



# Share

Go Anywhere, Do Anything

## Year One

April 2014 - March 2015

**We've had an incredibly exciting year here at Share, with the introduction of the City Bridge Trust funded Go Anywhere, Do Anything project. People with learning disabilities have been leading more independent and fulfilled lives.**

Since the project launch, 47 people with learning disabilities have been going anywhere, and doing anything. 198 places have been available and we have been out and about in London on 31 different occasions. We've enjoyed an array of activities from West End theatre, the Science Museum and Art exhibitions, to Kew Gardens and Hampton Court. We've been keeping active by going bowling regularly, ice-skating at Winter Wonderland and going dancing on the Southbank. We've enjoyed going to see live music, sightseeing in Greenwich and having dinner with friends. We've kept our vocal cords warm at sing-along events, and watched acrobats fly around in an upside down cow - we've really done it all! All of this has been possible with the support of the City Bridge Trust funding. Thank you!



Go Anywhere, Do Anything is a user led project that seeks to provide opportunities for adults with learning disabilities to access sports, leisure and arts in London. The project is supported by volunteers and two part time members of staff, Jenny and Leanne. All of our activities take place in the evenings, and at weekends meaning that people with learning disabilities are enjoying social activities at the same time as everyone else. We don't put constraints on getting home at a certain time; we like to stay out as late as people want to. We encourage independence through supporting people to navigate the transport system and find their way around on their own. We continually collect feedback from our members – before, during and after events, as well as during the

steering group meetings and through ad-hoc conversations with people. We've also had lots of feedback during the surveys we have been conducting this month.

Everyone that has accessed the project so far has had very positive things to say, here are some quotes from our members:

- "I like having a chance to go out more often, my confidence has grown and I don't feel scared anymore"
- "I have made new friends"
- "It's nice to be able to talk to new people"
- "It's fun, way better than being bored at home"
- "I get to spend more time with my friends, I have a lot of fun and laugh more"
- "I have got better at finding my way around London"
- "I feel happier – I get to go to fun places and talk to lovely people"
- "Go Anywhere, Do Anything gives me something to look forward to"
- "I'm really glad I've discovered the project as it means I can get out more."
- "I enjoyed seeing all the different plants at Kew Gardens, it was nice to walk around and see new things."
- "The social buddies were really nice and they made me happy."
- "I liked going to the Southbank, there were new and interesting people there."

Anyone with a learning disability is encouraged to sign up to come out, and Jenny, our Project Development Officer, works closely with family and care staff to make it happen. On the whole, people have been very positive about the concept of Go Anywhere, Do anything and have embraced and supported the person they support having more independence and freedom.



We have experienced some resistance from families who are fearful or worried about the person they support being out and about. With time we have managed to build trust and form relationships with members and their carers. This has led to several people having more independent experiences in the community. We have been committed to offering the project to everyone who registers an interest; however there are still one or two people who have not yet joined us on a trip despite being very keen to. We will continue to offer these people self-advocacy support, to ensure that their wishes and preferences are acknowledged. Where appropriate we have worked with partners in health and social care services to effectively meet people's needs.

We have received some encouraging feedback from carers through the Share Community annual carers' survey. When asked if there had been any positive changes in the person supported over the past year, one carer wrote:

" [The] positive change has been the new introduction of GADA, be able to access places of interest/things the person might like to do with friends they have already made but would not normally see outside Share."



The project has created a real buzz around Share, and has encouraged people to have a louder voice and tell us what they want to do and when they want to do it. We've built a steering group of members, who meet regularly and have 1-1 meetings with Jenny, to plan the schedule. The steering group is an open group; all members who would like to share their thoughts and ideas are welcomed. To date 16 members have attended one or more of the 19 steering group meetings held in this first year. A regular 'core group' has emerged of 6 members who most frequently attend. They are developing fantastic communication skills, and finding strategies to engage the whole community in the debate about where we go and what we do. They have undertaken surveys and are using Talking Mats (a communication tool) to structure their meetings and ensure that everyone can participate. Meetings are now being organised and chaired by Daniel, who has emerged as a natural leader.

