



**Evaluation of The Wellbeing Project Pilot Initiative
(The Stuart Low Trust)
April 2008 - April 2009.**

“This project has made me a calmer, happier man”

'This document is dedicated to the memory of Gillie Johnson, mentor, advisor, and friend to us and hundreds of other people in the voluntary and charitable sector. Thanks Gillie, it wouldn't have been possible without you...'

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1. Introduction

This document analyses and evaluates the reported experience of the Wellbeing Project over the year from its launch on 23 April 2008 to the end of its pilot development period in April 2009. (The project continued to operate at the same location on a reduced scale until March 2010). The report attempts to identify the critical success factors and learning from the experience and then considers ways in which The Stuart Low Trust may wish to consider developing this project in the future.

It has been based on over 30 responses from service users (known within the Trust as participants), staff, board members, service deliverers (practitioners) and external stakeholders familiar with the work that was done at the Wellbeing Project¹.

The majority of the information was elicited through face-to-face meetings with those involved in the project and where individual contact was not possible was augmented through email exchanges and telephone conversations².

Additionally the project has kept excellent monitoring and statistical records of the activities throughout the year³ and this alongside an interim evaluation conducted half way through the year and another in November 2008 provides quantitative evidence to support these findings⁴.

Key Recommendations:

Finally it's worth noting the very favourable comments made towards this initiative throughout this document. I think this reflects the commitment and hard work undertaken by the Trust's General Manager (Laurence Higgens), very ably supported by the two Project Managers in post during the course of the Pilot (Louise Palmer & Georgina Gavriel) and many others with a lesser involvement. They have all clearly brought a passion, enthusiasm, vision and professionalism to the task, which has been critical to the project's initiation and successful ongoing development.

¹ Please see in appendix 'Interviewees and responses' for more information.

² Please see in appendix 'Questions to stakeholders' for a copy of the original request letters and questions which were asked.

³ Please see in appendix 'Relevant financial information and statistics' for more information.

⁴ Please see in appendix 'Interim and telephone evaluations' for more information.

2. Feedback

This section draws primarily on the interviews and has been grouped according to role:

- Participants
- Staff
- Board
- Practitioners
- External Stakeholders

2.1. Participants

Perhaps unsurprisingly the project's participants were very favourably disposed towards the project and its activities. The activities mentioned most often included⁵:

Art (Therapy)
Relaxation
Indian head massage
Drama
Homeopathy
Yoga
Shiatsu
Singing
Cooking class
Legal & Welfare advice
Bingo
Drumming

However what came through most significantly was the importance of the opportunity to **meet socially** on a regular basis and it seems that many of these personal connections were made around the opportunity for participants and staff to eat together:

"I've learnt to cook, never cooked before in my life and now I'm a chef"!

"It gives me something to look forward to, it represents my wellbeing, I feel a sense of community and I get a decent meal."

It is worth reflecting on the project's '**wellbeing**' focus; it became apparent during my meetings with participants that this sense of community, improved wellbeing and reduction of social isolation was as important to the participants as the activities themselves.

Indeed there was a general sense of the **activities** as a containing structure for the all-important activity of social interaction.

⁵ Please see appendix 'Breakdown of activities' for details of activities, their cost, how long the Trust ran them for etc.

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This is by no means a marginalisation of the importance of the ‘doing’ of things, indeed when asked to scale how they felt their individual health & wellbeing had been impacted by attendance of the project 90% of participants reported an improvement of their wellbeing with some reporting dramatic improvement:

“My medication has been reduced and I no longer see my psychiatrist.”

“I have focused on relaxation, I’ve been going through a very difficult time and this has given me an opportunity to learn a way to calm down and share where I am. I feel supported and listened to.”

Rhythm, structure and familiarity would appear to be a critical component of participant experience, reflected in many comments such as this one:

“It’s given me a rhythm and a structure, which means the world to me, it’s local and friendly and somewhere nurturing to be with others.”

Participants reported feeling **more skilled, more confident and much more relaxed** as a result of their experiences of creative, dynamic and passive activities but again and again came back to this central theme:

“The friendly welcome, the chance to talk and the respectful way we are treated, I’m 74 and always look forward to coming. I also have a very serious soft spot for Georgina.”

“The social network is important; it gives me lots of confidence. It’s the little things that matter, having a quiet chat.”

Finally, something that struck me was the sense that participants felt able to **interact and engage** with as much or as little of the project as they felt able to each evening; if people wanted to be quiet then they were allowed to be quiet, to share and do that was also fine; many participants recorded this sense of **being respected, valued and met where they were**, as being a unique and special experience:

“They do a wonderful job the staff here, really wonderful, without them I would have spent a lot more time on my own.”

This combination of a warm, **non-judgmental environment**, a welcoming, communal, non-institutionalised approach, creative, dynamic and relaxing activities and the opportunity to eat, meet and talk together resulted in a very rich participant experience⁶.

⁶ Please see in appendix ‘Breakdown of participants by postcode, age groups and gender’ for more information.

2.2. Staff

Broadly the staff team reported satisfaction regarding the way this pilot developed and was run. As is often the case with committed professionals they focused their feedback on the lessons learnt and the things they might have done better. These included:

- Concerns about the project's location
- A desire for more actual supervision
- The complexity of working with volunteers
- A realisation that the timing of the project may have been too ambitious
- A request for further support from the board

It is my intention to develop these aspects more fully later in the document.

There was a very real sense that the staff team had enjoyed the challenge of building something from the ground up:

“It was a great challenge and exciting to build something virtually from scratch...I learnt that I had the resources and determination to see the project through.”

The fact that the project was new attracted people to work there, as did the sense of the initiative as unusual in so far as **there is a culture within the Trust that encourages participants to feel less stigmatised** than in other mental health settings:

“I have been informed by many service users that it provides a better alternative to traditional mental health services because it offers the opportunity for people with a diagnosis to remain anonymous and participate with others without needing to disclose their health status.”

There was also a strong sense that they were engaged in **providing a vital ‘out-of-hours’ service to the community**, those with experience of other agencies felt that offering a service that was focused on **equality and respect** combined with the provision of a **safe environment** when no other services were open was a critical aspect in giving them a sense of purpose and meaning in their working lives:

“The prime thing that bonds everyone is not illness, but a passion and a love for a particular activity i.e. drama, art or simply catching up with friends. Individuals are united by their enthusiasm and creative talent, rather than their illness.”

It appears that working in this way is very rewarding to the individuals in this team and that the **diversity offered by working with different practitioners and disciplines** is creative and exciting:

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“That it can provide an opportunity for different worlds to meet and enrich each other. For example, the comedians who came in February were somewhat thrown by not receiving the types of responses they were used to, but this forced them to work harder and search for common ground with a different type of audience, which was a positive learning experience for them.”

Clearly this way of working brings its own challenges, some of which will be addressed in later sections.

The staff repeatedly demonstrated a **passion for the work** and a desire to maintain and develop the ethos of the Project and the Trust, which is essentially to provide a **caring and non-judgmental service** with a **focus on wellbeing** across the greater London area.

“The Project is unique in this sense, offering an inclusive service without barriers at a time when services are often refused to individuals because they do not have the correct postcode.”

The staff’s attitude is summed up by a comment from one of the team that whilst it is not a “grand” idea it is an important one **offering an important resource to a client population** that benefits greatly from the project’s continuing existence:

“Overall, I believe the project offers an inclusive service and equality of opportunity to mental wellbeing in uncertain times. There’s a real sense of urgency and importance to our work, as many people are experiencing a sense of fragility in the current climate.”

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2.3. Board

The board reported that they saw this project at its inception as a “stepping stone” towards the Trust’s stated vision of a 24-hour service:

“The Wellbeing Project was designed to test the idea of the 24hr service...Stuart Low Trust is presently a small scale operation and we felt this might also increase our profile and lead to greater fundraising initiatives, additionally through testing the idea we might better understand the needs of service users”

The board felt that the project had met many of the requirements as stated above particularly with regards to profile and partnership development:

“Running this project has demonstrated that the Trust is competent at expansion and implementation, the experience of running the Wellbeing Project is an excellent experience in the Trust development. It has also been important in developing the Trust’s profile with external stakeholders, building confidence for future partnership relationships”

Additionally many board members held the perception that the project’s location was a potential concern:

“Location is crucial as are premises; we were a bit out on a limb.”

There was a consensus that this issue would need to be addressed if the Wellbeing project were to continue and more than one board member suggested **partnership with other agencies** might provide a solution to this.

It is also interesting to note that there was some concern as to whether the idea of a 24hr project was realisable at this time:

“The goal of a 24 hour service is at this moment doubtful, the Trust is small in scale but ambitious in scope, the step up required to run a 24hr service could feel too great at this time, the experience of running the Wellbeing Project is a very valuable one in this context”

There was a sense within the group that at this time there might be a need to look at a more pragmatic approach to developing and delivering Trust services:

“Ideally there should be a long-term strategy and short-term steps, which work towards our goals. Although in the present economic circumstances all that can be achieved are short-term projects, I would like to see slightly longer term thinking on our part.”

There is also a general **shared vision** in terms of the scope of the Trust’s ambition, which everyone was behind but a question as to whether a 24/7 project was, at this time, viable:

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“It’s a halfway step and tests the idea, is there a demand for this idea? Certainly our numbers would indicate that there might not be a need for a 24hr service.”

There was a general consensus as to the value of the project for its participants with a belief that people seem to have become **much more confident** as a result of attendance at the Project:

“It is valuable to have a service in a centre that caters for other interests, because it is our desire to integrate SLT activities with other community events and not make people feel awkward about admitting they are isolated or lonely.”

These are all very valuable contributions to the Trust’s future directions and overall it seemed that the board felt the pilot was regarded as a great success:

“My view is that the Wellbeing Project represents a triumph of putting together a project from scratch in a short amount of time on a relatively small budget.”

They were also unanimous in praising the staff and management team for their service delivery:

“People with great passion, working for relatively low wages to deliver excellent services.”

2.4. Practitioners

Practitioners reported a strong sense of satisfaction with their involvement with this project, this was experienced both with their work with participants but also in their relationship with the staff team:

“At its heart I believe The Stuart Low Trust offers its users a service based on respect and care. It also offers a service at weekends and evenings when 99% of others services and activities for disadvantaged adults are closed.”

It seems that the practitioners were aware of the value of the service and received a great deal of satisfaction from **utilising their skills to support participants**. They too felt very strongly that the project offered an **effective means of reducing social isolation** and improving participant wellbeing:

“Working on this project has for me reinforced the importance of social inclusion and being part of a group in people’s wellbeing and mental health.”

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They offered some useful observations regarding how the organisation could improve its service delivery: some of this was about having more equipment for them to work with and also a sense that it might be useful to provide more **opportunities for participants to talk**:

“I think the project might benefit from one or two volunteers whose role is primarily to chat and listen to participants, especially those visiting the project for the first time.”

Generally though people felt that the service offered was **welcoming, non-institutionalised and effective**. They enjoyed working as part of a multidisciplinary team; felt that their work improved the general wellbeing of participants and felt supported and of value:

“I just wanted to especially mention Georgina for holding everything together and for always being there when I need support.”

Recruitment and retention of volunteers would seem to be a challenge though in the feedback from the practitioners this did not emerge as an issue:

“I have learned a great deal about working with people with mental health issues. I didn't really know what to expect at the beginning as I have not had that much experience in the field, but the results from the treatments given to some clients over the months showed that it made a great difference to their conditions and their wellbeing.”

It was interesting to notice that in some cases the Trust had approached specialist practitioners when participants identified a specific need and this **participant led approach** would seem to be very effective. Overall there was a sense that the practitioners had a strong sense of agency and attachment to the project and its mission:

“I can genuinely say that I am proud to be involved with such an important project and I value it enormously.”

2.5. External Stakeholders

“If this project were to close many local people would be saddened, there really is very little else like this going on. Many would probably ‘stay in’ & miss the social interaction and as a result become more isolated...”

Feedback from the stakeholder grouping was generally very positive; once again they highlighted the importance of an **out-of-hours service provision** and its importance to the community:

“I was interested especially as it offers out-of-hours activities and I have a couple of clients who don't get up until most day centres close, and others who need activities in the weekend.”

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They were clear and indeed unanimous in recognising the Wellbeing Project's contribution to the **reduction of social isolation** within the locality, with many of them expressing a concern that were the project to close it would result in:

“More isolation for current and potential users.”

A number of stakeholders were impressed by the sense that participants were **non-judgmentally welcomed** into the project and that there was a real sense that **participants were involved in shaping the project**, were listened to and that their opinions mattered:

“It's brilliant having an out-of-hours service where users are very involved and I understand that it's very inclusive.”

A few commented that they had enjoyed **working in partnership** with the project and its staff and felt that this aspect might be **expanded in the future**. Some expressed a desire for improved **face-to-face contact** with the Wellbeing Project's staff group as this gave them an improved sense of the project's visibility and activities.

Some were curious about the project's marketing strategy, feeling that the flyers though informative needed to be a little more eye catching and accessible.

The fact that **carers were able to access the project** was an important point for some of the projects referring agencies:

“I have invited SLT staff to speak at two of our carers' groups. I understand some of our carers have used services at SLT”

Finally there was a general consensus that stakeholders were impressed by the project's **professionalism, accessibility and purpose**, they noted that participants were demonstrating **developed self-confidence and esteem** and had a sense that their clients' **general wellbeing had improved**:

“It offers activities that build self confidence and esteem at times when other day centres are closed, and seems to be more accessible and client led (from reports from one of my service users) than other centres.”

3. Milestones and Outcomes

The Big Lottery Fund was one of the major funders for the project. The target outcomes were agreed between SLT and Big Lottery before the project to measure the success of the project.

Project outcome 1:

Outcome: **Reduced isolation.**

Milestone: At least one repeat visit to project from 70 per cent of beneficiaries.

Timescale: Midway through the implementation phase

Milestone: Fifty individuals will visit the project.

Timescale: Midway through the implementation phase.

The number of repeat visits and regular attendees increased in the second half of the project when it was able to run activities to a more consistent standard and had a better understanding of the activities that participants desired.

