

Our Health in our Hands

Case studies of
voluntary groups
working towards a
healthier Redbridge

June 2014



RedbridgeCVS 

NHS

**Redbridge
Clinical Commissioning Group**

Our Health in Our Hands

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Foreword

We are proud to present the third edition of “Our Health in Our Hands”, a collection of case studies showing just some of the innovative health-focused services offered by voluntary and community organisations in Redbridge.

These show just a few of the many thousands of activities undertaken by local people working to help enhance the health and wellbeing of their communities through voluntary and community organisations. Some of these are specific health-condition related activities, others are more preventative, or focus on the idea of “wellbeing.” Together these interventions and activities contribute hugely to the life of the borough – keeping Redbridge’s residents healthy, happy and engaged.

RedbridgeCVS believes that the activities of the voluntary and community sector locally greatly reduce the strain facing NHS services through helping people to care for themselves and each other appropriately. A single visit to a GP, for example, costs around £451 and leads to an average prescription cost of £42. Reducing the need for such visits would be of great benefit to the NHS.

GPs often see patients with multiple or non-specific symptoms whom they find very difficult to treat. We know that supporting such patients to find appropriate voluntary sector services can reduce social isolation, give specific health-related advice and information from peers, and encourage healthy activity and lifestyles. This will improve the health and wellbeing of the individuals concerned and, by reducing their need for regular GP appointments and treatment, will save the NHS time and money. Some areas of the country are currently trialling “social prescription” services, where GPs can make out “prescriptions” for patients to access particular voluntary agencies’ services. In Redbridge we are looking at using the Redbridge First Response Service in a similar way. This publication gives a snapshot of the kinds of services that are already out there, but which GPs and other health and social care professionals may not know about, or where they may not fully appreciate the benefits which they and their patients could gain if they could be encouraged and supported to get involved.

RedbridgeCVS has written and produced this report as part of a project funded by Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group. We both want to improve the understanding between the voluntary sector and local health and social care commissioners and service providers, and we hope that this document can play a part in this important work.



Ross Diamond
Chief Officer
RedbridgeCVS
May 2014

Introduction

There exists a wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations in Redbridge, many of which contribute greatly towards improving the health and wellbeing of their members and, in so doing, reducing local health inequalities.

I am delighted to present the third edition of *Our Health in Our Hands*, which shows examples of how local voluntary and community groups have taken ownership of promoting and maintaining healthy lifestyles amongst their members. It includes case studies of ten voluntary and community sector groups working on a range of issues, including cancer, stroke, learning disability, mental health, multiple sclerosis, physical disability, general wellbeing and volunteering.

The purpose of this document is to give the NHS, the Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group and its member GPs a glimpse of some of the services offered by the voluntary and community sector in Redbridge and to show how they impact on improving the health and wellbeing of local communities. The first and second editions of *Our Health in Our Hands* were very well received and generated interest amongst NHS colleagues and GPs. I hope this document will lead to ever closer working between the Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group, local GP practices and the voluntary sector to achieve common goals of illness prevention, improving clinical outcomes and greater patient satisfaction.

The Marmot Review, "Fair Society Healthy Lives" (2010), was a major review of health inequalities in the UK. It shows that people in disadvantaged and marginalised communities are more likely to have cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and mental health problems than those living in wealthier communities. Residents in these areas are more likely to be diagnosed late, to have more years of poor health and to die prematurely. In Redbridge this is shown by the fact that life expectancy for men in the most deprived wards of the borough is 7.3 years lower for men living in the least deprived wards. (Source: DH Health Profile for Redbridge 2012)

Although health inequalities result from social inequalities, evidence shows that up to 20% of the life expectancy gap between the most and least deprived communities can be accounted for by health care.

Indeed CCGs have a legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act (2010) to demonstrate how they are commissioning in order to reduce health inequalities in access and outcomes for patients. (Source: NHS England) NHS England has now established a Health Inequalities Working Group that brings together commissioners, national clinical leaders and members of the Equality and Health Inequalities team at NHS England. This working group is currently developing a toolkit, *How to Commission to Reduce Health Inequalities*, which lists key commissioning actions that CCGs can take to reduce health inequalities. (<http://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/part-rel/assembly/ca-wrk-grps/rhi-wg/>)

Options being considered in the toolkit include:

- Working with communities to co-produce solutions that build on community assets



- Shared decision making
- Integration of care and services
- Bringing together primary care and community assets through mechanisms such as social prescribing

These are all areas where the voluntary and community sector has a great deal to offer.

Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSOs) are often established in response to an unmet need. Many of these work directly in health and social care, whilst others undertake activities which help improve the wider determinants of health. Work may focus on a particular part of the life course or on people with particular protected characteristics. VCSOs often work with the most disadvantaged communities – in terms of both geographic localities and communities of interest – which public sector bodies, including the NHS, may find it hard to engage. VCSOs can play a vital role in helping CCGs communicate with these “seldom-heard” communities to ensure their needs and wishes are fully understood, and that these communities in turn understand the range of services available from the NHS locally.

