

The Learning Disability Partnership Board has funded short-term projects with the Learning Disability Development Fund 2012-13.

The projects aimed to support the 6 priority areas in the Learning Disability Partnership Work Plan for 2012-13:

- Getting people ready for the next step and getting older – projects to support people developing life skills, supporting people to move, increasing awareness of housing options
- Information – providing accessible information or working with others to make information more accessible
- Making sure we include everyone – projects that support hard to reach groups to be represented
- Being healthy and getting Health Checks – projects that improve health or increase take up of health checks
- People being safe in services and the community – helping people be safe in the community, involving people with learning disabilities in checking the quality of services
- Making sure rights of people with learning disabilities are protected – increase understanding of people's rights as citizens including the Mental Capacity Act

Please use this document to record your project's progress and project evaluation to date and return by **Thursday 28th March 2013 to mark.hendriks@brighton-hove.gov.uk**

Project name: Gig Buddies

Name of the organisation: Stay Up Late

LDDF monies awarded: £9833

Is your project complete?: NO

Expected project completion date*: July 31st (project extension discussed with sub-group and agreed)

Contact details for the project:

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***NB: If your project (as funded through LDDF monies) will not be complete by 31st March 2013, we will ask for a final evaluation according to the completion dates supplied.**

Please provide a short (no longer than one page) description of project progress to date:

Stay Up Late has employed a Gig Buddies Project Manager, to work 18.5 hours per week. She has been in post since January 14th.

The project was launched with a party at a major venue in Brighton, actively promoting inclusion among both performers and audience through local learning disabled and non-disabled performers. 140 people (the full venue capacity) attended.

We currently have 13 people with learning disabilities who have requested to be on the scheme (4 have been through the referral process). The Project Manager has spoken to many other people who have expressed keenness to be on the scheme.

22 volunteer gig buddies have been recruited and interviewed, and a further 4 have sent in applications that are currently being processed. Their training has been developed and will take place in early April.

3 members of the Stay Up Late Advisory Group, a group of people with learning disabilities who will help to lead the project, have been recruited. They took on voluntary roles at the launch night, filming, selling merchandise and manning the door.

We have formed positive links with the Brighton Institute of Modern Music who are assisting us with recruiting volunteers and establishing links to the music industry, The Great Escape, Attitude is Everything, Carousel, and other disability service providers such as Impetus, the Priory and Spiral, who are helping to promote the scheme. We have had many requests from organisations wanting to run the scheme wider afield in the UK such as Mencap Liverpool. We have also made links with Brighton based bands and musicians who are actively supporting Gig Buddies. Attitude is Everything have assisted us with tickets to Glastonbury festival for two participants and their volunteer buddies, and Stay Up Late staff.

We now have our T-shirts and publicity materials and are using them to

promote gig buddies.

An advert for a web developer has been submitted through the Wired Sussex Website and we have been inundated with interest from around 40 potential developers. We are currently working with a volunteer freelancer with knowledge of working with web developers to help us select the appropriate person to move this part of the project forward.

With reference to one or more of the 6 priority areas in the Learning Disability Partnership Work Plan for 2012-13, please comment briefly on:

**1. How has the project benefited people with learning disabilities?
Through gig buddies, Stay Up Late seeks to promote social inclusion, help people with learning disabilities to form social networks and improve wellbeing.**

The project focuses on a number of themes from the 6 priority areas in the Learning Disability Partnership Work Plan for 2012-13. We already have some participants who are at an age where they have recently left child services, indeed we have one person who is waiting to turn 18 so he can join, and we aim to encourage age-appropriate leisure activities for younger adults, providing the opportunity to meet others of a similar age. We find opportunities for people with learning disabilities to develop skills at every stage of the project, from involving a service user on the interview panel for the Project Manager post, developing his skills and confidence, to supporting one of our participants to be Stage Manager at the launch night. Through being a part of the advisory group, participants are developing skills and confidence that they can apply to living independently and potentially employment.

A key part of the project is that the volunteer role involves reading, often inaccessible, information about Brighton's music scene, and enabling people with learning disabilities to make choices about their music-based leisure activities.

Stay Up late is very committed to ensuring that this project reaches 'hard to reach' people. We have linked with community support workers who are keen to support people who have less support hours to become involved in the scheme. We have ensured that we maintain contact with people who's supported housing has been known to be more restrictive. We believe that supportive relationships and happiness are intrinsic to health and well-being, and know that many people with learning disabilities find it difficult to make new friends. We have already seen

friendships form among participants and volunteers at the launch night, and have recruited volunteers who are supportive people, who will be well-trained.

One of the barriers for learning disabled people to accessing live music and going out in the evening is safety – through providing a volunteer buddy to pick people up from their homes and accompany them, we are mitigating this barrier.

As a campaigning organisation, Stay Up Late is keen for the success of gig buddies to encourage other service providers to respect the rights of people with learning disabilities to make choices about their own social lives. We envisage that this will benefit the wider community of people with learning disabilities as the project will illustrate the unacceptability of providing services that are not person-centred, where people are unable to stay up late.

2. What difference did the project make?

All of the participants who have been through the referral process have stated that they only go out beyond 9pm 'occasionally' or 'never'. Having a volunteer gig buddy will make a dramatic difference in their ability to choose what leisure activities they want to do.

The launch night has already made an impact with non-disabled audiences that were not aware of the issues we're addressing, and who want to engage with our work.

Only 2 of the 22 volunteers who have been interviewed have stated that they have a friend who has a learning disability. A project that nurtures friendship through a shared love of music such as gig buddies will help to contribute to a general shift towards a more inclusive society.

3. How will this project benefit people with learning disabilities in the long term?

The project nurtures social confidence and self-belief, through pairing people with volunteer befrienders who will be trained to encourage

participants to explore their interests and believe in what they can do. We hope that service providers will take inspiration from gig buddies and identify that it is necessary to support people in the evenings. As this becomes the norm, people will be in a better position to advocate for this and part of the gig buddies advisory group's role will be to continue to highlight this issue.

4. Will the project continue – YES

& please explain why:

Stay Up Late know that this is an ongoing issue, and we seek to create lasting relationships and change.

We have been successful in securing further funding from The Sussex Community Foundation to enable us to provide the service in parts of East Sussex, and Southdown Housing Association have bought our services to benefit their service users. This means we can spread the cost of the Project Manager's salary. We continue to look for additional sources of funding to continue the project.

We were also selected as a short listed organisation to pitch at the Innovators Den at the Health Innovators EXPO at London's Excel Arena. We were pitching the idea of developing the scheme as a social franchise and received positive feedback. This is an idea we are pursuing further.

We are strengthening our ongoing links with Mencap nationally, who have expressed a desire to develop our reach with their support, and although we don't know the outcome of this link yet, it has the potential to a very exciting development for us.

Is there anything else you want us to know?

Gig Buddies was the winning pitch at City Camp Brighton and a year on the participants at City Camp 3 were very excited to hear of the progress we have made.

We're really grateful to the people who've funded us to enable the project to get this far as we move in to the next stage, which is training buddies to equip them for their nights out together.

Many Thanks for your project and for making a difference to people with learning disabilities.

The Learning Disability Partnership may invite some projects to present at a future board meeting.