Number of participants registered in first six months:	190
Number of visits to project:	1179*
Average number of visits per registered participant:	6

Number of participants registered in second six months:	110
Number of visits to project:	1133
Average number of visits per participant:	10

* (not including opening evening)

Project outcome 2:

Outcome: **Increased community participation.**

Milestone: The organisation will signpost 25 per cent of beneficiaries to other services.

Timescale: Midway through the implementation phase.

The Wellbeing project was able to signpost the majority of beneficiaries to other services. In addition to this it had many participants who after visiting the project were referred to other services. The Outreach Worker has a record of conversations where she has spoken to some participants and referred them to appropriate agencies.

Throughout the project it advertised a wide range of services and activities including those that it runs itself.

In addition to this, the inclusive nature of the project meant that communities who would not normally mix were able to.

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Project outcome 3:

Outcome: Improvements to the mental health of beneficiaries.

Milestone: 70 per cent of beneficiaries report improvements and physical health.

Timescale: At the end of the implementation phase

Of the regular participants who have attended the project, over 70 percent responded positively when asked said that they felt that visiting the project had helped improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

The staff approached participants regularly to map service efficiency.

Project outcome 4:

Outcome: Increased access to out-of-hours mental health services.

Milestone: 150 people visit the project within the first six months.

Timescale: Midway through the implementation phase.

In the first six months the project had over 150 people visit it. During the whole year it recorded over 300 participants. The project has registration forms and behaviour agreements for all participants and has been able to cross reference these with signing-in sheets.

The Wellbeing Project was also able to increase access to other out-of-hours mental health services by signposting participants to those services.

Project outcome 5:

Outcome: Increased demonstration and sustainability of the project for service users.

Milestone: Achievement of the aims of the project within the budget.

Timescale: At the end of the implementation phase.

Milestone: Attract an adequate number of project users to confirm that this project is viable.

Timescale: At the end of the implementation phase.

The Wellbeing Project managed to complete the first year of the pilot-project within budget. Accurate records have been kept for expenditure and budgets for different activities at the project.

The project has become more popular over the period that it has been running has regularly attracted 25-30 participants every Sunday. During the last few months of running Wednesday evening sessions attendances were reaching approximately 20 participants.

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The most popular Saturday Special Events have attracted 38 and 43 participants respectively.

These numbers all show that the project is attractive to participants and was worth running. If the project were to continue and it becomes more established and its delivery more refined there is no reason that these numbers should not continue to increase.

4. Looking back, going forwards...

Perhaps the most important learning from a position benefiting from hindsight is that the staff team and indeed the Trust as a whole has within it the potential to respond to circumstances as they evolve. After a difficult beginning it appears that the complex task of starting up and delivering a successful service was achieved.

This speaks volumes for those involved and if the lessons of the experience can be assimilated within the Trust then any future initiatives can benefit from this experience.

What follows is a brief series of observations and reflections from all members of the Trust.

These ideas were surfaced through the processes of interviewing participants, staff, external stakeholders and The Stuart Low Trust Board.

As such they are emergent thinking in the organisation and I would suggest that they hold a great deal of energy and potential.

4.1 Preparation & Planning

It appears that more time was needed in preparation for the project set up. This sense pertains to both funding issues and to thinking around volunteer recruitment and training, in the succinct language used by a staff member:

“Initiatives like this take longer to set up than I imagined.”

This perhaps overlaps with the issues encountered with regard to preparation; the predominant feeling was that the project, once it had struggled with its start up, might have benefited from being envisioned as a longer process:

“Perhaps the project was not long enough, it takes longer to fundraise, implement and develop a project such as this, and I would imagine 2/3 years would be a more appropriate timeframe.”

Recommendation:

Double any time you think you need to create a project of this nature and be clear to ensure effectively resourced for this period.

Communicate your plans widely in the hope of garnering extra support.

4.2 Location

There were many comments that focused on the importance of the chosen location for the project; concerns included general location, financial implications in terms of rental costs & potential inaccessibility to disabled participants.

There was a consensus that the location chosen was not ideal and that it felt “out on a limb”. Any future choices would need to reflect this.

Recommendation:

Change the location/s.

As a possible way of addressing the location issues an exciting idea emerged that the project might work in a peripatetic fashion and could look to take the service to its participants using perhaps more than one location and looking at venues that might be attractive to participants. Maybe it would be possible to look at aligning the project to local coffee shops, libraries and locations where communities congregate - partnerships might just allow something of this concept to become actualised.

4.3 Funding

Again with the benefit of hindsight there has been a struggle to feel financially secure for the duration of the pilot:

“My learning would be that security of funding is everything, and that a project such as this is likely to encounter starting up problems... a project always takes longer to set up than you imagine.”

Recommendation:

Develop a secure funding base in order to ensure that the project has sufficient resources to deliver for its lifetime, try to ‘get ahead’ of yourselves so that development and expansion can become proactive, not reactive⁷.

Create a business plan looking forward five years. Use this as a fundraising platform.

⁷ Please see in appendix ‘List of possible funders’ for more ideas.

4.4 Policies & Procedures

I think this is a complex philosophical issue for the Trust and its work in the future, it is an important hallmark of the work that it is accepting, welcoming and respectful of all and that no formal assessment takes place with participants. However there was quite a lot of concern voiced by both practitioners and participants regarding a sense of a need for clearer policy and procedures than the existing 'Acceptable Behaviour Agreement'⁸. The sense was that staff would feel safer in implementing policy and the participants feel simply safer, if policies and procedures were to be more containing:

"It's a great project BUT the Policy & Procedures need to be tightened up, the project needs to be more containing not just for staff but for other participants also."

And from a participant:

"I sometimes get concerned about some of the conduct of the male participants, there needs to be a code of conduct so that the project is safer. I think that would help the staff as well."

Recommendation:

In order to create a more containing environment for participants, staff and practitioners, codes of conduct and possibly an assessment protocol need to be developed and extended into the everyday culture of the organisation:

"SLT needs to understand that there is a difference between staff and participants and that this cannot be denied, I think that sadly a risk assessment of some sort needs to be put in place."

4.5 Staff support

In addition to the requests for more clarity regarding policies numerous requests were made from the staff body for increased supervisory support.

Recommendation:

It would seem that the staff team would benefit from increased management and supervisory support.

One idea was that a manager needs to be 'on site'.

It would be valuable to create a group facilitated staff space. This has financial implications and its inclusion would need to reflect in any future fundraising initiatives.

⁸ Please see 'Behaviour agreement and project outline in appendix'.

4.6 Centrality of volunteers

In order to deliver the wide range of activities that the project offers, it holds that volunteers are an absolutely essential component. It is, of course, wonderful that this diversity can be offered but there was significant concern from staff members that volunteer recruitment/management/training and supervision was a time consuming and sometimes anxiety provoking aspect of working in the project:

“The Project could not survive without them but volunteer retention and recruitment is a difficult task and often quite stressful.”

Recommendation:

Fundraise for a volunteer co-coordinator.

This was flagged up as one of the most difficult facets of running this project. There would seem to be a need to look at how this aspect could be developed, perhaps there is a need to look at how other organisations manage this challenge?

4.7 Partnership

Although a lot of effort was made and continued to be made to develop creative and valuable partnerships it appears that there is a need for this work to be undertaken in a more intensive and focused manner. I do not think this is any reflection on existing staff who appear to have done an excellent job with the time and resources they have had at their disposal but it is perhaps something to think about in terms of future development:

“There’s simply not enough time to provide the kind of follow-up and partnership working that I would like to see happen in the future.”

Recommendation:

Partnership and joint working would seem an important and exciting component of the project’s future development.

Members of the board might be allocated an identified organisation with which to develop relationships. This has the added advantages of engaging the board actively in the project and reducing staff workloads.

4.8 Organisational change

Any initiative evolving within an organisation will have an impact on the culture of that organisation. Feedback would suggest that this was the experience of some of those involved in the Wellbeing Project:

“I was wondering if this initiative might have challenged the culture of SLT, I think it’s a family run culture and this project challenged this to moving towards a more bounded and pragmatic approach to our work.”

Recommendation:

The Trust might benefit from some reflection internally with regards to this matter. The tension would seem to emerge from the desire to remain accessible and non-institutionalised against a growing culture in the field of what constitutes ‘good practice’:

4.9 Scale

There appears to be a tension between retaining the existing scale of the project which is seen as “Friendly and manageable” versus a desire to expand the project to be accessible to more potential participants.

Recommendation:

The peripatetic working model mentioned earlier could offer an exciting answer to this challenge.

Develop working partnerships with local business that have high or just off high street presence.

4.10 Participant involvement

Many people I spoke to suggested that they wanted to see more participant involvement in the planning and delivery of the service: this is a laudable idea and I imagine is in tune with the ethos of the Trust. However it appears that if this is to be achieved then more resources would need to be provided:

“I know that the trustees wanted more participant involvement but this would have to be managed very carefully and the resources are not currently there for this implementation.”

Recommendation:

The Trust itself has a history of working in this way; maybe it needs to draw from its own experience.

Look out for examples of good practice in other organisations working with participant involvement in this area.

4.11 Marketing

Those on the ground were clear that though the emphasis on ‘paper’ marketing had produced results a complementary mechanism would involve much more face-to-face contact, and staff presenting within other projects might produce improved results⁹:

“I feel the project originally relied too heavily on ‘paper’ marketing (i.e. flyers, posters, handouts). I have received a positive response to the visits that I have made to local projects, which has paid dividends to current numbers.”

Recommendation:

Devote more resource to personal contacts between staff and external stakeholders. Additionally initial face-to-face meetings seem to be very successful in reducing participant anxiety and improving throughput and retention. Clearly this is a resourcing and funding issue.

Highlight carer accessibility, this is an important point for a number of your key stakeholders.

The newsletter is a great tool in the general profile-raising of the project and it would be good to develop this mechanism still further.

A look at the website would see that it is maintained regularly but a couple of people wondered if more could be done with it.

4.12 Gender

It would seem, looking at participant gender numbers and some stated concerns from female participants that there might be a case for trying to increase female participation in the project.

Recommendation:

Ideas from staff and participants included closed gender groupings and activities that might focus on particular female and male concerns.

⁹ Please see ‘Examples of advertising and promotion’ in the appendix.

4.13 Consultancy

This experience leaves Stuart Low Trust as an organisation which has learnt a great deal about the challenges faced by developing a project of this nature. There is therefore a question as to whether SLT could offer consultancy advice as a means of raising funds, though it needs to be accepted that there is always a 'local' aspect to this work.

Recommendation:

To explore this both as an additional revenue stream and to develop joint working practices where SLT might exchange its experiences for things it might need from other organisations.

5. Q&A with Laurence Higgins (General Manager)

How did it go overall?

Given the steep learning curve for us as an organisation in running the project I am very happy that we managed to pilot a successful project which attracted many participants from different backgrounds.

What went well?

We managed to complete the pilot project and test out a unique project.

I think that we also succeeded in developing a location where people felt safe and welcome and could enjoy the activities or the company of others.

Participants valued the atmosphere that we managed to create. I feel that we were able to strike a good balance between a formal and informal method of service delivery.

We also managed to reach a number of participants who had had issues at other projects.

I was very glad that we were able to attract so many dedicated staff, volunteers and activity leaders to run the project and activities.

What would you have done differently?

I would have ensured that we spent more time recruiting, training and preparing staff, volunteers and hosts so that we hit the ground running.

Fundraising was also an issue and we decided to go ahead with the project without funding for the whole year. At times, this meant that there was an air of uncertainty around the future of the project.

In the end we managed to raise enough money to complete the pilot so the risk seems justified. As others have said however, perhaps a year for a pilot is not long enough and we should have raised more money to run it for two or three years.

For SLT, this was a big 'step-up' in operations. Although we had run an evening event for a long time previously, this project - at the beginning at least - effectively quadrupled the amount of services that we were running. More staff and/or volunteer time to manage this would have been beneficial.

Related to this, the increase in operations meant that new people were involved in running activities. In a way this challenged the organisational structure of SLT as we were required to take a less 'hands-on' approach in all our activities. It would have been good to have anticipated this and thought about our new ways of working.

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Would you have any advice for anyone else?

My main advice would be that this type of project is well worth running. It takes time to develop but once things are working well, participants will be attracted.

In terms of setting up something similar to the Wellbeing Project I would suggest the following:

- Consult with potential and existing participants on the type of activities to be offered.
- Allow enough time to recruit and train staff, volunteers, and activity leaders.
- Raise adequate money for a two to three year trial period for the project.
- Prepare everyone for any changes that it will make to organisational structure.
- Develop consistent policies and procedures which cover all activities and make sure that they are followed throughout the entire organisation.

While running the project I think that it is useful to think about:

- Being flexible and responding creatively to participants' needs.
- Continuously advertising and marketing the project.
- Getting participants involved in running and developing activities as much as possible.
- Recruiting volunteers on an ongoing basis so that there is a pool of reliable people to help out more regular volunteers.
- Trying to get as many partnership organisations involved as possible.
- Maintaining lines of communications between different groups running the project. This is especially important as some will be working during the evening and some during the day.

6. Postscript - A Personal Perspective

And finally - good luck!

It is reassuring to know that services such as this are being piloted and developed at this time. With this in mind I think it's important to thank the Big Lottery and the coalition of funders who made this pilot possible

This scheme has undoubtedly captured the hearts and minds of a great many of your participants, staff and external contacts.

The non-judgmental, welcoming, caring and professional ethos that the project promises and, in my personal experience, delivers is a unique and exciting potential to be built upon if you so choose and the fact that this service delivers a much needed 'out-of-hours' provision that is participant led and is clearly an important and enriching facet of the lives of those who attend it is to be celebrated:

"It has produced high quality activities that have made a difference to some people's confidence in dealing with the wider world, and provided healthy and enjoyable evenings for many more people."

There is clear evidence of the benefits to date, however as we all know nothing can ever stand still, so I hope the learning gained from running the pilot and the suggestions for further development can be heard in the manner in which they are offered - constructive ideas emerging from within your organisation, which can continue the work which so effectively reflects and enhances your stated mission and values:

"It makes my week coming here, I've never told anyone this but I really love it."

My thanks go out to all those who contributed to the research and development of this document.