GPs and practice nurses often see patients whose health is affected by social determinants like poor housing, social isolation, exclusion, debt, unemployment and caring responsibilities. They are often unable to address these without working in partnership with other stakeholders. VCSOs offer a wide range of services that address the social determinants of health as well as helping prevent illnesses. Joint working between GPs and the VCS can have a hugely positive impact on the health of local communities. Redbridge has already made headway in this direction through the Council's new Redbridge First Response Service (ReFRS) where a number of public and voluntary sector organisations are working together to support local residents with their wellbeing, safety, choice and independence. We are keen to develop this work – and to enhance the understanding and knowledge of GPs and other health professionals about the range of services offered locally by voluntary and community sector groups.

Swati Vyas

Health Partnerships Manager
RedbridgeCVS

More information

If you need any more information about the groups mentioned in this document or any of the hundreds of voluntary and community groups working on health in Redbridge, please email Swati Vyas, Health Partnerships Manager at swati@redbridgecvs.net or call her on 020 8514 9626.

Marjorie Collins Centre

Redbridge Multiple Sclerosis Society

Introduction and Brief History

The Redbridge Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society is based at the Marjorie Collins Centre in Chadwell Heath. It is part of the national MS Society and is a purpose built day centre. The branch has been in existence since 1958, but it was not until 1991 that the day centre first opened. The committee of the time, spearheaded by Marjorie Collins herself, were able to harness a great amount of community support and spirit in order to see the project through to completion. Since then the day centre has gone from strength to strength, and is now one of the only purpose-built day centres for people with MS in the country.

Description of Activities

The Marjorie Collins Centre has grown into something of a hub for the local MS community. They see lots of different people with different variations of the condition, from different backgrounds and of different ages. The Centre is keen to be able to provide a service to everyone affected by MS, whether it is someone looking to come to its day centre on a regular basis or just to grab some information. They also run a number of therapies and activities throughout the week as well as providing a home-cooked lunch, all at a very reasonable price. The centre is open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am onwards.



Need for the Organisation

There are around 100,000 people in Britain diagnosed with MS, around 400 of whom live in Redbridge. MS is a complex neurological condition which has many symptoms. Most people won't experience them all – certainly not at the same time. Symptoms might include fatigue, vision problems and difficulties with walking, but MS is different for everyone. Most people are diagnosed with the condition between the ages of 20 and 40, but it can affect younger and older people.

Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

The Centre's aim is to provide a service to everyone in the community affected by MS. Because MS affects people in different ways and at different ages, they see a real mix of people. Some members stay at the Centre for the whole day, enjoying a meal and taking part in some of the activities. Other members come just for therapy or information. The MS Society understands the different needs for a centre such as this, and is looking to expand its services and activities where ever possible.

Benefits for Users

The Centre is able to provide a social area for people with MS to come and meet others with the condition. It also provides a variety of therapies which have benefit those with the condition at very reasonable prices. It runs a support service, led by trained volunteers. As well as having the day centre, it also runs events and activities throughout the year to keep service users entertained. On average, 50 service users visit the Centre every week, and the numbers are increasing.

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

Redbridge MS Society believes that its Centre benefits the NHS and social care services in the area by alleviating the need for alternative day centre arrangements for those affected by MS and their carers.

Its members pay no entry fee and they are also provided with a hot meal at a subsidised rate. The Centre has 2 minibuses that are used to pick up and drop off members who live in Redbridge.

The organisation believes that the well-being its members get from coming to the Centre also affects their health in a positive way.

The mental health charity Mind also recommended the Centre as a good example of a group who promoted well-being in their publication *Building Resilient Communities*.



How Does the Project Know that it is Achieving its Aims and Objectives?

The Centre has been achieving its aim of serving the local MS community for over 20 years. Many of its members have been attending for a number of years and it also sees a regular stream of new members. The Centre's aim is to be a regional hub for MS and be there for whatever a person's needs are, whether it is use our day centre facility, or just for support or information.

Lessons Learnt and the Way Ahead

Over recent years the Centre has adapted to the needs of people affected by MS. The main cause for this has been the lowering of the average age of diagnosis, which means the Centre works with more people being diagnosed at a younger age. Their needs are often different to those of the older generation, so the Centre have adapted to meet this, mostly by fulfilling more of a drop-in centre role.

The future for the Marjorie Collins Centre is a bright one! They are looking to expand their services to include counselling and advice as soon as possible, and also to expand the exercise classes available. They are also keen to promote the work of the Centre and make sure people are made aware of the work they do as soon as they are diagnosed. Development of a "Just Diagnosed" group is also a priority here, as well as a Carers' Group.

