

Follow up report from:
**Tyne & Wear Archives &
Museums (TWAM) Partners’
Together Day Thursday 14th
February 2013**

“It is always beneficial, inspiring, and exciting to work together with TWAM. They bring such fresh ideas and tangible objects to encourage clients to look forward to and participate in our reminiscence programmes. We have many participants who have physical and cognitive disabilities, and it is always a joy to observe their ability to be involved in using objects from museums that they would once have been able to independently access within the museum environment, but are no longer able to.

Occupational Therapist, NHS North Tyneside, Housing 21

Summary

Empowerment, gaining confidence, achievement, improved engagement, greater investment, enhanced interaction, building friendships, and the development of trust; these are some of the ways service providers, service users, senior staff and commissioners used when describing the elements of partnership working between Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums and community organisations they wanted to celebrate.

The Partners Together Day set out to explore the reasons why our community partners continue to want to collaborate with us and to imagine how we can continue to work together in the future which would help develop the Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums community engagement programme.

Service users talked of the great choice of engaging, creative experiences, of unlimited inspiration from the collections, and feeling their time spent on activity programmes was purposeful and meaningful. Service providers explained how we link with their world by sharing resources, skills and values between social care, health and justice professionals. With commissioners and senior staff describing how they saw the future having a community integration focus, measuring impact and creating learning pathways with strong heritage and cultural themes.

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums value the community partners who have spent their time, unlimited energy and limited resources on creating a vibrant exciting engagement programme. We continue to strive to meet the needs of local people in conjunction with our community partners and we think this report reflects the shared commitment to continue the development of our partnership working.

Overview of the day

The TWAM Outreach programme has seen the development and strengthening of its relationships with community organisations and service providers during the past two years.

We wanted to celebrate, reflect and debate the future of the outreach programme with our community partners. Service users and providers, senior staff and commissioners attended and contributed to the Partners Together Day

The all day event was held at Great North Museum on Thursday 14th February 2013.

Our master of ceremonies was **Jan Thompson Public Health Specialist,**

We were welcomed by **Iain Watson, Director,** and **Zoë Brown, Outreach Officer - Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums**

Our sessions were facilitated by **Lucy Cooke, Volunteer Programmes Co-ordinator - Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums**

After the event a **special planetarium visit** was enjoyed by all.

We encouraged each partner organisation to showcase the partnership work we have delivered together. During the day we heard from 10 organisations presenting on specific projects they had been engaged in with TWAM. Presentations were given by delivery staff, service users and managers.

During each presentation partner organisations considered the following:

- Outline of the projects
- What the projects' aims were?
- What the benefits were for staff (both TWAM and partner organisation) and clients/service users? (you may want to include a reflection on the exchange of staff placements we had at each others work venues).
- What needs to be considered when working on a similar project in the future?

Throughout the day all the delegates worked through a series of 'task questions' with the aim of exploring key aspects of all our partnership work; but from different view points whether a service user, provider, commissioner or senior manager. This model was used to give us the fullest understanding of what each organisation's needs are and how TWAM can respond to them in the most meaningful way.

Key information we found out

What binds us together as partners



For Task question 1 we asked you.....

What do you think is worth celebrating?

Having seen some presentations and from their own personal experience of working with us, respondents were tasked with selecting 5 words that best describe the most important points from their conversation. Clear themes appeared which related to the partnership.

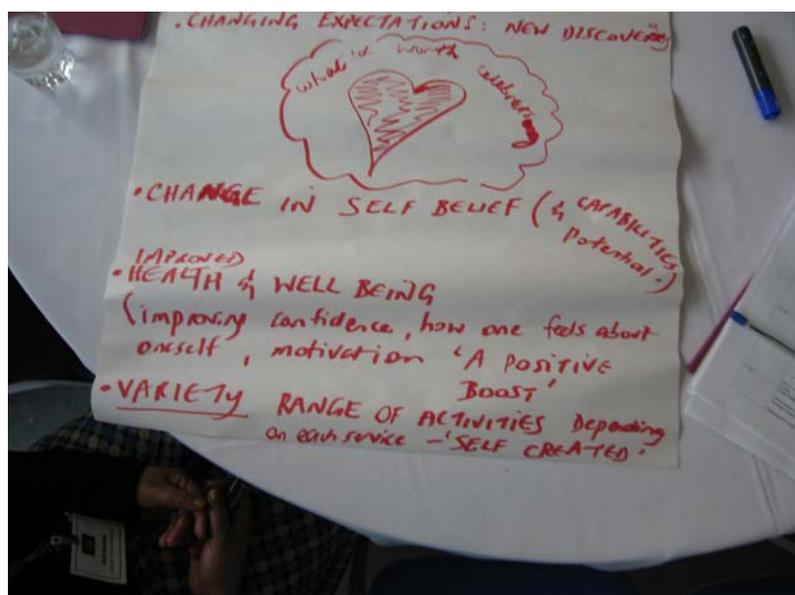
You said.....