Ian May
22/06/09

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation

7. Appendices

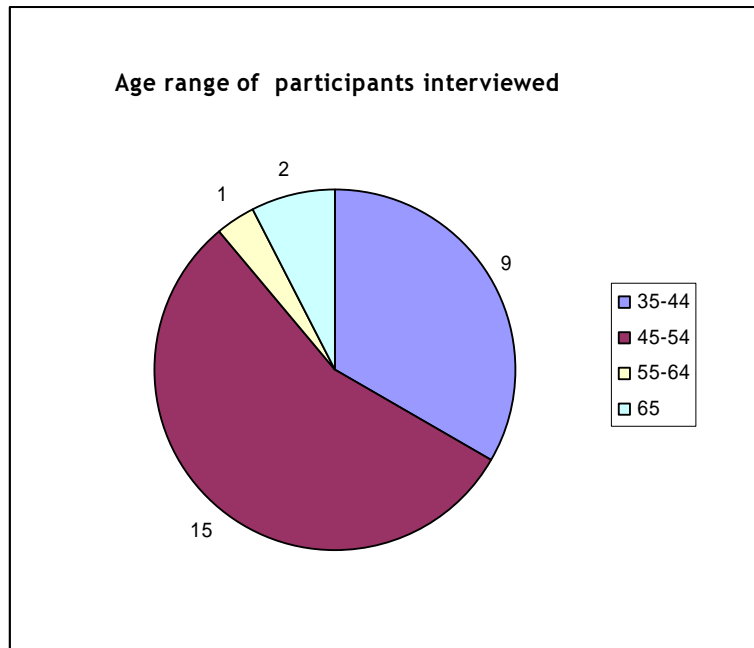
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1. Breakdown of interviewees

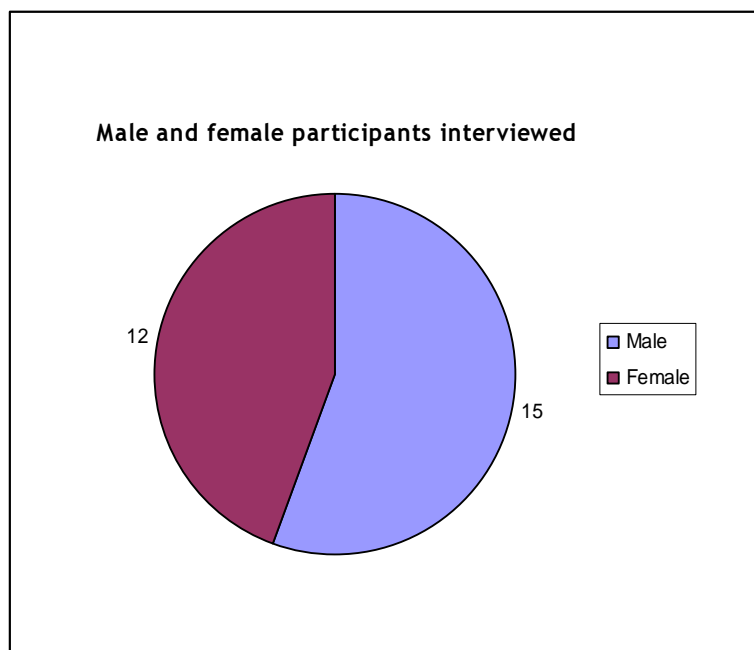
1.1 Participants

Number of participants interviewed: 27

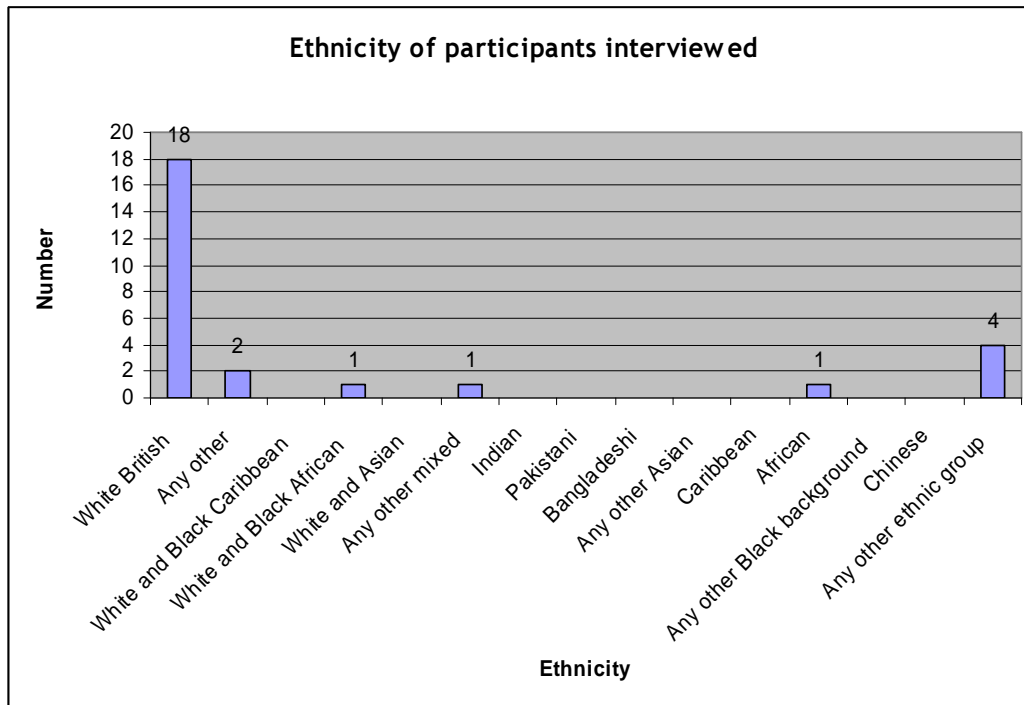
1.1a Age ranges of participants interviewed



1.1b Gender of participants interviewed



1.1c Ethnicity of participants interviewed



1.2 Staff interviewed

- Laurence Higgins (General Manager)
- Georgina Gavriel (Project Manager)
- Louise Palmer (former Project Manager)
- Katy Connell (Project Co-ordinator)
- Naheed Malik (Assistant Co-ordinator)
- Mark Kipping (former Project Co-ordinator)

1.3 Board Members interviewed

- Virginia Low (Chair)
- Michael Gwinnell (Treasurer and Company Secretary)
- Joseph Lowe (Deputy Treasurer)
- Eileen Thomas
- Alena Kavenga
- Margaret Newton
- Robin King

1.4 Practitioners interviewed

- Toni Gooden (Homeopath)
- Jo Simon (Indian Head & Foot Massage)
- Meeme Luks (Drama)
- Renate Sillinger (Yoga)
- Katy Connell (Relaxation classes)
- Katy Greene (Open art sessions)

1.5 External Stakeholders interviewed

- One housing group
- Islington Mind
- Carr-Gomm
- 2-Care

2. Questions to stakeholders

2.1 Participants

How did you find out about the SLT Wellbeing Project?	
How often do you come here?	
What works for you and why?	
Have you noticed any improvement to your health or wellbeing since starting the project? In what way?	
Please rate (out of ten) how useful this project has been to improving your wellbeing (1- not useful, 10 - really useful)	
Is there any area you'd like to see improved - why? How?	
Is there any new area you'd like to see offered - why?	
What differences has it made to your life?	
Would you recommend this service to a friend?	
Have you come across anywhere else like this, if so where?	
How do you feel the project compares to other similar services (i.e. mental health services/activities) Better/worse or same? Why?	
In terms of overall performance and services offered, please rate the project out of ten (1- bad, 10- Excellent)	
Do you feel the project is unique? In what way?	
Anything else you would like to add?	

2.2 Staff

How/why did you first get involved in WP?	
What level of involvement do you/have you had?	
What do you think has attracted service users to this project?	
How might the service improve to better meet its users' needs?	
Would you like to see this service replicated elsewhere - why & how?	
What would you do differently?	
What have you learnt from working on this project?	
A.O.B?	

2.3 Board

What's your understanding of why the Trust decided to undertake this project?	
What expectations did you have for WP? Were they met?	
What learning / surprises as a result?	
If SLT were to be involved in implementing this initiative again what might you suggest be amended?	
How far does this initiative go towards realising the vision of a 24hr's a day project?	
A.O.B?	

2.4 Practitioners

How/why did you first get involved in the Wellbeing Project?	
What level of involvement do you/have you had?	
What do you think has attracted service users to this project?	
How do you feel the service might improve to better meet its users needs?	
What have you learnt from working on this project?	
Is there anything else you would like to add?	

2.5 External Stakeholders

How/why did you first hear about the Wellbeing Project and what do you understand it offers?	
How would you describe your involvement/use of it?	
Why might you recommend it to your service users to this project?	
How do you feel the service might improve?	
What would you consider the impact were the project to close?	
Is there anything else you would like to add?	

3. Relevant financial information and statistics

3.1 Financial information

3.1a Income

Charitable Trusts and Foundations:

Amber Fund:	£5,000
Big Lottery Fund:	£40,000
Bonus Trust:	£400
Drapers' Charitable Trust:	£2,500
Islington PCT:	£5,000
Mary Kinross Charitable Trust:	£10,000
Mercers' Charitable Foundation:	£1,500
Morris Charitable Trust:	£2,500
Moulton Charitable Trust:	£15,000
Richard Cloudesley's Charity:	£4,000
Tana Trust:	£1,500
Total:	£87,400
Charges for activities:	£3,289
Total income:	£90,689

3.1b Expenditure

Planning and research phase

Employees & NI:	£8,181
Recruitment:	£1,782
Rent (deposit):[not an expense]	£500
Training (staff):	£198
Admin:	£114
Total:	£10,775

Implementation & evaluation phase

Employees & NI:	£31,454
Activities:	£17,514
Activities (admin & equipment etc):	£608
Rent:	£14,982
Evaluation:	£4,984
Recruitment:	£261
Advertising:	£1,242
Phones:	£708
Volunteers:	£500
Total:	£72,253
Total over 18 months:	£83,028

Notes:

1. In addition the Trust devoted £11,000 from its 24 hour centre Designated Fund towards the project's overheads, which in practice greatly exceeded that amount
2. The overall project surplus of £7,661 [NB adjust for rent deposit] arose from funds raised towards the end of the pilot period and was used to continue the project's activities from May 2009 onwards.

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3.2 Statistics (please see section 6 for breakdown of participants by age etc)

Number of staff hours at project:	1,240
Number of volunteer hours at project:	1,800
Activity hours provided:	1,014
Number of meals provided (including cook and eat class):	1,809
Number of different activities run:	52
Best attended Wednesday: (20/07/2008)	28
Best attended Saturday: (02/02/2009)	48
Best attended Sunday: (29/03/2009)	34
Number of individual visitors to project:	Over 300

4. Interim and telephone evaluations

**4.1 Interim evaluation as at October 2008 (Completed by Louise Palmer -
former Wellbeing Project Manager)**

Contents

- 1. Introduction**

- 2. Summary and Findings**

- 3. Consultation, implementation and the first 6 months**

- 4. Strengths and weaknesses**

- 5. Key recommendations**

1. Introduction

The Wellbeing Project was launched in April 2008. This was in response to research conducted both in 2003 and 2007 into the need for better provision of social and leisure activities, support, advice and signposting to other specialised services - specifically during the evening time. It was established that little provision was available for such activities targeting isolated and vulnerable groups outside core hours during the day.

The project was also to be a model to support the longer term vision of The Stuart Low Trust; to provide 24 hour facilities for people affected by mental distress or isolation, offering support and opportunities to improve their quality of life.

This was to run as a pilot for the duration of 1 year. The budget for the project was estimated at £110,000 and funding was secured from the Big Lottery Fund, The Mercers Charitable Foundation, The Moulton Charitable Trust, The Bonus Trust and The Mary Kinross Charitable Trust. For the purpose of this report, the period between April-October 2008 will be reviewed.

2. Summary/findings

The following outcomes were proposed for the project:

1. To reduce social isolation in Islington
2. To widen community participation
3. To improve physical and mental health for those that have used the service
4. To increase access to out of hours services in Islington
5. To demonstrate the feasibility of out of hours services

In looking at the proposed outcomes, it is clear that participants have benefited from the existence of the Wellbeing Project. For the purpose of this report, outcomes have been evaluated using questionnaires and telephone interviews.

Questionnaires

Thirteen participants completed questionnaires (please see Appendix 1 for full details)

The following were assessed:

Mental wellbeing
Physical wellbeing
Social networks/relationships
Meaningful use of time

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Each of the above was measured with comparative scores for being at the Wellbeing Project or outside of the Wellbeing Project in order to assess the effect of the project on participants' wellbeing overall.

Mental wellbeing

- 60% scored better feelings of mental wellbeing when visiting the project
- 30% scored the same feelings of mental wellbeing when visiting the project or not
- 10% scored slightly lower feelings of mental wellbeing when visiting the project

Physical wellbeing

- 40% scored better feelings of physical wellbeing when visiting the project
- 40% scored the same feelings of physical wellbeing when visiting the project or not
- 20% scored slightly lower feelings of physical wellbeing when visiting the project

Social networks/relationships

- 60% scored better levels of social networks/relationships when visiting the project
- 10% scored the same level of social networks/relationships when visiting the project
- 30% scored lower levels of social networks/relationships when visiting the project

Meaningful use of time

- 60% scored more meaningful use of time when visiting the project
- 20% scored the same levels of meaningful use of time when visiting the project or not
- 20% scored less for meaningful use of time when visiting the project

Of those consulted there is a clear level of improved mental wellbeing, a reduction of social isolation, as well as more meaningful use of time. Scores for physical wellbeing are not significantly higher in this report, though this will be re-assessed in the overall evaluation with higher numbers of respondents.

Community participation has been widened through the availability of activities based in an extended community school, located in a large residential area. Having no referral system also enables a wider group to participate from within the community at large.

The increase in access to out-of-hours services in Islington has been achieved through the piloting of this project.

The feasibility of out-of-hours services continues to be assessed in relation to cost, staffing issues and location and will be evaluated in more detail in the final evaluation.