Contact Details

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Melting Pot

Introduction and Brief History

Melting Pot is a charity that exists to respond to the needs of African Caribbean senior citizens in Redbridge and the surrounding areas. The charity was formally founded by the late Joy Guy MBE in the late 1990's. At the time, whilst working with Age UK, Joy saw the need for local services that were culturally sensitive. In 2005 Melting Pot established a new constitution and trustee board. In 2011, following the decease of the founder, a new committee was established. The new Chair, Carol McKenzie, alongside the board of trustees, work to further the mission of Melting Pot..

Description of Activities

Melting Pot provides a range of activities including:

- Luncheon Club with a full healthy lunch every Thursday from 1-4 pm
- A chair-based fitness bi-weekly programme with entertainment
- A health-based project, providing information and seminars on strategies to improve health
- A range of activities including board games, trips, events including Black History Month etc



Need for the Organisation

Melting Pot was set up primarily to bring together a cross section of senior citizens from different parts of the Caribbean and African islands. Whilst the project aims to respond to the needs of a specific community, all are welcome.

Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

Melting Pot aims to meet the needs of African Caribbean seniors through the provision of social activities, entertainment, health information and fitness activities. It exists to reduce isolation and promote community cohesion and participation.

Benefits for Users

- Social engagement
- Fun and happiness
- Access to health information
- Access to a healthy meal
- Access to fitness activities
- Opportunities to learn and develop (IT programme)
- Opportunities to volunteer and help
- It has brought all the African and Caribbean people from different islands together
- The environment at the club is very friendly

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

- An excellent health and social care resource in Redbridge
- Individuals can self refer, promoting autonomy, independence and choice
- Promotes health and wellbeing



- Melting Pot has values relevant to promoting the dignity and respect of senior citizens
- The facilities are wheelchair accessible, supporting the physical needs of disabled people

Lessons Learnt and the Way Ahead

- Melting Pot has learnt that senior citizens benefit tremendously from services within the community that are culturally sensitive.
- Melting Pot plans to expand governance, expand volunteering opportunities and expand opportunities for the wider cohort of African Caribbean citizens to access its services.
- Melting Pot plans to develop a health, fitness and nutrition education programme for 2014.

Contact Details

Cardinal Heenan Centre
326 High Road
Ilford
IG1 1QP

Oshwal Association of East London and Essex

Introduction and Brief History

Oshwal Association of the UK (OAUK) is a registered charity and the largest Jain organisation in the United Kingdom. The foundations for the Association were laid in 1968 by far-sighted individuals from the Halari Visa Oshwal community, a Gujarati-speaking community mainly from India and Africa. The population of the Oshwal community in the UK is now estimated to be in excess of 25,000. Members of the Executive Committee, who are the Trustees for the purpose of the Charities Act 1993, conduct the operations of the Association, which comprises nine geographically defined branches, referred to as Areas. One of the branches is the East London and Essex branch which covers Redbridge.

The East London and Essex branch started in 1973 and it had a thriving Gujarati school from 1981 to 2002 and a swimming club from 1985 to 2002.

Description of Activities

Currently, the Redbridge branch of Oshwal Association organises the following main activities for its members:

- **Thursday Fitness Club**

The club has been operating since 2002. Activities include chair based exercises, tai



chi classes, ball games, debates, mind-games, health checks and Satsang (prayers and singing devotional songs held on last Thursday of every month) and a light lunch

- **Friday Youth Sports Club**

The club is held at Canon Palmer School. Activities include basketball for over 12's and football for under 12's.

- **Cultural and Religious Events**

These are celebrated throughout the year, including Paryushan (8-day Jain festival based around forgiveness), India's Independence and Republic Day, celebration of the birth of Mahavir Swami (Jain faith leader), National Sewa (service day), Christmas etc.

These activities cater to all the age-groups – children, young people and adults. Many activities involve intergenerational work like the celebration of different cultural and religious events, quiz, debates etc. This ensures that the younger generation learns about their culture from the elders while the elders can learn about the use of technology etc.

As the East London branch is part of a larger organisation, members get a chance to participate in activities that are centrally organised like day trips, education fairs and disability awareness events.

Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

1. The advancement of Jain religion in the UK by provision of a place of worship, study, facilities for other religious functions such as births, marriages, performance of last rites relating to deaths, employment and housing for a priest
2. Relief of poverty, advancement of education, protection of health and other such charitable projects.

Benefits for Users

- The activities and gatherings organised by Oshwal Association have helped people to make long-term friends, who in turn have helped volunteers to get the lonely to leave their homes and make new friends of their own.
- Many people who live on their own get an opportunity to meet with their peers and exchange ideas and talk about matters that affect them all from time to time
- Oshwal Association encourages people who do not usually take part in physical exercise to become more active.

