

Protocols for the engagement of Participants



General Principles.

- The proposed arts projects will recognise and support the particular needs of people with mental ill health.
- Each project has open access for self referral, and does not necessarily require referral from a GP, Community Psychiatric Nurse or other mental health professional; although a care co-ordinator will need to talk with the participants before the course begins in order to confirm that the course is suitable.
- Arts practitioners and staff are generally not given information regarding an individual's mental health condition by partner agencies, but respond to individuals and their needs as they present themselves.
- Staff of partner organisations (e.g. Primary Care Trust) have a crucial role to play in offering non-learning support, assisting with the completion of any project documentation, and in assisting and supporting people in their learning choices. Initially these projects are not accredited and there is no need for the users to keep a file.

Risk Management. The projects will follow safe working practices and encourage arts practitioners, support staff and users to recognise and report risk elements, and to suggest ways in which these might be managed.

Risk Assessment is carried out as part of the initial assessment of users, in line with general community education practice. This usually relies on users' own self assessments e.g. an arts practitioner on a dance project advising the group regarding risks for people with certain medical conditions. Staff of partner organisations will support users in their awareness and judgment of these risk elements.

On some practical courses with a different risk element (e.g. using VDU screens) learners are asked to complete a self assessment form noting any particular risk factors. This will be retained by the arts practitioner. Where formal risk assessment of users exists, staff of partner agencies will inform arts practitioners of relevant elements on a need-to-know and strictly confidential basis.

Confidentiality. Arts practitioners will be required to abide by the relevant partner agency's code of confidentiality. This will include circumstances under which confidentiality can be broken and how this should be dealt with.

Course Documentation. In line with other community arts courses, users are asked to complete assessment documentation. We do need to know if you have benefited from the project and users will be given help and support to do this.

Financial Support. No fees are charged to users.