3. Consultation, implementation and the first six months

The consultation period took place between October 2007 and January 2008. This was carried out using face to face questionnaires, presentations to various other organisations and a consultation evening. Those consulted with included established SLT participants, users of other mental health services and isolated groups in and around the Islington area. A total number of 28 organisations were consulted. These included Hillside Clubhouse, Holy Cross, Islington Bereavement Service, Islington Expert Patients Programme, Umbrella, Hanley Road, Isledon Road and the Stress Project. Advice was also sought on user-led activities and involvement with Hillside Clubhouse and Holy Cross. IVAC and CIPF [spell out acronyms] were also consulted on how best to promote and advertise the project.

The services we proposed to offer comprised:

- Low-level support/counselling
- A café and cookery classes
- Legal and welfare advice
- Leisure activities (e.g. yoga, art therapy, pilates, bingo)
- Self-development opportunities
- Sign-posting to other specialist services

Findings

The following activities were found to be the most popular:

- Music
- Films
- Bingo
- Quizzes
- Art
- Counselling
- Café
- Cookery classes
- IT classes
- Complementary Therapies
- Women's Group
- Drama
- Photography
- Legal advice

Project opening times

Proposed opening times were 2-3 evenings per week, once during the week and on a Saturday, Sunday or both. Respondents' preference was for both Saturdays and Sundays. Findings also showed that 63% of those consulted wanted the project to run on both Saturdays and Sundays.

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Premises

After looking at a number of different locations, Hargrave Park Extended Community School was agreed upon. This was found to have the right number of rooms and space, including a facility to provide a café and run cook & eat classes. This is a primary school based in the north of the borough in Archway. Transport links include Archway station and a number of buses that stop nearby. Hargrave Park is located in a residential area and runs through a large housing estate. It is a recently refurbished 2 form entry primary school which rents out facilities to a number of different community groups and organisations. This was felt to be mutually advantageous in terms of information sharing and attracting a mix of participants to the project.

Roll-out

The roll-out of the project was set for the end of April, on a 3 evening a week basis (Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays). The project was launched on the 23rd April 2008, with the Mayor of Islington and local MP Jeremy Corbyn speaking. The evening was very well attended with almost 200 people passing through for information on activities.

Staff

A female Project Coordinator was recruited who appeared competent with a background in community work and experience of working with women in the mental health system. An experienced cook was interviewed and offered the job to work on the weekends, however due to what seems to have been personal issues, she chose not to take up the position.

Volunteers

A number of volunteers were interviewed prior to the launch date. A total of 2 were available to start immediately and a volunteer stall was set up on the launch night. This proved to be more successful with two volunteers for the kitchen and a volunteer project worker starting from the following weekend. To date two out of the three have been extremely committed to the project and whilst SLT is not able to offer a structured training programme, for these particular individuals some self development seems to have come out of volunteering.

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Steering Group

A Steering Group was formed in order to help shape the project. This comprised some internal staff and trustees as well as external members from the Hanley Road Day Centre and a representative from the Camden and Islington Providers' Forum. Meetings are held around every 6 weeks.

Evaluation

An external consultant Mick Denton, was recruited to advise on the development and evaluation of the project. An evaluation framework was devised with the steering group to start the process of how to assess the project during the pilot stage.

Contracts with the following organisations and individuals were made. Some of the activities were to be reviewed after an initial 6 week period and some to run on for a period of months to establish take up.

Islington Mind	(Peter Nevins)
Islington People's Rights	(Ahmed Butt)
Music for People	(Peter Crocket)
African /Brazilian Drumming	(Emmanuel McDonald)
Indian & Head Massage	(Jo Simon)
Cook & Eat Class	(Community Kitchens Project)
Women's Group Workshop	(Davina James-Hanman)
Twist & Tone/Pilates	(Julie Ritchie)
Film Club	(Brian Leach)
* Drama Group	(Meeme Luks)
* Shiatsu	(Frances Hamilton)
* Yoga	(Rachel Thomasson/Simone Gutbrod)
* Art therapy	(Hanako Chiba)
* Homeopathy	(Toni Gooden)
* Relaxation	(Katy Connell)

* These activities were not implemented from the start but evolved or have run from October or November.

All activities were set at a low cost - from £1 to £2.50 for food or the Cook & Eat class. The decision to charge was made based on the notion that putting a cost on something gives it more value. It was also agreed that whilst not wanting to profit from activities, a small contribution towards overheads was necessary. Some participants who regularly attend day services free of charge have found this difficult, though for the majority this has not been a significant problem.

Summary of activities

Islington MIND was contracted to provide workshops on a fortnightly basis to give a broad overview of different types of mental health issues. A dedicated quota was also agreed to give participants the opportunity to be 'fast-tracked' into MIND's counselling service. After a period of a few months, it became apparent that there was a lack of commitment from MIND to run these workshops. On more than a few occasions the facilitator failed to turn up. The workshops were also a little confusing for some who believed it was a counselling service. It was agreed to stop the workshops but retain the quota for participant referrals.

Islington People's Rights have continued to run free fortnightly sessions. Take up for this has been slow with an average of only one or two people using the service per session. A review meeting took place in November where it was agreed that from the New Year it may be more beneficial for a referral system as with MIND. The location of the project was cited as one factor that influenced low numbers. It was also felt that the project's emphasis on social and leisure activities has perhaps made the environment less appropriate for advice surgeries.

The music group was held for 6 weeks. This comprised one experienced tutor and open access for anyone wishing to participate. A number of instruments were provided with the main focus on singing. An average of 2-4 people attended regularly. This was held on Sundays. After a 6 week trial we changed the activity to drumming in order to see if this would attract more numbers.

Take-up for the drumming workshops was again quite low with an average of 3 people each week. Sessions ran for 8 weeks before the decision was made to change the activity again. Despite those who attended really enjoying the class it was felt that we could not justify paying the instructor for such low numbers.

During the period that the music and drumming groups had been running, a drama group 'evolved'. A participant with some acting experience was keen to start some classes. We agreed to try out the sessions weekly. Classes started a few weeks into the launch of the project and have been very popular since with numbers continuing to attract between 8-10 participants each week.

Exercise classes were held weekly on a Wednesday. Two sessions were held, the first one as an aerobic 'Twist & Tone' class, the other as Pilates. The instructor was qualified to teach both, however the Pilates class proved to be more popular with average numbers of 5 in attendance. Due to other commitments, at the end of September the instructor could no longer run the classes. It has now been replaced with a Relaxation class.

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It was hoped the poetry and writing class could be established by participants themselves and facilitated by the Project Coordinator or volunteers. This proved to be difficult to run effectively due to staffing problems and too few volunteers. Consequently, the project coordinator could not commit to being in one place for the duration of the session and proved not to be experienced enough to facilitate the group. It was agreed that after the first 6 weeks we would try to replace the group with something else. During this time, we were approached by a qualified Shiatsu practitioner looking to run sessions on a voluntary basis. We decided to pilot this over the following 6 weeks.

This proved to be extremely popular with bookings to full capacity each week. This ran for three months after which time the practitioner secured a full time day job and could no longer commit to the project. She did however wish to retain some 'ad hoc' sessions which we try to accommodate.

The head and foot massages have been very well attended since the launch, as with the shiatsu with fully booked sessions each week. The sessions have been so popular that some participants have asked for additional sessions to be held on a Wednesday. However due to limited space at the school we are currently unable to do this.

The film club did not ever fully develop as the person who had volunteered to run it found it too much responsibility on a regular basis. It was agreed that we would have a supply of films based at the project that could be watched on a more informal basis.

The yoga started in August as a trial and now runs every Sunday with around 3-5 people. This is a low level class that runs at a gentle pace. Two instructors alternate weekly.

The art therapy class is very new and numbers are just building up, though it seems that some participants would prefer to have a more 'open art' session. This will be reviewed in more detail in early 2009.

The homeopathy sessions have been running since November and are to date, extremely popular - again with back to back bookings each Sunday. A qualified homeopath from the Highgate Day Centre runs weekly sessions.

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Attendance levels

Average attendance levels over the period April - October can be seen below:

April	-	* 264
May	-	189
June	-	179
July	-	226
August	-	218
September	-	151
October	-	172

*This includes the launch evening and does not cover a full month as the project opened on the 23rd April

(A breakdown of attendance levels for specific activities can be seen in Appendix 2)

The above figures show that initial figures increased during the summer then dropped again in September. It is felt that this may have been partly due to staff changes that occurred in July and also problems encountered with the café.

4. Strengths and weaknesses

In order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the pilot to date, a number of different methods were used:

Telephone interviews carried out by the SLT Outreach Worker
Focus group meetings held at the project
A suggestion box

A total number of 65 participants responded (this includes the questionnaires used to measure the outcomes outlined in the summary).

Telephone interviews

The most commonly expressed likes/strengths by regular attendees can be seen below:

- Opportunity to exercise (15%)
- Bingo quizzes and board games (10%)
- Opportunity to eat healthy food (10%)
- Somewhere to go and meet others (7%)
- Drama, singing, holistic therapies, cook & eat classes (7%)

Some weaknesses included:

- Too many disturbances during activities (12%)
- Safety issues in walking to and from the project (7%)

50% reported no dislikes

Focus Group Meetings

To date 3 meetings have been held.

Suggestion Box

Some suggestions include:

More quizzes
Access to computers
More outings
More women's workshops
More dance and music sessions
Plainer English food for the café

Other significant findings

Staff & volunteers

In looking at the overall issues that have been significant, it is important to reflect on the difficulties encountered in both recruitment and retaining of staff and volunteers.

The initial Project Coordinator was contracted to work 3 evenings a week. It became evident quite early on that this was problematic. Personal circumstances meant that childcare was insecure which resulted in high levels of unreliability. It also became clear after the initial six weeks, that the coordinator did not have the right experience or background to deal with the challenges of running a new project, or with the complex needs of some of the participants. It was agreed after the probationary period to let her go.

A replacement was recruited for via an agency, being mindful of the necessity to have a 'pool' of staff in order to retain consistent cover. We realised that the unsocial hours of the project made it quite unattractive to recruit for someone on a permanent basis. We also recognised that the core competencies of the candidates needed to reflect more upon the needs of participants and that we required people with a stronger background of working with vulnerable adults or in a mental health setting. We recruited a temporary coordinator with significant relevant experience, and interviewed several locum staff. The current coordinator has worked for MIND and in many social housing projects. He has been extremely reliable and implemented many positive administrative procedures at the project. We now also have more temps to cover when the coordinator wishes to take leave.

It has also been extremely difficult to retain volunteers. We found that though many people expressed interest in April, the project was possibly not organised enough at the start - in particular in the kitchen which is very open and accessible to participants during food preparation. Some practical issues have led to difficulties in managing and supporting volunteers effectively. This responsibility is shared between the Project Coordinator and the Project Manager. However, the project runs during the evenings whilst the Project Manager works 3 days a week. Consequently meeting with volunteers regularly has not always been easy for the Project Manager, whilst the Project Coordinator is often busy during each session.

We have continuously interviewed for more volunteers as we have found some unable to commit on a regular basis. Nonetheless, we do have 4 regular volunteers who have contributed enormously to the shaping and success of the project to date. Several volunteers came as participants themselves and found roles that they wished to pursue. They have all been a great asset to the project overall.

Café

Another significant issue has been the efficient running of the café. The recruitment of an experienced cook proved challenging. The hours offered were too few to make the post appealing, combined with the hours being unsocial. There were also some issues with serving hot food and registering with Environmental Health which we have now solved. We have still never managed to recruit a paid, qualified cook. Nonetheless, we do now have a pool of very dedicated and experienced volunteers in the kitchen who have managed to create some very healthy and varied menus over the past few months (they include a qualified nutritionist). Indeed feedback for the food has generally been very positive, even whilst serving cold dishes.

Saturdays

Another major change in the running of the project has been the decision to stop opening every Saturday. On looking at average attendance levels per session, it is clear that the most popular evening is Sunday, with Wednesdays and then Saturdays after that. The structure of Wednesdays is specifically aimed at providing planned activities that will increase physical wellbeing and provide a space for learning (thus the exercise classes and the Cook & Eat class have always been on Wednesdays). Sundays have developed into a more 'therapeutic' environment with massages, homeopathy, yoga and drama available. Saturdays were initially planned to host weekly 'fun' events such as a performance or themed party. Over the first few months, some of the events for Saturdays included dancing and movement, a singer, a puppeteer and bingo and quizzes. We also held a summer barbeque which proved to be the most popular evening. Nonetheless, after the summer, attendance levels began to drop on Saturdays and the atmosphere of the project became more like a 'drop-in'.

Some factors that we believe contributed to this are listed here:

- a) Lack of time and resources to organise interesting and well planned events every Saturday.
- b) Location of the project (on a Saturday night in particular) can induce feelings of vulnerability, especially for women.
- c) One individual participant who was particularly challenging, rude to other participants and dominated staff time. This made the atmosphere unpleasant and inhibited some participants from coming on a regular basis. Feedback was quite specific about this.

The decision to open the project every Saturday was changed to try and host more interesting and better managed events on a monthly basis. This was implemented in November, starting with a laughter workshop, and a poetry evening with John Hegley. Both were ticketed and advertised outside of the project to attract higher numbers. The John Hegley event was well attended with almost 40 people.

Some objection has been raised to the change in Saturdays - in the main from those participants who come regularly. Some participants were also unhappy that we ticketed events, feeling that this created an 'exclusive' rather than 'inclusive' environment. These views were taken on board and Saturdays are now accessible for any participant who wishes to come to the project to socialise. We are still testing out this model and will have more feedback when the overall evaluation is carried out.