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

- By providing a range of keep fit classes for their members from different age groups, Oshwal Association helps in the prevention of many long-term conditions, or stops those conditions from deteriorating, thereby helping the NHS make savings on their resources.
- Oshwal Association provides information on health services and improving the uptake of health programmes where the Asian population is under-represented.

Contact Details

OAUK East Area Chairman – Mr Rasik V Shah

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Redbridge Stroke Club

Introduction and Brief History

The Redbridge Stroke Club was formed in 1978 by people affected by stroke and is a registered charity affiliated to the Stroke Association. Initially, it was called Redbridge and District Stroke Club as, in the seventies, there weren't similar support groups in existence. Later, the Club's membership increased and it was separated into two different clubs, Redbridge Stroke Club (covering Redbridge only) and Parkside Stroke Club.

The Club is run by £1 donations per visit plus raffle contributions, and reaches out to 30 members on average every week.

Description of Activities

1. The Club meets on Thursday afternoons from 2pm-4pm at Loxford Youth Centre
2. Chair-based exercises for those who wish to participate, followed by a tea-break and a chance to win a small raffle prize
3. Group activities like card and board games
4. Separate group activities for those whose stroke has affected their speech, language and memory faculties
5. Group activities for carers
6. Day trips during summer
7. Social events



Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

The Club's aim is to provide a social forum to help people in Redbridge who have suffered a stroke, and their carers.

The Club's object is to help the members, both survivors and carers, over their difficulties in coping with stroke.

Benefits for Users

Stroke survivors and their carers are able to meet others in the same situation as them and share their experiences and the coping mechanisms they have developed.

Chair based exercises and board games, like scrabble, help members keep active and aid recovery.

Quotes from service users

"I have been recently diagnosed with stroke and was referred to Redbridge Stroke Club by the Stroke Association. It is so reassuring to meet other people who have had a stroke and also get an opportunity to socialise."

Service user

"My husband was diagnosed with stroke some years ago and I have been accompanying him to Redbridge Stroke Club on a regular basis. Because I am a trained yoga teacher, I run yoga classes for the Club as a volunteer teacher. It feels great to be able to put my skills to use for other stroke survivors."

Carer

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

In the absence of Redbridge Stroke Club, stroke survivors would remain socially isolated and lose out on meeting other stroke survivors and their carers, leading to higher dependence on NHS and social care services.

Lessons Learnt and the Way Ahead

Providing a social environment for stroke survivors and their carers to interact and participate in different activities complements the clinical setting.

Redbridge Stroke Club is looking to expand its team of volunteers to support its day-to-day activities and special events.

Contact Details

Redbridge Stroke Club
Loxford Youth Centre
Loxford Lane
Ilford
IG1 2UT

Shopmobility

Introduction and Brief History

Redbridge Disability Association was founded in 1967 and has been an important part of the borough ever since, providing information and advice to disabled people living in Redbridge. At the July 2011 Annual General Meeting members approved the change of name to Disability Redbridge.

Description of Activities

Iford Shopmobility is the service arm of Disability Redbridge. Powered wheelchairs, scooters and manual wheelchairs are available for hire to anyone with permanent or temporary mobility difficulties to enable them to get around Iford town centre more independently.

Manual chairs and small scooters are available for holiday/longer term hire to members only. Shopmobility also sometimes provide personal assistants if requested in advance. The annual membership fee is £10 and the daily hire cost is £2 to members and £5 to non-members.

A wide range of magazines, leaflets and information about disability and local services is available in the Iford Shopmobility office. People are signposted to other organisations for further advice as necessary. Disability Redbridge seeks to ensure disabled people are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

Shopmobility has been able to update much of its equipment recently due to generous donations from Abbey Total Care, 1st Step Mobility and the Mayor of London's Olympic Legacy Project: Enhancing Shopmobility.



Need for the Organisation

Shopmobility was set up in 1992 when Ilford High Road was made open for pedestrians with the opening of Ilford Exchange. Initially local businesses funded equipment and there was funding from the London Borough of Redbridge and Norwich Union, the developers of the Exchange. Shopmobility now relies on funding in kind by Ilford Exchange – which has provided them with office premises at no rent and pays the utility bills – and the work of the volunteers who run the service. Membership fees help in covering insurance and maintenance costs, however Shopmobility is looking for funding to have a paid staff member to manage the day-to-day operations.

Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

Working within the social model of disability, Disability Redbridge identifies and removes barriers and overcomes the limitations that disabled people encounter in their daily lives in order that they can play a full role in society.

Disability Redbridge's objectives are:

1. The provision of relief for disabled people living or working in Redbridge through the provision of facilities and assistance to such people.
2. To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society through the provision of advice, information and guidance for disabled people, and in particular through practical assistance for those with mobility problems to access public facilities independently.
3. To promote equality and diversity for the public benefit by the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion, and advancing education and raising awareness in equality and diversity.

