

# 2017-18 Impact Report



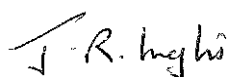
## Chairman's Report

From Moray in the North of Scotland to Sussex in the South of England our advocacy and personal support projects are helping thousands of people each year to live better and more fulfilling lives. With financial help from Children in Need we also run an innovative Equine Facilitated Learning project to support seriously disadvantaged young people in life changing ways and to give their parents hope.



As well as well as expanding our activities in the areas in which we already operate, we will also move further into providing an alternative education provision for children who, for one reason or another, are excluded from mainstream education. We know this will be challenging but we also know that there is a massive unfulfilled demand and from our work with young people we are confident that this is a gap we can help to fill.

Our successes are due to the dedication and hard work of our loyal staff who connect everyday with the individuals we support. On behalf of the Trustees I thank and congratulate them for their outstanding work and the difference they make to so many people's lives."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. R. Inglis'.

**Jim Inglis**  
**Chairman**

# Chief Executives Report

## Annual Impact Report

John Winfield says that we, at Circles Network

***"bring soft light to lives that would otherwise remain forever dark".***

He should know..... as a man in his 60's who has lived with cerebral palsy, abject loneliness and an existence in the shadows, moving through various institutions from the age of 18 months, until he escaped to university at 19. The traumas he experienced under the guise of 'care' would make chilling reading - he talks about the majority of his life being unspeakably sad and horribly dark.

Fortunately, we have been able to move a few mountains and John is now living a much happier, connected and inclusive life and can contribute his gifts in a myriad of ways. His story, just like every person whose life we have the privilege to support in some way, is unique.

Our reason for existence is to make a positive difference to the lives of people at risk of exclusion through listening exquisitely and responding individually, non-judgementally and in the most authentically empowering style. Being person centred is what it takes, it's the central theme of every aspect of our approach, regardless of the age, gender, background and situation for the person in front of us. I hope that every reader will be enveloped in that sense as you continue to make your way through the reports that follow.

Circles Network is focussed on providing for the public benefit. Working across many parts of the UK we respond to expressed need through our four pillars of strength:

- Independent Advocacy
- Community Based Support
- Equine Facilitated Learning
- The Academy of Inspiring Inclusion

Each of the four pillars represent provision that is described in detail further into this impact report. We've developed extremely robust, principled, value driven approaches that enable people to be included in the mainstream of life, fulfilled and involved at their own pace.

Our own longevity, twenty three successful years, has always guided us towards our vision. The consistency of this brings hope and enables people to come back to us at times of uncertainty and when the support around them begins to crumble. There is a model of mutual interdependence and support that is based on parity and respect that steers people away from emptiness and isolation.

This year has been a turbulent ride, with the highs of greater stability for the organisation, astonishingly good corporate support, the most wonderful team of staff and volunteers and growth in a number of key areas of our work. The lows were undoubtedly experienced through the continued adversity faced by disabled people who have endured degrading 'assessments', and horrendous cuts in personal budgets and available resources. It's as though the UK is reversing attitudes and practice by at least thirty years. So many suicides and senseless anxiety, hate crimes and wasted lives.

We had our own dreadful loss to endure in August 2017 when Angela Butcher, Senior Manager in the organisation for seventeen years, suddenly and tragically passed away. As a trusted and much loved colleague and friend, Angela epitomised inclusion, she lived her life in the glorious service of others, loving, generous and brilliantly creative. Her legacy is written into our history and our future, and her presence is sorely missed.

We break through the challenges ever stronger and enormously grateful to the people who have provided the power behind our sail, the individuals and families we support, our own staff and volunteers, Trustees, friends, associates and the people who donate both practically and financially to ensure our future is guaranteed.

Next steps for any organisation in the UK in the midst of the chaos of Brexit, the constant possibility of terror, fear of insecurity and the wanton destruction of our planet.... need strong entrepreneurial solutions.

For Circles Network, our intention is to expand the ideology, methodology and geographical spread of our work through pushing the barriers of inclusion to their limits. Growth is imminent, we are preparing to develop exciting new alternative education provision; to set up in the North of England and to grow a new project in Wales. These represent just a fraction of our forward thinking agenda.

We will continue to work in harmony with our many allies and partnerships and gather strength through continuous learning and profound improvement, ever grateful to influences from experts by experience and global leaders.

May we always be available to bring that soft light to lives that are at risk of darkness.

Thank You.



**Mandy Neville**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# Circles Advocacy

## Circles Advocacy Scotland

The success of the Scottish Advocacy Service has ensued as a result of a fantastic group of compassionate, skilled individuals who continue to enthusiastically and professionally deliver a high quality service. The sincere passion of our team to ensure the best possible service and absolute commitment to our partners, supported by streamlined processes and procedures, is what has enabled us as an organisation to manage the tremendous increase in new introductions.

Now that the five offices in Scotland are well established in their respective communities and the stakeholder and partner feedback on our advocacy service is extremely positive, more focus has been given to the development of Self and Collective advocacy as well as the delivery of added value in the form of student placements and productive interaction with local colleges and universities. This activity will be prioritised over the next financial year, particularly as we develop the skillset of our volunteers. Our extensive involvement and support of many Health and Social Care forums and groups has resulted in our service and expertise becoming an integral part of the overall strategic development agenda.

This participation is extremely important given the development of related new strategies across all Councils, such as those focussing on people with Mental Ill Health, Learning Disability, Dementia, Auditory Processing Disorder and Advocacy to name a few.

Team performance continues to be closely managed by way of six-weekly supervisions which incorporates personal learning and development, an audit process for open and closed introductions, weekly team meetings, ongoing training and development, a much supported open door policy by all Service Managers and effective resource management. The introduction of Self Directed Support, Mental Health Act updates and the new Social Security bill has been met with focused team training, ensuring we keep abreast of legislative changes.

The delivery of a high quality professional, issue based independent advocacy service is demonstrated in our stakeholder quarterly reports which include statistics on quantitative and qualitative outcomes namely; new introductions, geography, partner group introduction, advocacy issue types, residency, age range, gender, source and outcome of closed situations.

**2791**  
**Issues**  
**responded**  
**to**

It is recognised that although our Advocacy Partners provide valuable feedback, we have not yet introduced partner service experience and partner impact in a statistical format as yet. This will be addressed in the next quarter.

The tremendous growth of introductions across the region continues, which is fantastic news and evidences that our awareness sessions and stakeholder engagement activity is focused and delivering results. This great work will continue.

Not an organisation to standstill, four out of the five Scottish Continuous Improvement workshops have been delivered, resulting in some quality opportunities for development. Once the Glasgow workshop has been delivered the management team will prioritise the opportunities and present them to our Board for progression. In addition, we are process mapping our critical introduction steps across all offices to ensure all possible opportunities for streamlining and process improvement are identified.



In addition, the Scottish management team have worked collaboratively to introduce standardised reporting in respect to partner documentation, quarterly reporting, team performance monitoring as well as preparing for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Priorities over the next financial year include; development of the Scottish growth strategy for Scotland, website and IT development, refreshed induction and training materials, the priorities already mentioned above as well as the continued sharing of best practice.

**7997**  
**People**  
**Supported**

**1071 New**  
**Introductions**

**Margaret McKechnie**  
**Co-ordinator for Scotland**



# Circles Advocacy in Fife

## Introduction

Circles Network in Fife provide advocacy to the full Fife region and have a large remit which includes supporting individuals who experience mental health difficulties, dementia, disability, chronic illness, acquired brain injury learning difficulties and autism. The team can also provide advocacy support for children under 16 years who are subject to compulsory measures under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Scotland act 2003.

## Outcomes

Advocacy in Fife continues to deliver a high quality provision with no waiting lists. This year we provided support to 1662 separate advocacy issues, of which 1598 were individuals requiring advocacy and 834 were new to our advocacy service.

We continue to provide access to our project from three office bases in Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Stratheden Hospital. This ensures we are accessible to anyone throughout the Fife area who requires advocacy, it also supports the team to protect our no waiting list strategy.

The team provides awareness sessions to professionals, service providers, voluntary organisations and any other providers who want

to know more about advocacy. This ensures we are building and sustaining good working relationships and importantly, providing advocacy learning, particularly around the many benefits it can deliver.

## Developments

The Fife service also supports social work student placements. We provide placements twice a year for students who are in their final year of University. Placements for potential new social workers gives an insight into advocacy and provides an understanding of how beneficial advocacy is as well as presenting challenges faced by our partners. When our students leave us and move on to become social workers they have a good knowledge of advocacy and become strong supporters of our service. We began providing advocacy in Fife in 2009 and have successfully been awarded the contract twice, with an additional extension of another year.

Three overlapping circles of different shades of blue and teal. The top circle is teal and contains the text "1662 separate advocacy issues". The bottom-left circle is a darker blue and contains the text "No Waiting Lists". The bottom-right circle is a medium blue and contains the text "834 new people supported".

**1662**  
separate  
advocacy  
issues

**834**  
new people  
supported

**No**  
Waiting  
Lists

The Fife contract is due to be re-tendered in the third quarter of the year and we look forward to responding with an excellent application.

We will shortly be introducing our new Advocacy Cab, an adapted vehicle which takes advocates into the most hidden and rural areas of Fife, eliminating barriers to our service delivery

**Advocacy  
in Fife**



### Story of Change - Mr Brown

Mr Brown contacted the Advocacy service stating his concerns regarding a forthcoming meeting involving his wife's discharge from hospital. Mr Brown felt that pressure was being put on him by the other professionals to move his wife into a care home. The Advocate met Mr Brown before the meeting to discuss his views. Mr Brown had acquired smaller accommodation so that he could look after his wife however, there were some doubts from the various health professionals about this course of action

The Advocate asked if this was the least restrictive option and stressed nothing else had been attempted and if reasonable adjustments could be made along with a support package it would give Mr Brown the opportunity to look after his wife at home.

The ward staff then offered Mr Brown the opportunity to stay overnight in hospital so that he could experience the full needs of his wife and develop a routine. The consultant and Mr Brown felt this was a good way to acquire awareness of what would be required of him if she did go home. Mr Brown was pleased to be given this chance and said he would begin his role at the hospital as soon as possible.



## Story of change - Isa

Isa is a lady who has spent the most part of the last three years in an acute psychiatric ward setting. Isa had asked for her advocate to attend a meeting on the ward to discuss a progression plan, as Isa is now well enough to be discharged into a community setting. Isa was very concerned that doctors and mental health officers would suggest a group home for her as she did not want that. She also did not want to return to her two bedroom house as it holds too many memories. Isa wanted a clear plan for discharge. She asked that her advocate express on her behalf; her desire to have her own home, a one bedroom ground floor flat or bungalow, in the local area. Isa also wanted a package of care to help her with daily tasks. At the meeting Isa's advocate expressed her views. The housing team and others involved in Isa's care agreed that she could be discharged to a new build one bedroom flat when it was ready, this would give them time to put in place the necessary support. Isa was extremely pleased with the result of her meeting and thanked her advocate for putting forward her views and helping her achieve her dream.

**Carolann Haddow**  
**Service Manager**

# Circles Advocacy in Glasgow

## Specialist Forensic Mental Health Advocacy Service

### The Service

Circles forensic mental health advocacy in Glasgow supports individuals who are detained under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 due to either, or a combination of, severe and enduring mental health difficulties, including mental illness, learning difficulties and personality disorder.

The Glasgow service is jointly funded by Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board and the West of Scotland Forensic Directorate. The service provides independent advocacy to individuals detained within Medium and Low secure psychiatric services in Glasgow and this support extends to three months post-discharge in the community.