5. Key Recommendations

In continuing over the next six months and the longer-term future of the pilot project we will need to consider the following aspects to the project:

Location

- Somewhere more accessible to transport
- Away from a large council estate
- Better kitchen facilities

Participant involvement

- More support and guidance to implement participant-led activities

Therapeutic activities

- More relaxation, massages and therapeutic activities

Staff

- Experienced staff with a mental-health background and experience of dealing with challenging behaviour

Higher numbers of female participants:

- More women only activities/space
- Shared project coordinator role between male/female

Management

- Management role to include contracted hours based at the project to allow for proper supervision of staff and volunteers
- Staff should be contracted for supervision time outside of project as well.
- Shared project coordinator role between male/female

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 3
Interim evaluation November 2008

Taking account of all the above recommendations, there are still many participants who have benefited hugely from piloting this project. The following extract illustrates some of the positive effects on one particular individual:

“ Thank you so very much for the wellbeing project... it has been a god send to me at a very difficult time... it has been wonderful getting out at night ... I have been joining in the art class which was fantastic... the shiatsu was great for the fear I had been experiencing ... I have also had some great meals as I have not really felt like cooking... I also joined in some of the singing with guitar and some drama. All have been fantastic and done lots for my wellbeing and happiness Thank you so much “

The original model of the Wellbeing Project has changed to 2 regular evenings per week with one Saturday per month. It is likely to change again after January 2009 when funding may be reduced and activities may need to be scaled down. It is hoped that the Wellbeing Project will continue to support those isolated groups and individuals who have become regular participants, and that numbers will increase and benefit more in the future.

Thanks go to Consultant Mick Denton from Inspiracion and Georgina Gavriel, SLT Outreach Worker for their help in compiling this report.

Louise Palmer
Project Manager

4.2 Telephone evaluation carried out by Georgina Gavriel November 2008

101 people were contacted by the Stuart Low Trust (via telephone) to give their views on the project, with contact details taken from registration forms. Of these, 38 people responded (38.3%).

Respondents can be broken down into the following categories - those who:

- Attended on the opening night (only)
- Made 3 or less visits to the project
- Made between 5-12 visits to the project
- Continue to use/visit the project once a week
- Continue to use/visit the project twice a week
- Continue to use/visit the project three times a week

The views and experiences belonging to each of these categories will be investigated in this evaluation. The first part will investigate the reasons behind an individual's level of attendance. However, in the interests of fairness, the views of those who attended the opening night will be investigated as a separate category, to reduce the likelihood of perception over shadowing actual experiences of the project.

Then the report will then bring together everyone's views of the project - strengths/weaknesses - before a final summary.

Opening night respondents:

Of the 38 individuals, 14 (36%) only attended the opening night. With feedback, 6 individuals said they would otherwise attend if certain criteria were met. These were:

- If the project was available during the day /daylight hours
- If the project was nearer to them
- If they had more time and less commitments
- If the project had IT facilities/computer room
- If they had the confidence to get themselves to the project

Of the remaining 8, four individuals did not disclose their views about the project. The remaining four were more vocal, and felt strongly about not using the project because:

- They felt weary of a service-user environment
- They were already linked to SLT services that they prefer

Experiences of those who attend(ed) the project

The remaining 24 of surveyed individuals reported more regular attendance at the project. This ranges from 3 visits (only) to 3 days per week (ongoing, regular basis).

Three or fewer visits:

Of less frequent visitors -3 or less visits (6 visitors, 15%) - reasons for not attending the project more frequently include:

- Finding it difficult to relax around people
- Life is overwhelming at the moment - can't commit to new activities
- Too few people to socialise with - people disappearing halfway through workshops, which ruins the atmosphere

Possible changes that would make them re-visit include:

- A common room/snooker room
- Singing workshops
- Counselling

Five to twelve visits:

Other, more frequent visitors - 5-12 visitors (4 visitors, 10%) - reasons for not attending more include:

- Busy on weekends
- Own personal issues - prefers to keep to herself
- Only visits when they have time to spare

Of the possible changes that might encourage them visit the project more often, the following suggestions were given:

- Nothing
- Currently happy
- I go often enough, no changes needed
- A pool table

Once a week:

More regular visitors - once a week - account for 21% of all respondents (8 individuals). Reasons for not making more regular attendance include:

- Lives too far to drive on weekends
- Doesn't like activities on Sat/Sun
- Spends time with family/partners the rest of the time

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 4
Telephone evaluation November 2008

Of these individuals, the following suggestions were made to improve the project and encourage them to attend more often:

- Nothing - really happy.
- The project has helped a respondent to deal multiple issues
- A regular massage/relaxation evening
- More cooked food
- Dance lessons would encourage a respondent to travel more often
- More exercise/relaxation classes
- Art sessions/yoga

Twice a week:

The most frequent visitors - twice per week - account for 13% of respondents (5 individuals). Most had little to say about changes that would make them visit the project more often. Of the few comments, the following was suggested:

- Encourage more females to attend the project - a predominantly male environment can feel intimidating

Suggestions for changes include:

- A computing area
- Service-user led activities
- Film nights should publicise film before the night
- More regular women's group - rather than once a month
- Run female-orientated projects - as the project is losing women and young adults
- Arrange a facilitator to teach card games
- Open the project later on Saturday - until 11.30pm - currently finishes too early to constitute a 'night out'
- Arrange a regular relaxation, stress management & meditation group
- Recruit a second coordinator - preferably female - to help current male coordinator. Current coordinator is sometimes busy attending to matters in a separate quarter and other things happen in a separate area - leaving the project unsupervised
- People collect in 'meet n' greet area' - which can be intimidating
- Area & Safety - Archway can be intimidating at night, and people feel frightened walking along backstreets to visit the project. The trust could arrange/help with transport and safety at this time
- TV/DVD to be situated at the Project
- Sewing machine for craft group

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 4
Telephone evaluation November 2008

- Suggestion box
- Advertise project in Contact Islington
- Organise a massage therapist for Saturday evenings - might attract more females
- Inform large charities (Mind, Saneline, Samaritans) of the project
- Singing - Peter Crocket ran a session with his guitar - proved popular
- Circulate minutes from focus group meetings/evaluation

Three times a week:

One respondent originally attended 3 evenings a week (Weds/Saturday & Sunday), although now attends less often, due to other commitments/busy lifestyle. This respondent feels positively about the exercise classes offered, and has recommended the project to a friend, who receives monthly updates and uses the project herself.

Strengths/Weaknesses:

Each respondent was asked to comment on their likes/dislikes of the project. The respondents were encouraged to be honest and frank, and were invited to comment on activities, surroundings, staff, structure - or whatever they felt strongly about. Here are the results:

Opening night respondents:

Of those who came to the opening night, the following strengths were noted (14 individuals):

- The opportunity to exercise - notably, holistic exercise (i.e. yoga)
- The building is pleasant - nice atmosphere

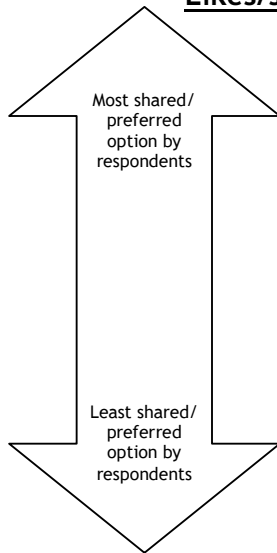
On weaknesses, not enough individuals felt able to comment, although one individual felt anxious about meeting new people. The same person also felt the building (school) provided a patronising environment, as he prefers to engage with active/real life projects rather than 'passively taking part in structured activities and classes'. He prefers projects like the Culpeper Garden, as individuals take an active part in working towards achieving something - taking pride in a common goal/future of a project - and feels a greater sense of self-worth, rather than being artificially created through supervised activities. He prefers an 'exchange' between service users and providers.

Regular Attendees:

Of those who come more regularly (24 individuals, 63% of all respondents) the following strengths were noted (please note that each respondent had

the option to choose more than one preference, and the results below are ranked according to most commonly expressed likes/strengths amongst all 24 respondents):

Likes/strengths



- Opportunity to exercise - most liked/preferred activity (expressed by 15% of all respondents)
- Bingo/quizzes & board games - second preferred activity (10%)
- No preferences for a single activity - enjoys them all (10%)
- The opportunity to eat healthy food (10%)
- The project offers somewhere to go - some individuals prefer less structured activities and the project offers the opportunity to meet other people (7%)
- Equal split preferences (expressed by 7% of respondents) were given to the following activities - drama, singing, holistic therapies, cook n' eat classes, the opportunity to eat healthy food.
- Women's workshops.
- Art, knitting, a nice large space to visit.

SUMMARY - in essence, the wide range of activities means that there is something available for everyone - catering for diverse tastes/needs.

Weaknesses/Dislikes:

- 50% of attendees (12 individuals) had no dislikes.
- 12% of attendees (3 individuals) report that disturbances - during workshops/sessions - can be off-putting and annoying.
- 8% (2 individuals, female) feel unsafe walking to/from the project.
- Other weaknesses include:
 - No food served on Weds due to 'cook and eat' session - would prefer food to be available to buy
 - Cost of activities (£1 drama) too high - although has not deterred this individual taking part
 - Other people being offensive/unpleasant/swearing, causing others to leave and some fail to return.
 - Activities blocking the corridor, restricting access to the toilets
 - Finding drama too difficult, due to mental health difficulties
 - The atmosphere is too daunting - too many people for an individual to deal with
 - Islington People's Rights - might first seem good, but have failed to provide meaningful help
 - Security - no place to lock a bike inside the building
 - Feeling excluded on Saturday Night Monthly Events - particularly regular attendees who cannot afford the cost of tickets for workshops taking place and feel excluded.
 - Feeling scared/put off by others with more serious mental health difficulties

Key weaknesses affecting attendance:

Some pressing issues that I have encountered during outreach have been calls concerning the behaviour of others, and how this has impacted attendance. I spoke at length with a couple about their experiences of the Project. The couple have attended the project since the launch in April and have remained complimentary about the services offered since the beginning. They both take part in regular activities and feel the project has contributed to their wellbeing. However, the behaviour of other participants has caused them to make contact with the office and inform the Trust of discontinued attendance, should nothing be done about rude/disruptive behaviour of other members.

The couple also informed me that several individuals have since left the project as a result, and they have witnessed others leave the project the moment a particular disrupter arrives. Whilst the couple have returned, other individuals have not. This reduced attendance - and whilst dealt with - might need to be looked at in the future. Some of the individuals identified as 'disrupters' have more serious mental health needs. The trust will need to consider support to these individuals and staff capacity/expertise to provide the necessary support - without detracting from other duties.

Evaluation:

Looking back on the findings, the results can be broken down into three separate categories:

- the experiences and perceptions of those who attended the opening night - first impressions
- lapsing individuals - lasting impressions
- regular individuals - changing/ongoing impressions

Regarding individuals who attended the opening night, the suggestions put forward include factors that the Trust can do very little about - i.e. the provision of day services are outside the specification for the project, and some suggestions are of a personal nature - i.e. the project being nearer to them. With regards to more manageable changes - i.e. suggestions for IT suite and needing more self-esteem to attend the project - this is dependent upon funding (portable laptops) and providing more structured support (outreach) for individuals wishing to engage and access services. Some individuals felt strongly that the project was not for them - reasons include recovery from mental health difficulties and a fear of being in a service user environment might hamper their perceived development. This unveils a really important point that the Trust has aimed to prioritise from the start - namely, that the project is not exclusively a 'mental health' service, but rather an inclusive project intended for everyone - and whilst supportive of mental health needs - it has done its best to engage all members of the community through marketing (i.e. targeting mental health service providers and other generic community services with equal weight - i.e. libraries, GPs, community halls etc...).

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 4
Telephone evaluation November 2008

Regarding individuals who have attended the project between 3 and 12 visits - we have the most to gain in increasing engagement and tailoring services for these individuals. Little can be done to address some of the reasons for non-engagement - i.e. some individuals find it hard to relax around other people - other than providing more specialist mental health support (as suggested above). A common room/snooker room and singing workshops are all things to be considered in the future. For those who attend more frequently (once or more times per week), ways to improve the project involve overcoming barriers to women (providing a woman-friendly environment - suggestions for a regular women's group and a female coordinator alongside the current male coordinator). Suggestions for yoga, relaxation and art-related activities have been introduced since the start of this evaluation, so changes are underway. Issues around safety have been raised in this report - particularly feeling unsafe walking to/from the project. I have suggested a regular 'Home Group', where people have the option to leave at the same time and walk to main transport routes together. The majority of suggestions for improvement can be easily introduced (i.e. clearing meet n' greet area; promoting more user-led activities).

Looking back, in terms of key strengths, everyone appears to be pleased about the range of activities on offer, as illustrated, and there is something for everyone. The most popular activities are exercise (yoga/Pilates/twist n' tone), which should remain an ongoing feature, as well as regular quiz nights. The project also offers individuals somewhere to go - for individuals who prefer less structured activities and the opportunity to meet other people.

Of the less attractive aspects - the majority of people reported disturbances as their top dislike (12%), reinforced by people leaving the project due to another member's behaviour, followed by feeling unsafe walking to/from the project. Behaviour and location are clear issues of concern for the future. Other, more dispersed comments include no food served on Wednesdays (when individuals would like food available), cost of activities - although this has not prevented individuals from taking part - and individuals finding certain activities too difficult for those with more complex needs.

Conclusion

The trust has achieved much over the last year. The project remains proud at having engaged over 100 individuals since its opening. Dealing with disturbances, support for individuals with more complex needs and safety are top priorities. However, all respondents gave clear examples of activities/features they liked, with an example from an individual who feels the project continues to help her deal with severe anxiety and schizophrenia. Whilst the project has far to go in many respects, it has achieved much in securing the positive opinion of 50% of attendees (12 individuals) who reported no dislikes and feel the project has no weaknesses. I feel this is the project's biggest achievement. Whilst there is plenty of scope for improvement, at least half of respondents clearly feel we are on the right path and this should not be underestimated.

