

Care Co-Ops "Limited Editions"

Evaluation of Limited Editions and its Service User Commissioning Project

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*Limited
Editions*



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1. Introduction

This report feeds back on the evaluation of one of Care Co-ops services . Limited Editionsq . and particularly a one year project that forms part of it, the %SUCP+(Service User Commissioning Project). An independent evaluator interviewed services users and staff; observed Steering Group meetings; and analysed reports and quality assurance material produced by Limited Editions. This evaluation feeds back on the following 4 questions:

WHY was a %service user commissioning project+run?
WHAT did the project do?
WHAT was the experience of running the project like?
WHAT does the project need to do next?

This report evaluates the value of the Limited Editions service and the one year SUCP pilot project. Monitoring information is separate to this evaluation. This has been completed separately for the commissioners (Brighton and Hove City PCT) on target and on time.

2. Background to Limited Editions

Limited Editions is a workshop based service for people who have long term mental health problems in Brighton and Hove. Participants are involved in learning about and producing woodwork pieces and artwork. The stated aim of Limited Editions is: %to provide vocational mental health recovery support for people on the Care Programme Approach (CPA); and to develop pathways towards employment within a social enterprise model of delivery+.

Limited Editions has been run by Care Co-ops since early 2010 . prior to this the workshop was run by another provider for many years. Care Co-ops has a long experience of running many services and projects for and with people with mental health problems and others. This has included therapeutic work, social enterprise in catering and horticulture, employment support, training, housing support and leisure opportunities. The organisation has put in place various service user influenced and controlled services and activities of which this is one.

A pilot project . the SUCP (Service User Commissioning Project) . was put in place for one year and it put aside a sum of money (£9,000) to enable the service user group to decide upon and purchase art or workshop classes or other activities that the service user group wanted.

Limited Editions provides workshop sessions and involvement in the running of the workshop for up to 20 clients over a year period. The practical woodworking, painting, artwork, pottery and metal work facilities at the workshop are excellent.

Workshop users have produced all kinds of objects and pieces as well as priced, marketed and sold goods. Objects include:

- Mirrors; panels, and pieces from found timber
- Screenprints
- Badges
- Greetings cards
- Plaster sculpture
- Metal sculptures and objects

During the course of the SUCP project a public %Gallery Sale+was organised and it produced a flurry of activity. It was a positive experience for all involved preparing for a public event and sale.

3. WHY was a “Service User Commissioning Project” (SUCP) run?

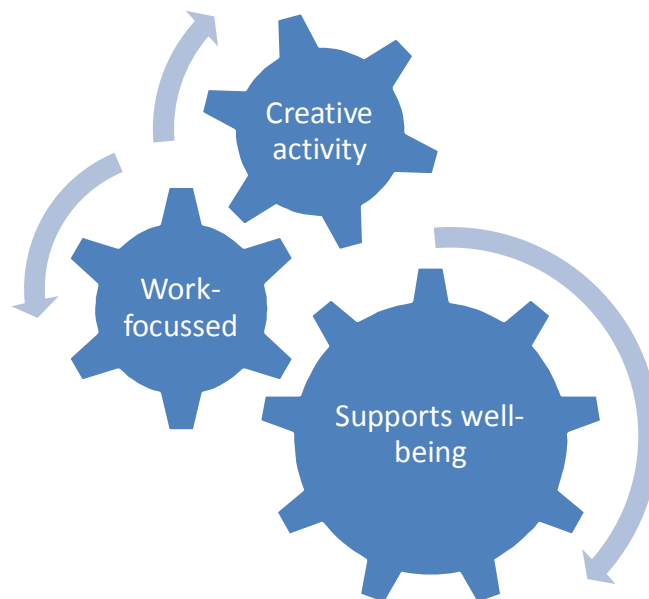
An opportunity arose for Care Co-ops to extend and develop Limited Editions further through this pilot project. The PCT funded the project as part of an ongoing shift in social care services towards better user involvement and the personalisation of social care services. Arts and crafts are being used as a tool to focus on training and learning activity that, in turn, can enhance the progression of well-being and recovery for the people involved.