### Summary

This year the Glasgow team have continued to have an active role in supporting individuals to express their views and assisting them in making informed decisions about their care and treatment. This year saw the Glasgow team attend 280 Care Programme Approach

meetings, 80 Mental Health Tribunals and 213 meetings with lawyers along with a variety of other formal proceedings such as mental health officer meetings and interviews with external agencies (Mental Welfare Commission).

The Glasgow team continue to be heavily involved in supporting individuals undergoing criminal proceedings, often bridging the gap between the complex interactions of the criminal justice and mental health systems. This year, the team supported individuals with a total of 574 issues in regards to Criminal Proceedings and attended 21 Formal Criminal Court Proceedings.



### Developments

The Glasgow team have recently introduced allocated ward drop in times following discussion at a team meeting. In theory this should promote independence and a more structured approach for both the individuals accessing the service and the advocates.



**750  
ward  
drop-ins  
this year**

People across the units will now know when to expect advocacy on-site as opposed to varying times each week. This improvement will be reviewed and amended accordingly to meet the demands of the service.

The Glasgow service continues to have extensive contact with the individuals that we support, accumulating to a monumental 6419 individual contacts this year. Across both in-patient sites, we carried out 750 ward drop-ins this year as well as 27 home visits to individuals discharged to the community.

Collective advocacy continues to be successful within the Forensic Directorate, with the advocacy team facilitating monthly ward council meetings dealing with a variety of collective issues such as; technology policy, medium secure community shop provision and inequalities between medium and low secure sites. In addition, we have been in attendance at a number of internal and external meetings including; patient activity group, client and carer's network events, Mental Health Tribunal Service advocacy reference group, meet your team day facilitation group and many more.

### Story of Change - Luke

Luke was admitted to Rowanbank Clinic in June 2017 following an escalation in his behaviour from his previous placement. During his time in Rowanbank Clinic, Luke was supported through two tribunals and one Care Programme Approach (CPA) meetings. Alongside this, an advocate supported Luke when he met with solicitors and with general issues which arose during his time at Rowanbank Clinic. The advocate supported Luke at his first tribunal where he appealed against his transfer to hospital and at his second tribunal, which was to extend and vary his Compulsory Treatment Order (CTO).

In the first instance, Luke was supported to seek out a mental health solicitor to provide legal representation in relation to appealing against his transfer to hospital. His advocate contacted the legal firm and arranged an initial meeting with the solicitor where Luke was supported with advocacy. Luke was also accompanied by an advocate at his CPA meeting, where his views were communicated effectively and ultimately resulted in professionals taking a different perspective on his care and treatment. This gave Luke more confidence as he felt he was being listened to by professionals. Luke was always encouraged to take part in different activities in the hospital and engaged well with Occupational Therapists.

## Story of Change Continued.....

Luke's diagnosis changed twice during his time in hospital, advocates helped convey this to Luke and assisted in representing his views on these changes in response to his care team. Luke often found the change and uncertainty of his future distressing, as a result he was provided with emotional support during these times. Similar support was also provided to Luke when he indicated he wished to harm himself. The advocate discussed this at length and referred Luke onto the relevant professionals to assist him with these feelings.

Luke's second tribunal was triggered due to a change in his diagnosis which meant he no longer met the criteria of being cared for in Rowanbank Clinic. Luke was provided with information in relation to this and collaboratively worked with an advocate to compose a tribunal statement containing his views on this matter. These conversations supported Luke to begin considering his future, where he would like to transfer to and longer term plans in terms of discharge into the community.

There were some occasions where Luke did not want an advocate to take issues forward on his behalf. Not only did this ensure Luke trusted the advocate would take instruction from him, it also promoted self-advocacy as Luke could raise these issues when he felt able and confident enough to do so. An advocate would follow these issues up with Luke through informal discussions to ensure they were resolved.

Luke's position in relation to his care and treatment could fluctuate from time to time. His advocate supported Luke to have his voice heard during his last tribunal where Luke agreed his CTO should stay in place and he should move back to his original local authority. The tribunal granted an order for his CTO to remain and that he would return to his area of origin under a recorded matter, this made Luke feel listened to and valued within the process.

**Adam Ovington**  
**Service Manager**

## Circles Advocacy - Inverclyde

### Introduction

In Inverclyde we operate as a person-centred operation and are driven by a commitment to work in partnership with a range of local agencies and organisations in order to support local people to have access to advocacy. Advocacy is important to ensure social justice, equality and fairness. An essential way of helping people understand advocacy and the role of our advocates would be for all of us to think 'what would I want to do if this was happening to someone I cared for?' It is indicative of our work that people have a sense of control, by exploring real choices and participating in the process, regardless of their situation or ability and that they have a right to dignity, respect, being listened to and privacy of choice.

Our service is jointly funded by the Health and Social Care Partnership in Inverclyde, and we receive funding from the Scottish Government to

deliver the Self-Directed Support Project. We operate within the boundaries of Inverclyde, which includes Greenock, Bridge of Weir, Port Glasgow, Gourock, Inverkip and Wemyss Bay.

### Outcomes

**We provided advocacy support to 535 new individuals and supported 544 people to achieve a resolution to their issues - positively progressing social justice, equality and inclusion throughout our local community. Along with this we have developed six peer support groups, held twelve residents groups meetings, recruited and trained six new volunteers. The service also delivered sixty outreach surgeries, participated in ten marketing events to increase and raise awareness of the service. We operate with a no waiting list policy and we are able to make this possible by the efforts of our committed team and our dedicated group of volunteer advocates.**

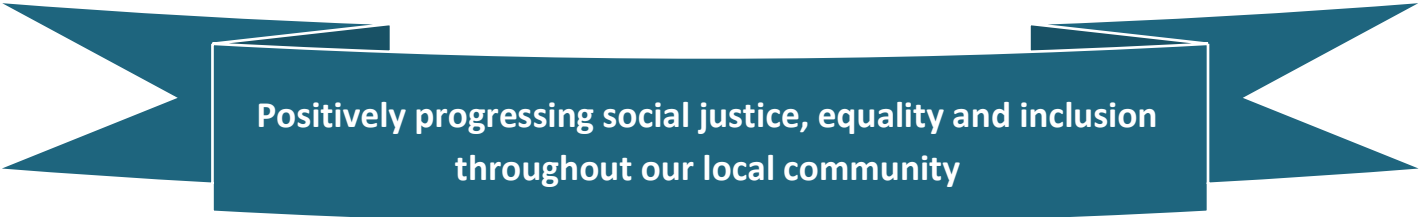


## Developments

Throughout the year we had seen an increase in individuals seeking support to attend interviews in Glasgow for their Personal Independent Payment (PIP). We were proactive in our approach and invited Mr Ronnie Cowan, MP for Inverclyde, to our office, enabling us to highlight the difficulties of the situation on behalf of many vulnerable individuals who were not able to gain support.

We were successful in our application for a six month extension to our Self-Directed Support Project. This enables us to continue to deliver the project until the end of October 2018.

We also welcomed and supported an observational student placement from the University of Strathclyde, School of Social Work and Social Policy. We participated in one school information awareness day and attended four community events and participated in seven events held by self-directed support Scotland.

A dark blue ribbon banner with white text, featuring a 3D effect with shadows.

**Positively progressing social justice, equality and inclusion  
throughout our local community**

### Story of change - Elijah

Elijah was introduced to our service by a concerned neighbour. Elijah was discharged from hospital following a fall in his home which left him quadriplegic, alongside other physical and mental health issues.

Elijah was extremely reluctant to receive support from paid services so asked his wife and older daughter to take on the role of his main carers to ensure that he was looked after. Elijah was lead to believe that he would still receive support from health services to ensure that his physical health remained at the level he was at when he left the spinal unit.

Unfortunately, Elijah failed to receive the correct level of support from health services following his return home and quickly deteriorated. His mood and requirements had a knock on effect to his family and they began to find themselves in a difficult position of being his unpaid carers whilst trying to juggle their own work and personal commitments.



## Story of Change continued....

When we first met with Elijah it was clear to see that his family were at crisis point and there were a large number of issues that they were experiencing. We explained our role and the type of support that we could offer. For assistance on matters that we could not support with we made appropriate referrals to other local organisation on behalf of Elijah.

Elijah's main issue was the lack of support he was receiving for all of his care needs which was having a direct impact on his family members and putting a huge strain on their relationships. Alongside the more obvious support needs Elijah was deeply distressed by the way he had been treated by health services following his hospital discharge. Elijah expressed that he wished to make a formal complaint regarding a few different issues. Elijah stated that he was also experiencing difficulties with his own GP as he didn't feel they were listening to him and he was in a lot of pain.

The advocate made a new referral to social work for Elijah and requested a change of care manager as Elijah made it clear the relationship between himself and his previous care manager had broken down. Whilst this referral was being processed we supported Elijah to take his formal complaint forward and supported him to communicate the issues he was experiencing with his GP.

Once these issues were dealt with and Elijah had received an apology he felt able to move on and concentrate on his future support. An Advocate then supported Elijah to work through his ideal support plan and explain what self-directed support could mean for him. Elijah found it very positive that he could take charge of his support and be listened to when his support package was being constructed. After a few meetings his support plan was constructed to include his wife becoming his paid personal assistant. This financial support has also helped to relieve some of the family's pressures and made their situation more positive for all of those involved. We also informed Elijah about his respite allowance and have supported him to think of different ideas for ways that this can be put into practice to help the family.



**Moya Sweeney**  
Service Manager

## Circles Advocacy - SDS in Inverclyde

The Self-Directed Support Project (SDS) aims to raise awareness and understanding of Self-Directed Support, and the process across Inverclyde for people using services, their families and carers.

Circles Advocacy Self-Directed support project provides independent support so that individuals can make informed decisions about how they wish to use Self-Directed Support.

It has been a busy and exciting year for the project as we have recruited and trained a further six volunteer advocates who are now actively engaged in delivering one to one self-directed support. We have also seen an increase in the number of individuals we have supported through self-directed support assessments with 202 new referrals

### Developments

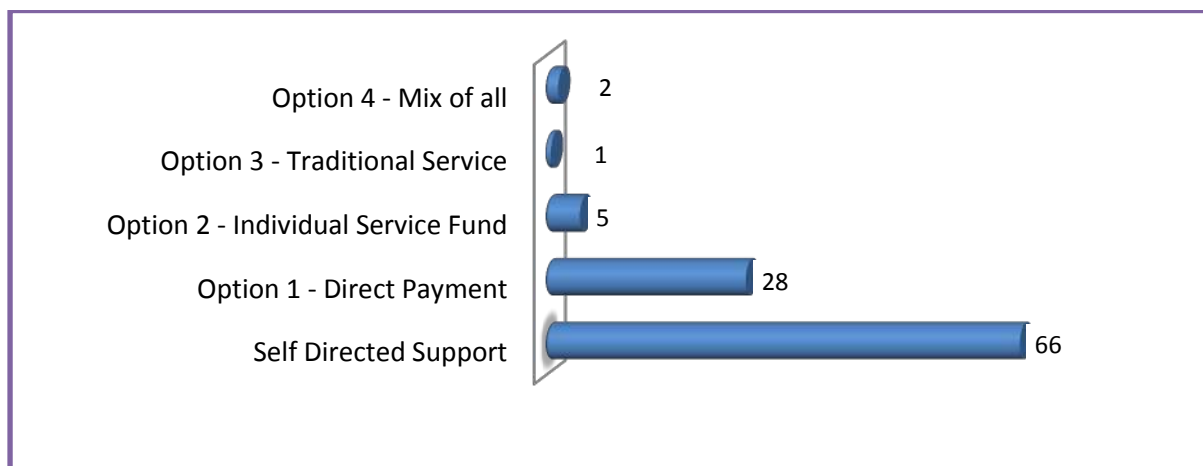
Our peer group continues to meet on a regular basis and invites guest speakers to participate over the year.

