that everyone deserves to play a meaningful role in society, and to improve the employment statistics for people with disabilities.

## Key outcomes

- 1 Prepare challenging young people with learning disabilities for further education, the workplace or volunteering using creativity and cultural engagement to develop the necessary skills, confidence, experience and qualifications.
- 2 Transform the way that a greater number of museums and galleries engage with people with a learning disability.
- 3 Programme becomes more self-sustaining through commissioning model developed over the course of the grant.

# how do we do this?

## Preparing challenging young people

We created a mini college within The Herbert Museum & Art Gallery. We're a smaller campus than a big college which enables easier transition from special schools to next steps.

We recognize that neuro diverse people have great problem solving skills and are inspired by creative challenges.

Creating opportunities for learners to be off site and independently interacting with new people, both neuro typical and neuro diverse, helps them see beyond their current school life.



## Transforming your way of working

As part of our programme we have a steering group of peer professionals providing insight, a critical eye and a national perspective to our professional training programme.

Representing organisations from:

- GEM
- Open Theatre
- National Trust
- Local Authority Museums

Our annual symposium provides inspiration, practical and shared learning as well as organisational research to inform our blended training offer.

64% of respondents gave our symposium top marks for inspiration.

We want you to be a part of our extended family. Everyone deserves to have a meaningful role in society and we want to ensure the cultural and museum sector sets a standard for other organisations to follow.

## Looking forward: Becoming sustainable

As part of our research and partnership working we are pursuing models of sustainability from formal education to social enterprises. As we pilot and test we will share our learning with the wider sector.



# THE CREATIVE BRIDGES WAY

## 1. Playing to our strengths and partnership working

As a Creative and Digital Media Team we work with learners utilising these skills and working in partnership with other cultural organisations to diversify the art forms and skills development our learners can engage with.

This sees us work with:

- Freelance artists from animators to digital creators
- Birmingham Royal Ballet
- Open Theatre Company

## 2. A person centred approach

Supporting any young person to equip themselves for the next steps in their lives requires us to reflect upon how we can enable participation. Adapt what you already have - we learn by generalising and remodelling approaches but it's important to be flexible and responsive to individuals. Inclusivity and accessibility is a state of continuous learning.

## 3. Sharing knowledge

Identify what needs to be in place for individual inclusivity and participation, what are their coping strategies and how can organisations use these for mutual greater benefit? As a team we debrief activity and reflect upon support worker feedback. Embedding a reflective practice in our work creates greater inclusivity and better outcomes for our learners. Through this training offer we want to share our knowledge with you.

## 4. Qualification mapping

As part of our course we map qualifications to the outcomes we know our learners can achieve. This includes Open College Network and Arts Award accreditations. We are currently working with our fourth cohort of learners from 3 special schools within our locality.

## 5. Organisational change

As a museum and art gallery we understand the challenges of transitioning a whole organization to embed inclusive thinking into every department. As a cultural institution, the creative case for diversity has been made clear by the Arts Council. How diverse and inclusive is your organisation and its offer?

*Non-disabled children and young people aged 11-15 are twice as likely to visit a museum with their school as their disabled peers, with special schools less likely to visit cultural venues.*

We support the values of the Cultural Inclusion manifesto which establishes a set of beliefs we as a sector can adopt to be more inclusive. Sign up to the manifesto and join us on the journey to establish a kitemark for inclusive practice.

Equality and diversity should be built into what we all do from the start. It's not an appendix to the business plan – it is the business plan. Michelle Lally, 20-21 Visual Arts Centre 3

## 6. We're always learning

Our experiences of people dictate our ability to adapt to their needs and showcase their abilities, so we must make our circle of visitors, friends and colleagues as wide and diverse as possible. Our staff are committed to continually learning new skills and adapting their practice for the new people we meet. Sharing our learning with the sector will help us move forward collectively in both our thinking and our practice.