Here are some of our steering group members hard at work –

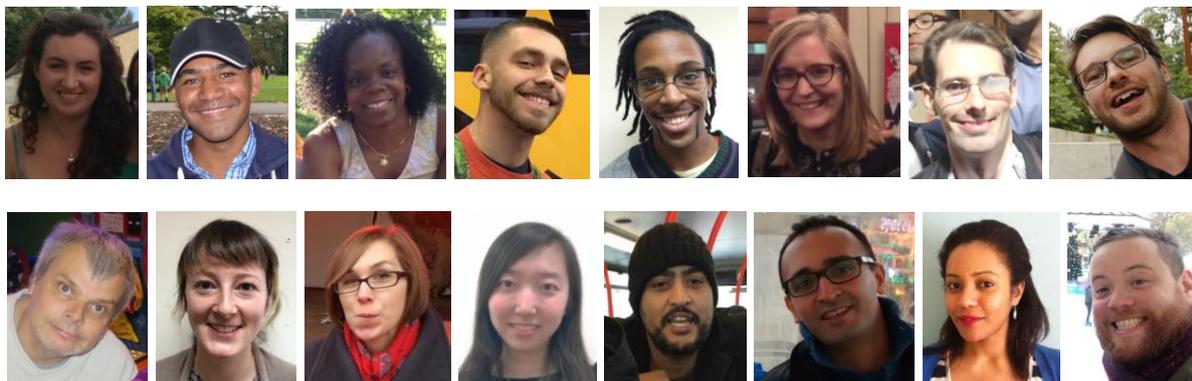


You'll find out more about Daniel, a very active member of our steering group, a bit later on in his case study.

Go Anywhere. Do Anything wouldn't be possible without our 16 excellent volunteers, who we call 'Social Buddies'. Our volunteers have a range of different backgrounds and stories. Some of our volunteers work full time in the city and want to volunteer to experience new things and meet new people. Some of our volunteers

are studying nursing and want to spend some time getting to know more people with learning disabilities. Some are looking to develop their own skills and experience new things. The one thing that all of our volunteers have in common, is that they want to spend time with our members and support them to have a great time. Our social buddies have committed over 400 volunteer hours to make this project a success.

### Here are our social buddies –



All of our volunteers have been background checked and passed an interview. Members of the steering group have been involved in selecting and training Social Buddies from the very beginning. This is one measure we have developed to ensure that the project is user led. All Social Buddies have attended a half day induction, and have received training in supporting people with a learning disability and/or autism, safeguarding and equal opportunities. 7 of our volunteers have also been trained in first aid, whilst 4 are trainee or trained nurses. Our volunteers have access to a volunteer handbook which details all of the policies they need to know about. They understand what we expect of them as volunteers and what they can expect from us. Leanne, our HR and Projects Officer, has worked closely with them to support their journey into the project. We regularly ask for feedback after trips and complete reviews periodically to see how people are finding their experience. When asked to rate how much they agree with the following statements - 'I am enjoying being a social buddy' and 'I have enjoyed the activities/events that I have participated in so far' - 16% agreed and 84% strongly agreed.



We collect feedback from our volunteers regularly – before, during and after events. We get in touch with people to ask how they found it and what we could have done differently. We collected feedback after induction, and we also receive it during their volunteer reviews. Here is what they've have had to say so far:

- “The best part of these events is getting to know the members and it’s always nice to see some of the same faces at each event.”
- “I can see this project really growing with many more volunteers and perhaps more members signing on. I hope it will continue to encourage new friendships and support networks.”

- “It was a real pleasure to spend the day with such nice people, in such a lovely place.”
- “This whole project can be so empowering and potentially life changing for people.”
- “I hope the members are enjoying this programme because I definitely love being able to assist and help out, and I’ve found that I come home feeling really happy with a renewed appreciation for life in general.”
- “Go Anywhere, Do Anything is a fantastic initiative which I’m so happy to be a part of”
- “I believe overall the project seems to be running very well and is led in a great way by passionate staff always willing to answer any questions”

Now that our volunteers have built up good relationships with our members, we will begin to think about ‘pairing people’ together so that they can enjoy shared interests in a more natural way, without a member of Share staff being present. We take safeguarding very seriously and will ensure we put plans in place to make sure everyone is safe and happy. Our first volunteer led event will be taking place at the end of March when Fynn, Andrew, Maitre and Gail will be exploring the British Museum together.

