



Young at Arts: Time to Shine end of project report

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2017



**YOUNG
AT ARTS**



Summary

The LEAF partnership, a consortium of six arts and culture organisations led by [Yorkshire Dance](#), co-produced an integrated two-year programme giving socially isolated older people the opportunity to connect through cultural encounters, creative participation and community engagement. Young at Arts invited older people across the city to come together to spark new friendships, experiment, re-imagine themselves, forge social adventures, have their say and take their place in their neighbourhoods and city. Older people were supported to try something new and participate in art, theatre, music and dance as a way to make connections, develop relationships and combat social isolation.

Young at Arts in numbers

638 participants took part in one or more of the following:

- 61 Creative Consultation Tasters
- 8 Weekends of Wonder
- 228 Participatory sessions
- 22 Information sessions
- 23 Older Peoples' Steering Group meetings
- 8 Ambassador Training Sessions
- 256 Ambassador contact sessions
- 634 hours of volunteering



What happened, and what needed to change?

The vision included the creation of an Ambassador Programme – a group of 40 older people who would be more actively involved in befriending, signposting and transporting socially isolated older people in communities to engage them in social opportunities. This proved to be a more challenging role than anticipated. A change of approach resulted in Young at Arts working in care homes with very socially isolated older people, many of whom were living with dementia.

What difference did it make for older people?

The group sessions had a positive impact on clients' health and wellbeing. Of those who completed entry and exit monitoring, 60% reported an improvement. Many developed new friendships; they tried new activities which have improved their confidence to take part in other groups and activities such as Heydays – a long-established older people's group at the Leeds playhouse.

- All consortium partners, and particularly the lead, Yorkshire Dance, now have some excellent knowledge and experience of working with older people and some 500 older people on their contact database.
- Yorkshire Dance developed contacts and expertise in using the arts to connect with and engage older people in care homes, in particular those living with dementia.
- Staff are trained in [Dementia Care Mapping](#) – a tool designed to evidence the impact of working with these beneficiaries.
- Two community-based groups (in Morley and Rothwell) are likely to continue beyond the project because they have sufficient numbers of participants to make weekly financial contributions that would make them sustainable.
- LEAF partners now consider the needs of older people and community work.



Learning

The aspects of the project that targeted the most socially isolated older people – those living with dementia in care homes and those living in Richmond Hill – were the least likely to have taken part in monitoring and evaluation (either because they lacked capacity or didn't want to) meaning that there was a lack of evidence regarding the positive impact of the intervention.

When working with freelance artists as delivery partners, they need to be fully engaged in the monitoring and evaluation. They need to receive the training and the process needs to be built into the sessions.

Sustainable partnerships

Yorkshire Dance led the Young at Arts project on behalf of the LEAF (Leeds Education Arts Forum) partnership. LEAF consists of Yorkshire Dance, Phoenix Dance, Northern Ballet, West Yorkshire Playhouse, The Grand and Opera North. Through working on a shared project, Young at Arts has enabled the partnership to develop and strengthen.



Case Study

One Time to Shine participant, an 88 year old woman we'll call Mrs. T, was involved in the weekly Young at Arts workshops at Richmond Hill Community Centre. Mrs. T lived alone and had no immediate family supporting her. Over the last few years she had become increasingly isolated due to ill health. At the beginning of the year Mrs. T went to see her G.P and half-jokingly said she was afraid she would be found dead in her flat weeks after she had died.

Although Mrs. T told this story whilst laughing, it alarmed the doctor, who set about trying to find her some help. He contacted the Council who referred Mrs.T to Richmond Hill Elderly Action. An outreach worker visited Mrs. T at home and suggested she attend the Young at Arts workshops being held at Richmond Hill.

Mrs. T was taken to and from the workshops by taxi and attended regularly from February 2016 onwards. She valued the attention and the resources being spent on her. Attending the workshops was a lifesaver. Before this she was depressed, never leaving the house, let alone speaking to other people. Mrs. T experienced contemporary dance with Yorkshire Dance, singing with Opera North and storytelling with West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Mrs. T said: "I just did what I wanted, you're allowed to do what you want". "Light exercises were good, they all laugh and it was funny". "I've liked all of it, the young girls are adorable." "It's money well spent!"

It's humans make this planet, not places, money, things. I've three homes, three places I go between. But they're just bricks and mortar. Like the flat I call my 'penthouse;' beautiful view. But home is nowhere when you're not good at being on your own. Once I worked on a boat in Greece; blue sky, paradise. But paradise is hell if you've no one to share it with. It's people I like; in a group I get this buzz. Once I was a coach driver, then a tour guide. But I didn't go out for a whole year after my mum died. This group is like family, that's why I like being here. It brings me out into the world, makes me want to come back. It's humans, not places, money, things, that make this planet. "I am sorry not to have known about this group earlier. Forgot to feel lonely."



Resources

Find the Young at Arts online report on the Yorkshire Dance website

yorkshiredance.com/project/young-at-arts/

[Young at Arts - Connecting People Through Creativity](#)

To find out more about Yorkshire Dance go to yorkshiredance.com

To find out more about Time to Shine go to www.timetoshineleeds.org





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