*1,3 Cultural Inclusion Manifesto <https://culturalinclusion.uk/manifesto/>  
ACE Every Child Equality and Diversity in the Arts and Culture by, with and for Children and Young People Review and Action Plan <http://bit.ly/ACECYPequalityanddiversityplan>*

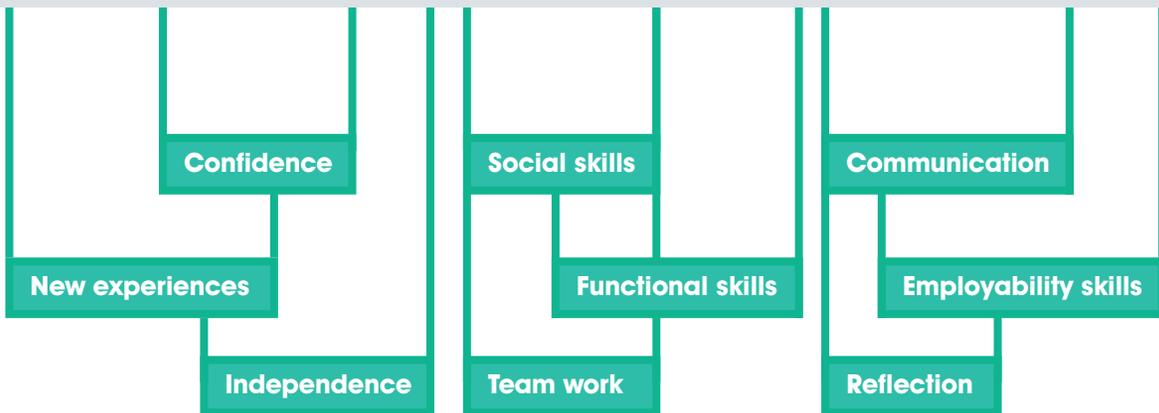
# HOW DO WE KNOW THIS WORKS?

## Qualifications & Destinations



Creative Bridges delivers a person-centred approach and responds to individual targets identified in combination by the school, project staff and the learners themselves.

### Often shared core outcomes centre around:



Through a diverse creative programme and qualification evidence Creative Bridges explores and adapts activity for individual progression and reinforcement of skills development.

*"A wonderful set of Bronze portfolios here, impeccably evidenced, very well organized and accurately assessed. The young people clearly had an incredibly rich experience and the opportunity to take part in a huge variety of exciting arts activity from filmmaking and photography to animation and dance. I am impressed by the way that communication challenges have been overcome and individual reflection supported along with individual choices. I am glad that young people have used this framework to support their progression and employability – it has clearly made a difference to their learning, lives and future options."*

- Arts Award Moderator

# MEET OUR LEARNERS



## Meet Eloise

Eloise's own personal targets on the programme were to:

**Improve speaking with confidence when speaking with new people**

**Raise any worries with staff  
Try new things**

**Speaking with confidence for Eloise was centred around her ability to share her ideas within a new group of people and state her opinions with an appropriate tone.**

Group work for Eloise was met with frustration, instead preferring to work alone as communicating verbally could be challenging. The diversity of group work enabled her to be direct with her creative vision with staff on solo work but also express herself politely and with manners in group work.

Eloise was able to develop new skills as part of the programme, from ICT skills, creative ideas generation and self-reflection. At the start of the programme Eloise was uncertain about exploring new skills and activities, this included dance. As part of monitoring Eloise's learning journey; Eloise improved 1 to 2 points upon each progression scale of engagement, group work and concentration skills; consistently achieving success in her targets. This development resulted in increased confidence within Eloise; understanding the level of her achievements through a slide show she made. Sharing this at the celebration event has enabled her to be more willing to undertake new experiences in the future, especially dance.

***'The experience will have built on Eloise's ability to do things outside of her comfort zone.'***

*– Oakwood Support Worker*



## Meet HENRY

Henry's own personal targets on the programme were to:

**Improve listening skills**

**Develop team work skills**

**Improve social skills**

**For Henry this meant understanding social boundaries and enable others the opportunity to participate and express themselves.** This included understanding personal space and appropriate greetings; Henry started out as an insistent hugger of all he would meet for the first time to exchanging this greeting for a handshake, without needing to be reminded.

'This activity was ideal for Henry as he was working with different students and how the activity was set out in the bigger room it definitely gave Henry the opportunity to listen more and to let other people contribute within the group activity,' – Sherbourne Support Worker

Smaller team working scenarios enabled Henry take on a leadership role enabling him to champion and support his team mates contributions. His supportive and nurturing tendencies was exemplified in his role in the film as a Captain directing his crew. Reinforcing roles and behaviours through creative outcomes has placed Henry on a path where he can continue working on these in a positive way.