Georgina Gavriel
26.11.08

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 5

5. Breakdown of activities

5.1 Wednesday activities (direct costs do not include rent or coordinators/managers)

Activity Name	Dates run	Number of sessions	Approximate direct costs	Average number of guests	Approximate takings	Notes
Cook and eat classes	30/04/2008 to 25/03/2009	46	£7084	4	£460	Run by Manor Gardens
Women's workshops	25/06/2009 to 07/01/2008	8	£0	5	£0	Uncharged
Mind information sessions	07/05/2008 and 21/05/2008	2	£0	1	£0	Uncharged
Poetry group	07/05/2008 to 28/05/2008	4	£0	2	£0	Uncharged
Reading group	04/06/2008 to 16/07/2008	4	£0	2	£0	Uncharged
Islington People's Rights	30/04/2008 to 21/01/2009	19	£546	2	£0	Uncharged
Aerobics	30/04/2008 to 15/10/2008	22	£495	2	£33	
Pilates	30/04/2008 to 15/10/2008	22	£550	3	£66	
Knitting	08/10/2008 to 25/03/2009	8	£0	3	£20	
Work skills training course	25/03/2009 to 22/04/2009	5	£850	9	£0	Uncharged
Café	04/03/2009 to 29/03/2009	9	£315	7	£100	
Relaxation class	22/10/2008 to 29/04/2009	23	£468	2	£30	
Art therapy	08/10/2008 to 17/12/2008	10	£362	2	£20	Supervision and art materials
Open art sessions	04/03/2009 to 29/04/2009	9	£51	5	£22.50	Art materials
Stress relief workshop	04/06/2008	1	£0	4	£0	Uncharged
Shiatsu massage	11/06/2008 to 30/07/2008	8	£0	4	£32	
Focus group	06/09/2008	1	£0	10	£0	Uncharged
Yoga	13/08/2008 to 17/09/2008	3	£0	3	£9	

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 5

5.2 Saturday activities

5.2a Saturday activities weekly (direct costs do not include rent or coordinators/managers)

Activity Name	Dates run	Number of sessions	Approximate direct costs	Number of guests (total)	Approximate takings (total)	Notes
Café	26/04/2008 to 18/10/2008	26	£1040 (average over all period)	11 (average over all period)	£500	Payments were not always collected at beginning of project
Drumming performance	26/04/2008	1	£40	12	£25	10 guests for café
Film club	03/05/2008 to 23/08/2008	2	£80	24	£23	12 guests for café each evening
Guitar performance	10/05/2008 and 16/08/2008	2	£120	24	£20	12 guests for café each evening
Didgeridoo performance	17/05/2008	1	£85	12	£10	6 guests for café
Dance movement and meditation	31/05/2008	1	£85	10	£12	6 guests for café
Puppetry and open mic night	07/06/2008	1	£100	15	£30	15 guests for café
Jazz performance	28/06/2008	1	£80	12	£20	12 guests for café
Bonsai Bingo	26/04/2008 to 18/10/2008	3	£120	24	£55	12 for café each evening (approx)
Summer party	12/07/2008	1	£60	20	£40	
Karaoke	19/07/2008	1	£40	14	£30	14 guests for café
Women's group and film night	26/07/2008	1	£40	12	£50	4 guests for café
Bingo and games night	02/08/2008	2	£80	18	£35	18 guests for café
Quiz night	09/08/2008	1	£40	10	£18	10 guests for café
Guitarist	16/08/2008	1	£40	19	£40	19 guests for café
Bingo	30/08/2008 and 18/10/2008	2	£80	12	£30	12 guests for café
Focus group and bingo	06/09/2008	1	£40	10	£25	6 guests for café
Music Quiz	13/09/2008 and 27/09/2008	2	£80	16	£35	8 guests for café each evening (approx)
Bingo and film	04/10/2008	1	£40	12	£45	Café payments
Surgery with MP Jeremy Corbyn	11/10/2008	1	£40	12	£28	MP was unable to attend

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 5

5.2b Saturday activities monthly (direct costs do not include rent or coordinators/managers)

Activity Name	Dates run	Number of sessions	Approximate direct costs	Number of guests for activity	Number of visitors for café	Total guests for evening	Approximate takings	Notes
Laughter workshop	01/11/2008	1	£220	10	2 (who didn't participate in activity)	12	£60	
Poetry evening	29/11/2008	1	£180	37	Guests paid for both	37	£129	
Multicultural evening	10/01/2009	1	£90	25	Guests paid for both	25	£54.50	
Comedy evening	21/02/2009	1	£200	48	Guests paid for both	48	£105.60	
Party quiz & Bingo night	28/03/2009	1	£80	22	Guests paid for both	22	£57.05	
Drama performance and celebration	25/04/2009	1	£80	20	Guests paid for both	20	£39	

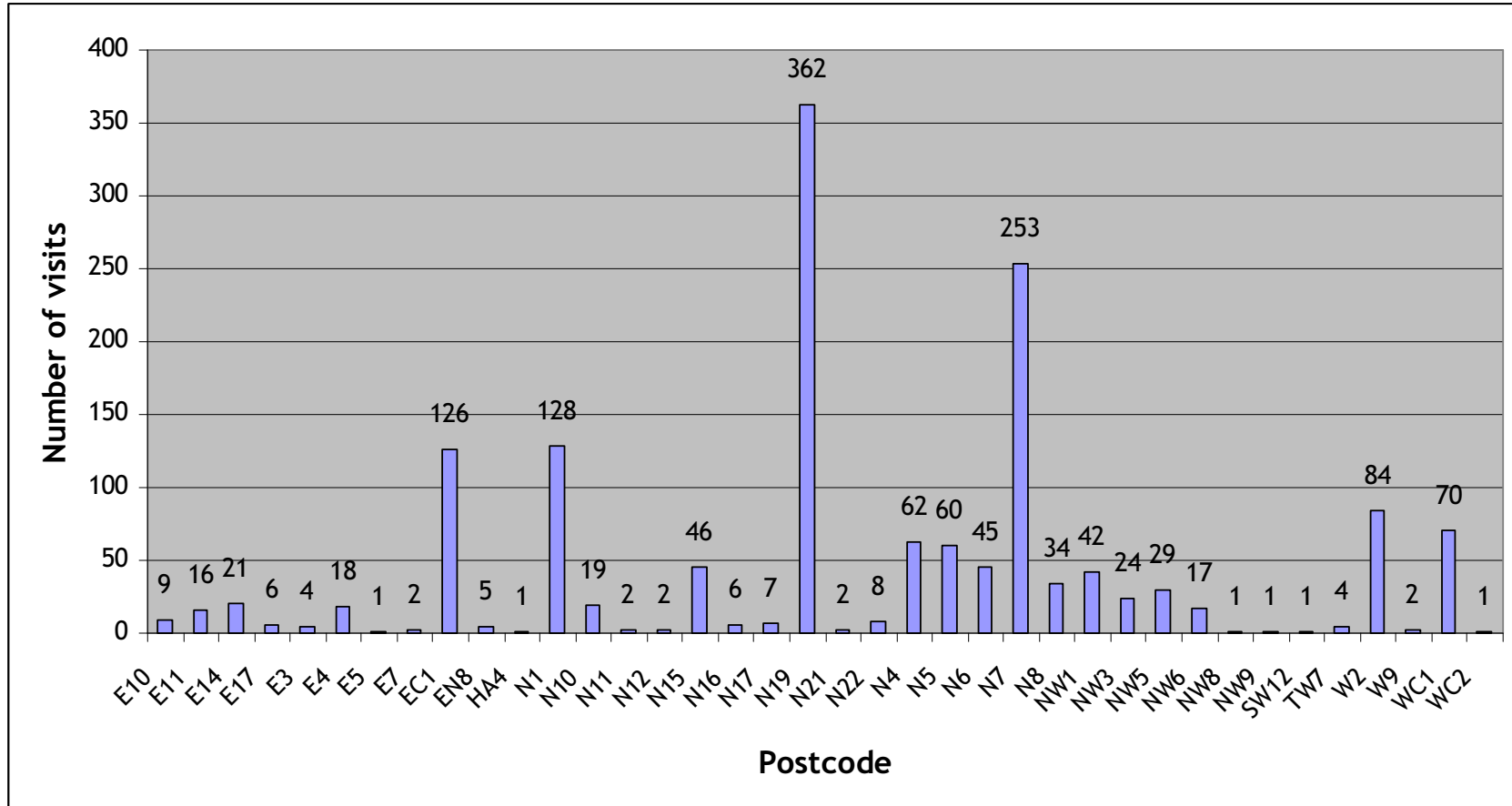
5.3 Sunday activities (direct costs do not include rent or coordinators/managers)

Activity Name	Dates run	Number of sessions	Approximate direct costs	Average number of visitors	Approximate takings	Notes
Music workshops	27/04/2008 to 01/06 2008	6	£345	2	£24	
Brazilian and African Drumming	08/06/2008 to 21/09/2008	13	£0	2	£30	
Yoga/Pilates	28/09/2008 to 26/04/2009	28	£0	3	£80	
Homeopathy	05/10/2008 to 26/04/2009	28	£1362	5	£143	
Drama workshop	08/06/2008 to 26/04/2009	45	£946	5	£133	Originally uncharged then £1
Head and foot massage	27/04/2008 to 26/04/2009	48	£0	4	£0	Payment direct to therapist
Café	27/04/2008 to 26/04/2009	51	£2000	15	£1070	Not all guests had a full meal.
Focus group	21/09/2008	1	£0	12	£0	Uncharged

6. Breakdown of participants by postcode, age groups, gender and ethnicity

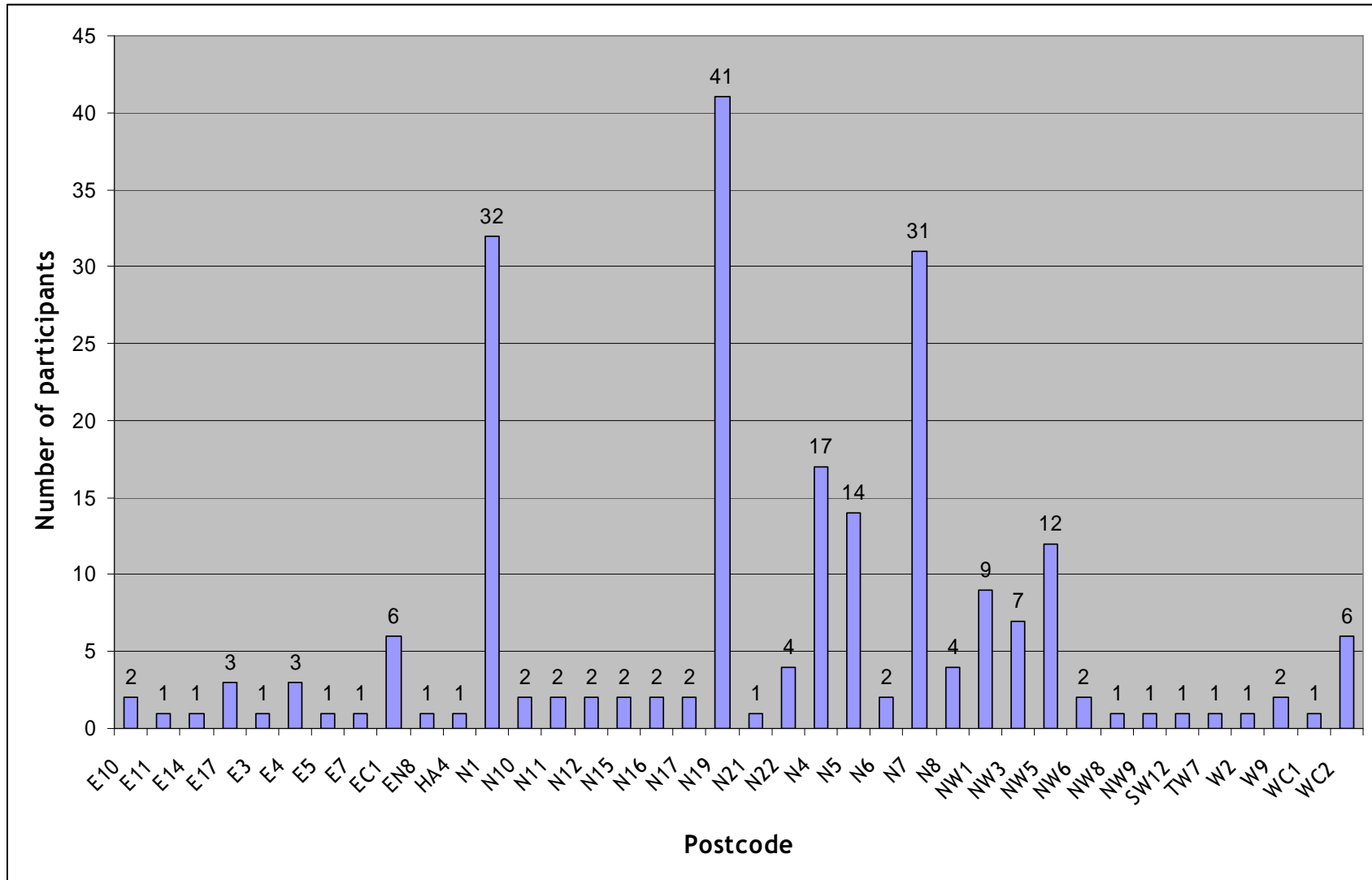
6.1 Postcode

6.1a Number of visits by postcode (April 2008-April 2009)