Shona Docherty, SDS Development Officer, also attended the group meeting. Her remit is to promote understanding and best practice at Inverclyde Council. Another speaker to attend the peer group was Mark-Han Johnson from Self-Directed Support Scotland. Mark spoke about his work which actively promotes independent living by supporting, working with and championing the aims of SDS.

Along with providing one to one and professional advocacy for people introduced to self-directed support, we continued our collaborative practice by working closely with a range of other services and organisations to ensure that the people we support are offered a holistic approach to the information and support that we provide. We have sought out and met with newly formed projects and teams within Inverclyde to introduce our service and work towards a seamless practice throughout. We continue to support individuals to work through a range of issues.



Choice individuals are seeking assistance with:



## Story of Change

Janice was introduced to our project following her move from England when she was waiting for an assessment of her needs to be carried out. We spent time getting to know Janice and supported her through her assessment to make sure that she was able to voice her opinion to ensure that her needs were listened to and considered whilst building her support plan.

We provided Janice with information on a range of SDS issues including requesting a change of social worker, looking into support organisations and hiring a personal assistant.

Janice was able to build on the support plan that she wanted and is now in the process of hiring a personal assistant whilst receiving support from us to advertise locally and interview perspective people.

Janice has come across several issues whilst putting her support package into place and has approached our project to help her to voice her opinion and the ensure that she has been involved and listened to throughout.

**Moya Sweeney**  
Service Manager

## Circles Advocacy, South Ayrshire

### Introduction

The Advocacy Service in South Ayrshire has been up and running now for two and a half years. Jointly funded by the Health and Social Care Partnership, we deliver 'issue based', one to one advocacy enabling us to assist individuals in making informed decisions, supporting them to express their own needs and have as much control as possible over their own lives. We support individuals over 16 years of age experiencing mental health difficulties, dementia, disability and chronic illness.

The primary partner group we support are those individuals affected by mental health difficulties. The most common issues we deal with are Welfare and Financial Guardianships, followed closely by Welfare issues and Adult Support and Protection. Circles Advocacy in South Ayrshire remains highly responsive and operates with no waiting lists. We endeavour to make contact with individuals within three days of an initial introduction.

We continue to actively promote our service through information awareness sessions, participating in events and working in partnership with a range of stakeholders, recognising the underpinning values of social inclusion, equality and social justice.

### Outcomes

This year Circles Advocacy in South Ayrshire has seen an increase in individuals supported to put forward their views, with a total number of 663 issues responded to by the team, of which 334 were new partners to the service.



**663**  
issues  
responded  
to

**334**  
new  
individuals

## Development

**Team Development Day** - Circles Advocacy held a Team Development Day in Scotland in November 2017 in Fife. The 'Circles and You' programme was a one day event to explore and affirm how our personal development, our values, and our vision impact the whole organisation and can enable us to deliver more effectively in our roles. Workshops, discussion groups and networking on relevant issues including well-being, communication and relationship building brought together the team members to share new learning, personal development and experiences.

**Mental Health Tribunal Service Information Event** - David Eaglesham, Lead Advocate, attended a 'Question and Answer' event arranged by the Mental Health Tribunal Service in Kilmarnock in November 2017, to raise awareness on independent advocacy and highlight its impact on those who have been subject to statutory measures under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

**Self-Directed Support** - Circles Advocacy, South Ayrshire, will feature in a promotional video in partnership with AILN - Ayrshire Independent Living Network. This short video gives local organisations the opportunity to talk about their services and their role in assisting individuals to benefit from self-directed support.

**Collective Advocacy** - In consultation with our Contract and Commissioning representatives Circles Advocacy have been asked to facilitate a participatory event involving partners and their carers. This event, the first of its kind in South Ayrshire, will ensure the collective views of those receiving services in South Ayrshire are heard in the future of the allocation of service providers within the local authority tendering process.

## George's Story

We were approached by the Community Learning Disability Team to see if we could establish the views and opinions of George, a 42 year old man with learning difficulties and limited communication. George lived at home with his parents, however they were finding it increasingly difficult to cope with looking after George due to a decline in their health. His parents, who were his joint Welfare and Financial Guardians, were considering looking at alternative accommodation for George. George attended a day centre twice a week where he socialised with friends. The advocate spoke to the day centre staff to establish the best way of communicating with George and met him there on a one to one basis. George was able to understand what the advocate was saying to him, but the difficulty was with him communicating back. The advocate used short, simple phrases and Makaton symbols, and was thereby able to establish that George wanted to move from his family home into his own tenancy. The advocate visited George on several occasions to ensure that he was consistently communicating this view, which he did. A property was found which was suitable for George's needs and after a couple of months he moved in. The advocate visited George again on a couple of occasions after he had settled in to establish his views on his new property. He indicated that he was happy there and liked his new house.

**Brenda Morrison**  
**Service Manager**



# Circles Advocacy, Moray

## Introduction

Our newest Advocacy project opened in April 2017, providing an extensive range of independent, professional, issue based advocacy support throughout Moray. Circles Advocacy in Moray was set up by Joanne Dooley and Mandy Neville, who then recruited Paul Mellis as local manager. The service provides issue based advocacy to individuals living in Moray who are over the age of 18. This includes those affected by mental health issues, learning difficulties, personality disorders, physical impairments, acquired brain injury, dementia, autistic spectrum disorders, chronic illness and those who are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, rights, care or other interests.

## Impact of the Service

Since opening in Moray we have supported 466 issues raised by different people. This is quite an achievement for a new service and pays testament to the combined efforts of the team.

We now have a full team and are establishing a team of eight volunteers. This means that the office is staffed from 9am to 5pm, five days a week, and open to people dropping in.

This has increased our accessibility as people can and frequently do, come into the office when they are passing.

The Volunteers have also taken the lead on setting up and operating a text reminder system. They text all relevant advocacy partners 48hrs before their appointment by way of a friendly reminder. This is particularly helpful to people who have memory issues due to their mental ill health or other issues.

## Developments

We will shortly be carrying out some outreach work in remote and rural communities using NHS Grampian's mobile information bus. This will operate on a monthly basis with the bus stopping at the same places and times every month. Initially the vehicle will be staffed by one volunteer and one advocate, however the plan is that it will be staffed solely by volunteers once they can work independently. We have started some outreach work with the Traveller community and we have received our first introduction recently. We have initiated a new, regular drop in at Seafeld Hospital in Buckie at the dementia assessment unit. This drop in is volunteer led and ensures that no-one who wishes to engage with the advocacy team misses out.

We are currently trialling a Direct Access Appointment and Support Scheme (DAASS). The idea behind this is that many of the people we support often feel disempowered. Suitable partners will be given an access code that will allow them to book their own appointment, straight into their advocate's electronic diary. This allows the advocacy partner to choose the time and date that suits them, reduces the rate of those who miss or cancel appointments and saves administration time. The project is only at the early stages of trial but so far it is going well.

In the last year we have joined the Moray Learning Disability Providers Forum, the Moray Health and Wellbeing forum, the Moray Adult Protection Committee and the Grampian Independent Advocacy Group.

We have also assisted with the Scottish Patient Safety Survey, Forres Area HSCP redesign roundtable and Open Space

**466  
Issues  
Supported**

Technology events for Learning Disability service re-design to ensure that the voice of the individual is heard.

We have supplied training input to the Medication PDA and the Level 2 Adult Protection courses run by the Moray Health and Social Care Partnership. We have also developed and delivered to a group of carers, a Peer and Self Advocacy course designed to enhance collective and self-advocacy in Moray.



## Story of Change - Alexandra

Circles Advocacy had been suggested to Alexandra by her CPN, psychiatrist and psychotherapist. She felt that her social worker was making decisions about removing her support without consultation or involvement. A meeting of professionals was organised, although Alexandra was not invited nor had she received documentation detailing output. Alexandra had recently been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, after having previously being misdiagnosed with bipolar for years. She had started receiving psychotherapy which was slowly increasing her self-awareness, but this was also an emotionally difficult time for her. The social worker had also decided that Alexandra had dependency issues because she was resistant to change.

Alexandra spent hours preparing for the social work review which we had requested. Unfortunately, the first meeting went very badly and she felt she was being presented with a done deal without her input which made her very distressed. Afterwards, the advocate took Alexandra to the café to try and de-escalate her emotions and suggested strategies to prevent her haring herself and to enable her to be fit to drive..

We discovered that Alexandra had never previously seen any of her review documents and that the social worker had written her outcomes from their perspective of informal conversations. Alexandra also had seen three different social workers in a short time, so there had been incorrect assumptions made from previously written material. There was a significant change in social work processes and funding which were new to Alexandra. The most recent social worker had attached all her issues on the new diagnosis.

The advocate met with the social worker and an independent advanced practitioner to help them understand Alexandra's perspective and also present her request that the risk assessment be rewritten involving her. This was accomplished and has really changed her situation for the better, reducing her stress levels and increasing her sense of empowerment and control.

**Paul Mellis**  
Service Manager

# Circles Community

## Circles Community Support, East of England

### Introduction

3D Community Support in Peterborough is a dynamic and vibrant service that offers support on a one to one and group basis to people of all ages and abilities.

The project is led by a registered manager. The Hub, from where the team is based, is a registered location with the Care Quality Commission and has a rating of "Good".

The highly trained and experienced team of facilitators work alongside a variety of individuals to enable and empower them to take part and excel in education, employment and leisure and to develop and maintain relationships with others.

The project is financed on a self-funded 'fee for service' basis and charges for every hour of support that is delivered with each individual. In most cases the local authority provides the funding for those people that access the service and some provide their own funds.

3D Community Support has grown organically over the past six years by consistently listening carefully to the participants. It isn't restricted to providing a service for a certain age range or by way of certain assessment criteria. The service will work for those people that require a truly personalised approach.

### Outcomes

**We have delivered 14907.55 hours of 1:1 support**

**We have supported 37 individuals on a 1:1 basis**

**We have increased our delivery/productivity by 15.6% on the previous financial year**

**Supported 37 individuals on a 1:1 basis**

**Delivered 14,907 hours of 1:1 Support**

### Summary

During the year we have had the privilege of establishing some special relationships with partners in the community that have assisted us to raise awareness of the project and helped to add value to our services.

The Peterborough School have chosen us as their "charity of the year" and have been busy fundraising on our behalf.



The Peterborough Psychic and Spiritual Fellowship have supported the charity by way of making a donation and have hosted an evening of mediumship in our honour which raised £623. We are fortunate to be supported by a local artist and excellent networker, Roland Burt, who has delivered art workshops to young people across all of our projects and is now a valuable part of the team.

The Park Inn Radisson provided young people from all of our Peterborough projects with a Christmas party.

In August 2017 the project moved its registered location to a new hub. The building is much bigger and boasts an office, meeting room, gaming suite, kitchen, bathrooms and activity room. It has been synonymous with the growth that we have experienced as the space has enabled the team to facilitate a diverse range of clubs and events. We plan to extend the kitchen and create a new 'changing places' room in the coming months.





## Story of Change - Rebecca McNab

”I am a young person with a disability which does not allow me to go out and about and I have very little communication with people my age. That was until my family and I met Caroline Hunte through my Social worker, called Shelly Dune.

Caroline explained to us how Circles Network works and she even said to us “I have got two ladies in mind for Becca.” So I started going to Circles Network twice a week and I met so many lovely people who have become my friends. That was back in 2015.

Now I have been with Circles Network for three years and it is been great fun. I am going out and about much more now, going to town, cinema, or I just relax at the Hub doing a puzzle or chatting. I had loads of fun going on a Circle Network trip they had in 2016 when we all stayed in Crawley.

Earlier this year I had to do 15 hours of work experience for my IT Level 2 course. I did this at Circles Network alongside Lisa White, helping her set up a new system called Nurse Buddy. They were so impressed with me that Caroline and Lisa asked me to do the annual Newsletter for them, which I now do.

