



Mental well-being impact assessment

Project Overview

It has long been recognised the arts make an important contribution towards the North Norfolk tourism offer as well as providing economic benefit to the wider local economy and to the significant number of artists working in the area. Of equal importance are the benefits the arts bring to the resident population through the range of opportunities to access and engage.

Whilst officers are aware of these many potential benefits, until now this has been largely anecdotal and not possible to robustly demonstrate. By applying to be a pilot authority on the Local Government Group Mental Well-being Impact Assessment (MWIA) Flagship programme North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) aimed to effectively communicate the wider impact the service, or elements of it, has on the communities' health and well-being.

The Process

MWIA seeks to identify and evidence (through community profiling, literature review and stakeholders views) the key impacts that a service or project has on well-being, and ensure relevant population groups are being targeted. Wider determinants of health and protective factors for health are used as the basis for the assessment.

Factors considered include:


- Wider determinants e.g. transport, leisure activities, challenging discrimination, economic security
- Enhancing control e.g. belief in own capabilities, a sense of control, opportunities for expressing views and being heard
- Increasing resilience and community assets e.g. emotional well-being, learning and development, trust and safety, social networks and relationships
- Facilitating participation and promoting inclusion e.g. sense of belonging, ways to be involved, activities that bring people together

Led by MWIA specialists from the Inuksuk Consultancy commissioned by the Local Government Group, local authority officers alongside health and arts professionals were brought together to undertake the MWIA. An initial screening exercise identified the Sheringham Little Theatre (SLT) Youth Outreach Programme as an appropriate area of the service on which to focus the MWIA.

Project Outcome

Findings of MWIA

SLT is having many positive impacts on the health and well-being of participating young people as well as their parents and carers. It is achieving this through:



Enabling Skills Development - participation creates opportunities for individuals to develop skills. Skill development builds an individual's sense of control and resilience thus promoting self-esteem and belief in themselves. There is also evidence that participation in the SLT youth outreach programme has had a positive impact for some young people on their pathway into employment or further education.

Offering Opportunities to Volunteer – enables the development of knowledge, experience and skills and therefore highly likely to promote the individuals self-esteem and sense of participation as well as a reduction in social isolation. Volunteering is also a pathway into paid employment.

Offering Young People Alternative Activities – thus providing them with positive activities in a rural area where there are potential problems of isolation and inactivity leading to negative behaviour.

Offering Opportunities to Network – evidence suggests participants benefit from their participation at SLT by building relationships with peers from other communities. This has been especially beneficial to young people during their transition to high school. There is evidence to also suggest that parents and carers also benefit from the extended relationships made through their connections to SLT.

Building Communication Skills, Confidence, Self-esteem and Emotional Well-being – helps develop resilience to bullying and builds aspirations for future learning and development. Some parents illustrated how involvement at SLT by their young people had led to an improvement in confidence levels and this was helping with their self-development and ability to deal with bullying – this was mirrored in the feedback from the young people.

Providing a Safe and Trusted Environment - much importance was placed on trust and safety particularly by the parents. Parents are confident in the SLT policies and procedures in place. This aspect had not previously been seen as a key direct impact of the programme.

Providing Affordable Activities - young people are able to be engaged with meaningful activities as SLT sessions are affordable for most parents. There is a growing evidence base about the positive impacts of arts, creativity and fun on mental well-being for both individuals and communities. SLT offers this experience for young people who may not be receiving this in formal education.

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