## Our Environmental Policy

We try to be as environmentally friendly as possible within Go Anywhere, Do Anything. We travel using public transport and very rarely travel by taxi, only if absolutely essential. Most of our documentation and paperwork is paperless; we try not to print unnecessarily. If we do print, we will print double sided and recycle paper, waste and cartridges where possible. We try to conserve energy by ensuring that our computers are turned off when they are not in use, and are put to ‘sleep’ mode when they haven’t been used for a while. We use as much natural light as possible, and we do not use air conditioning.

## Monitoring Framework

Activities and outputs	Year 1 targets	How have we done?
1. Co-ordination and facilitation of a user-led "Go anywhere, do anything" working group. First step is to recruit the development worker, with user involvement from the start. The working group will meet every week. There will be 20 meetings in the first year (allowing for set-up, breaks and holidays)	Recruitment of project worker  Set-up of working group of people with learning disabilities  20 meetings of working group  Meetings lead to user-led activity schedule	Jenny Ash recruited as the Project Development Officer  Working group/Steering group set up. 16 members have attended, with a core group of 6 regular attendees. Meetings are organised and chaired by student member.  20 meetings have taken place.  User led activity schedule produced bi-monthly.
2. Recruitment, development and matching of 20 volunteers to user groups and individuals. Volunteers to be DBS screened and references taken; activity with potential project users is part of the interviewing process; training includes making activities	10 volunteers recruited          10 volunteers trained in learning	16 volunteers recruited. References and DBS taken. All attended interview with potential project users. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 attended induction in June</li> <li>• 5 attended induction in August</li> <li>• 4 attended induction in November</li> </ul> All volunteers training in learning disability

accessible, introduction to self-advocacy, and supporting people with autism.	disability and autism awareness	and autism awareness. Training focuses on providing person centred and empowering support for people with disabilities.
3. 20 people with learning disabilities take part in 20 outings related to arts, sports and leisure to run over the course of the first year. 35 to be run in year 2 with 30 participants. 45 to be run in year 3 with 40 participants.	20 arts, sports or leisure activities take place  20 people with learning disabilities report enjoying greater access to arts, sports, and leisure	31 arts, sports or leisure activities have taken place.  20 people with learning disabilities who have attended regularly have been surveyed, and 100% report enjoying greater access.
4. Individuals and volunteers are matched for shared interests, and as a result, 20 individuals in the first year, 25 in second year, and 35 in third year, take part in community arts and sports events, accompanied by a volunteer with the same interest.	20 individuals paired with volunteers for shared activities  20 individuals enjoy at least 4 events each	47 individuals supported by volunteers for shared activities  23 individuals have enjoyed at least 4 events each.
<b>Difference made – outcome</b>	<b>Year 1 target</b>	<b>How have we done?</b>
1. People with learning difficulties are more confident in accessing mainstream arts, sports and leisure events. They're able to manage social situations, navigate the transport system, and take part on an equal basis.	20 people report feeling more confident in accessing arts, sports and leisure events after 6 months of the project.	20 people report feeling more confident in accessing arts, sports and leisure events after 8 months of the project.
2. People with learning difficulties lead normal lives, enjoying social activities at the same times and venues as everyone else, and with the lack of constraints such as getting home early.	Parents/carers/staff in supported houses adapt to ensure participants can fully enjoy and participate in their chosen activity.  20 people are staying out as late as they want to at night  20 people enjoy weekend and “out of hours” activities	Most parents/carers/staff in supported houses adapt to ensure participants can fully enjoy and participate in their chosen activity. Still some work to be done here.  16 people are staying out as late as they want to at night (4 of the people we surveyed would like to stay out later).  47 people have enjoy weekend and “out of hours” activities
3. People with learning difficulties report feeling fitter and happier as a result of their	20 people identify personal health and wellbeing goals	19 people have identified health and wellbeing goals.