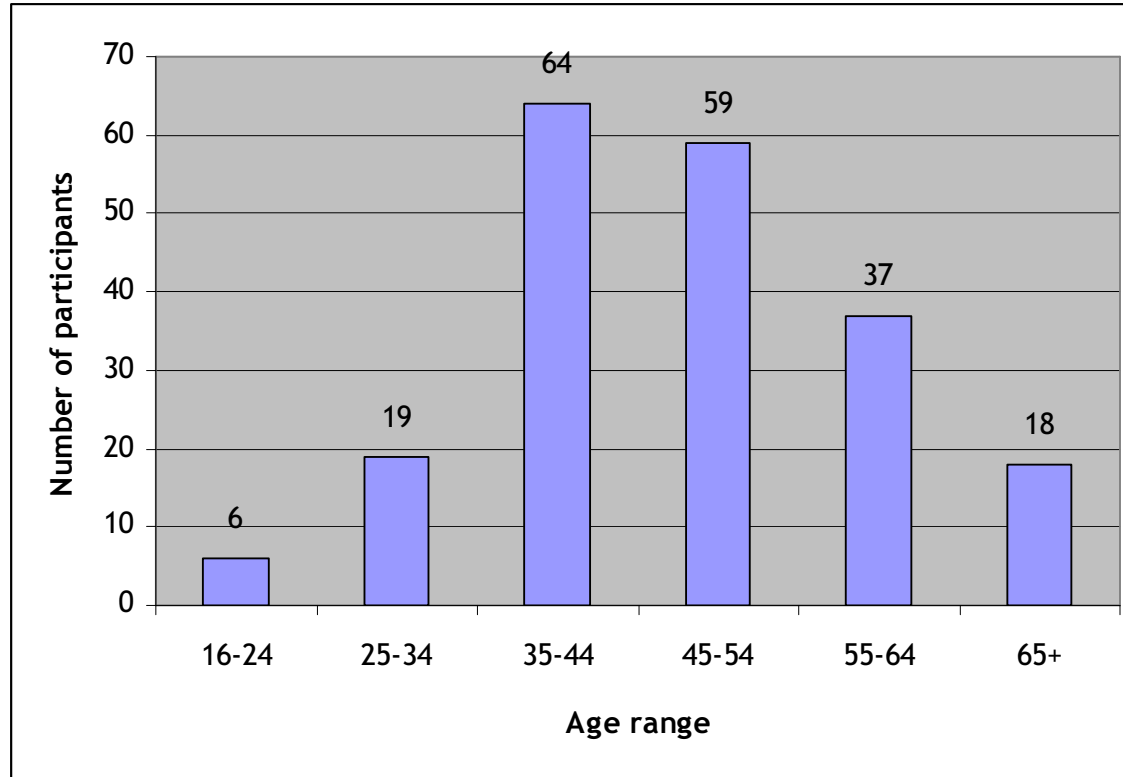


The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 6

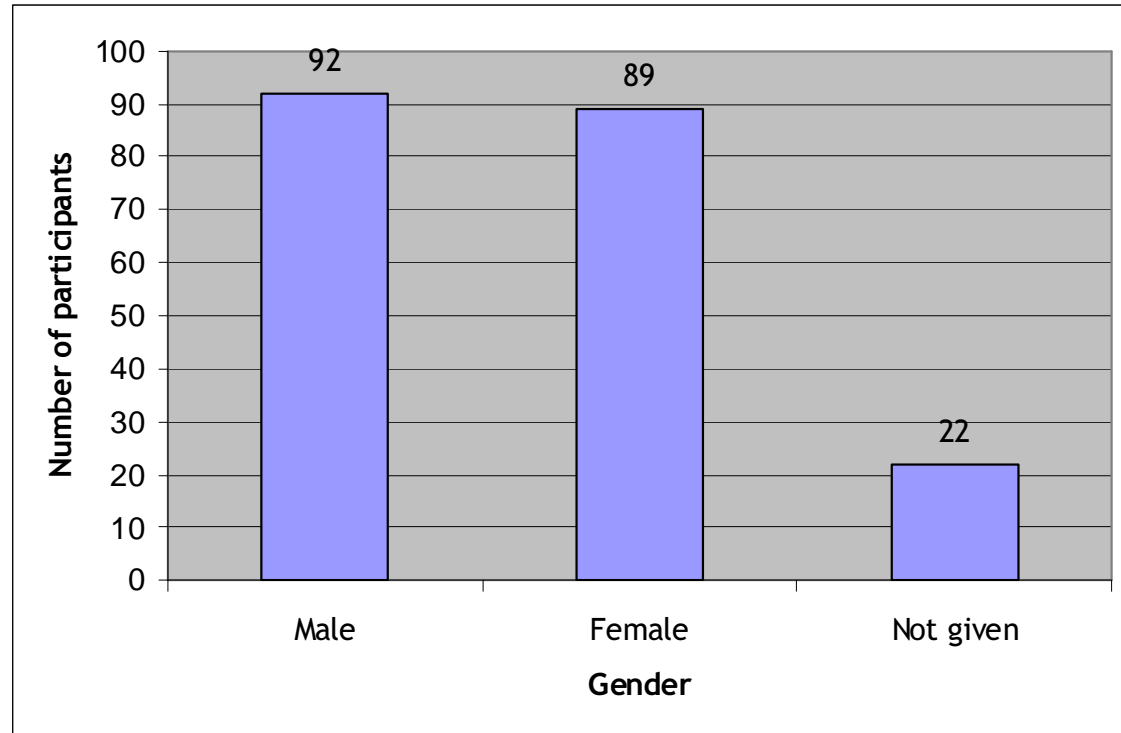
6.1b Registration postcodes of participants



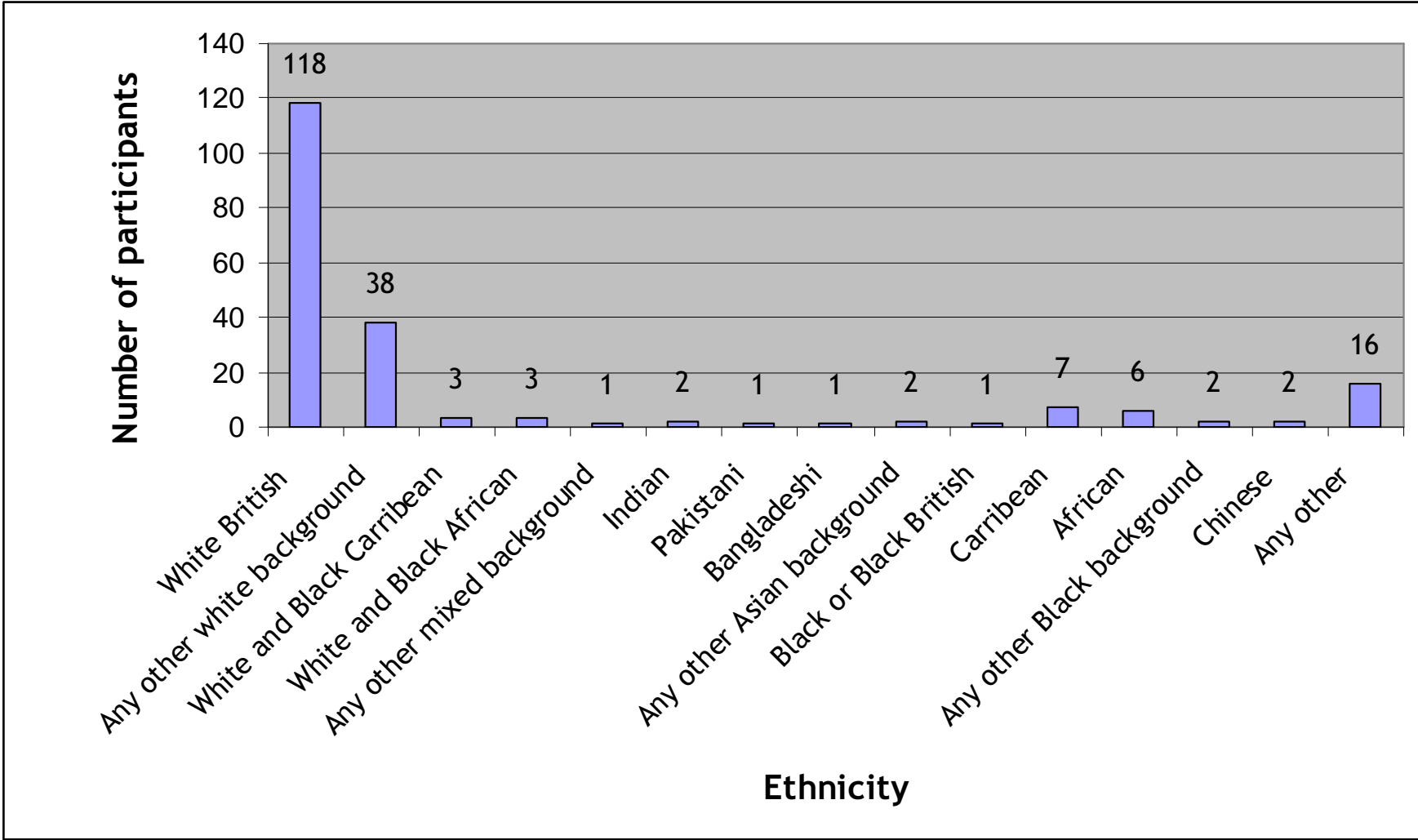
6.2 Age groups of participants



6.3 Gender of participants



6.4 Ethnicity of participants



7. List of possible funders

29 May 1961 Charitable Trust
Abbey Charitable Trust
Albert Hunt Trust
Beatrice Laing Foundation
Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation
Cadbury Schweppes
Charles Hayward Foundation
Charles S French Charitable Trust
CHK Charities
City Bridge Trust
Comic Relief
David and Frederick Barclay Foundation
Deutsche Bank
Donald Forrester Trust
Drapers' Company Charity
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
Girdlers' Company Charitable Trust
Goldsmith's Company Charity
Hadley Trust
Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation
HBOS Foundation
Henry Smith Charity
Hilden Charitable Fund
J Paul Getty Junior Trust
James Tudor Foundation
Jill Franklin Trust
John Lewis Partnership
Kathleen Hannay Memorial Fund
Kings Fund
Lloyds TSB Foundation
London Catalyst
Mercers' Charitable Foundation
Merchant Taylors Company
Mrs Smith & Mount Trust
P F Charitable Foundation
Percy Bilton Charity
Peter de Haan Charitable Trust
Pilgrim Trust
Rose Foundation
Saddlers' Company Charitable Trust
Sir Halley Stuart Trust
Transformation Fund
Triangle Trust (1949) Trust
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation
Tudor Trust
v' - Youth Volunteering Fund
Zurich Community Trust

8. Project outline and Behaviour agreement



What is the Wellbeing Project?

The Wellbeing project is a place to get involved in a variety of social and leisure activities.

The aim of the project is to provide a space where people can enjoy these activities and improve their wellbeing.

The project is an inclusive atmosphere where people can get together in a welcoming environment.

Some of the activities at the project:

- Café:** Enjoy a nutritious meal cooked by our catering assistants
- Homeopathy:** Homeopathy is a complementary therapy which aims to help people bring their bodies back into balance. Practitioner Toni Gooden is joining us from the Highgate Mental Health Centre. Please note that it is not a replacement for other treatments.
- Drama group:** Tutor Meeme Luks takes a class on Sunday evenings. A chance to practise your acting skills and express yourself!
- Hatha Yoga:** We are lucky to have two experienced practitioners who take classes on alternate Sundays in this popular form of yoga which can help improve posture and relaxation.
- Relaxation classes:** If you are feeling a bit stressed by city life, why not come and join our new relaxation classes with Katy Connell?
- Cook and eat class:** Each week the group learns about nutrition and cooks a delicious meal.

It is very rare that there is any unacceptable behaviour at the project. To maintain this situation and keep the harmony of the project we ask all participants to sign the acceptable behaviour agreement below.

ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AGREEMENT

The following types of behaviour are considered to be unacceptable towards other participants, staff or volunteers at the project:

1. Disruptive behaviour
2. Threatening behaviour
3. Violent behaviour
4. Harassment

This also includes any other visitors or staff on the premises of Hargrave Park School.

Procedure:

1. We will first discuss the inappropriate behaviour with those concerned. If necessary a warning may be given.
2. We may ask the participant to leave the premises if the behaviour is persistent and un-resolvable.
3. We may call the police in extreme circumstances
4. We may temporarily exclude a participant who consistently exhibits any of the above behaviour.
5. We may permanently exclude a participant if we feel that their behaviour would cause unnecessary harm or distress to anyone at the project or other SLT event.

I have read and understood the above guidelines on unacceptable behaviour at the Wellbeing Project.

I understand that the above action will be taken if I am involved in any unacceptable behaviour at the Wellbeing Project.

Signed:.....

Please print:

9. Examples of advertising and promotion

9.1 Article on project launch (Islington Tribune 02/05/2008)

NEWS Islington Tribune 2 May 2008

'Life-line' service for vulnerable will be looking for funding

Walk-in centre a tribute from a mother to her son

by PETER GRUNER

HER son committed suicide 11 years ago, but this week Virginia Low is able to celebrate the launch of a new "life-line" walk-in centre for the mentally ill in Archway.

Former Islington Green pupil Stuart Low killed himself aged 27, after being unable to get help with a bout of acute depression in 1997.

On Wednesday night Stuart was remembered at the opening of the centre, in Hargrave Park Community School, by Islington mayor Barbara Smith.

The Well-Being Centre will allow people to join a range of activities from cooking to exercises and music from 6.30pm to 10pm, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

After his death Stuart's mother, former social scientist Virginia Low, vowed that she



would campaign for better facilities for people with conditions like schizophrenia and depression.

She set up the Stuart Low Trust which now boasts more than 1,000 supporters from all over London with an office in the Claremont Centre at the Angel, a short walk from her home.

Volunteers provide assistance and advice to people with mental health problems, and the trust organises events, holidays and talks by top psychologists like writer Dorothy Rowe.

Virginia said: "The new centre is an extension of the work we already do. It is important that people have somewhere to go and relax, particularly at weekends.

"But we are only funded for the first six months. We need lots of financial support."

Looking back to the death of Stuart, Virginia remembered that at the time she had been looking forward to retiring and travelling the world.

"My life changed as a result of the tragedy but I



can honestly say that I've met wonderful people who have become friends and have transformed my life," she said. "People with mental health problems live in a very hostile world. The press and public are not warm and welcoming towards them. They're often shunned by society."

The trust works like an extended family: "We're basically a social network where people with problems can relax and be themselves," said Virginia. "They don't have to define themselves by their condition."

● Stuart Low Trust is always looking for help and volunteers: Contact them at 24-27 White Lion Street, N1 9PD or phone: 020 7713 9304.

Virginia Low with, from left, mayor Barbara Smith, trust general manager Laurence Higgins and project manager Louise Palmer. Inset: Stuart Low

9.2 Original leaflet for project

How can I get involved?

It's quite simple, just come along! All that we ask is that you fill in a registration form on your first visit and you will be given an introduction to all our activities and events.

amazon.com
and you're done.

Amazon - please purchase through a link on our website (www.slt.org.uk) as 5% of your order will be donated to SLT.

Supported by



The Mercers' Charitable Foundation
The Bonus Trust
The Moulton Charitable Trust
The Mary Kinross Charitable Trust

Registered Charity No. 1102325
Company limited by guarantee No. 5001948
Designed by Portugal Prints

Where to find the SLT Wellbeing Project



**Hargrave Park
Extended Community School
51 Bredgar Road
London N19 5BS**
(Please note main entrance is in Bredgar Rd)

Buses:
4 & C11 stop nearby in Dartmouth Park Hill, as do 134 & 390 in Junction Road (17,41,43,143,210,263,271 & W5 also stop around the Archway area)

Underground:
Archway (Northern Line)

For more information about the Wellbeing Project or The Stuart Low Trust, please contact:
0207 7713 9304, e-mail info@slt.org.uk or visit our website www.slt.org.uk to download our latest programme of events.