The *individual* – with an emphasis on *empowerment*, *gaining confidence*, *developing self belief* and *personal goals*

There was an emphasis also on *achievement* - *learning* something new, *new skills*, *new experiences*, *increased creativity*

Partnership* was the theme of the day – it is about *working together* – improved *engagement*, and greater *investment*, build on being *inclusive*, it is also about *trust* and that is *challenging

This goes hand in hand with developing *relationships* – enhanced *interaction*, building *friendships*, and the development of *trust*, being part of something bigger than self, e.g. *society/community*, the development of *citizenship*



For Task question 2 we asked you.....

What shapes your decision to engage with culture and heritage organisations like TWAM?

Delegates were split up into 3 groups:

- 1 Service users/service members
- 2 Service providers – delivery/front line staff
- 3 Commissioners and senior staff

You said.....

Service users/service members

Service users saw the value in developing purpose and structure into their lives - of developing a routine.

Working with museums offered them greater choice in activities, the opportunity for new experiences, trying the unknown - choices which are about the development of creativity and inspiration and developing a positive outlook on ones own life and in a new motivation to engage.

“I didn’t know what I could make. I was surprised at how well I managed to do in creative writing.”
Member of the women’s group, Northumbria probation Trust

It is about opportunities to be with and interact with others and the sense of enjoyment that brings, about shared experiences, of co-operation and the development of a team spirit and new friendships where one is encouraged to keep going whilst being respected as one does.

“I felt proud to learn to use a mac book and make a film and have my story in the exhibition. I never thought that that would happen.”

Young person, Stonham (Tyneside Foyer Home group) Newcastle

Service providers – delivery/front line staff

There was a recognition that we are working within an environment which challenges the resources we have. There is an increasing need to look at opportunities to develop sustainability and share resources held by others. Those resources can be in knowledge and expertise, common experiences, or both, whilst having a strong presence within a community.

There was a recognition of the benefits of organisations working together to attain better outcomes for their service users and for themselves. Therefore it makes sense to work with another organisation which shares ones values, in which a strong, trusted relationship has built up over a number of years, and has a reputation for delivering the right response.

Working together can break down the barriers to accessing culture - of developing an interactive experience for people who have not associated working with or being in museums in the past. This can be achieved through linking things up - through visiting venues and meeting staff, of developing something new and innovative, e.g. diversity of learning opportunities.

It is also about service users - it is about the development of partnerships which share a vision - of harnessing the energy of service users, of giving them opportunities to progress, through offering opportunities for volunteering, bringing in friends/others with similar issues.

Commissioners and senior staff

Those with a more strategic hat on are working within a national push of moving people away from being in treatment and a public health push on issues such as substance abuse.

They are looking to see the development of new lifestyles; an integration back into the community for service users.

Therefore they are looking for partners who can develop opportunities which stimulate minds. This can be in the development of new skills, trying things out, lifelong learning opportunities; which will lead to clearly defined and agreed outcomes around moving people on, and reconnecting with the wider community.

They are looking for the development of bespoke programmes by people who are professional, with a track record of delivering successful programmes.

Therefore there is a clear emphasis upon the quality of the delivery as well as a need to make the best use of resources. Programmes have to be designed which are tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of service users.

Activities must be outcomes based with a strong evidence base on their impact, to meet the requirements of commissioners.

“some of the social & citizenship skills learnt by young people was a stepping stone to them to move on to college and apprenticeship.”
Training Officer, Stonham (Tyneside Foyer Home group) Newcastle

For Task question 3 we asked you to.....

Imagine the possibilities

Which particular ways of working interest you?

What is possible?

What might be possible if certain things are put in place?

To answer these questions delegates were split up into 3 groups:

- 1 Service users/service members
- 2 Service providers – delivery/front line staff
- 3 Commissioners and senior staff

You said.....