Self- directed support has proved to be a useful and meaningful strategy for clients in various other Care Cops services. Putting this in place on a group basis brings with it other benefits in terms of learning group skills and benefitting from group endeavour and mutual support.

4. WHAT does the project do?

Within Limited Editions the SUCP does three things. Firstly it helps clients to identify and specify activities that they would like to take part in at Limited Editions. Secondly it provides brokerage with the client group in order that the funding for and purchase of activities can go ahead. Thirdly it provides individual support to clients throughout the process and as part of their involvement in Limited Editions.

The service has three inter-locking functions. Creativity has the opportunity to be enlivened and expressed. The workshop provides a safe, secure and real work-focussed environment. Well-being is being supported and nurtured. Care Co-ops takes a positive approach rather than a deficit approach to working with people.



Practically speaking the SUCP project has successfully:

- Identified interest in additional creative and supportive activities with clients
- Costed and packaged activities
- Completed an extensive consultation and choosing process (using questionnaires, traffic lights voting and meetings)
- Commissioned additional activities, courses and classes (woodworking and stained glass in particular; plus a social event)

5. WHAT was the experience of running the project like?

Evaluation from Service Users:

Overall service users had a very good experience of the project (the SUCP) and of the Limited Editions project as a whole. It is hard to make a distinction between the two. The SUCP, as the commissioning project, is an extension of Limited Editions workshop activities as well as an enhancement of the process of developing user choice, participation and control.

Many services and projects claim to progress and benefit their clientele. Reports back from Limited Editions clients demonstrate that it really does make a difference in the experience, confidence, well-being and progress of its participants. Here are a couple of examples of people's responses:

"This place has a good knock-on effect; I feel happier, so I have better relationships for instance. Also I'm more able to travel and more able to commit to things"

"The concept and following through with the idea of "creative therapy" is and has worked"

The service has regular successes with referring people to further learning and education, voluntary work and paid employment. The case studies further on in the report demonstrate the kind of journey that service users experience.

In a group evaluation session service users were asked about what they thought was good with the service and what kind of difference it makes to them. Here are their responses.

What is special about or good about the service user commissioning project and Limited Editions?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ you get confidence through using machines○ inspiration○ space○ a goal○ SUCP will be very good for client input to improve the service○ its uniqueness○ The level of support and understanding.○ It is proactive in getting you to do things○ it's helped me altered my priorities○ non-competitive,○ The structure and commitment has helped me: I can now cycle here from some distance in the mornings.○ You get up earlier: it gives you a structure in the week.○ It is accepting○ It's special because we're treated with the respect (unusual).○ It's very non-judgemental.○ there are empathetic staff and volunteers○ it's a safe haven where the two days a week I've can forget my problems

- tea or coffee, biccies and chatting
- distractions from problems and feelings
- attacking wood

Service users report very positive differences being made in their lives and in their outlook. In terms of distance travelled- that is the difference between where people feel they are at when they start and where they feel they are at having been involved with Limited Editions - the project is making a real difference.

The collaborative and friendly feel of Limited Editions and the way that people treat each other is as important to service users as the practical production of and learning about art and craft.

"There's a big difference between being consulted and having a vote.....different to how it used to be when the staff just did it all"

What difference has it made, is it making, to you and to others?

- It's helping me recover from my mental illness
- it helps me get well
- It has helped me with loneliness.
- It's good to make old material into new objectsō its cool
- This place has a good knock-on effect; I feel happier, so I had better relationships for instance. Also I'm more able to travel or more able to commit to things
- I feel better when I have made something and when I'm around people.
- Better relationships for instance with men.
- **Very good** for your self-confidence
- you count; your life means something

Evaluation from Observation:

Limited Editions is robust in its management systems. It is goal orientated and works to a set of short-term and annual objectives. Its policies are clear and transparent. Service users rate the support that they get very highly. The carried out a service user satisfaction survey in 2010. It scored highly in terms of clients reporting that participation was beneficial to their mental health and that staff were supportive and approachable.

