

## Arts Award Reaching Out, 2012-14

*Ruth Jones, Arts Award Associate (Access and Inclusion)*

### Background

Since its launch in 2005 Arts Award has been successfully delivered in a wide range of settings and contexts – from mainstream schools and colleges to services supporting some of the most marginalised, vulnerable young people. In order to find out more about how Arts Award is being used in non-mainstream settings an internal report was commissioned in spring 2012. A wide range of people within and outside of the Arts Award community were consulted to explore how Arts Award was being offered to young people in challenging circumstances, what factors reduce access to and/or completion of awards and which organisations might be ready to partner with Trinity College London to offer Arts Award in new contexts and increase young people's engagement with Arts Award in non-mainstream settings and challenging circumstances.

Following this internal report there was an 18 month Arts Award Reaching Out access and inclusion programme, including funded pilot projects with hospital schools, children in foster care, children referred to Arts Therapists by NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services children with behavioural disorders in residential care homes, homeless young adults, and children with life-limiting illness, directly resulting in over 300 Arts Awards achieved and 100 new advisers. All of the projects have led to ongoing, sustainable delivery. The programme also provided Arts Award advice, support and training to a range of other partners and organisations who work with disadvantaged children and young people.

Reaching Out was managed by the Arts Award Access and Inclusion Associate. The learning from Reaching Out is now being used to develop further support and resources to help widen access to Arts Award. For more information, case studies and updates please visit the Arts Award Access and Inclusion page on the website:

[www.artsaward.org.uk/accessandinclusion](http://www.artsaward.org.uk/accessandinclusion)

### Key benefits and challenges

Arts Award recognises that in many settings delivering services and support to children and young people and their families, there are urgent day to day priorities in terms of every day needs or crisis situations. The main responsibility of professionals – whether they are advisers or not – is to support young people and put their general safety and welfare first. Individuals working directly with young people in challenging circumstances generally do not tend to be arts practitioners/specialists,

and more often than not have never delivered accredited programmes with young people.

Common challenges when delivering Arts Award in these settings include:

- other priorities /agendas in young people's lives
- low levels of concentration
- low levels of literacy
- transience – young people moving between organisations

These have implications for portfolio evidencing, continuity, and can limit activities young people can undertake to achieve qualifications.

However there is recognition of the benefits of Arts Award with these groups of young people which include:

- no time restriction to complete the Award
- it's a recognised, universal qualification
- the award increases self confidence and encourages leadership
- can lead to further education / training
- an opportunity to achieve in areas not measured by other qualifications
- a variety and range of acceptable portfolio evidencing
- the openness to non arts professionals delivering the Award
- a good way to introduce the arts for the first time
- competitive fees
- availability of the Access Fund

As with many settings, organisations working with young people at risk often depend on time-limited project funding to support arts programmes. The accessibility and achievability of Arts Award at Discover, Explore and Bronze levels makes a short term project with accreditation a reality, and many organisations find that 'embedding' Arts Award within their year round provision works – and that Arts Award can be aligned with existing aims and objectives and can improve outcomes for the children and young people they work with.

In addition, organisations and professionals working with vulnerable young people report that Arts Award supports improved well being and self confidence, gives young people a sense of purpose and achievement, and involves family and carers.

For participating organisations an important aspect of the Reaching Out programme was recognition that they worked with small groups, or even on a one to one basis, and that target numbers, timetables and dates for moderation were realistic and flexible.

## The Reaching Out programme, 2012-14

The Reaching Out programme involved funded projects, and support and partnership work, as well as work within the Arts Award team to raise knowledge and awareness of how Arts Award works in challenging circumstances. The focus of the Reaching Out work was to test and embed Arts Award within organisations and ongoing practice, and to provide information and evidence of accessibility – that Arts Award can work in settings and situations where perhaps other qualifications can't, and that Arts Award has a positive impact on children and young people over and above its status as a qualification.

A three year Arts Award impact study is currently being carried out by a research team from London South Bank University, due for completion in 2015. Results emerging from quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that Arts Award particularly encourages development of personal and social skills, enjoyment and enthusiasm, and leadership and general skills in young people. All the case studies were assessed as encouraging meta-cognition – 'learning to learn', and Arts Award is perceived as being particularly beneficial for children who have difficult relationships with education.

## Funded projects

Six key projects were funded and supported in three types of setting:

- **Health:** hospital schools; arts therapy/CAMHS; long term ill-health
- **Looked after children:** residential children's homes; foster care
- **Homelessness:** housing support for young adults

In addition, the programme included specialist support and advice to projects, programmes and centres, a range of partnerships, events, and resources, as well as representation at key conferences and events.