In the future I would love a paid job in a company like Circles Network but I would be really happy to find a job anywhere in Peterborough, being a Data inputer or a Data analyst. ”



**Caroline Hunte**  
**Area Manager**



# The Peer Mentorship Project

## Introduction

The Peer Mentorship project was developed in Peterborough by Circles Network over 12 years ago. The project is an excellent example of how an innovative and pioneering concept can withstand time, forging the way as a result of

our great outcomes, created by the young participants. The original aim of the project was to give young people the opportunity to participate and benefit from peer advocacy, and yet it has become so much more.

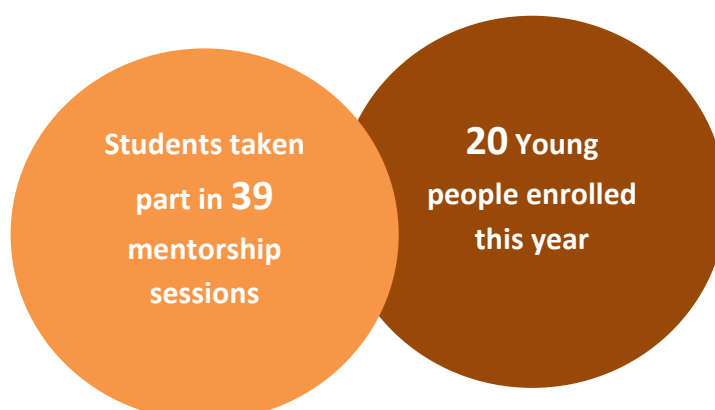
## Outcomes

**20 young people have been enrolled to take part in the project this year**  
**Students have taken part in 39 mentorship sessions**

## History

Circles Network have a long standing alliance with The Phoenix School who provide excellent educational opportunities for young people with profound and multiple disabilities. The Phoenix school have been involved in the project since its inception and Circles Network have facilitated collaboration with a number of partnership schools.

For the third consecutive academic year The Nenegate School have partnered with The Phoenix School to take part in the project. Nenegate opened in January 2008. It is a county maintained day school for pupils currently aged between 11 and 16 who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD). Each school involved fund the project.



## Aims of the Project

The aim of the project is to give young disabled and non-disabled people, who wouldn't ordinarily have access to each other, time and space together to learn from one another.

Circles Network coordinates and facilitates the project, providing training, support and information

and designing plans, in line with the national curriculum, which are fun and accessible to all of the young people involved.

The sessions are facilitated every Tuesday afternoon at The Phoenix Upper School campus.

### Story of Change - Jamie

We began facilitating Peer Mentorship in September 2015. Over the past three years we have worked with students from both Nenegate and Phoenix Schools. There have been a number of Nenegate students who have attended consistently during this time and developed both academically and personally. One student in particular has experienced multiple benefits as a result of his involvement in Peer Mentorship.

When Jamie first joined the group, as a year nine student, he was going through various difficulties in his home life that were having a knock on effect in his school life. He found it hard to concentrate and engage in lessons and had little hope or thought for his future. He openly admitted that he joined

Peer Mentorship as it would give him one afternoon a week out of school.

Fast forward three years, it's almost impossible to recognise him as the same young person. During his time spent with the students at Phoenix school, he has developed some excellent communication skills, including with non-verbal children. He has gone on to share these skills with fellow Nenegate students and mentors them when they arrive new to Peer Mentorship.

In the first few months of joining the project, Jamie struggled with group work and found it hard to make his voice heard when sharing ideas. By the time he left us to go off to college, he was leading the group, planning sessions and presenting ideas and completed work to the whole group.

## Story of Change continued....

Jamie initially struggled to join in with the different challenges covered in the ASDAN programme, as he saw no skills in himself and considered himself 'stupid and thick'. However, he is our first student to achieve a Silver Award in the ASDAN personal development programme.

During his study time for his GCSE's this year he was missed by students and teachers alike, but they were over the moon that he choose to come back and continue his commitment to them after his exams, during his own free time.

Despite his ongoing problematic home life, he has attended each session with a smile and put his own issues to one side while he focused on helping others.

After one session, he confessed that over the weekend he had sat on his bedroom floor with a razor blade, ready to end his life, but as he sat there, he thought about the students he had been working with and thought about how they would feel and what they would do if he wasn't around to help them. He made up his mind, that they needed him and that was enough to live for.

He will be missed from the Peer Mentorship group next year, but we are all so pleased to see him heading off to college and can't wait to hear back about the great things he achieves.

**Caroline Hunte**  
**Area Manager**

# The Phoenix Youth Club

## Introduction

Phoenix Youth Club takes place every Wednesday at The Phoenix School in Peterborough from 7pm - 9pm throughout the school term.

The participants of the project are children that attend and have been selected by the school. There are also places for young people that have left the school and wish to maintain friendships with their peers.

The project is funded by Peterborough City Council short breaks budget, and supports young people with profound and multiple disabilities to have an opportunity to socialise with their

peers. The children and young people are asked to input and feedback on what they most want to undertake at the youth club, in order to keep the activities fun and motivating for everyone.

Circles Network organises the activities and coordinates the team of staff which is made up of professionals from The Phoenix School and Circles Network. Circles Network has responsibility for introducing non-disabled young people to the group.

## Outcomes

30 children attend the youth club  
39 youth club sessions this year

An infographic consisting of two overlapping circles. The top-left circle is orange and contains the text "30 children attended Youth Club". The bottom-right circle is a darker brown and contains the text "39 club sessions this year".

30 children  
attended  
Youth Club

39 club  
sessions this  
year

## Development

The youth club participants enjoy celebrating all religious events, festivals and exploring different cultures. This enables the young people to engage in a variety of multisensory activities. In January the club celebrated Chinese New Year. They researched and made decorations to take home.

The group organized a Bollywood night which was a major event. The young people tried a selection of Indian food, danced to Bollywood inspired music and enjoyed Henna tattooing from a local lady.

There have been a number of cookery sessions, sweet and savoury. Zumba, sound bath and sports are regular sessions. There has been a movie night, a pamper night and arts and crafts session.

Rebound and hydrotherapy sessions are on offer each week.

The variation of activities ensures that young people are able to make their own choices and decisions.

The young people absolutely know that when the Circles Network team arrive that school has ended and youth club starts and it is important to differentiate between the two.

**Caroline Hunte**  
**Area Manager**

## Fun United

### Introductions

Fun United is an inclusive Youth Club attended by young people aged 11 to 25 years. The youth club is an initiative funded by Peterborough City Council as part of their short breaks provision for young people in Peterborough.

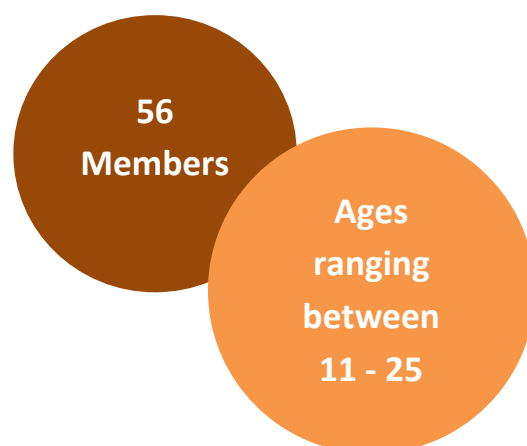
The club is well established, until April 2017 it was governed by The Papworth Trust.

The club is open every Wednesday evening 7pm - 9pm term time and during the school holidays for 26 sessions per year 10am - 3pm at the Hub in Peterborough.

### Outcomes

**The youth club has 56 members whose ages range from 11 years to 25 years**

**We have delivered 39 term time and 26 holiday youth club sessions**



### Development

We are pleased to report that the group, whilst having undergone a cleanse of participants and losing a registered 29 members; 10 that were over 25 years of age and 19 that had disengaged, the group now has 56 members registered. Over the past year Circles Network has introduced 27 new members to the group.

The staff team facilitating the club has also undergone a transformation and there are now only two members of staff who transferred across from the Papworth Trust remaining.

This has been a gradual shift due to changes in circumstances for those involved but it has led to a more cohesive approach and the group becoming fully embedded within Circles Network. The club has also benefited from having a manager and business administrator located in the building from where the club is facilitated.



During the year the team have held regular meetings to discuss health, safety and safeguarding concerns and to share feedback from young people contributing to continuous improvements to the club.

The staff team regularly consult with participants of the club to gauge which activities they would like on

offer particularly during the holiday periods, and this had led to receiving positive feedback from young people. The use of The Hub has been especially advantageous to young people, as we are able to provide them with a choice of activities and play/work stations that are always available and easy to use.

### **Feedback - what do people think**

In January 2018 Circles Network consulted with all parents and carers of the club members and received good feedback. Some of the quotes include:

- Thank you, I like Circles - I like coming
- L prefers the new accommodation. He really enjoyed the xmas party. The support you offer is very important to parents in the holidays and term time.
- I would like to go to Rugby again so I can be brave with dogs and ride a pony.

### **What went well?**

The club sessions are busy and noisy, but most importantly fun! There is a real sense of an ordinary youth club and the atmosphere is most enjoyable. Young people are able to move freely between activities that are on offer and we have the provision, during times when activities are community based, for people to stay at The Hub if they so wish. The gaming suite is very popular with a cohort of young people who are often taking part in virtual football tournaments with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Two members of the group, who are on a catering course at college, have given demonstrations to other members of the group in baking and cookery. This has improved their confidence and demonstrates to the group that they can lead the sessions with support. As Circles Network works closely with partners in the community we have been able to facilitate full day music/jamming sessions with Beat This.

These days are very popular and greatly improve confidence and self-esteem. Each week during holiday periods the group are given the option to travel to Circles Network HQ in Rugby to participate in our Taking the Reins project. This project supports young people in building confidence, improving their decision making skills, working

collaboratively and increasing feelings of self-esteem and wellbeing. Circles Network now has two vehicles in Peterborough, one of which is an eight seater minivan. This has made getting to different activities in the community much safer and easier than using taxis.

**Caroline Hunte**  
**Area Manager**

## 3D Community Support, Midlands

### Introduction

3D Community Support in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Staffordshire supports a core group of individuals throughout each week; this is based at the Leamington and Rugby Hubs, as well as regular community trips in the local areas and support in the home. Participants have their own goals and the overall aims are to promote inclusion, and personal development through social activities, coaching, learning and community access.

### Outcome

**We have provided 4698 hours of support over the last year, to 20 individuals and their families on a weekly basis. Our staff team has grown to four times the size it was at the start of the year.**

### Developments

Days of support have included; volunteering at shops, mobility centres and community cafes, accessing local clubs and classes, local museums and attractions and accessing the local community. As well as our core group that we see during the week we have continued to increase the amount of support we offer children and young people during the evenings and weekends which has enabled us to continue to expand across the region.

We work in conjunction with the local authority through their framework systems as well as receiving requests for support directly from individuals or their families. After an awareness increasing campaign with the local authority we have seen a significant increase in the amount of introductions being received.

**4,698** hours  
of support  
provided this  
year



Our ties in the community have strengthened this year, through us accessing clubs and local groups, as well as volunteering in shop mobility centres, local charity shops and community cafes. We have started to support individuals in Staffordshire where we have not had a presence in the past.

The individuals that we work with are from a wide range of backgrounds and the positive impact that we can assist people to make in their lives is enormous. Participants mention that they feel

that their support is a lifeline and makes a true difference to their lives. Some individuals are vulnerable to isolation and without the help that we are able to offer they would be completely isolated from their communities. We have supported individuals to achieve personal goals which include; increasing independence skills, accessing clubs that they have wanted to for a long time or simply getting away from parents or carers for a while. We are an integral part of many participant's lives.