The team and mutual support feel of the project gives lots of potential for developing the workshop. Examples for development areas includes: marketing goods; new crafts classes; developing peoples work skills and roles such as more Responsible Volunteering; and bringing in more clients.

Limited Editions is value for money for commissioners and it works very successfully with its clientele. It supports people who might otherwise cost social care services large sums in admissions to acute mental health services.

Evaluation from Staff:

Good things about the project:

- It is empowering and lets everybody participate
- It offers choice
- It has a high level of involvement in decisions being made by service users
- Service users can both participate in more brainwork (meetings etc) as well as the therapeutic work of creating art.
- It is genuinely a creative outlet for people.
- It includes fun experiences which are very good for morale, such as the Christmas trip going bowling
- Time and patience:
Action planning and helping people to progress can be a slow process. For instance, a service user with high anxiety may take several months and many small steps to build up the necessary confidence to access their local Community Centre.

General points:

- Sales - the sale in December, galvanised people into action as all the artworks and crafts had to be ready for the exhibition
- There most definitely is some opportunity for developing the sales side with clients and it is another good work-simulation activity. Also therapeutically it feels really good, if somebody buys your work.
- Learning for the future:
It might be better for us to provide more specific lesson plans or at the least clear activity and learning outcomes for participants. We need to be more prescriptive to try and get the best out of people working here.

6. WHAT does the project need to do next?

What needs to be enhanced or changed at Limited Editions?		
Maintain and carry on	Do more of	Do less of
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing the workshop as it is - this needs to be maintained and developed further as it makes a difference and is good value for money - Current workshop activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more days available and more days open* - provide a more flexible time-scale for clients being able to use the workshop; where needed offering a longer total stay+ - Food and cooking; maybe making lunches together (we need somebody else with a food hygiene certificate+) - sales and marketing of artworks with service users involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - extensive questionnaires . keep them simpler or/and deal with some of the choosing business in meetings and through delegation - The the project works well; we don't want less of anything+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it would cost marginally more to extend the hours available for opening either for more clients, for more use by the present client load, or for both. Limited Editions has high fixed costs. Also some time presently used for staff team activities such as action planning and one-to-one support could be re-directed to more opening time availability. 		

7. Conclusion

Having had an independent review of the work quite clearly it is doing a very good job for and with its service users. They are making good progress, enjoying the project, learning and dealing with their lives better. They report benefits directly . being creative, (re)learning work patterns and routines and learning a craft. Also they report indirect benefits on better mental health, confidence, relationships and altering their personal priorities. The service user commissioning element complements the very positive community of Limited Editions and enables it to provide more availability and better opportunities.

This work needs to be invested in and extended further as it has very good outcomes for service users that provide good value for money.

8. CASE STUDIES of two Limited Editions Clients:

Case Study 1: Client A

Client A says that *“he doesn’t feel that he would be where he is today without Limited Editions; it really worked for him”*

Client A was assessed as being at risk of suicide and self-neglect due to a combination of stressful family relationships, debt problems and insecure housing.

He initially attended courses at the Wish Day Hospital (Millview) but after being discharged felt a bit lost and that getting into a routine and having a reason to get up would be a good starting point for him. Client A had a background in carpentry having completed YTS grade 1 and City & Guilds Certificate in Carpentry and Joinery as a teenager.

He had also worked as a self-employed carpenter for 7 years before experiencing mental health problems.

During his first year at Limited Editions, Client A was signposted to the Housing Options service and moved into a new flat in Hove, managed by South Downs Housing. He was also supported by Limited Editions staff to apply for Incapacity Benefit and Disability Living Allowance and given information about options for Permitted Work while in receipt of benefits.