## Health settings

**Hospital schools** Funding, in house training and support was provided to the education staff team at Chelsea Community Hospital School (CCHS) to help embed Arts Award across four hospital school sites and in their outreach programme, and in bedside ward visits. The school benefits from many links with artists and arts organisations, and students at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital also take part in live hospital radio transmissions as presenters. There are also many exhibitions and arts opportunities around the hospital sites or access to online opportunities.

Arts Award has shown CCHS how engaging young people in the arts can positively impact their engagement in sessions, learning of new skills and

improving their well-being and confidence. Children enjoy being recognised as artists, and not by their medical condition, and young people who have regular hospital stays can pick up on their Arts Award progress.

*'Arts Award has shone a light on the creative skills of our young people. We have also seen a dramatic impact on the self-confidence of children once immersed in the programme.'* Suzie Tidy, Arts Award adviser  
[Art Therapy](#) Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Culture Shift were funded to train a group of art therapists and support them to test how Arts Award might work in therapeutic settings with young people, and to produce some guidelines based on what they had learnt. The therapists primarily work within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services which provide specialist care and support to young people under the age of 18 suffering from emotional, behavioural or mental health problems.

Young people were offered the opportunity to work towards gaining a Bronze Arts Award as a part of their therapy. There were many challenges to deal with but partners found that young people were positive about Arts Award. It supported them to build stronger relationships with their art therapist, peers and carers. It helped them develop new elements of their identity and built their self-confidence. Achieving an Arts Award has been an important recognition of their work and allows them to leave therapy with a nationally recognised qualification. Arts Award training has provided arts therapists with an extra approach to draw on in their work with young people.

*'It has enabled the young person to transfer some of the therapeutic benefits of the work outside of the arts therapy session by developing their ability to work at home.'* - Art therapist

Since the project Arts Award has facilitated a national seminar on Arts Award in health settings trained more hospital based advisers and developed a health settings web page. Learning from the project is being widely disseminated, and Joanna Stevens from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has presented the work at other seminars. You can read the full case studies and download the *Guidelines for Arts Award in Therapeutic settings*, which are endorsed by the British Association of Arts Therapists, [here](#).

[Long term ill-health](#) The Association of Young People with Myalgic Encephalopathy (AYME) is a charity that supports children and young people aged up to 26 who have ME - sometimes known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. ME causes a wide range of symptoms, including

intense tiredness, aches and pains, and can make it very difficult to concentrate or perform everyday tasks easily. Symptoms can come and go, and will vary from person to person. Some people are only mildly affected; others struggle to manage normal school or working hours and may have to cut back a lot on their social life; while a small percentage of patients have to stay in bed, and aren't able to look after themselves or eat properly.

Funding, adviser training and support has been provided to adult volunteers working with AYME, and to a young disabled woman with severe ME. Three advisers are working remotely with a small Bronze group, and an artist adviser is working with a young woman completing Gold with a view to embedding Arts Award into their support to members. The flexibility of Arts Award and the opportunity to work with remote support is an important feature of the project, as young people with ME are often isolated at home. The young woman doing Gold is 25 and has not been able to attend school since aged 11. Although she is extremely talented she has not been able to access any other qualifications. The opportunity to achieve Gold within an appropriate, flexible timescale is unique, as all other qualifications must be completed within a defined time and evidenced in a rigid format.

## Looked after children and young people

### Residential children's homes

Derbyshire County Council aims to raise the ambition for children in care to achieve their potential, develop dreams and ambitions, and have a happy journey through their childhood. They recognise Arts Award as a positive intervention that bridges the difficult divide between social care and education and are also committed to a social pedagogy approach which maps across to Arts Award effectively.

Although residential children's home managers and staff teams had already attended adviser training they had not got going and needed support to help overcome challenges and find accessible ways of delivering. Funding, refresher training and support was provided to staff in eight different settings, including five residential children's homes, foster care, contract care, and respite care resulting in 17 successful moderations and Arts Award is now embedded across provision including enrichment/alternative curriculum for all children who are excluded from school.

The challenges of working with their target groups of children and young people included lack of continuity due to care placements changing, complex shift patterns for key workers, and adding in time to reflect on

activity, support young people's evidencing and planning progression – not normally part of the formal role for residential children's workers. A key success factor was appointment of a central 'buddy' artist to support staff members - most of whom had no experience of supporting creative arts based work with young people.