Benefits for Users

- Promotes independence
- Social inclusion
- Improved health and wellbeing

A quote from a client

"I have found the service to be excellent. I am unable to walk far without causing severe discomfort. This service gives me the freedom to get out and socialise with friends and family as well as enable me to shop for myself thus giving me some independence. My world would be a lot lonelier without Shopmobility."

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

- Improved health and wellbeing
- Able to link with everyone
- Less isolation
- Feel part of the community

Main Achievements of the Organisation in 2013-14

- Shopmobility has a membership of 110 members: they use the service regularly, some once a week, some once a fortnight, usually at least once a month. Shopping is the most common activity but having a meal, going to the bank, going to the library, visiting the opticians, having a hearing test, meeting friends all feature in the survey conducted annually.
- Clients' mobility may be impaired by a range of medical conditions such as arthritis, heart/respiratory conditions or sports injury, or due to accidents or age.
- 120 people had registered for a "one off" use of the service.
- Members made 37 long-term hires. A long-term hire may be for the week-end, one week or longer.

The Way Ahead

- Raise awareness of the scheme so more people can benefit from the services of Shopmobility
- Recruit more volunteers for the personal assistant service for wheelchair users

Contact Details

Address

Iford Shopmobility Car Park
Level1, Exchange
High Road
Iford
IG1 1RS

Phone

020 8478 6864

Website

www.disabilityredbridge.org.uk

Sue's House

Iford Cancer and Holistic Help Centre

Introduction and Brief History

Sue's House, also known as Iford Cancer and Holistic Help Centre, was founded in 1984 and named after Sue Quirk, whose death from cancer inspired her husband to set up the charity. It exists to give help and support to people diagnosed with cancer. Where possible, the organisation also helps people with other illnesses who can benefit from their services, and also works with families and friends of patients.

Description of Activities

Sue's House offers counselling, information, healing, relaxation, advice and supporting therapy work. Many patients are also helped by the opportunity provided by the centre to meet and talk to people who are in the same situation as themselves.

They stress that their services are not an alternative to the treatment provided by doctors and hospitals but are intended to be complementary and supportive to this treatment.

The Centre serves Iford, Barking and Dagenham and surrounding areas. Staff give their services free of charge and all expenses are met through donations and fundraising. As the organisation is run by volunteers and operates as economically as possible, donations received are used towards maintaining and developing support for service users.



Need for the Organisation

After his wife's death the founder, Terry Quirk, talking to others in the same situation, realised that as well as the existing cancer support organisations there was a need for a smaller, informal, local and flexible service which could be more easily be tailored to the individual needs of people affected by cancer.

Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

The aim of the organisation is to help patients improve their general health and so strengthen their resistance to their illness.

The organisation puts a strong emphasis on encouraging people to take responsibility for their own health.

Benefits for Users

- As a small charity, the organisation's informal approach enables them to focus their support on an individual's needs more easily than would be possible for a large organisation. People who use services of Sue's House find that they take into account not only their needs but also their own feelings about what they want. The support they receive, focused on their individual situation, can play a vital part in building up their hope and confidence to fight against their illness.
- Improvement in the patient's will to live.



- A reduction in the side effects when patients undergo chemotherapy, radiotherapy and/or surgery, due to changes in diet and nutrition, to a positive and relaxed state of mind and complementary therapies.
- A support network that provides for the emotional, therapeutic and informational needs of people with cancer.
- The experience of a safe, loving environment that allows time for people to recover and to rediscover the priorities and sources of energy in their lives.

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

- Sue's house complements the services provided by NHS and Social care. They provide services to people diagnosed with cancer and their carers so as to build their confidence which supports recovery.

Main Achievements of the Organisation

- Sue's House has reached out to over 1000 cancer survivors through the different services it offers.

"As a cancer patient, Sue's House is a haven for me – supporting, reassuring, helpful and understanding. I feel very lucky to have the help they give me." Service user

Lessons Learnt and the Way Ahead

- Many aspects of the service developed for cancer support can also be applied to help those suffering from other illnesses.
- As well as the actual support work, much effort has to be put into fundraising and raising and maintaining public awareness.
- The charity would like to increase the range of services it provides and to cater for a wider variety of users. This will require more volunteers and development of financial resources.

Contact Details

Address

10 Dawlish Drive
Ilford
IG3 9ED

Phone

020 8597 0024

Website

www.sueshouse.org

Ubuntu Arts

Introduction and Brief History

Ubuntu Arts is a community group formed by people who have experienced mental health issues and came about as a result of the ending in 2011 of the long-standing arts project ThinkArts, based at Goodmayes Hospital. Recognising the talent and expertise that made up the long standing members of the project, a decision was made to continue the good work and ethos that was formerly ThinkArts, and from that common wish Ubuntu Arts was formed.

Since then Ubuntu Arts has originated and delivered a number of arts-related projects across the North East London area. It holds a firm belief in the use of creativity and art as a tool for change that can facilitate and enhance a sense of well-being and the fostering of self esteem.