## Story of Change - Michelle

Michelle has been going through a large transition in her life. She has recently left hospital, where she had been staying for over a year, and returned home. Michelle finds it very hard to socialise and access activities that she would like to. When we started spending time with Michelle she found it very difficult to just leave the house. She would often become very anxious and upset and ask to go home early or choose not to leave the house at all that day. In the beginning of our time with Michelle she would not eat when outside of the house, this was one small part of her life she felt she had control over and found it difficult to manage this away from her home.

After spending just a few months with her facilitator, Michelle has made some massive changes in her life and real moves forward. Not only does Michelle leave the house several times a week now, she is able to plan ahead and has recently been to Laser Quest, shopping, to a safari park and a zoo. She now also eats out every time she is out of the house with little of the concerns of anxiety that she had shown before. She is a much happier person and instead of focusing on coping from day to day she is making some plans for the future and has recently asked for support in finding employment.

Michelle is really proud of the progress she has made and is looking to the future.

**Jeff Bryan**  
Manager  
The Midlands

## Enrich your Day

### Introduction

Enrich Your Day (EYD) is held at the WI hall in Dunchurch. The day runs from 10.30 to 3.30. We welcome people to come along to this informal friendly group with participant led activities such as drawing, games, painting, walking, cooking, crafts, music and singing. Participants are key to planning events and activities for the group.

### Outcomes

**EYD regularly supports five people offering over 30 hours of support per week. This year we have welcomed several new individuals to attend taster days as well as some of our events. We held our first Coffee and Chat event raising over £50, as well as our first open day which was well received. Residents from a local home attended and will be coming for future themed events.**

### Development

We have continued to make links in our local community by going to cafes, canals, restaurants, countryside venues and parks. We have had local artists run workshops and we have also received a grant to allow us to offer accessible musical events at EYD over the coming months. Participants drive these sessions and find reminiscence opportunities such as; looking back at memories, photos and events particularly enjoyable. This prompted participants to get in contact with long lost friends. One of our most positive impacts came from our fitness themes where we focused on healthy eating and exercise; many people have continued these themes at their own home creating a long term positive impact.

A large, solid orange circle containing white text.

EYD Regularly  
support **5** people  
Offering over **30**  
hours of support

## Story of Change - Graham

Graham has been attending EYD for several years. He walks with the aid of walking sticks, which limits how far he can manage and finds going out very tiring. This impacts the places in the community that he feels he can access. Graham was worried about the future and hated the idea of losing his independence and needing to use a wheelchair. He sees using a wheelchair as a permanent loss to his independence. This has caused Graham's mood to drop and him asking to go out less.

After talking to Graham he has now decided that he could use a wheelchair on occasions when he

wants to go somewhere that involves a lot of walking. Graham explained that he wouldn't normally choose to go to some location if it involved a lot of walking as he would soon be tired and have to stop and rest, but with the use of the wheelchair he can now visit many more locations. A large part of Graham changing his mind was another participant, Sarah, who explained that she has done the same thing in the past and that it has helped her to access things she would find very difficult to otherwise. She also went on to explain that it has not reduced her independence.



**Jeff Bryan**  
**Manager**  
**The Midlands**



## Cooking Club

Participants of all ages meet weekly to learn to cook and share food, have conversation and fun and gain confidence together.

The cooking club seeks to provide a fully inclusive space where participants can explore everything connected to food. It is a two-hour period in which food is planned, prepared and cooked. It is a social, sharing environment which is participant led. It seeks to provide a sensory experience on a number of levels including hand-on-hand knife skills, using culinary equipment. The cooking club also aims to achieve a finished product that is shared with others in the group and at home with family members.

Cooking has offered a truly inclusive environment to explore preparing food. Participants come to the group with a range of skills, all with a passion for cooking and

to socialise. We hold themed events around special times of the year including pancake days and Easter.

These have gone down really well and participants eagerly plan the next session.

Several members now share food with each other and are learning what individuals like and offering suggestions. Each week there is an opportunity to take prepared food home to share and all participants have said that they now take a more active role in cooking when they are at home. This has been reported by the family members of participants too, so is already having a really positive impact for many people.



## Story of Change - Becky

Becky has been joining us at Circles Network for a few years now on different projects that she enjoys. Becky is a very sociable young lady and quickly makes friends in group settings. She was keen to be involved when she found out a new cooking club was being launched as she had already worked alongside facilitators who have cooked with her in the home setting.

For the first number of weeks Becky was a little anxious about the time she was spending away from mum and tended to watch the time, she also needed to spend part of the session as 'down time' doing a different activity.

She is always very keen to learn what ingredients are needed for the session and what the method will be to produce the finished dishes. She is a very sharing and caring individual and facilitates others within the group with their social sharing skills. During this quarter Becky has been considerably more relaxed and has stayed in the kitchen environment for the entire session, laughing, joking and loving the sensory experience of messy ingredients.



**Jeff Bryan**  
Manager, The Midlands

## 3D Community Support, South East

### Introduction

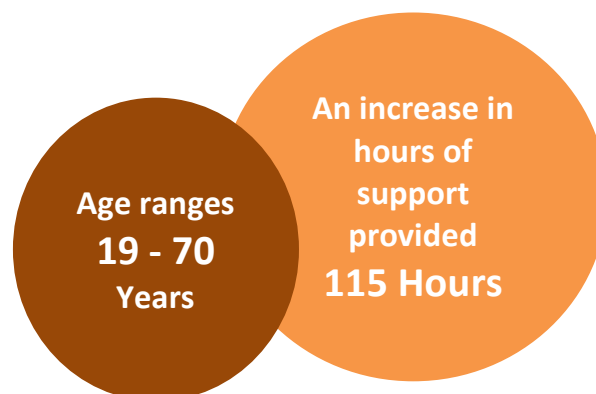
3D community support in the South East is largely located in West and East Sussex and based from The Hub in Crawley. We offer individual and small group support to individuals of any ages who are at risk of isolation due to disability or disadvantage. People purchase any required level of support using Direct Payments and individual budgets.

This year we have experienced a great increase in the hours of support provided. An increase of 115 hours per week. Ages ranging from 19 to 70 years old.

We have worked very hard at creating a strong family feel and building in structure to enable a great sense of belonging. Emphasising everyone has meaning. It is essential that no one is supported in isolation. Making sustainable local links in community to add greater value and accessible support network for people to live full meaningful lives. We have seen people becoming valued members of other social circles. Church groups, sports teams, mother and toddler groups, choirs, gyms, extended learning opportunities, gardening programmes and food bank helpers.

We have supported; new safe paths being laid, local councils vastly improving people's homes, money management for individuals; debt free status for some; successful benefits awards for others. A young lady without a roof over her head was rehoused, a 70 year old gentleman who was found living in a three bedroom house alone and then made homeless has been placed into a suitable home of his choosing and many other success stories.

Sometimes the seemingly small things are the biggest successes. One gentleman who wouldn't change his underwear or have his hair washed will now independently do these things every week. A child who would touch only his own items now takes a book from the shelf in the Hub on The High Street.



We are honoured to have won the community peoples award and to have been awarded funding from the Arts council for Creative Workshops. Huge thanks to Homebase sponsoring the garden projects. Barclays Bank for

collecting money for us. Decathlon sports shop for helping us to promote active lives and Diverse Crawley for leading basic cooking classes. People who receive 3D support are supported in all aspects of life.

## The Things we do



We walked and talked about how to keep safe in friendships on and off the internet. We were also followed by a herd of cows.

## We create memories



Fun in the sun working with people of all ages creating safe family environments

## We Support Friendships

## Story of Change

"Circles Network have changed my life, I never used to do anything or go anywhere I just used to see my four walls. People would come and go and cook my food, but I was always told I couldn't go places because of my wheel chair. I knew sometime people would do things and I would find out after. With Circles Network I now laugh a lot and being with people makes me feel happy. They helped me get a new wheelchair and I am going away for the weekend." **Sara**



**Claire Oak**  
**Project Manager**



## South East of England

### West Sussex Time Banking Network

333 people of ages between 18 to 60 took part in exchanging time and talents through West Sussex Time Bank. Time has been equally given from men and women

Examples of time and talents being shared over this time vary and are listed as follows:

- Parties
- Cinema, theatre, football outings
- Sporting and wellbeing activities
- Cooking / Baking
- Caring for animals
- Card making
- Visiting home and hospitals
- Shopping
- Making phone calls
- DIY
- Food parcels
- Shop keeping
- Cleaning
- Entertaining
- Planning / organising of activities
- Gardening

The Council have benefited through our adoption of all the planters in the High Street which Time Bank members now take care of. This is an everyday activity and a worthwhile project for any individuals or community groups to partake in.

We have linked with a variety of organisations to provide opportunities for people to explore new ambitions.

We have sought Volunteering opportunities and run sessions to show how people can get involved, sharing time and talents.

Those people who are interested in technology, engineering or the audio industry have opportunities to be part of Creative Technology (CT) one of the world's leading suppliers of specialist Audio Visual equipment to the sports, corporate, exhibition and entertainment industries based in Crawley.



**333**  
**People**  
**exchanged**  
**Time**

There have also been some exciting opportunities with The National Trust to help set up an installation.

Those locally who took part have benefited in growing in confidence and newly acquired skills. .

We have closely linked with the DWP to give people the opportunity to get involved in numerous activities and to try new things. We have registered with Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Crawley work coaches. This aids people to foster good relationships under the new Universal Credit system.



**Bike it**, is a council run bike project where we have had people assist cleaning and fixing bikes, which was empowering for some people.

Those taking part have benefited in growing in confidence and new acquired skills.

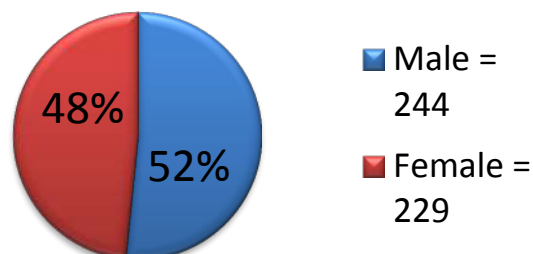
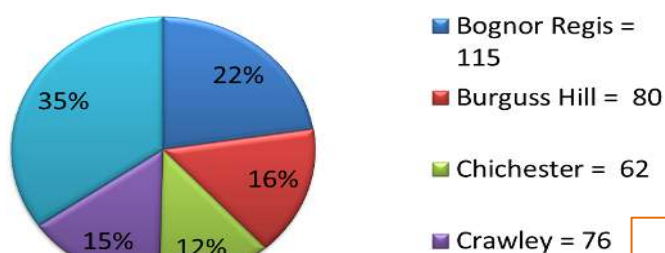
Time Banking has been a wonderful tool to engage people. Sadly, our funding for Time Banking came to an end in September 2018.

However the values and impact it has had will continue, as the spirit of Time Banking will be reflected through our practices in other projects.

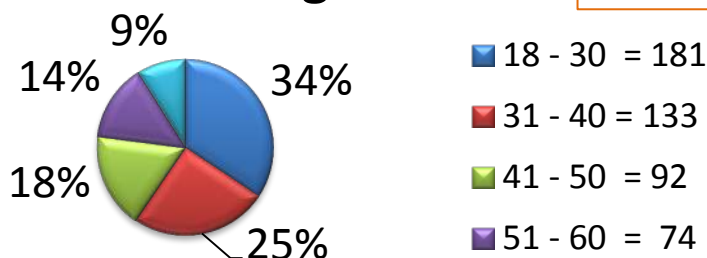
It's amazing what can be achieved with one act of kindness, how you can be encouraged to give and come away feeling you have gained so much in return.

It with most definitely not be the end of us sharing our time gifts and talents.