The new Derbyshire County Council Virtual School launched in September 2014, with responsibility for ensuring high quality education for around 700 children in care in Derbyshire, deploying Pupil Premium Plus as a resource to support attainment including through Arts Award.

Arts Award will now be delivered in Derbyshire as part of a range of Alternative Provision for children in care, care leavers, vulnerable young people, and those at risk of being NEET (not in employment, education or training).

Arts Award has been aligned to Derbyshire's development of Social Pedagogy as an underpinning set of child centred, whole person principles and theory to inform practice with children and young people – and through this work Arts Award has been evidenced as an effective tool for staff to help children and young people learn through their own interests and passions.

[Read the full case study](#) and watch the short film: [Exploring Arts Award in Derbyshire Residential Children's Homes](#)

### Families who Foster

Arts Award commissioned the National Children's Bureau (NCB) to work with families who foster in South Tyneside to build foster carers' confidence in engaging with arts and cultural activities and to train to become Arts Award advisers at Discover and Explore levels. The Customs House and South Tyneside Council were the key local partners. The project aimed to develop a model which could be replicated in other foster settings.

Foster carers were trained to deliver Arts Award Discover and Explore to looked after children and their own children, building new links with artists, arts and cultural organisations, and a local support network. Specialist in-house Discover and Explore training was developed by The Customs House with support from South Tyneside Virtual School. The partnership worked with two cohorts of foster carers building confidence in accessing arts and cultural activities and in helping the children evidence work in log books. During the ten month programme a total of 22 families took part, 21 foster carers and 7 education support workers

were trained as advisers, 35 children achieved Discover or Explore, and 8 progressed to Bronze.

Arts Award was also mapped against the Department for Education approved Training, Support & Development Standards for Foster Carers – helping foster carers provide evidence that they were for example using person centered approaches, being organized, supporting educational potential, and meeting learning needs as part of ongoing CPD.

A transferrable model was developed which includes a three way partnership between a cultural organisation, fostering services (local authority or independent) and the local authority. The project partners found that Arts Award provided a highly effective and successful family learning framework that facilitates and encourages children and foster carer's engagement in arts and cultural activities and helped foster carers get to know the children in their care, having fun and learning together. Arts Award now plays a key role in South Tyneside virtual school's offer / support for looked after children and young people, and the partnership have just trained their fourth cohort of foster carers.

The project has been featured in the [Fostering Network's national magazine](#) and as a result foster carers from several regions have contacted Arts Award to ask about starting similar work. Arts Award was profiled as part of 2015 Fostering Fortnight 1<sup>st</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

## Homelessness

Alabare Christian Care is a charity working across the south west with vulnerable and marginalised people. They deliver services and manage homes for homeless / at risk of homeless people, veterans, young people and people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. The project was designed to kick start Arts Award with young adults aged 16-25 at Alabare Place housing support project in Wiltshire. One of Alabare Place's key aims for their clients is to provide opportunities for them to engage in education and training that can lead to employment, and links to the community so the project aimed to test whether Housing Support staff could embed Arts Award delivery within their existing support roles

Funding, support and in-house adviser training was provided for the Housing Support team, none of whom have ever had teaching experience, although they do have a music studio at the centre. The Arts Award programme was based on music and song writing, working with a visiting musician and members of staff, and accessing computers and internet to

do research. It was hugely challenging for housing support staff to fit Arts Award in with managing daily crises, often involving clients who have serious illnesses and drug and alcohol abuse related behaviours. Despite these challenges they had what they describe as 'amazing results' using the Arts Award to engage with their clients. For example one young woman went on a laptop and used Google to complete her Bronze Part C research - she had never been on the internet before. Four young men played musical instruments in a group setting for the first time. Two young men were able to achieve Arts Award Bronze and were presented with certificates at a special VIP open day event attended by the local Mayor, and one of them used his new qualification to get a job. Alabare Place are now working towards another moderation for more of their service users.

*'For the two men who have reached moderation, this has been a life changing input into their lives. They are demonstrating increased confidence, are fully engaged in our support service and are both looking at achieving a positive Move-On in the near future.'* Hannah Bruford, Manager, Alabare Place

Following the introduction to Arts Award within their housing support they made a successful application to Youth Music to deliver a programme with vulnerable young people at The Junction youth programme in Hampshire, achieving their target of 90 bronze moderations. Reaching Out provided support visits to help the centre to plan the programme and prepare for moderations and The Junction have now embedded Arts Award at the centre of their alternative education offer.

Read Alabare's case study in full on the [adviser hub](#).

## Partnerships, development and other support

As well as the six key projects outlined, the Reaching Out programme supported and led on a range of other areas of work.