Description of Activities

- Facilitate a series of tailored “journey” creative workshops
- The recent Redbridge Vision-funded “Reaching Out” project was initiated to facilitate a series of creative workshops, in partnership with the homeless participants of the Healthy Living Project and culminating in a site-specific art exhibition at the Welcome Centre, Ilford, in early 2014

Need for the Organisation

The guiding ethos of Ubuntu Arts is the engagement of its members in creative projects. Workshops are facilitated by service users for fellow service users, inspiring the development of standalone creative opportunities, vocational pathways and providing a recovery focus.

Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

- Awareness of mental health issues has enabled the practitioners of Ubuntu Arts to empathise with and facilitate mental wellbeing through conducting creative workshops and activities that encourage participants to explore different ways of being creative.
- Ubuntu Arts aims to encourage each participant to develop their own style of creativity, promoting self-esteem, independence and a desire to help others to reach their potential.
- Ubuntu Arts will actively promote the creativity of service users and the power of creativity to enhance wellbeing.

Benefits for Users

The creativity that often exists alongside mental health issues mitigates and alleviates the barriers and sense of isolation individuals often experience when accessing their everyday world. Ubuntu Arts endeavours to minimise the acute sense of exclusion experienced by



service users by developing healthy and mutually beneficial partnerships with like-minded and sympathetic organisations in the wider community.

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

Current creative activities facilitated by Ubuntu Arts, alongside complimentary existing clinical care, encourage participants towards a healthy recovery pathway with their mental health issues.

The Way Ahead

- Extending the current activities and disciplines to a wider range of sectors and clientele
- Working closely in partnership with existing mental health service providers

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Uniting Friends

Introduction, Aims and Brief History

Uniting Friends (UF) was established in 1996 as a charity for adults with learning disabilities in Redbridge and surrounding areas. The project's purpose is to provide and support community-based activities that enable people to become independent, socially included and active citizens. The project works with more than 220 service users with many employed as mentors within the organisation. Uniting Friends was awarded preferred provider status for the London Borough of Redbridge in 2013.

Services Provided

Out There! daytime

Out There!-daytime is an outcome focussed day opportunity service that offers over 42 activities weekly in the following areas:

- Employment training
- Life skills
- Health and well being activities
- Sports and leisure programmes
- Music and performing arts programmes
- Creative arts activities

Out There! evenings and weekends

Uniting Friends operates a varied range of recreation and leisure choices, both in large and small groups as well as on a one-to-one basis. It also runs short-break holiday programmes, awareness-raising group work sessions and many discussion groups. This project works with approximately 80 people, 56 of whom meet the FACS (Fair Access to Care Services) criteria. This project provides essential provision for those who do not meet the criteria and who would otherwise be excluded from services.



Sprout There!

This is a healthy living “soil to fork” project combining organic horticultural training at an allotment in Wanstead with the operation of a vegetable box scheme provided to members of the learning disabled community. The project includes cookery lessons to tie in with the box scheme, as well as delivering a comprehensive food-based health programme run with support from a dietician.

The project also grows, makes and sells a range of cosmetics to help fund the service. The service is run by two full time professionals with five peer mentors.

A linked, employment project operates a quality lunchtime café from the UF base.

The Groovy Cat Club

This is a monthly night club run by and for adults with a learning disability. Over 150 people attend in the heart of Ilford. Four service users are employed as DJs. Eight more are trained in front-of-house and management duties.



Uniting Friends Radio

Operated by professional radio team, together with over 30 UF members each month involved in its production and delivery, UF Radio delivers a lively mix of music and discussion. Each month a theme is selected based upon topical issues that affect our members and views are pre-recorded, edited and played on the show. The show has a fan base that is now worldwide.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of Uniting Friends is to enable people with learning disabilities to become independent, socially included and active citizens. The group does this by providing and supporting activities in the community.

Benefits for NHS and Social Care Services

Uniting Friends works within several of the Big Priorities stated in the Department of Health's Valuing People document. These include:

- **Personalisation**

Uniting Friend's programme of activities is developed around the needs and choices of

service users, ensuring people can make real informed choices about what they do and when they do them.

- **What people do during the day** (and evening and weekends)
Central to the work of UF is the commitment to support service users in living the lives they want within their community. This is done through a variety of opportunities including the Out There Project, which operates during the daytime, evenings and weekends.
- **Better Health**
Through an extensive programme of opportunities, UF has introduced its service users to a variety of health initiatives. These include a range of sporting activities and membership of health clubs, as well as delivering services on healthy eating and healthy lifestyles.

