

Case Study



Project

Venture Out Cardiff

Organisation

Innovate Trust

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Contact

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About the Organisation

Innovate Trust employed a project co-ordinator to develop and deliver the Mentro Allan programme in Cardiff. There is support available through the Mentro Allan project manager.

Project overview

The core aim of the project is to provide an opportunity for people with disabilities to enjoy physical activity outdoors. It provides a variety of activities from gardening to water sports. These activities run as weekly sessions but some are available on an ad-hoc basis. The project aims to:

- Develop new opportunities for physical activity in local green spaces for people with disabilities in the Cardiff area;
- Increase levels of physical activity among the target group;
- Utilise a range of methods to publicise the projects to the target group and encourage people to participate; and
- Put support structures in place to sustain this activity beyond the lifetime of the funding.

What has it achieved?

The project has engaged with 584 participants in the first two years of operation.

The project has developed a range of activities over the lifetime of the project. These now include Nordic Walking, gardening, conservation projects, environmental groups (including litter picking and taking out invasive plant species), horse riding, sailing, walking, canoeing and indoor climbing. The number of sessions and participants has steadily increased since the start of the project. For example the number of participants on the walking sessions increased from one to three per session to around thirteen.

How did the project get people involved?

The project has successfully established links with other organisations. The project manager works closely with several divisions of Cardiff Council including the Disability Sports Development Officer, the Countryside team, Lifelong Learning and the social work team. Representatives from these organisations have attended the steering group meetings and Social Services have been referring participants to the project.

The project has also worked with the Countryside Council for Wales and the Parks and Cycling Officer and the Rights of Way Improvement team. Through these connections there has been improved access for disabled people in local parks and physical barriers removed from river trails.

Co-ordinating these roles plays an important part in the success of its delivery.

What was innovative and what worked well?

The project provided new opportunities for participants. The sailing activity has encouraged wheel chair users to participate, this has allowed many to take part in a completely new experience.

In order to cater for the needs of service users, the project consulted through a survey involving 200-300 disabled people in the Cardiff area. From this consultation, the project manager tailored a programme of activities which was set up as an initial programme. The project manager states "It's better to provide a menu to choose from rather than a blank canvas".

As a result of the responses gathered through the survey, the project started to train health walk leaders and prepare necessary activities.



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Were there any unexpected outcomes?

The project manager did not expect changes in temperament and behaviour of individuals. This transition was especially noticeable in an individual participating in the sailing activity. The individual's violent and aggressive behaviour changed to being calmer when taking to the water and getting involved with activities.

Another participant became regularly involved in activities after receiving support from a social worker. This helped him to be able to travel to activities himself. Since being involved in the project, the individual has taken part in six activities and is now attending activities three to four times a week.

The future...

The project is now looking closely at sustainability issues. Some of the project activities will continue after the funding has stopped. Pedal Power might be able to continue delivering the activities arranged on Saturdays and Innovate Trust may be able to continue the walking activities. The project charges for the horse riding activity and this may help it to continue beyond the funding period.

Lessons from the project

The Venture Out project in Cardiff has worked successfully with people with disabilities. There are lessons that can be taken from this project and these are listed below.

- Asking participants what they want to do. This ensures that the project develops and delivers activities that people want to take part in.
- Work in partnership with other organisations. Working in partnership with other organisations enables projects to engage with participants through referrals. Other organisations can also provide specialist support to help people participate.
- Look at activities that can run in the winter months. The weather is an obvious barrier to participation. The project has tried to overcome this by introducing Nordic Walking and they ran some indoor basketball and football sessions during the winter.
- Transport training helped participants to access the activities. Two occupational therapists offered transport training to individual participants so they could attend the activities.
- Understand people's needs and issues. The project manager thinks this is vital for activities to succeed. Project co-ordinators need to understand what is important to different groups and what needs to be provided to help them participate.