The Wellbeing Project from The Stuart Low Trust



at
**Hargrave Park
Extended Community School
51 Bredgar Road
London N19 5BS**

**Every Wednesday,
Saturday & Sunday Evening
6.30pm - 10pm**

Supported by



The Mercers' Charitable Foundation
The Bonus Trust
The Moulton Charitable Trust
The Mary Kinross Charitable Trust

What is the Wellbeing Project?

The Wellbeing Project is a place to get involved in social and leisure activities including music, cookery & exercise classes, drumming workshops, reading, poetry and women's groups, as well as quiz and bingo nights. There are opportunities to talk about, and be referred to counselling services, as well as legal and welfare advice. Some complementary therapies are also available. Our Friends room will provide a space to relax or play games, or eat something healthy and delicious from our low cost café.

The Wellbeing Project provides a place for people to meet up with others, have fun, stay healthy and perhaps learn a new skill.

The Wellbeing Project is available both for local people and those living in the surrounding areas.

Who is it for?

The Stuart Low Trust has an inclusive approach to all its activities and welcomes all members of the community to come along.

Since 1999 SLT has developed its varied and interesting programme including gardening, photography, a weekly Friday evening event, as well as canal boat trips and outings to places of special interest.

Our formal charitable objects are "the promotion, protection and preservation of public health and the relief of those suffering from mental, emotional or psychological illness or distress."

The Wellbeing Project will further extend the above programme while developing services to include support, advice and information. It is not necessary to sign up to all of our activities; you may just want to do a weekly cookery class or try out a music session. We do ask that everyone behaves respectfully towards others and in doing so, maintains a safe and pleasant atmosphere (please also note that no alcohol is allowed on the premises).

When will activities take place?

Programme:

Wednesdays

Cookery Class
Exercise Classes (Pilates and Aerobics)
Advice and Information Session
Counselling advice/referral
Reading Group
Poetry Group
Women's Group

Saturdays and Sundays

Music workshop
Drumming workshop
Drama workshop
Film club
Bingo / quiz night
Live Bands
Complementary therapies
Friends room
Café

Some of the activities are held weekly and others rotate on a monthly or fortnightly basis. Some are charged at a low cost, to enable us to pay skilled instructors and professionals. Other activities are held at no cost. Weekly timetables are available at Hargrave Park School.

9.3 Early project timetable

The Wellbeing Project is a place to get involved in social and leisure activities including music, cookery & exercise classes, drumming workshops, reading poetry and women’s groups.

Please see over for our current activity timetable.

Please note that some activities require a low-cost payment and some are free.

SLT has an inclusive approach to all of our activities and welcomes all members of the community to come along.

We require people who attend the project to treat each other with respect and dignity.

We welcome both local people and those living in the surrounding areas.

If you would like any more information, please call the office on 020 7713 9304.

Our formal charitable objects are “the promotion, protection and preservation of public health and the relief of those suffering from mental, emotional or psychological illness or distress.”



Hargrave Park Extended Community School, 51 Bredgar Road, London N19 5BS

(The entrance to the school is in Bredgar Road not Hargrave Road)

Buses:

4 & C11 stop nearby in Dartmouth Park Hill, as do 134 & 390 in Junction Road (17, 41, 43, 143, 210, 263, 271 & W5 also stop around the Archway area)

Underground:

Archway (Northern Line)

Get involved

We are always keen for people to come and share a skill at the project or help out with volunteering, if you would like to get involved please contact us on 020 7713 9304 or at info@slt.org.uk

The Stuart Low Trust
 bringing people together for better health and wellbeing

**Wellbeing Project
 Activity Timetable**

**Wednesday 30 July to
 Sunday 24 August 2008**



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 Charity Registered in England & Wales No. 1102325

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project Evaluation - Appendix 9

Wednesdays

Twist and tone with Julie Ritchie

Time: 6.30-7.30pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 30 Jul, 06 Aug



Pilates with Julie Ritchie

Time: 7.45 -8.45pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 30 Jul, 06 Aug



Yoga classes

Time: 6.30-7.30pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 13 Aug, 20 Aug



Cook and eat classes

Time: 6.30-8.30pm

Room: Friends and Family Room

Cost: £2.50

Dates: 30 Jul, 06 Aug 13 Aug, 20 Aug



Shiatsu with Frances Hamilton

Time: 6.30-8.30pm

Room: Training room 2

Cost: £1 (PB)

Dates: 30 Jul, 06 Aug 13 Aug, 20 Aug



Women's workshop - all about criticism

Time: 7.00-9.00pm

Room: Training room 1

Cost: FREE

Dates: 30 Jul



Islington People's Rights - Legal advice

Time: 6.30-8.30pm

Room: Training room 1

Cost: FREE

Dates: 6 Aug, 20 Aug



Story writing with Lane Ashfeld

Time: 7.00-9.00pm

Room: Training room 1

Cost: FREE



Saturdays

Bingo and games

Time: 7.00-9.00pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 02 Aug



Quiz Night

Time: 7.30-9.00pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 09 Aug



Rick Ferry Guitarist

Time: 7.30-9.00pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 16 Aug



Film Night

Time: 7.30-9.30pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 23 Aug



Café

Time: 7.00pm-9.00pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1.50 (main course)

£0.20 (drink)

£0.30 (dessert)

Dates: 02 Aug, 09 Aug, 16 Aug, 23 Aug



Open space for art/board games

Time: 6.30-9.30pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: FREE

Dates: 02 Aug, 09 Aug, 16 Aug, 23 Aug



Sundays

Brazilian drumming with Mac

Time: 7.00-8.00pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 03 Aug, 10 Aug, 17 Aug



Drama Group with Meeme

Time: 8.00-9.30pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1

Dates: 03 Aug, 10 Aug, 17 Aug, 24 Aug



Café

Time: 7.00pm-9.00pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: £1.50 (main course)

£0.20 (drink)

£0.30 (dessert)

Dates: 03 Aug, 10 Aug, 17 Aug, 24 Aug



Open space for art/board games

Time: 6.30-9.30pm

Room: Main hall

Cost: FREE

Dates: 03 Aug, 10 Aug, 17 Aug, 24 Aug



Head/foot massage and manicures with Jo Simon

Time: 6.30-8.30pm

Room: Training room 2

Cost: £5 (PB)

Dates: 03 Aug, 10 Aug, 17 Aug, 24 Aug



Reminders

Jul = July

Aug = August

PB = Please book by calling the office on 020 7713 9304



The Wellbeing Project Activity Timetable 30 July - 24 August 2008

**9.4 Advertisement for Saturday laughter workshop
(Islington Tribune 24/10/2008)**

The Stuart Low Trust - Wellbeing Project

£5 on door including hot food

Saturday 1st November
7.15 - 9.15pm
'LAUGHTER EVENING'




Discover some of the many reasons why laughter is so good for you - and laugh yourself silly!

Kit Hammond-Stapely pulled off a miracle when her cancer diagnosis became critical in 1998 and credits laughter and humour for helping her "ride lightly over heavy ground to triumph." After her recovery she became a Laughter Leader and now helps others recover from distress and disease.

Hargrave Park Extended Community School,
51 Bredgar Road, London N19 5BS


Tel: 020 7713 9304
E-mail: info@slt.org.uk
Web: www.slt.org.uk



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**9.5 Advertisement for Saturday poetry performance
(Islington Tribune 21/11/2008 & 28/11/2008)**

The Stuart Low Trust - Wellbeing Project



An Evening of Song and Poetry with John Hegley!

Saturday 29 November, 7.30pm–9.00pm.
Come along and enjoy an evening with one of Britain's finest poets



John Hegley ranks as one of our finest contemporary poets. He performs live in venues all over Britain, including London's Hackney and Bloomsbury Theatres and the Edinburgh Festival.




Tickets:
£4 including hot buffet
£2.50 without food

Please book on 020 7713 9304 until Friday 6pm or tickets are available on the door on Saturday evening.

Location of event:
Hargrave Park Extended Community School,
51 Bredgar Road, London N19 5BS

SLT Contact Details:
Tel: 020 7713 9304
E-mail: info@slt.org.uk
Web: www.slt.org.uk



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SLT New Year Multicultural Celebration!

Saturday 10 January 2009, 7.00pm—9.00pm

Experience the food, music and traditions of a variety of cultures in a party environment

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project
Hargrave Park Extended Community School
51 Bredgar Road, London N19 5BS

Come and celebrate the start of 2009 with SLT! Experience a variety of food, music and customs from around the globe.

TICKETS £2.50 including hot food
Pre-book your ticket by calling 020 7713 9304, or just come along on the night and pay on the door.

If you would like to give a presentation about your culture, please get in touch!

For those who do not wish to attend the celebration, space for socialising will be available. Tea, coffee and food will be available for all to purchase from the café



How to Get There



Underground: Archway (Northern Line)

Buses: 4 & C11 stop nearby in Dartmouth Park Hill, as do 134 & 390 in Junction Road (17, 41, 43, 143, 210, 263, 271 & W5 also stop around the Archway area)

9.7 Poster/flyer for Saturday comedy evening

The Stuart Low Trust

bringing people together for better health and wellbeing
(supported by the Big Lottery)



Comedy Night!

The Stuart Low Trust Wellbeing Project

Hargrave Park Extended Community School, 51 Bredgar Road,
London N19 5BS

SATURDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2009 7.30–9.30pm

Admission £4.50—includes hot buffet (vegetarian option available)

Three top comedians from the UK stand-up circuit!

DAN ANTPOLSKI



Winner of the 1998 BBC New Comedy Award, Dan is one of the most inventive, intelligent, edgy and unusual comics to emerge in years.

His quick wit and surreal flights of fancy have delighted critics and comedy audiences alike.

“A dazzling stage presence and a great store of one-liners” *The Times*

“Undeniably the most imaginative comedian on display” *Time Out*



LUKE MCQUEEN

Energetic and instantly likable, Luke’s stories and sharp observations are starting to win big audiences.



BOBBY CARROLL

Your host for the evening has been called “smooth pattered” and praised for his “fresh, funny, keen observations.” Bobby’s energetic daftness is sure to charm!

Avoid disappointment and book in advance on 020 7713 9304

How to Get there

Underground:
Archway (Northern Line)

Buses: 4 & C11 stop nearby in Dartmouth Park Hill; 134 & 390 stop nearby in Junction Road.

Bus numbers 17, 41, 43, 143, 210, 263, 271 & W5 also stop around the Archway area

Please note the entrance to the school is in Bredgar Road not Hargrave Park



For those who do not wish to attend the performance, space for socialising will be available. Tea, coffee and food will be available to purchase from the café.

This is a non alcohol event. Please be aware that some language may possibly offend.

“The promotion, protection and preservation of public health and the relief of those suffering from mental, emotional or psychological illness or distress”

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9.8 Listing for comedy evening in newspaper (Islington Gazette 19/02/2010)

www.islingtongazette.co.uk

NEWSDESK (020) 8342 5777 ADS (020) 7433 0000

Agenda

EVENTS

THURSDAY 19

● **FIND** out what happens when adults and children use art therapy to cope with the psychological impact of physically life-threatening or life-changing illnesses and disability with the exhibition *The Healing Mind: Art Therapy and the Body*. From 9am to 5pm at the Together Our Space Gallery, Old Street, EC1. This exhibition runs till February 27.

FRIDAY 20

● **LEARN** the skills of making diamond kites from beginning to flying time. Decorate your kite in unique materials and take it for a test-run in nearby Waterlow Park. From 10.30am to 12pm at Waterlow Park Centre, Dartmouth Park Hill, N19. Classes cost £8 per child and adults go free. All materials are provided.

SATURDAY 21

● **CHUCKLE** your way through a one-off comedy night in association with the Stuart Low Trust – who provide facilities for people suffering social isolation or mental stress. The line up includes Dan Antopolski, Luke McQueen and Bobby Carroll. From 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Hargrave Park Extended Community School, Bredgar Road, N19. Admission is £4.50 including a hot buffet.

SUNDAY 22

● **WALTZ**, foxtrot and cha cha the afternoon away at a tea dance where

dancers of all standards are welcome. Art of the Dog and the Rag Roof theatre company presents an afternoon of partner dancing, lessons and demonstrations with tea and cake. From 2pm-5pm at Old Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebery Avenue, EC1. Tickets cost £6 or £3 with concessions.

MONDAY 23

● **DON'T** miss the first comprehensive exhibition in the UK of 20th and 21st century Georgian art. The exhibition claims to reveal a kaleidoscope of brilliant and diverse artworks united by the passionate spirit of Georgian culture. From 10am to 6pm at the Chambers Gallery, Long Lane, EC1.

TUESDAY 24

● **CHECK** out an innovative art and music project by Manchester-based artist Joe Simpson entitled *Almost There* – a collaboration between Joe and 12 up-and-coming bands and solo artists. Each oil painting has a song written especially for that piece. From 11am to 8pm at Candid Arts Trust, Torrens Street, EC1. The exhibition runs till March 1.

WEDNESDAY 25

● **GET** to know some inspiring Londoners a little better in a new regular event called *In Conversation With*. The first week, Robert Elms talks to Peter Tatchell, human rights campaigner and gay activist – who



■ **DAN Antopolski: charity comedy night (see Saturday Events)**

will share his defining memories of London. From 7pm at the Museum of London, London Wall, EC1. Advance booking is required.

■ *If you have any information which you wish to be considered for inclusion in Agenda, write to: Agenda, Islington Gazette, 161 Tottenham Lane, London N8 9BU, telephone 020 8342 5777 or e-mail duncan.hepburn@archant.co.uk*

Compiled by **DUNCAN HEPBURN**

10. Contact details

If you would like any further information on the evaluation, the Wellbeing Project or The Stuart Low Trust, please contact;

Ian May - Lead Evaluator

ian.may@mac.com

Laurence Higgens - SLT General Manager during the pilot project

lhiggens2@googlemail.com

Susanna McKnight - SLT General Manager since February 2010

susanna@slt.org.uk