Uniting Friends also meets areas of the wider agenda:

- **Including everyone**
Uniting Friends is committed to working with people across the community, as well as working within all relevant government legislation. In addition, UF provides a service for those individuals that fall outside the FACS criteria, providing both a service and volunteering opportunities.
- **People as local citizens**
All activities are community based, providing service users an opportunity for real social inclusion. Alongside this work, UF offers training programmes that provide skills to service users on issues such as active citizenship and keeping safe in the community.

Uniting Friends has also led the way in designing innovative projects that promote opportunities for individual choice.

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VAANI

Introduction and Brief History

VAANI is a Sanskrit word meaning “inner voice”. Its vision is to push boundaries to achieve full potential. It aims to bring a smile to people’s faces.

Its first two members, Smita Rajesh and Nandini Jawli, founded VAANI in 2009. Their love for the English language motivated them to establish VAANI, a creative writing group for Asian women authors and artists in Redbridge. Ilford Central Library believed in them and their efforts and supported them by giving them space to meet. The group started with just a few members, but eventually turned into something quiet magical and different from what they started as. In 2010, a group of learning disabled people from Wanstead, Redbridge Asian Women’s Day Centre, joined VAANI to learn about poetry and reading books. Since then VAANI has been involved in organizing various activities with people with learning difficulties as well as elderly people.

VAANI has been working in partnership with Mildmay Community Options Day Services, RedbridgeCVS, Redbridge Libraries, Uniting Friends, DAWN, South Asian Literature Festival and many other community organizations in various capacities.

Description of Activities

- **Sense project**
VAANI offers various workshops for people with learning disabilities and elderly people. Its art, craft and dance workshops have proven highly popular and successful.
- **Render project**
This project is dedicated to older people and involves them in using various forms of art, craft and painting.



- VAANI also organizes various competitions at different cultural events, like short story writing, painting, photography and salad decoration for young people as well as adults.

Need for the Organisation

Approximately 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability.

Between 25 and 40% of people with learning disabilities also suffer from mental health problems. People with learning disabilities are much more likely than others to live in poverty, to have few friends and to have additional long term health problems and disabilities such as epilepsy and sensory impairments.

Evidence shows that engagement in arts-based interventions (including arts therapies) enhances mental and physical wellbeing. Art programmes have been shown to contribute to enhancing social cohesion and local image, reducing offending behaviour, building private/public sector partnerships, promoting interest in the local environment, developing self-confidence, enhancing organisational capacity, supporting independence and exploring visions of the future. They have other benefits in that they help to reach across cultural boundaries and are a relatively non-verbal medium of communication which can be beneficial for clients of stroke, learning disabilities, or others facing speech and language difficulties, or even those who have distrustful of the psychotherapeutic process.

Different art forms have been shown to have different effects – for example theatre, drama and the visual arts all provide patients with powerful ways of expressing themselves and understanding their own world.

Aims and Objectives of the Organisation

VAANI helps its service users to integrate better within society via the medium of art and cultural events. It works to bring cohesion and better integration of different communities residing within the borough via various cultural and art related activities.

Benefits for Users

- VAANI's mission to bring a smile to people's faces has worked wonders for its service users. Its team is dedicated to make the most of the time that they spend with their service users. Long lasting friendships are formed between staff and service users and they want to come back to VAANI again and again. Being involved in different forms of art and craft helps service users to be motivated and fit both in body and in mind. Bollywood dance class helped many people with learning disabilities to overcome their shyness and recognize their own strengths.

Quotes from service users and carers

- *'I cry when I'm not attending VAANI's class. I like it here so much'*
Service user
- *'My son couldn't dance as he is in a wheelchair and his hand movement is limited. He used to cry in every class. But he enjoyed music a lot. After a while he figured out to shake his head and enjoy dancing. Now he is happy and has fun like the rest of the participants in the Bollywood dance classes. He is getting better and better every day.'* Carer

How Does the Group Know that it is Achieving its Aims and Objectives?

VAANI takes regular feedback from service users, carers and partners regarding its services and performance. This helps them in creating better projects for the future.

Main Achievements of the Organisation

- Gained funding from London Dispossessed Grant, Redbridge NHS and Redbridge Small Grants
- Organized four major events where large numbers of Redbridge residents participated
- Approximately 4,550 people have benefitted from VAANI's events and workshops over the last five years
- Conducted 360 workshops for people with learning disabilities
- Conducted 180 workshops for creative writing
- Conducted seven workshops for the elderly (new project)

Lessons Learnt and the Way Ahead

- It takes time and patience to see real results while working with people with learning disabilities or any disadvantaged group of people
- Every little effort helps in bringing positive change in our service users

In future VAANI plans to work with more community groups, day services and other disadvantaged groups, local residents and businesses and help create a better Redbridge.

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Volunteer Centre Redbridge

History

Volunteer Centre Redbridge (VCR) initially opened in May 2007 as a pilot project with six months' funding from the London Borough of Redbridge and from Capacity Builders. Hosting a Volunteer Centre was a natural addition to RedbridgeCVS's existing development and representation work with voluntary and community organisations in the borough.