Client A made excellent progress within the wood workshop and was given the opportunity to train as Assistant Supervisor and to train up other service users as a Responsible Volunteer. He appeared to thrive on the responsibility and over the following year began to take on more roles such as leading groups in outreach work in the community, driving the organisation's minibus and offering peer support to other service users.

Client A also attended courses in Building Resilience, Toolkit for Living and First Aid for Mental Health during 2009. He was referred to this training by staff at Limited Editions. He reported that the course on Resilience was very beneficial.

By November 2009, Client A was applying for part-time work under the Permitted Work scheme. Staff at Limited Editions helped him to put together a CV and to set up an email address. He secured a 5-month work placement at Sussex County Cricket ground as a maintenance worker which led to him being offered a further 3-month part-time contract. When this contract ended, he was not offered any further employment due to the cricket ground preferring to employ agency workers for ad-hoc tasks. This was a disappointment to him but he managed to secure temporary work as a landscape gardener over the summer. In October 2010, 6 months after leaving Limited Editions, Client A reports that he is feeling mentally well and physically fit. He has managed to obtain further employment and is currently working on an attic conversion with a team of builders. He says that he is enjoying the physical work, the social aspects and is glad to be utilising his carpentry / joinery skills. He still maintains contact with several other ex-clients from his time at Limited Editions and they form part of a valuable support network for him. Client A states he doesn't feel that he would be where he is today without Limited Editions; it really worked for him.

Case Study 2: Client B

Client B worked so hard that he eventually received the learner of the year award having overcome all kinds of personal challenges and issues - *“several times I felt I couldn’t deal with it and nearly gave up but was determined to make it work and overcame my problems to complete the courses.”*

Client B was referred to Limited Editions in by the Central Access Mental Health Team at Aldrington House. A summary of his mental health problems at the time of his referral stated that he was experiencing symptoms of depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, anxiety, stress and mood swings. Client B had a background in customer service and hospitality but had not worked since experiencing a breakdown in his mental health.

Client B stated on his initial application that he would like to get help and support with his mental health problems and with employment issues. He also expressed a particular interest in learning jewellery making, a long-term ambition of his. He wanted to gain new skills in woodwork and metalwork with a view to furthering his job prospects in this field.

During his first year at Limited Editions, Client B was signposted to City College, where he completed two short courses in custom jewellery and fusion glass. Following on from this he signed up for NCFE Level 1 courses in Jewellery Design and Stained Glass. He also received 1:1 tuition in metalwork from a Responsible Volunteer at Limited Editions with over 7 years experience in working with metals. The Responsible Volunteer has established a good working relationship with client B and has been a great source of support and advice, on both practical and emotional levels.

In March 2010, Client B received the %Adult Learner of the Year+award (awarded by the NIACE . National Institute of Adult Continuing Education), in recognition of his achievements. This was due to his efforts in overcoming his anxiety and other mental health issues and completing the courses successfully. Client B feels that he was nominated because, %several times I felt I couldn’t deal with it and nearly gave up but was determined to make it work and overcame my problems to complete the courses.+

In early 2010, Client B secured a part time work placement with a local fashion and jewellery store where he gained experience of all aspects of retail work. In April of this year he began renting a studio space in order to begin setting up his own jewellery business. He managed to obtain a grant from Working Links towards the cost of equipment. He has also received support and training from Working Links and has been mentored by an established local jeweller. He was signposted by Limited Editions staff to courses about self-employment at Business Link and HMRC.

During the summer, Client B ran a stall at local festivals and events and was successful in achieving sales of his imaginative, handmade jewellery pieces. His next goal is to find a work placement with a professional jeweller in order to gain more experience and to hone his existing skills. Meanwhile, he has reported that he appreciates the support of staff at Limited Editions since he no longer has a CPN to discuss difficult issues with.