<p>activities on the project. Where appropriate, people's health can be demonstrated to have improved - eg those seeking to lose weight through exercise; people experiencing depression.</p>	<p>By end of first year, at least 15 people reporting improvements in 2 or more aspects of life</p>	<p>20 people have reported improvements in 2 or more aspects of life. Improvements include feeling happier, safer, more independent and less lonely.</p>
<p>4. People with learning difficulties are able to follow and develop their interests through buddy relationships with others who share their interest. As a result, they feel valued and benefit from companionship.</p>	<p>20 people report feeling happy about being paired with a buddy who shares their interest</p> <p>15 people demonstrate improved confidence and self esteem</p>	<p>Anecdotal evidence (gathered through feedback conversations and observation) suggests that members enjoy the company and support of Social Buddies.</p> <p>20 people report improved confidence, especially with regard to accessing the community. That's 100% of people we surveyed.</p>
<p>5. The learning from this project will help other projects around the country and result in more people with learning disabilities leading independent and inclusive lives.</p>	<p>Ongoing articles in video and print to promote project and disseminate good practice</p> <p>Members of the working group visit community groups to encourage more people to sign up</p>	<p>Articles in print have been used to promote project to the community. We will be working on a video over the next few months.</p> <p>We haven't yet visited external community groups as we have been inundated with demand from people already known to Share. The steering group are exploring effective ways of engaging with Share's diverse community, such as using surveys, easy read information and talking mats.</p>

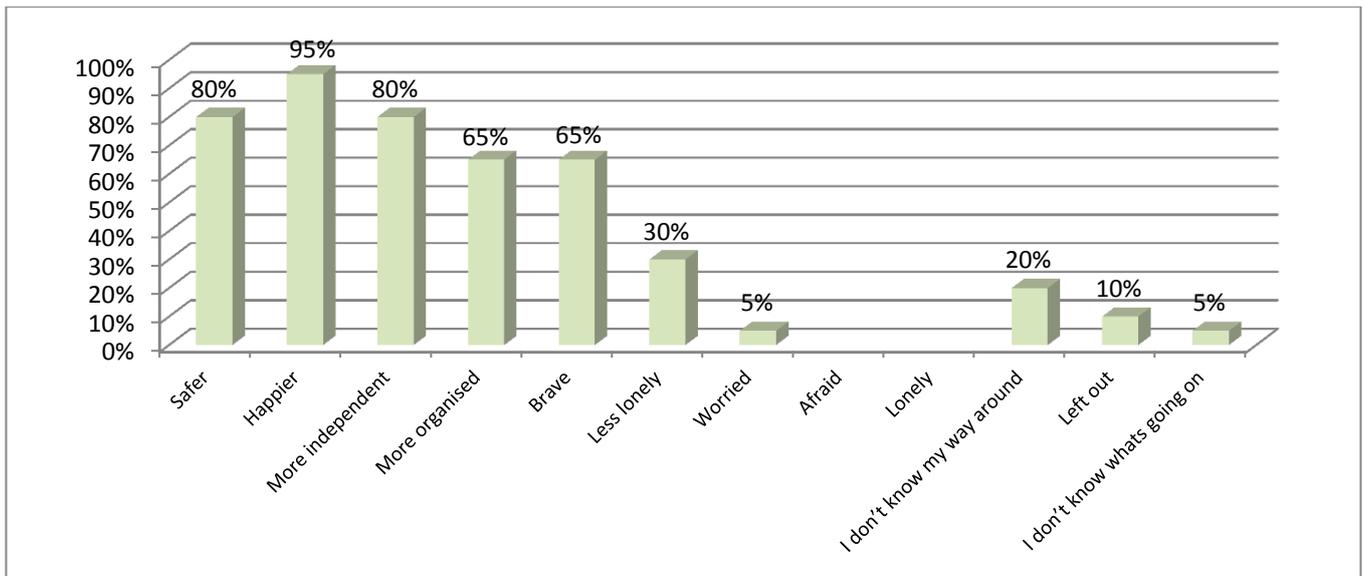
## Outcomes

We continuously collect feedback about how the project, what is good about it and what could be better. We gather action points from steering group meetings on things we should get better at, and we are proactive about continuous improvement. This month we have met with our 20 most active members and asked them a series of questions about their time with the project so far.