Whilst there was no Volunteer Centre in Redbridge between 2008 and 2010, RedbridgeCVS was working to develop a volunteering strategy for the borough, and NHS Redbridge funded a project to develop its volunteering policy and create volunteering roles to support the NHS locally.

VCR won funding in 2009 and 2010 from the London Borough of Redbridge, initially to develop a good practice pack for managers of volunteers and then to run a volunteering brokerage service. In 2013 Volunteer Centre Redbridge won a three-year contract with the London Borough of Redbridge, enabling us to help even more local people to get involved in their community and to support organisations to manage volunteers effectively.

What Volunteer Centre Redbridge Does

- Volunteer Centre Redbridge aims to make Redbridge into a borough which values volunteering, where organisations feel supported to manage volunteers as well as possible and where local people feel inspired to participate in their community.
- To achieve these aims, we provide information, advice and guidance for Redbridge residents and those who work or study in the borough to help them find and apply for volunteering roles in projects that benefit the community.



- The Volunteer Centre works with a range of partners including LB Redbridge and helps local organisations that want to involve volunteers to create and advertise their volunteering opportunities and manage their volunteers effectively, by providing training and mentoring for Volunteer Managers. We offer free good practice advice to local organisations that involve volunteers – including support to write policies and procedures, providing time-saving templates and providing essential training to managers.
- A wide range of volunteering roles are advertised on “Do-it”, the national volunteering website (www.doit.org.uk) and Volunteer Centre Redbridge also produces the monthly “Volunteering Opportunities” listing, containing brief details of ways to get involved in local roles. The listing is available from Redbridge libraries, the London Borough of Redbridge’s One Stop Shop at Lynton House, Redbridge Town Hall reception, Redbridge Institute for Adult Education and Work Redbridge as well as from Volunteer Centre Redbridge and RedbridgeCVS’ website at www.redbridgecvs.net/volunteering
- Anyone wanting to find out more about volunteering can visit Volunteer Centre Redbridge from 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday, at our address in central Ilford.
- VCR run joint advice sessions with Work Redbridge (the Council’s employability project) at libraries on Tuesday mornings and at the Work Redbridge Work Club at the Salvation Army Hall in Clements Road on Wednesday mornings. For more information see <http://bit.ly/workredbridge>

Benefits for Redbridge

The contribution made by volunteers to all aspects of community life in Redbridge cannot be overestimated. Volunteering strengthens people’s sense of belonging and allows them to participate in positive activity, meet people from all backgrounds and cultures and even keep skills fresh whilst looking for work.

One person who combines volunteering and a paid job is Harjit Sangha, who is Finance Manager for RedbridgeCVS and also chairs her local Patient Participation Group, as well as volunteering for ad hoc projects, such as practice interviews for year 11 students, whenever time allows.

Harjit says that volunteering allows her to make a contribution to the community and provides a sense of achievement and helping shape local health service delivery.

Whilst Volunteer Centre Redbridge does not have a specialist supported volunteering service for people with mental and physical health conditions, over 20% of the people we see do have a health condition that affects everyday life. Many of these say that volunteering keeps them active, ensures they avoid isolation and allows them to play a role in keeping vital services running.



Volunteer Centre Redbridge has developed very positive relationships with voluntary, community and statutory sector organisations, as well as with the many individuals that approach us every year for support and advice. The majority of organisations that use our services to recruit volunteers and gain support to manage them are providers of health and social care services. Many of these organisations support specific linguistic, ethnic or geographical communities, or people with a particular health condition (such as the Stroke Association in Redbridge, the MS Society and Arthritis Self Help Network). As they often have few or no paid staff, volunteers are key to the delivery of services and enable them to reach many more vulnerable people.

A High Quality Service

Volunteer Centre Redbridge is accredited by NCVO (the National Council for Voluntary Organisations) and recognised as delivering a high quality service. VCR solicit, listen to and act upon feedback from our stakeholders and complete quarterly monitoring returns for our funder demonstrating the scope and effectiveness of their work.

The Year Ahead

VCR have a very small team (two staff and around 12 volunteers), so inevitably they struggle to participate in all the activities that they might like to be involved with. As we receive over 300 enquiries a month, we have to focus on responding to these, as well as sourcing new volunteering roles and supporting the organisations registered with us.

2014 will however see VCR delivering more support to help jobseeking volunteers to develop employability skills and continuing to attend as many community events as they can, to encourage people to volunteer.

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RedbridgeCVS

About us

RedbridgeCVS is an umbrella body that works with over 500 voluntary and community organisations in the London Borough of Redbridge.

Mission

Our mission is to promote a strong, effective and independent voluntary and community sector in Redbridge.

Funders



Contact Us

For more information about voluntary and community groups providing health and care services in Redbridge, contact:

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