**Geographic areas**



**Ages**



## Story of Change

Luke is a 44 year old man who has struggled to live on his own, he finds it tough to make friends and to feel comfortable in any setting. Once he has an idea OCD can prevent him from trying any new activities. Luke, over a period of a year, has been attending a regular Tuesday session. This has been a significant change for him. However, Luke would still remain in the corner screening himself off with books and other items to be alone so he could enjoy colouring. Through the 'adopt a green space' at one of our venues we had the opportunity to get involved in gardening. Luke loves drawing pictures of flowers and enjoys colourful things. He took an interest in some seed packets we brought to one of the sessions. The idea was suggested that he could help plant them and watch them grow. When he came in the following week he was invited to take part in this activity. Not only did this introduce a new activity to him, it opened up other unexpected opportunities that would lead to many other helpful things in Luke's life. Luke will only ever own one pair of shoes and one set of clothes, which has been a hygiene challenge. It was suggested to Luke that perhaps he shouldn't get his clothes dirty while gardening and that perhaps he could be taken shopping to get some suitable gardening clothing. Luke always needs a week to think about things, so the next week when he came back to our surprise

he had brought a whole new set of clothes. This then also resulted in us discovering that for 14 years he only ever withdrew a tiny amount of money each week for food and other necessities. This left him dangerously underweight as he wasn't eating enough food and had no hot meals, due to limiting money on the gas and electric keys.

Luke now has been encouraged to withdraw more money, buy more food to last him, to be able to have lights on in the house and to have the heating on when needed. As a result of this he is very happy to be gaining weight at



a healthy rate.

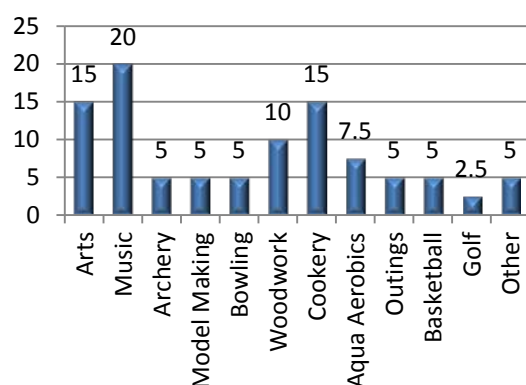
All of this has happened due to engaging one young man in an activity where he has given his time, but has been directly impacted by his interests and talents and the encouragement of other Time Bankers.

# Circles Community Support, Wales

## Alternative Day Services - Newport

Our alternative day service provision in Newport comprises an inclusive and dynamic group of adults who need support to access activities and gain confidence and skills to enable them to live the life of their choosing. Our team support people to plan and explore opportunities in the local area, access clubs and meet with like-minded people, to spend time together doing activities or just catching up. We are funded by Newport Council and support around eleven individuals across the average week.

We have focussed heavily on encouraging people to gain the skills and confidence to attend clubs within the local area with a view to building a sustainable support network which will enable them, wherever possible, to attend in the future with minimal support. We have worked alongside each person to identify their goals and identify areas of interest, for this reason we have a wide range of activities on offer at any one time:



Alongside our regular activities we have also found exciting and interesting one off opportunities. We were delighted when staff and our participants joined together to complete a First Aid course and took part in the St Johns Ambulance Save a Life programme.

We also explore events and activities which are taking place within the region, enjoying days out for St David's Day, Halloween Disco's, meals out and taking part in key community projects such as the Anti Bullying Campaign run locally by the Police and Local Authority.

After another successful year enabling positive change, it has been announced by Newport Council that they will no longer 'block fund' day service provision within the area and so the service as we know it will cease to exist into the new financial year. Although this has been sad news for those supported as well as the dedicated staff and volunteer team, we see that this will offer us an opportunity to develop our services within the region. We are looking to continue to be able to offer individualised support on a 1:1 and small group basis through a 3D Support style model similar to those seen in other areas of the organisation as well as seeking grant funding to offer much needed projects which focus on person centred approaches and circles of support.

## Taking the Reins

### Project Description

Taking the Reins is an Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL) project, based in Warwickshire, offering EFL sessions to disabled and disadvantaged children and young people from across the UK. The project is supported by BBC Children in Need.



### Summary of Impact and Achievements

We have worked with 223 children and young people this year from all parts of the UK. Taking the Reins has provided valuable and life changing experiences for a large majority of the participants of all ages from 3 years up to 18 years.

The Taking the Reins project has provided sessions based on the concept that horses mirror our thoughts and behaviours. This allows participants to reflect on their own body language, attitudes and approaches. The horses will not interact with us if we are negative or defensive, alternatively if we can enter with a sense of calmness, confidence and openness the horses respond more positively. This has helped a lot of young people improve relationships after becoming more aware of themselves and how they can affect the environment around them. We have experienced children and young people who have benefited both at home and in the school environment after accessing a course of sessions based around communication.

The horses have provided individuals/children with the opportunity to explore social situations and human communication in a way that they understand and can apply to everyday life. We have experienced children speaking for the very first time as they have ridden on the back of a horse or enjoyed the sensory experience from the different textures of the horse hair and the feeling of the horse's breath on their hand.

One young girl, who was only three, found she could slow the input from the world around her right down and enjoy living in the here and now. She started to sing whilst sitting on horseback and was able to process the verbal cues her parents were giving her much more readily than before. By the end of her sessions we witnessed her walking through the herd of horses, stopping to greet each one, whereas before she would run through the field finding it hard to slow down and process the world around her.

We have continued to work with children who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence. Children living in these situations are often lacking in feelings of self-worth and can either be very withdrawn or experience high levels of anger. Working with the horses has provided children with opportunities to develop their own self-worth, resilience, emotional control and feelings. As children gain the trust of these magnificent animals and the horse starts to work with the child, this experience is incredibly empowering. We have witnessed young children walk our biggest horse, Jenna over obstacles, work loose with a horse in a round pen or explore their biggest dreams and wishes as they paint them onto the horse. We have celebrated success at the tree of hope along with a pony in the enchanted garden in addition to saying goodbye to worries and fears as we have released them at the stream. We continue to provide ceremonies and celebrations, either to make memories or to use as a spring board to move forward from.

## Top Achievement Statistics

The number of participants has risen considerably over the year and we have exceeded the target of supporting 150 children and have supported 223.

Many of the children or young people who have attended this year are extremely socially isolated. Taking the Reins has provided them with opportunities to meet new children in an inclusive environment. For those young people we have supported who find it challenging to join a group, on an individual basis so the project has been accessible to them. Many young people have reported finding friendship within the horses, they have expressed that Taking the Reins has provided such an important part of their week.

We were surprised when one young person agreed to speak to BBC Radio 4 on air as part of the Children in Need campaign in November. This young person who lives with very high levels of anxiety explained how just four weeks of Taking the Reins sessions so far had hugely improved her mental health and greatly reduced the number of panic attacks she was experiencing each day.

**223**  
children  
supported

**20 hours of**  
support a week  
from this brand  
new project

## Libby's Story

Libby is 10 years old and has a diagnosis of autism and visual impairment. She lives with constant double vision and a convergent squint. In addition to this she also faces high levels of social anxiety. Libby has experienced a significant loss in confidence whenever she is outside the comfort of her home environment. Due to the challenges that Libby has been facing, including finding it difficult to read and understand social situations at school which has left her feeling excluded. When Libby arrived at Taking the Reins, she appeared quite shy, but it was clear she had a big love for animals, especially cats.

As Libby met the horses, she visibly relaxed around them. Each horse was drawn towards her, which

made her feel very wanted and accepted. Libby instantly felt an increase in her self-worth. Over the course of the Taking the Reins programme Libby worked with Jenna, whom she had picked out as being most like herself. Libby proved to be excellent at retaining information and learnt about the horses each week, showing a true talent as she confidently worked with all of the horses. After a few sessions, Libby was able to put on a head collar independently; groom the horse safely; lead her horse confidently through obstacles using only body language and directing her horse in the round-pen. Libby's sense of self-worth has increased due to the Taking the Reins programme and has highlighted the gift she has for working with animals.

**Rhianne McCallion**  
**Manager, Equine Projects**



# Taking the Lead

## Project Description

Taking the Lead is an Equine Facilitated Learning (EFL) project, based in Warwickshire, offering EFL sessions to disabled and disadvantaged children, young people and adults from

across the UK. The project offers sessions on an individual or group basis at a subsidised rate during the week and runs a children's club every Saturday.

## Summary of Impact and Achievements

- The project has worked with 22 adults and 243 children and young people this year
- The Saturday Club has consistently supported groups of 15 children and young people for 45 weeks of the year.
- Taking the Lead has supported a total of 22 children, young people and adults accessing courses of 1:1 sessions throughout the year
- The Holiday Club has supported a total of 35 children throughout the year as they have accessed themed days during school holidays in small groups.
- Taking the Lead has worked in collaboration with 15 schools and youth organisations to provide support to various groups.

Worked with  
22 Adults &  
243 Children  
this year

Saturday Club  
supported  
group of 15 for  
45 weeks of the  
year

The Taking the Lead team, both equine and human, has provided huge amounts of valuable support and witnessed personal growth, development and some spectacular transformations in the people attending. The project has supported children, young people, adults and families through a combination of individual and group sessions, holiday clubs and a weekly Saturday club throughout the year. We have worked closely with local authority services including Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Coventry

Child and Adult services and with schools and youth organisations such as Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs and Peterborough schools and youth organisations. Many of the schools we have worked with this year have been from links we have had for some time. However we have welcomed the collaboration from new groups and organisations too.

The Taking the Lead project has worked closely with Circles Network's 3D Community Support projects and provided individualised packages of support related to animal assistance as we have worked directly with SEND social care.

## Fundraising

We have fundraised and welcomed donations from external groups and organisations who have kindly sponsored us. Taking the Lead was one of the projects that benefited from the money raised through Circles Network's annual Mid-Summer ball, where we brought in £6,000, and a Christmas Race and Quiz night, which raised £1,500. A number of our participants took part in a sponsored spooky Halloween walk with the ponies which raised £64 to



directly support the project. North Warwickshire pony club kindly raised £500 for us through a charity equine show held at Rugby Riding club which was organised through their junior committee, and we are enormously grateful for donations from friends and family members too. Taking the Lead has expanded the team to meet the demands of the project including welcoming a lead facilitator in January 2018.

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## Achievements

Taking the Lead has supported a large number of young people who were experiencing extremely challenging times. Through an ongoing course of intensive Equine Facilitated Learning sessions we have seen young people developing emotional resilience building approaches such as emotional freedom therapy and mindfulness into the groundwork sessions with the horses. As we have facilitated sensory work on horseback we have observed children who have been able to ground themselves, relax and speak in full sentences for the first time or take a nap following a period of chronic sleep

disturbances. During the summer we supported a number of children and young people who were experiencing crisis due to changes in their personal circumstances. Taking the Lead has provided them with a chance to build their self-worth through achieving tasks and overcoming obstacles with the ponies. In addition to the children and young people we have also offered support to the families and worked very closely with SEND social care to provide one to one support to those who require it, making suggestions following observations and having input into core group and strategy meetings.

We have has facilitated an extensive holiday club throughout the year, including trips out and special festive events. We celebrated with our Saturday Club group as we attended Kenilworth Agricultural Show and Husbands Bosworth Show with the ponies.



All competitors received rosettes as they remained calm under pressure and handled their ponies with great confidence, whilst demonstrating fantastic communication skills. Taking the Lead's Saturday club enjoyed a visit from Santa again this year as he helped each young person and child attending, including those from Phoenix School Youth Group in Peterborough, create special memories with their favourite pony.