***'WOW he has done so well. He has worked so hard. This is such an amazing course.'***

*- Henry's parents*



## Meet Logan

Logan's own personal targets on the programme were to:

**Develop self confidence**

**Speak to unfamiliar people**

**Develop functional skills**

**Logan is very creative in both ideas generation and drawing skills, however lacked confidence in articulating these with new people.** The development and focus upon his creative skills meant that his functional skills needed opportunities to be tested.

The programme's combination of embedding functional skills within the creative process enabled Logan to enjoy the creative writing element of the storyboarding process and reading skills as part of group tasks. This saw Logan consistently engage, concentrate and work with others at a high level on his progression learning scale

The element of the programme that made the most difference for Logan was the skill share section of Arts Award.

'Logan had a lovely calm nature; teaching everyone to draw, he wasn't nervous – step by step he talked us through how to create a cartoon character – checking on all of the other learners– like a professional teacher' - Kerrie Suteu – Digital Media Manger – The Herbert

***'Logan was able to share his drawing skills with the rest of the group which reinforced his levels of confidence'***

*– Oakwood Support worker*



## Meet Max

Max's own personal targets on the programme were to:

**Improve communication skills**

**Follow multi-step instructions**

**Work on his own**

For Max this meant feeling confident to contribute his ideas and to complete work individually so that he couldn't hide within a group. Max thrived within the balance of smaller group work which enabled a happy median of improving communication whilst undertaking an individual role.

The open ended nature of the creative process enabled Max to thrive within activities where his own choices could be celebrated and praised.

The pivotal moment within the programme for Max was when he volunteered as the substitute for a lead role in the film. This took Max outside of his comfort zone and enabled direct progressions through his targets. Challenging Max in order to achieve his targets impacted upon his personal enjoyment of this part of the programme. Creating opportunities for reflecting upon his professionalism and other employability skills challenged Max and his family's expectations of what he had achieved.

***'Max works better in small groups it gets him to join in more and puts his own ideas forward without just shrugging his shoulders and saying "I don't know".'***

*– Baginton Fields Support Worker*

# Join OUR EXTENDED FAMILY

## Annual Symposium

**Hearing directly from inspiring neuro-diverse adults and young people is the best way to feel galvanised to make a change.** Gaining understanding of the challenges of peers who are doing great work and getting excited about the potential of mirroring these achievements ourselves can only happen when likeminded people are in the same space to connect and learn.

Our annual symposium is a space for learning, developing new skills and ideas, understanding and feeling armed with the knowledge to challenge the inclusivity of our organisations.

Last year a total of 20 organisations were represented across 72 attendees, The programme included:

- Film and animation workshops
- Movement and non-verbal communication workshops
- Talks from: National Trust, Open Theatre, Rugby Art Gallery and Museum and ourselves!

## What did they take away from the day?

A total of **94%** of our attendee respondents found the symposium inspiring

At least **52%** gave our workshops top marks for their usefulness in practical skills development that can be utilised in their venues and practice.

Network with likeminded peers and connect through shared experiences. We want to develop an accountability network where through a collaborative, supportive sector we can make measurable change happen. We respond to your needs and challenges in developing an offer that can make this happen.

## Why a Blended training offer?

The top training and development needs identified in our 2018 symposium were:

Work experience/volunteer offer

Front of house

Education programme development

**SIGN UP TO OUR BLENDED  
LEARNING PROGRAMME AT  
[www.creative-bridges.org](http://www.creative-bridges.org)**

**BURSARIES  
TO SUPPORT  
ATTENDANCE**

**TRAINING  
IS FREE**

## Our person-centred approach is transferrable across these three sector needs.

Funding and capacity are the biggest barriers identified in undertaking organisational change to become more inclusive and accessible for neuro diverse visitors. For this reason we have included bursaries to support participation. We recognise the challenges of having time to commit to new training and any action learning potential.

The Group for Education in Museums surveyed 1500 of its members exploring training needs. A total of 75% found that the one day training model was the most common on offer. It was also their most preferred delivery method, closely followed by online delivery. In person training offers are problematic for front of house staff to attend but we know that having the time away to engage with like-minded peers and having space to reflect is crucial to our own successful learning. As the location of such training is often in London and the East of England we want to ensure accessibility to as much of the sector as possible, as well as minimising professional development costs so that those savings can be diverted towards small changes in accessibility. Our blended learning offer and inspirational symposium day for sector learning provides the best of both worlds.

Management support and time are the next barriers to positive change in this area. Learning at your own pace will free up your capacity to commit and enable bite size organisational advocacy before progressing through our course.