### **You have been to lots of trips with 'Go Anywhere, Do Anything'.... Do you now feel more confident about going to places and events in the city?**

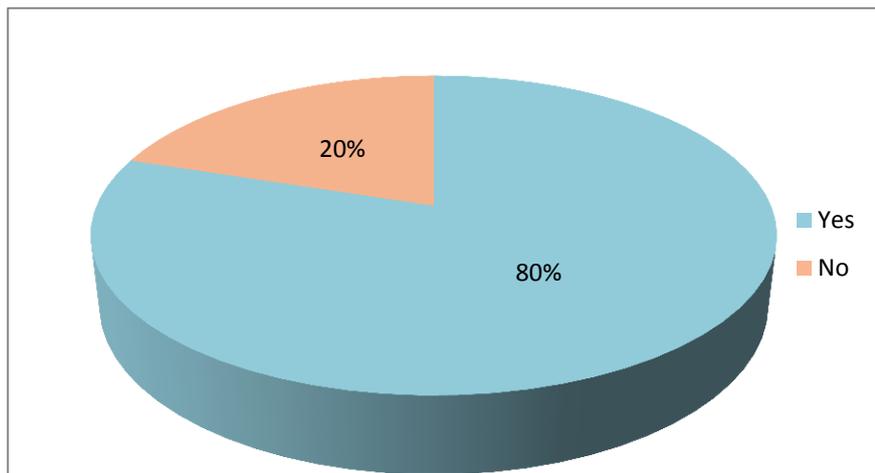
100% of members said **Yes**. When asked how 'Go Anywhere, Do Anything' makes them feel, the responses were very positive. 95% of people felt happier, whilst 80% felt safer and more independent. 20% of people felt they didn't know their way around and some left out or unsure of what was going on.





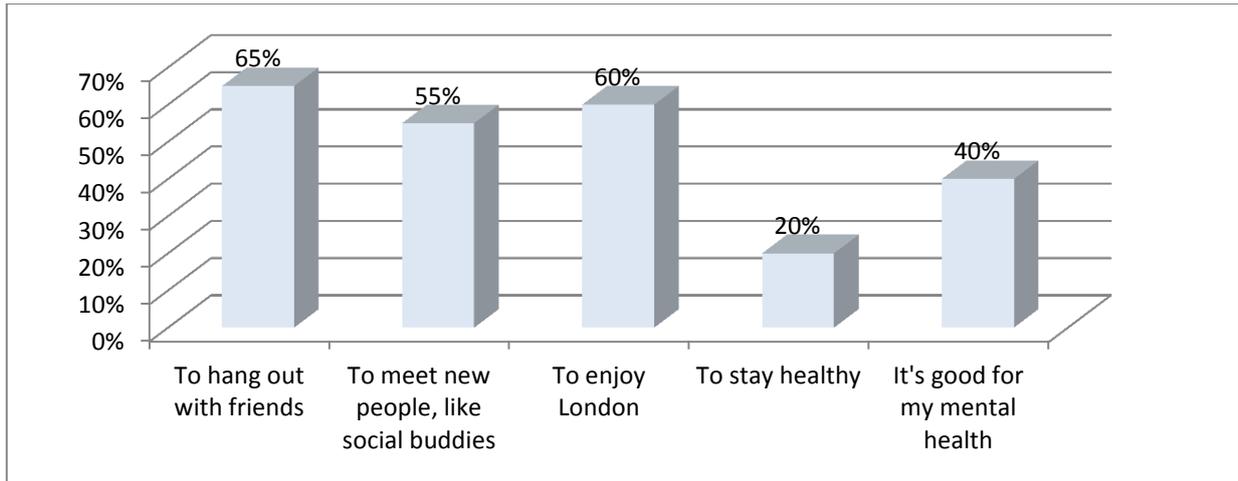
**Sometimes we go out in the evening. Do we stay out late enough?**

80% of members surveyed felt that we stayed out late enough; however 20% would like to stay out later. We'll talk to the steering group about running some more late night activities this year, and will specifically ask those who want to stay out later what they'd like to do.