Service users/service members

Service users were highly activity focused in their thinking. They requested activities which stimulated their interest; part of which could be stimulated by museum based activity, such as natural history or heritage, drama or music, multi-media working.

They were interested in the development of positive pathways, such as volunteers working with organisations and service users volunteering themselves - looking to develop further work-based experiences.

Service providers – delivery/front line staff

Service providers requested staff development opportunities, e.g. staff development days facilitated within and by TWAM, or to explore the idea of job swaps. There was a clear emphasis upon seeking ways to share good practice.

They requested practical things to see and to do for service users which are person centred, and motivate the service user to engage allowing an individual to take the next step, e.g. guided tours, outdoor activities, exploring local communities. Therefore it was about developing an offer together - to add value to each other's offer.

Service providers saw the importance and benefit of using museum spaces - large spaces have the potential to be used for different purposes whilst being a "neutral" and safe space which is inclusive and absent of stigma.

In addition museums can also offer access to culture and heritage within a community setting, through hosting events in the community.

Commissioners and senior staff

Commissioners and senior staff created a large list of activities they were interested in pursuing: collection of oral histories, meaningful activities for people in residential settings, including: working with dementia sufferers to help communication between sufferers and carers. They wanted pathways developed which incorporated art and cultural activity. They wanted services that are community led rather than service led. They wanted projects developed which engage clients.

They required clearly thought through outcomes of getting people to help themselves and move beyond dependency. They wanted to engage with those at risk of isolation; to make people feeling valued. They wanted activities which developed skills which get them into employment, networks, groups etc. with a clear focus on the development of employability skills.

They identified what they saw as possible in the short term. This included looking for opportunities to champion the relationship that has been built up - where possible work to give museums a positive press as being places that are more than just exhibitions.

However, to make this possible requires certain elements to be put in place, such as better communication and contacts between organisations. There needs to be improved routes of access, including better use of leaflets and presentations in order to better understand what museums can do/offer - more than just a menu. There needs to be programmes large enough to be able to be moved around the whole region (not just suitable for one local authority area); therefore there was interest in the idea of commissioners having an input into the shaping of services.



For Task question 4 we asked you....

How do we make this happen together?

Delegates were asked this question based on their organisations' priorities.

- 1 North East Council on Addictions (NECA)
- 2 Northumbria Probation Trust (NPT)
- 3 Moving Forward
- 4 NHS/Housing 21
- 5 Stonham (Tyneside Foyer Home group) Newcastle

You said.....

Moving Forward

They felt that together, we should be looking to work across districts; or to join up different agencies for cross-group working, e.g. older and younger people working together. It was recognised that this would require the development of clear, joint objectives.

They suggested that the idea of pop-up museums should be explored as a way to engage with local communities. There needs to be more work on developing and exchanging volunteers, including the development of placements.

Maintaining existing relationships (through sharing of resources, including knowledge) was seen as positive way forward in moves to target groups in provision.

North East Council on Addictions (NECA)

NECA were interested in working together with TWAM.

They were interested in the development of more active involvement; of developing communication links, to better understand what each party wants; this to incorporate the views of service users. This therefore included the need to share information more readily in a variety of forms.

We would both like to thank you very much as you have helped us both through some difficult times and have given us both the courage and strength and a belief in ourselves to move forward. Thank you again for everything”
Participant, NECA

Housing 21/NHS

Housing 21 wanted a route in - key contacts to take away. Meeting people at the workshop was good to make links, but this needs to be developed further.

Therefore they were going back to speak to line managers and service users and to a regional manager.

They felt that the Partners Together Day was a good opportunity to hear about the mix of skills at TWAM, but they felt they do need more information - reminders of what the museum is offering.

Stonham (Tyneside Foyer Home group) Newcastle

Stonham were interested in the development of opportunities which shared resources.

Therefore this required a better understanding of what each partner was doing. This could include partners going to visit each other's organisations.

Northumbria Probation Trust (NPT)

Northumbria Probation Trust is particularly interested in volunteering opportunities within TWAM for their clients and continuing creative projects with a longer term heritage / creative programme.

Partners Together Day... So what? We asked you....

How do we make our 'imaging potential' ideas happen?

You said.....

It is important that we work together to identify key issues which we can jointly address. The future is about working together to take these issues forward.

We will need to explore funding opportunities to make this happen.

Therefore over the next few months we'll arrange meetings with each partner organisation so we can discuss the ideas in detail and create a clear plan to make them happen. We will explore amendments to new memorandums of understanding.