During the year we have identified a huge gap in statutory support and services available to children and young people and the families of children who have been adopted. Many of the children live with attachment difficulties in addition to other challenges such as; learning difficulties, pathological demand avoidance syndrome and global development delay due to the trauma they experienced earlier in life. Working with the horses to understand and explore different forms of communication such as: body language, expressing emotions through paint and play and working with peers, in a team, to guide horses over jumps for example has provided participants with a platform for development.

We have also supported a large number of young people living with mental health challenges including those who have experienced long hospital stays.

Working with the horses has provided them with a starting point to explore experiences and ways to move forward through round pen work and observing the emotions their horses are mirroring in a number of ways. The Taking the Lead team has not only supported children and young people, the project has also supported adults, including one young man with Autism, who looked forward to his weekly equine sessions because they gave him the opportunity to stand in the field and just be with the horses, whilst listening to the breeze rustling through the trees. Freddie the pony also enjoyed being part of these sessions as he made him laugh by pulling the zip on his coat up and down, begging for direct attention!

We have received positive feedback from all the schools Taking the Lead has supported. As we have facilitated group sessions throughout the year, teachers, head teachers and other professionals have commented on how calm the children and young people are during and post sessions.

One teacher said she wished her class could attend with the horses at the start of everyday as they are so much calmer after spending time here, and so much more learning can take place on these days. We have received comments that the children's communication and empathy skills have increased and there are less incidents of poor behaviour being reported at school on a day to day basis.



## Lee's Story

Lee has been attending Taking the Lead for over two years now, with his mum and his nephew during school holidays. Lee is 10 years old, he lives with a rare condition and severe epilepsy and can have up to 100 seizures a day. Lee is unable to express himself verbally and unable to eat through his mouth due to the brain damage he has experienced as a result of the seizures. Lee has tried a number of medications and surgery, however he is terminally ill and his family are making it their mission to provide him with the best experiences and give him the opportunity to have lots of fun! Lee initially made a strong connection with the king of the herd, Reef, however when Reef passed away Lee fell in love with one of the smallest ponies in the herd, Kinnie! She is typically quite an energetic and cheeky little pony, and has been known to be a little bolshie and pushy at times too. With Lee however, she stands like a statue to be brushed and painted on and listens acutely to his signals as he leads her around a course of obstacles. Kinnie often rests her head on Lee's lap and sometimes enjoys exploring his chair as she pulls at the straps and looks for any spare strands of hay. During one of the sessions Lee attended in half term, Kinnie was not her usual quiet self around Lee. She started to nudge Lee and nudge at his mum and facilitator



As we asked Kinnie to stand still for Lee she continued to do this. A short while after she started this behavior Lee started to have a seizure, whilst Lee had his seizure Kinnie stood with her little head just by the side of Lee. This happened again later on in the same day, and several times since, Kinnie could detect, before any human, when Lee is going to have a seizure. Kinnie was also able to alert Lee's mum and facilitator to what she was sensing. Kinnie stays by Lee's side until his seizures are over.

Lee's mum reports that Taking the Lead is the only place Lee feels completely included. He can join in with all of the activities and he loves spending time with the horses. Lee recognises all of the children and team members and finds it a very special place to be.

**Rhianne McCallion**  
Circles Equine Manager

# Horses4Courses

## Introduction

Horses4Courses is a practical alternative educational project, based in Warwickshire, offering stable management, rural education, literacy and numeracy

courses for young people and adults from across the UK. The project is funded through fees and donations.

## Summary of Impact and Achievements

Over the last year Horses4Courses has really grown and developed. The programme has embraced changes and additions to the Circles Network horse care matrix, including three levels; foundation, level 1 and level 2, in addition to new subjects including The Equine Skeletal system, Hoof Care and Common illnesses.



**ASDAN**

GCSE equivalents.

ASDAN gives the flexibility to deliver these courses in a creative way making them achievable to any young person or adult, especially if a traditional class room based way of teaching is not their preferred environment. ASDAN provides a number of modules and gives the individual choice over the challenges they would like to complete within the modules of interest.

This year we have seen mini projects on equine genetics and even cloning in addition to trick training using positive reinforcement and exploring animals in the media.

We are delighted to announce that we are now an approved alternative education provider for secondary school aged children who are excluded from mainstream schooling in Warwickshire. Warwickshire Area Behaviour Partnership (WABP) have commissioned us to support a number of young people this year to access the ASDAN Animal Care course across a number of hours or days a week depending on each

**20 hours of support a week from this brand new project**

**17 young people supported with coaching and learning this year**



individual's timetable. WABP work with vulnerable secondary school students who have been or are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school. We continue to work directly with local secondary schools and

Warwickshire's flexible learning team as they fund us to provide qualifications to some of their students who are finding it challenging to access a school setting.

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## Top Achievement Statistics

- **Horses4Courses has consistently supported a total of 17 individuals this year**
  - **Between October 2017 and March 2018 the number of education hours Horses4Courses provided each week more than doubled, from 7 hours per week to 20 hours a week.**
  - **We have witnessed four young people engage back into full time education within a school setting or employment following the completion of their course through Horses4Courses**
  - **Throughout all of our equine projects we have supported 517 children and 22 adults this year**
- 

We have had a number of successes this year as Horses4Courses has supported young people who have benefited from building their confidence and re-engaging into education for a number of reasons. We supported individuals who are experiencing ill health and high levels of social anxiety, making it very challenging to access any school setting; those who have a diagnosis of autism, have a low level of self-confidence and self-worth, children who are home schooled and those who have been excluded from school due to emotional, social and behavioural challenges.

Although each educational session is carefully planned and facilitated

our setting is non-obtrusive and we facilitate in a very person centred style, building on our expertise in person centred planning and coaching.

All the individuals we have worked with this year have built positive relationships with their facilitator. We have witnessed them grow in confidence and they have shown some fantastic examples of self-determination.

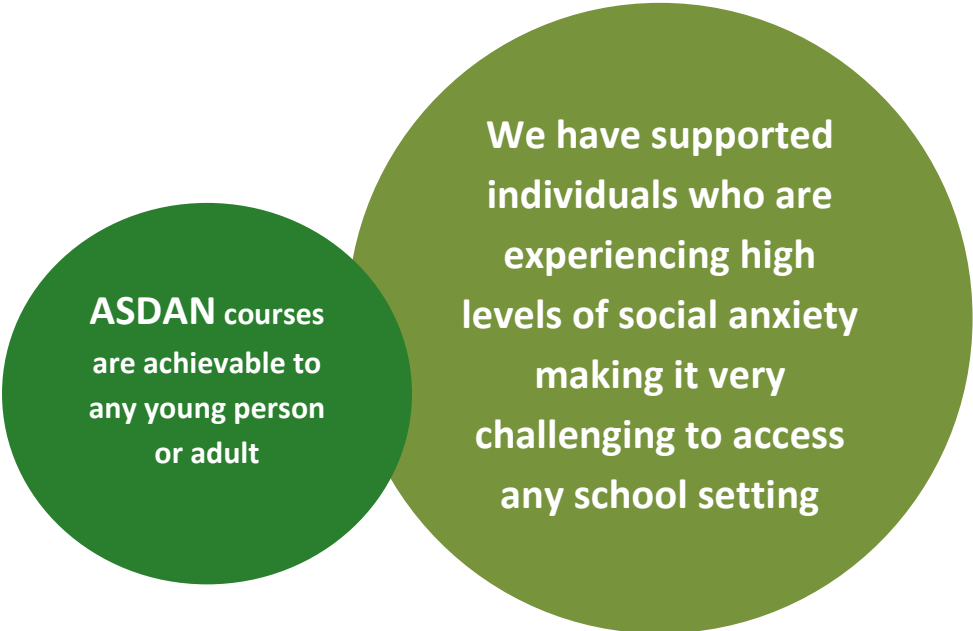


Horses4Courses has supported one vulnerable young person who was extremely isolated. Despite the challenges this young person faced they were determined to complete an animal care course. Due to high levels of anxiety this young person found the thought of leaving the house overwhelming. He managed to attend Circles Network twice a week consistently throughout the year. Horses4Courses has also developed care courses as part of their weekly curriculum.

In addition, we have worked with a number of vulnerable learners who have been permanently excluded from school, as well as providing alternative education in a safe outdoor environment, which has included forest schooling sessions to develop confidence and life skills. We have built in lots of

its' own introduction to Equine Facilitated Learning coaching course. Horses4 Courses has supported a young person with extremely high levels of anxiety to develop her ambition of becoming an Equine Facilitated Learning practitioner one day. We continue to support children and young people who are home schooled due to ill health, disadvantaged or disability as they access both the Horse Care and ASDAN animal therapeutic work to explore wishes for the future, worries to overcome and learning styles.

Many young people are experiencing attachment difficulties which can have a huge impact on their schooling and education, making Circles Network's equine environment a great platform for learning new skills and knowledge

Two overlapping green circles of different shades. The smaller circle on the left is a darker green, and the larger circle on the right is a lighter green. Both contain white text.

**ASDAN** courses  
are achievable to  
any young person  
or adult

**We have supported  
individuals who are  
experiencing high  
levels of social anxiety  
making it very  
challenging to access  
any school setting**

## Story of Change - Jonathan

Jonathan is 15 years old. He would be in his GCSE years at main stream school however, following a traumatic event which resulted in his anxiety heightening and his mental health affecting his everyday life, he spent some time within a young people's mental health ward within a hospital. Once he returned home Jonathan found it very challenging to get up in the mornings and leave the house at all. He became incredibly withdrawn and showed signs of depression. Jonathan also has a diagnosis of ADHD and Autism and felt that returning to school was too overwhelming. His confidence dramatically dropped and he stopped engaging in any form of education, including within the home. Jonathan's mum, once a lecturer at a college, had to end her job to care for him and became increasingly worried about him. Jonathan initially accessed the Taking the Reins project, he then continued onto Taking the Lead which he still participates in. Jonathan's facilitator took her time to build a relationship with him. Almost a year later, Jonathan started to engage in education again, he began to leave the house more and to access other activities such as swimming or the gym. Jonathan has now started to work through the ASDAN Animal Care short course. Jonathan really looks forward to his sessions each week. He asks questions and is very interested in all of the learning opportunities that are provided through the course. Jonathan recently took a trip to Redwings horse sanctuary and was amazed at how much he now knew about horses. As he chatted to some of the staff that worked there it became clear that he had a huge understanding of horse care and how horses think, feel and behave. Horses 4Courses continues to boost Jonathan's confidence each week he attends. The course has helped re-engage Jonathan into learning and he is now starting to access Maths and English tuition at an alternative learning centre within Warwickshire. Jonathan has also shown interest in some other online animal courses which we will support him to complete.. Horses4Courses had given Jonathan hope for the future, his mum can now see steady progress and a future full of opportunities from him as he transitions into adult life.

**Rhianne McCallion**  
**Manager, Equine Projects**

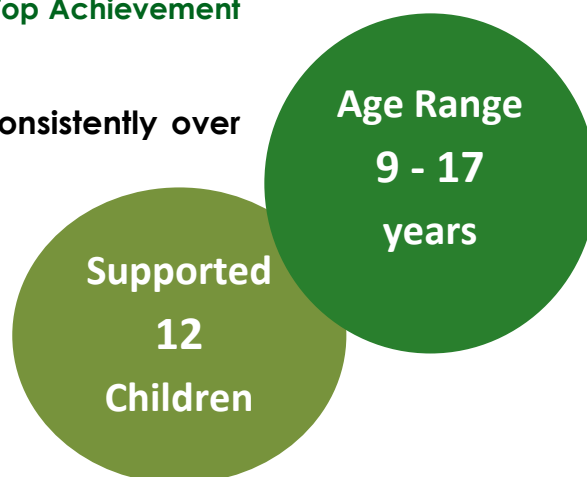
# LG2 Youth Club - Impact Report

## Project Description

Let's get together (LG2) is a youth project based in Warwickshire, offering workshops in communication, citizenship, leadership and planning. The project is open to young people aged nine years and above living in Rugby and surrounding areas. The project is self-funded.

