

# Learning and other outcomes

"I went from knowing little to an understanding and appreciation of the nature of a day centre and what could be useful activities" Artist

## Learning Outcomes

Everyone involved in this project learned in some respect.

### The Project Manager learned:

- About how to work with older people; she was impressed with the attitudes, warmth and generosity of this age group
- About how so much of the services provided for older people comes from older volunteers
- About how deep the need is and how wide-ranging and far-reaching the benefits; particularly in care home settings
- That sustainability cannot be through volunteer support, but through training of core staff. Volunteers can support activity but cannot sustain it alone.
- That volunteers need training in working on arts projects with older people
- That it is impossible to run a project well unless realistic management time is built in, especially a complex project with a wide range of partners, artists, volunteers and participants; all with differing needs and wants.
- That partnership, although the best way to achieve positive and far reaching outcomes, also requires a lot of time and work.

### Artists and volunteers learned:

- About the physical and psychological barriers faced by older people
- About art form;
- music was the most immediate art form and yielded the fastest results (because of
  - visual arts took longer for participants to feel comfortable with, but satisfaction with the outcome was greatest;
- drama was good for a group 'high' and encouraged camaraderie and was a very immediate expression of an individual's personality;
- That they could make real connections and even friendships with participants in some cases, which none of them expected
- That it was a privilege to have worked with older people
- That they found participant's stories interesting
- That the pace of activity needs to be slower for this age group than for others
- About management of a situation that includes people with dementia

### Participants learned:

- To take a risk and 'have a go'

- Pride in their achievements
- How to see others in a new light and got to know people better
- How enjoyable the social aspect of the sessions was
- That doing something is beneficial in many ways.

### Carers learned:

- About how effective creative work can be when working with older people
- About techniques for creative work
- To raise their aspirations
- New ways of getting to know participants better and seeing them in a new light
- Art Shape's Creativity in Social Care course for some.

### Other Outcomes

- Over 1650 people over 50 and living in Gloucestershire have had the opportunity to get involved in creative activities and have fun
- 51 artists gained employment from the project
- 65 volunteers and apprentices have gained experience and training in this area and many are using this experience on other projects and with other organisations
- The experience has strengthened many friendships between participants and done much to fight isolation and loneliness in older people – at least in the short term.
- Many care workers have been introduced to the benefits of creative work or had their creative know-how extended and three have also gained formal training on the subject
- There is now a pool of artists in Gloucestershire who are skilled at working with older people
- There are examples of excellent work displayed in luncheon clubs, care homes and people's private spaces all over
- Some groups have found ways to set up new or continued provision
- There are a number of strong partnerships ripe for more work
- Around 8500 people have seen work produced by the project, helping challenge traditional stereotypes of older people
- Intergenerational projects have helped promote understanding of older people by younger people
- As a result of the learning from this project, Art Shape is now working on a new project which provides creative work to care homes but also trains, mentors and provides a learning group for carers.