**Can you tell us why you choose to come out with 'Go Anywhere, Do Anything'?**

When members were asked why they engage with Go Anywhere, Do Anything, the most popular responses was to hang out with friends, enjoy London and to meet new people.

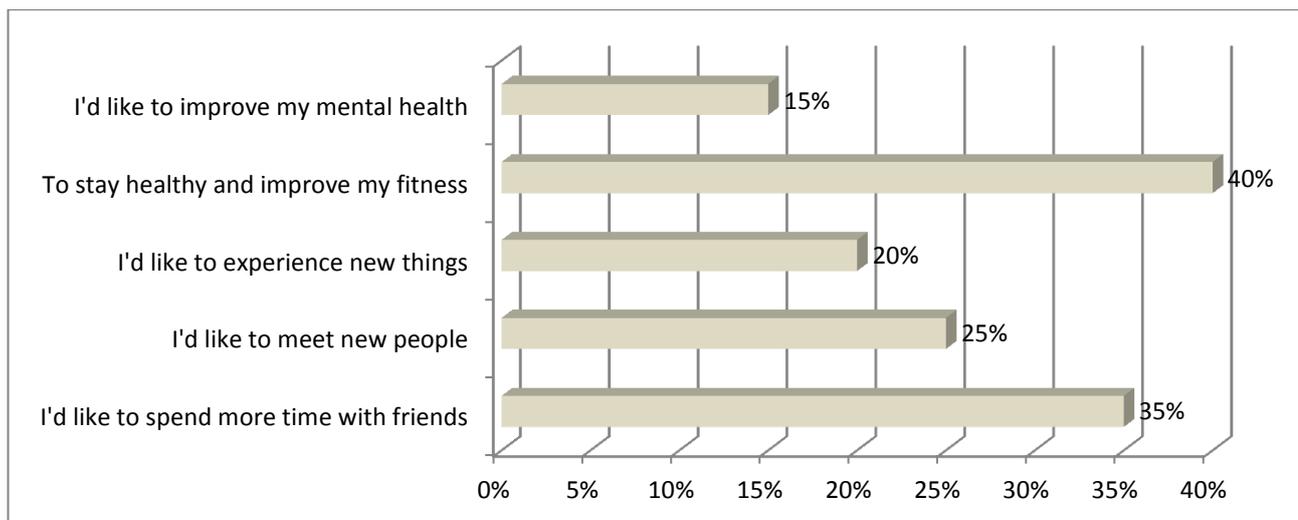


**Some other comments included:**

- It's fun
- I feel less lonely
- I get bored at home
- To do more things I've never done
- It's fun, better than being bored at home
- To have fun
- To be more independent
- To feel safer with other people
- It's lots of fun and gives me something to do
- I like to help other people on the trips
- It brings me out the house more
- It's nice to be able to talk to people
- To have fun

**Would you like to set a health and wellbeing goal?**

19 of the 20 people surveyed were keen to set a health and wellbeing goal. Goals ranged from improving health, to being happier and spending more time with friends. We will encourage more of our members to set health and wellbeing goals, and ensure that we support people over the coming year to achieve them.



**Some other health and wellbeing goals included:**

- I'd like to visit areas that I don't already know
- I would like to build my confidence in getting places so I can do it on my own
- I would like to find a job
- I would like to go and play football
- I would like to get a boyfriend
- I want to help people who have less confidence than me to go out
- I want to join a gym
- I want to eat healthier
- I would like to feel happier
- More exercise

## **Do you think being a member of the Go Anywhere Do Anything project makes your life better?**

100% of members surveyed said that 'Go Anywhere, Do Anything' had made their life better. We asked them to tell us why, and this is what they had to say:

- Interacting with others, improved friendships
- Navigating my way around, following signs and learning to read them
- I explore places more - I want to see more and experience new things
- I've got to know more people
- I like being with my friends
- I feel happier
- I like to go to London
- I like going out with my friends
- It is important to make new friends
- I like going being with my friends
- I like having the chance to go out more often
- I've got more confidence and don't feel as scared
- I get to spend more time with friends
- I have more fun and laugh more
- I get to socialise with more people
- I get new ideas of things I can do by myself
- I am learning how to travel and not get lost
- More comfortable with other people
- My mental health has got better
- It gives me something to look forward to
- I've enjoyed communicating with other people on trips
- I feel happier - I get to go somewhere fun and talk to lovely people at the same time
- I get to meet new people
- By shaking hands with people and talking to them
- I feel happier
- I have enjoyed meeting people
- I have made new friends
- I met Holly (social buddy)
- I go out more
- I am more active
- I get to meet new people

- I enjoy meeting social buddies
- I am more confident
- I can use the computer
- It's good to go out
- I enjoy going to museums
- I have a good time
- I just liked it
- Doing well
- I am healthier - walking is good exercise

## Case Studies

### Daniel

Daniel has been a student at Share Community for 3 years, and has been involved with Go Anywhere, Do Anything from day one. Jenny and Daniel had organised a trip to the theatre for Share students back in 2013, so it was only natural to seek his advice and support when setting up this new venture.

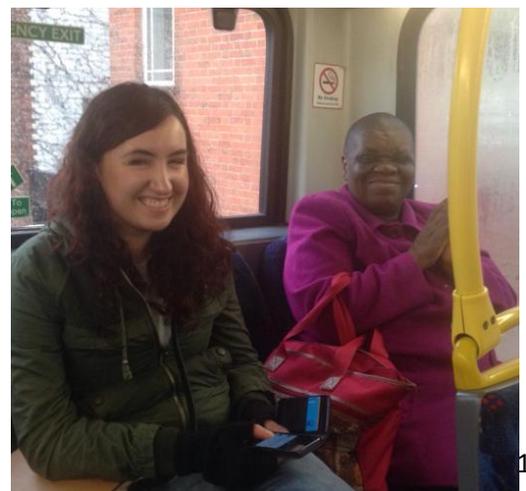
Daniel is also a student rep with Share's self advocacy group 'Student Voice', and he's passionate about making sure that the voice of the community is heard and acted upon. Daniel has been championing the steering group from the beginning. He says:

**"The steering group is important. It lets people have a say, rather than having words put in their mouth."**

Daniel has been involved with interviewing volunteers and delivering training during the volunteer induction. Daniel has also taken a lead role in organising the steering group meetings; he chooses the venues, makes posters, rallies the members, and now chairs the meetings. Daniel has learnt how to use a 'talking mat' to structure the meetings so that everyone gets to voice their opinion. Daniel is a natural diplomat; he has an enviable ability to keep a lively debate focused and friendly. He reminds us all to have empathy, and to think of our own choices but also the needs of the community as a whole. We think that being involved with the steering group has given Daniel a platform to showcase his valuable talents, and it has been a pleasure to watch his confidence grow over the past year.

### Holly and Joyce

Holly and Joyce met around 8 months ago when they both became involved in Go Anywhere, Do Anything. Holly has been one of our busiest social buddies and has supported 10 trips. Joyce has been one of our most sociable members and has been out with the project 16 times. Joyce and Holly share some of the same interests, including music, clubbing, cinema and museums, so they regularly see each other at events. Holly recently moved to London from New Zealand, and has always wanted to help people with disabilities. One of Holly's highlights so far has been the friendship that she built with Joyce; they live a short walk from one another so regularly go home



together. At first Joyce was quite reserved and a little shy towards Holly, however over time they've really bonded and now enjoy meeting up for a coffee and look around the shops at the weekend.

When we asked Joyce if 'Go Anywhere Do Anything had made her life better and if yes, why?' Joyce responded by saying 'Yes, because I got to meet Holly'.

## What have we learnt?

We like to think that Go Anywhere, Do Anything has revolutionised the way we work and engage with the people we support. As a user led project there is a drive to be flexible, reactive and committed to partnership working with our stakeholders. Also, this is a project which seeks to develop and embed itself into local community networks, through volunteer matching. We think this is a great model of providing services as it is sustainable, cost effective and responsive to the changing needs of the community.