### Unitas partnership and New Discover and Explore log books

Unitas delivers a structured arts programme with Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) during school holidays. Each young person has the opportunity to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and achieve Bronze or Silver Arts Award. More recently Discover and Explore have been introduced and a need was identified to produce Discover and Explore log books for older age groups – a particularly good starting point for YOTs and useful for other projects working with older young people struggling with mainstream education provision. Reaching Out collaborated with Unitas to

produce the new log book designs, which were piloted with Unitas Arts Colleges and are now available to all centres from the [Arts Award shop](#).

### Koestler Trust

Collaboration with the Koestler Trust resulted in the creation of a Koestler Arts Award Achievement Prize which was awarded to a young person working on Bronze Arts Award with TiPP and Leeds YOT Summer Arts College. Koestler also use Arts Award in their young curators programmes, and follow up support is being given to the Koestler Trust Exhibitions Co-ordinator. Koestler promoted Arts Award at an event and exhibition in Glasgow, and this was followed with a Reaching Out presentation and Q&A to Scotland based organisations working outside of mainstream settings, attended by Creative Scotland's new Youth Arts Programme Manager.

### Access Fund

Reaching Out contributed to a review of the [Arts Award Access Fund](#) priorities, terminology, application and reporting process.

The new focus for Access Fund will be for projects which help embed accessible Arts Award programmes by trailing or developing work with young people at risk of exclusion. Since its launch in 2007 the Access Fund has awarded 537 grants totalling £338,625.84 reaching 10,151 young people. In 2014 Access Fund awarded 68 grants reaching 1562 young people.

### Raising the Participation Age (RPA)

RPA came into effect from the start of the 2013/14 academic year. Local authorities (LAs) are subject to new duties to support all young people to participate. The Government has changed the law so that from start of the 2013/14 academic year, all young people are required to continue in education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. From summer 2015 this will be until their 18th birthday. Young people have a choice about how they continue in education or training post-16, which could be through:

- full-time study in a school, college or with a training provider
- full-time work or volunteering combined with part-time education or training
- an Apprenticeship

Although the majority of 16 and 17 year olds already continue in some form of education or training the small group of young people not participating include some of the most vulnerable. Through Reaching Out, Trinity commissioned research into RPA to determine how best to position and advocate for Arts Award as an option for service providers working

with both vulnerable and gifted young people. A summary of the research can be found [here](#) and in the 'Arts Award's Value and Position in today's' education landscape' resource [here](#).

### In Harmony

In Harmony is a national programme that aims to inspire and transform the lives of children in deprived communities, using the power and disciplines of community-based orchestral music-making funded jointly by the Department for Education and Arts Council England.

Support and training was given to In Harmony to help embed Discover and Explore within primary school work, and promoting Bronze and Silver as transition pathway to secondary. Following presentation at the national In Harmony meeting at ACE there were support visits to Liverpool, Sage Gateshead, and Telford and Wrekin, and support calls to Nottingham, Leeds and Lambeth. Further support was offered in the form of free training with a specific focus for each In Harmony setting and more support is planned for 2015-16 in order to embed and/or widen access to Arts Award.

### Arts Award - supporting Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Reaching Out identified a need to improve access and resources to enable more children and young people to engage with Arts Award. For example, support given to South East *Strong Voices* flagged up the need to offer reasonable adjustments to moderation time when advisers have been working with children and young people with specific individual requirements. (*'Strong Voices' was a two year project involving five Bridge organisations, funded by the Department for Education which explored ways of enabling disadvantaged and vulnerable young people to gain access to arts and culture.*) Evidencing support workshops, sessions and support calls were delivered to help advisers find effective and appropriate evidencing formats methods.

The launch of Discover and Explore has opened interest from larger numbers of organisations working in SEND settings and looking for an accessible qualification. Specialist SEND Discover & Explore Training has been developed and from Spring 2015 will be offered alongside the existing SEND Bronze & Silver training, and resources have been updated. Staff development for the Arts Programmes Team was commissioned from Scope, and an Arts Award Access and Inclusion steering group has been formed to set targets and monitor progress in all areas of operation including training, moderation, marketing and resources for advisers and young people.

Advisers can now request training resources, toolkits, and some young people's resources in accessible formats, such as large print, Braille, audio transcription, or unlocked PDF. BSL translations for some young people's materials is due to be completed in Summer 2015.

Arts Award remains committed to supporting work with vulnerable or disadvantaged young people, and those with specific individual requirements.

For more information and updates please head to the [Arts Award Access and Inclusion page](#) or [contact us](#).