

## POSTER ABSTRACT

# **New Voices, New Visions: Using Creative Practices and Fresh Perspectives to Shape Services and Communities for People with Learning Disabilities**

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Background: People with learning disabilities continue to experience inequity and marginalisation. Responses to this are often provided by organisations with a specialist learning disability remit, and with a focus on traditional health and social care activities. Beginning in 2021, the North Ayrshire Learning Disability Service has been pursuing a unique strand of work focusing on creative responses to these issues, from design and arts perspectives. A shared vision of celebrating the lives of people with learning disabilities, and using this as a starting point for a broader discussion of inclusion within communities, has enabled a wide array of academic, third sector, and arts partners to deliver 2 design internships, service experience projects for design students, and 2 funded arts projects, with funding being sought for a third.

All activities have affirmed the under-realised potential within services of creative practice not just to be used as a diversion and wellbeing activity for people with learning disabilities, but as a tool for activism, and a means of creating spaces for self-expression and community participation. This work builds on collaboration with Third Sector partners that commenced in 2020 and remains ongoing, to promote inclusion and accessibility within communities, using an approach promoted by the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities called Active, Connected, Included (ACI). ACI supports mainstream organisations to reflect on their accessibility, and become more inclusive.

Approach: Within this workshop, participants will receive a brief overview of the work to date, before having the opportunity to engage with the tools and techniques which have supported this journey, and the artefacts which have resulted from it. Following this, participants will be led through the shared vision and values which have underpinned all this, with a view to exploring the levers available to them to achieve similar work, or sharing what they are already doing of a similar nature.

10 mins – intro

15 mins – exploring tools and artefacts (whole group discussion)

20 mins – finding the common ground: creating a shared vision and values (small group discussion)

15 mins – feedback/discussion/close

Results: Participants will leave the session with an understanding of the potential of creative practices in reshaping services and community conversations; and practical suggestions for achieving similar outcomes in their own area. We will also seek to build commitment among those present to create (where needed) a strategic ambition to pursue creative practices as a key element of their integration journey, and to learn about or create mechanisms for sustaining an international sharing of vision and experience in this regard.

Implications: ‘Integration’ can take on many meanings, and forms. Along with the reshaping of traditional health and social care professional or service activity, there is a need to take advantage of the plurality of meaning behind integration, and draw in voices and perspectives which are less often evident. This workshop will highlight the potential of this, and sow the seeds for a global collaboration around the role of creative practices as tools for change, and realising human rights.