## Summary of Impact and Achievements Top Achievement Statistics

- **LG2 worked with a total of 12 children consistently over the year. This is the largest group in the history of LG2 and is testament to calmer behaviour and greater inclusion.**
- **Age range from 9 years - 17 years with both girls and boys providing a fully inclusive group.**



This year we the LG2 project has grown and developed, sustaining attendance by existing participants in addition to welcoming new ones. LG2 has a balance of structured activities to encourage citizenship, leadership and planning skills within the group, alongside young person led fun and games.

Some of the activities we have organised this year include meditation and mindfulness workshops, bug hunting and exploration, expressive arts, sports, team games, cookery and a number of musically themed talent shows and performances. Throughout the year we have based a number of the activities we provide within the local community. LG2 enjoyed a trip out to a local village to appreciate a

fabulous Christmas light display, the project also has a presence within the local community as we have accessed nature walks, enjoyed parks and taken part in some promotional events. Being out in the community has given participants opportunities to develop positive attitudes and approaches that help friendships grow with the consistent drive for inclusion.

As the LG2 group worked on growing as a team and strengthening communication and planning skills they embarked on a Circles Network '**say no to loneliness**' campaign in September 2017. LG2 organised and delivered an inclusive coffee, cake and chat evening which also raised £54 to go towards supporting the charity.

The coffee and chat event was very well attended, providing a platform for people of all ages to form connections, relax, play and fight against loneliness whilst eating lots of scrummy cake!

LG2 practiced and performed a Christmas sing a long at the

children's Christmas party in December. This was a natural follow on as the participants had been encouraging each other to develop their confidence and perform their talents, which included singing, dance and magic at their very own talent shows held each Wednesday night.

## Theo's Story



Theo has been attending LG2 since the initial project was piloted. He lives with his grandparents under special guardianship and has a diagnosis of Attachment Disorder with some other difficulties. Theo is an energetic and social young person however, at times his impulsive behaviour and confusion of social situations can cause him challenges. Recently Theo has demonstrated his empathy skills by writing a letter to a friend who had moved away. We have also seen Theo supporting other participants in a mature and sensible way.

It has become clear that his overall development, particularly his citizenship skills, have increased dramatically. He has also demonstrated further when noticing other participants finding something challenging, by offering support without prompting.

Theo has suggested some great imaginative ideas for the Harry Potter garden here at Circles Network in Rugby, as we wish to develop this in the near future. He has happily helped and taken instruction from a younger participant who was leading the design. In the past Theo has put huge effort into creating items out of wood such as benches, chairs and planters, demonstrating a fantastic work ethic and enthusiasm to create more. He is continuing to develop these all important life skills as he is moving through his teenage years. This is fantastic progress for a young person who is at risk of being 'labelled' as challenging

**Rhianne McCallion**  
Manager Equine Projects

## Ready Steady Go

### Project Description

Ready Steady Go is an innovative programme for families with children aged between 0-5 years who may have additional needs. Ready Steady Go was initially

funded through Warwickshire Smart Start and offers structured play sessions with ponies or other animals to prepare children for their first year at pre-school or school.

### Summary of Impact and Achievements

#### Achievement Statistics

- Ready Steady Go worked with a total of 15 families meeting the target of what we had proposed initially to Warwickshire smart start.



We were very excited to run the Ready Steady Go project this year, as this was a new project for Circles Equine. We worked with families who are raising children aged 0-5 years, many of whom are disabled or disadvantaged. Over a course 10 weeks we aimed to bridge any of the gaps in their development in addition to building on the stages they were already at in preparation for school or preschool. Throughout the 10 weeks the children, supported by their parents or guardians, accessed a number of carefully planned sessions with the ponies and play activities which supported them towards reaching outcomes outlined across all areas of development by the Early Years Foundation Stage.

At Ready Steady Go we witnessed some magical moments as one child with extreme sensory needs put a hat on for the first time. This little boy also joined in with an activity, which was unheard of, as we played with shape, space and colour with his favourite pony, Feorag.

He worked with another child to place Feorag in front of the pink block and behind.

Ready Steady Go facilitated an interactive 'pony hunt' as we experienced the season change going from summer into autumn. All the children were very engaged in the sensory walk through the 'swishy swashy grass' and the 'thick oozy mud' searching for a pony at the end. One child with certain attachment difficulties, which resulted in him experiencing severe separation anxiety, was happy to come away from mum in the garden and take part in the walk.

We have enjoyed sensory work through sitting on the back of the horse, building a bond between mum and son in one particular session. Painting on the ponies as a form of expression was a fully inclusive activity for twins, one of whom has severe and complex needs. Their Mum and Dad find it very challenging to come up with any activity that both boys can access together.



In addition to the direct work with the ponies the children and families enjoyed singing, rhythm and rhyme, playing with the small world farm, messy play, collaging using nature materials and circle time.

All of the families of children who attended commented on noticeable

changes they had seen following the 10 week course. This feedback included development of verbal speech and vocabulary, increased fine manipulative and gross motor skills, increased social skills such as developed empathy and turn taking, huge boosts in confidence and having the motivation to try new things.

## Story of Change - Vanessa

Vanessa attended Ready Steady Go with her younger sister Paige. Due to Vanessa's diagnosis of Prada Willi Syndrome she could tire easily and she also had a speech delay. Both children quickly warmed towards a favourite pony and could identify them from a visual aid as they said their names. The girls mum explained that Vanessa spoke about her favourite pony, Feorag, all week in between attending her sessions. Over the course of the 10 weeks Vanessa looked forward to seeing Feorag as she walked up the field calling his name. Despite some challenges Vanessa held surrounding her mobility, and tiring quickly, she enjoyed taking Feorag on a treasure hunt around the grounds with her sister Paige and her favourite pony Layla. Both girls looked out for horse equipment such as hoof picks and head collars and we named the objects as we found them.

Both Vanessa and Paige had the opportunity to experience the season change and enjoyed jumping in Autumn leaves and walking through frosty grass fields, hearing the crunch beneath their wellington boots. It became clear that Vanessa loved storytelling and thoroughly enjoyed taking part in an interactive walk and talk story with Feorag. Through puppetry and singing Vanessa took part in story telling and started to develop full sentences as her confidence soared and her verbal communication expanded. Following the ten week course their mum expressed how much Vanessa's speech had improved and how she enjoyed talking about her favourite pony Feorag at 'show and tell' at preschool



**Rhianne McCallion**  
Manager, Equine Projects

## The Academy for Inspiring Inclusion

The Academy for inspiring inclusion is established in order to deliver the values and the ethos of inclusion to internal teams and external groups and individuals. The training and learning provision that the Academy delivers helps us disseminate our experience and expertise. Through it we offer opportunities for learning in creative and responsive ways to children and adults of all ages and from all backgrounds.

Circles Network will be entering its 25th year next year. The organisation takes great pride in

ensuring that committed staff and volunteers receive the essential tools and training to enable them to carry out their roles effectively and efficiently. As a learning organisation we fully believe in the power of education and knowledge and know that everyone can learn.

Circles Network has developed many highly effective methods and inspiring techniques through the support we have provided for individuals.

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This year the curriculum of learning opportunities included:

- Continuation of our on-line training for all new employees and existing staff. Our on-line training provides mandatory training modules which all employees and volunteers are scheduled to undertake
- Studio One training in Responding Positively to Challenging Behaviours
- Forensic Training
- Advocacy - from first steps to advanced practice
- Human Rights Conference and Training
- Effective Communication training
- Self Directed
- Support Option 1
- Loneworking and Safeguarding
- Person Centred Planning and Approaches
- Positive Communication Workshop
- Equine Facilitated Learning
- Mental Capacity training
- Dealing with Complaints and Compliments
- Level 2 Health & Social Care
- Diabetes Awareness
- Steps for Stress Reduction
- Poverty Awareness
- Mindfulness
- First Aid and Health & Safety
- Leadership

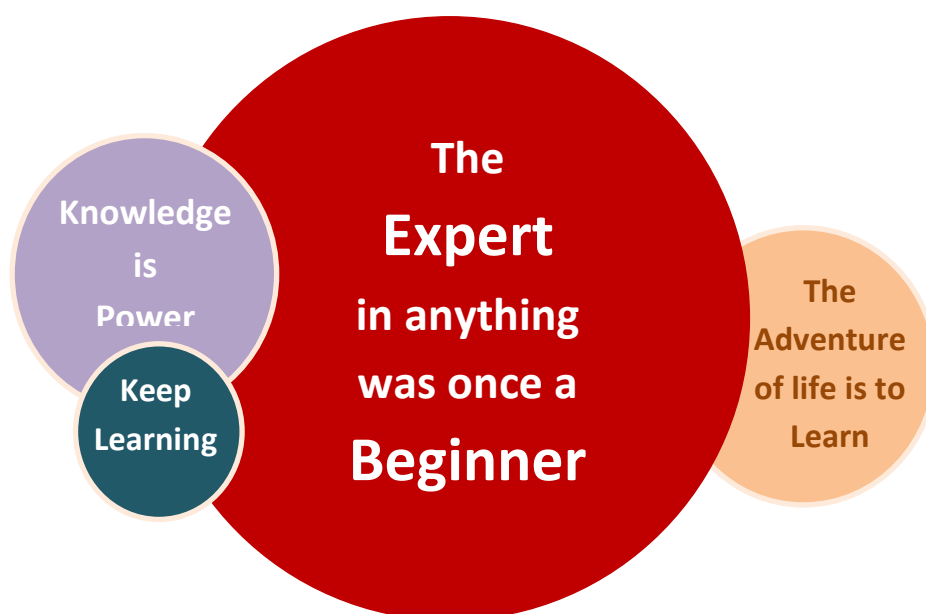
- Executive Coaching, ILM Level 5
- Community Connections
- Networking and Connecting
- Preparation for End of Life
- Understanding and Responding to Dementia
- Stable Management
- Talking Mats
- Animal Care
- Animal Assisted Learning
- Circles and You
- Circles of Support
- Art for All
- Effective Parenting
- Cookery Skills

All training is centred around the learner.

### Next Steps

Looking forward the Academy is set to grow exponentially as we are accepted on the framework as provider for Alternative Education for children and young people who are out of mainstream education.

Behind the scenes we have been preparing for this for some time now and anticipate a bright new path for so many to embark upon.



## Thank you

All of us at Circles Network would like to thank the organisations who have supported us throughout the year, that have provided us with wonderful volunteering and financial support.

A heartfelt thanks goes to **The World of Cars** who continue to support us as their Charity of Choice. They have provided us with a number of cars for all of our different regions, enabling us to reach even more people. Some of the World of Car staff have committed their valuable time to fundraise for us by undertaking the gruelling Thames 16 Bridges Trek and the company has provided warm winter gloves and scarves for the children undertaking the equine sessions in Rugby.

We would also like to thank **Cummins** who held a charity football match to raise funds for Circles Network. It was a fantastic day and they raised an amazing £500.

Teams of volunteers from both **Jaguar Land Rover** and **Cummins** have provided numerous hours to undertake and complete a number of tasks, such as: building a pony shelter for our tiny Shetland ponies; power washing garden furniture; clearing rubbish; fixing fences; and many other important jobs. We are so grateful for all their hard work.

The Peterborough School, who also made us their Charity of the Year, raised over five thousand pounds for our work with children and young people in the City.

St Mary, Mother of God Church in Fife raised almost three thousand pounds to enable us to develop an outreach advocacy cab for people living in the rural areas.

A huge **THANK YOU** to all of the people that have supported Circles Network throughout the year.