In the first year of the project we have learnt a lot about developing a user-led project for people with learning disabilities. Initially we were faced with a challenge about how to involve our members, by matching their skills to the tasks involved in setting up the project. This was tricky in the early stages of the project, as it wasn't clear how the trips, volunteers and members would be organised. As the project progressed the function of the steering group has been established, and this group is beginning to be self sufficient and provide regular effective feedback that shapes what we do. We think we learnt some important lessons about running user-led initiatives for this client group, some ideas about things that could benefit similar schemes are:

- Employing someone with a learning disability to work on the project
- Enabling service-users to contribute to the monitoring guidelines in order to reflect the outcomes that they value
- Training service users so that they can deliver induction to volunteers and new staff

In the first year of this project we have had particular success in recruiting volunteers and creating a sense of community amongst our social buddies. We think this is a key strength of the Go Anywhere, Do Anything project, and Share Community more generally. Share has a long history of supporting volunteers in Wandsworth. We think we have learnt some valuable lessons about facilitating community volunteering that could be shared with other organisations:

- Use your local Volunteer Centre- we accessed helpful training, advice and support that positively influenced our practice.
- Marketing your volunteer opportunities to the right people is really important, 30% of our volunteers were recruited from online sources. Also, consider where your community assets are – we approached a local school of nursing to recruit skilled volunteers. Writing a good volunteer role description is also important, think about the tone you set from the beginning.
- Take time to recognise what motivates individual volunteers, and support them to achieve their goals whilst helping others.

- We have found that offering volunteering opportunities outside of office hours has been most successful. We've also set an achievable minimum volunteer contribution of 4 hours a month, with a commitment of at least a year.
- It's important to give regular, quality feedback to ensure people feel valued and supported.
- Providing relevant training to volunteers has meant that we can expand our project, and grow our skills mix to match the needs of those we support. Every month we see our volunteers develop their confidence.



We also feel that we have learnt valuable lessons about how people with learning disabilities in our community want to access arts, sports and leisure across London and locally in Wandsworth. Whilst we acknowledge that we support individuals with personal preferences and ideas, we have noticed some important trends:

- There is a high demand from people with learning disabilities wanting to explore London and socialise. We are oversubscribed on 32% of trips. On 5 occasions we have had to duplicate a trip to accommodate the number of people who wish to join in with the project. Anecdotally, Jenny the project officer has regular conversations with members and non members about their ambitions to go to a wide range of places across London. We think that there is a demand for more services like Go Anywhere, Do Anything in our community.
- We have found that the majority of venues and organisations we have visited have had an excellent attitude towards inclusivity. Furthermore we have received lots of support in the form of carer and disability discounts on entrance fees. This has really benefited our community, many of whom are on a low income.
- Many people with learning disabilities have different experiences of living in the community, than those of their non-disabled peers. Many learning disabled adults live with their parents, and rely on others for support to travel and make arrangements to socialise. The majority of people we support do not use, or even own, a mobile phone and do not have a Facebook (or similar social media) account. The way that people maintain friendships and make plans to socialise in the community does not reflect recent changes in the social use of technology, and is largely organised face to face and with the support of carers, support staff and family members. Few people have a social support network that they are able to contact without the support of another person.
- There has been a drive for people with learning disabilities to have equality of choice and independence with regard to how they live their lives. Whilst we have come across many excellent examples of people living fulfilling and autonomous lives in the community, we have worked with people who have had their choices and freedoms restricted. We have found that the reasons for this were often very complex. We think that Go Anywhere, Do Anything has a valuable role to play in changing peoples' attitudes towards the way people with learning and in offering opportunities for people to exercise meaningful choice.



## Closing thoughts

We cannot thank the City Bridge Trust enough for recognising the voice of people with learning disabilities who asked for improved access to London's cultural opportunities by investing in the Go Anywhere, Do Anything project. We have had an enormous amount of fun in this first year. It has been a true pleasure to nurture new friendships and watch our volunteers and members grow in confidence. The feedback we have received has been hugely encouraging, and gives us a fantastic base from which to develop the project and improve our service.

We are greatly looking forward to the year ahead. If you would like to follow our adventures over the coming months, you can do so via our online communications:

At our website: <http://bit.ly/Im6mnPu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ShareCommunity>