

Impact summary: Inclusion Grants to support d/Deaf and Disabled People



Introduction

This strategic inclusion grants programme aimed to change the narrative around disability by improving accessibility and inclusion for d/Deaf and disabled people.

The grant programme was funded by [Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership](#) in response to the recommendations from The Greater Manchester Mental Wellbeing and Disability report, which showed that d/Deaf and disabled people in Greater Manchester (especially those with diagnosed mental health conditions) are less happy, less satisfied with life, feel things are less worthwhile and are more anxious than hearing and non-disabled people.

In order to help reduce the gap, in 2023, a total of **£78,350.40** was awarded to **6 innovative, strategic projects** across Greater Manchester to encourage, embed or increase good practice around one or more of the following priorities:

- Listening to d/Deaf and disabled people and including them in the co-creation of services, policies, practices, events and activities.

- Joining up services so support is offered holistically, ensuring it is tailored to the need and preferences of the individual.
- Removing any 'one size fits all' approaches.
- Improving support for d/Deaf and disabled people wanting to take on volunteering opportunities.

This document details some of the impact and outcomes of the funded projects. It showcases the resources that were co-produced with d/Deaf and/or disabled people that can be used by commissioners and service providers to improve accessibility and inclusion.



GMCVO works to drive economic and social inclusion in Greater Manchester through effective collaborations and supporting other organisations to achieve their goals.

We support better decision making by increasing the accessibility and diversity of learning and insight.



Henshaws (First Step Telephone Helpline service)

Grant received: £9,170

Henshaws developed their First Step Telephone Helpline service - an outbound proactive, rather than reactive, telephone service.

They worked with the NHS and other referral partners to contact people newly diagnosed with an eye conditions and provide holistic, specialist support in a timely manner.

678 newly diagnosed people were referred into the helpline over the year of the project, enabling Henshaw's to pro-actively support health and wellbeing concerns at the point of diagnosis.

699 referrals have been made to professional support provided by Henshaw or other services such as the

sensory teams for a cane, Low Vision Assessment teams for magnify glasses, Digital Enablement teams or to counselling services.

They also embedded the First Step Telephone Helpline service into Henshaw's way of working, and they are continuing to refine the service with the learning and feedback gained over the pilot from the people using the service.

Read the full story in our case study [here](#).

"I feel ready to take up the offer of support at this stage, as I have been suffering in silence for a long time, which doesn't help your health and wellbeing in the long term. You lose your confidence; however I am ready to take your help now. Thank you for staying in touch with me" - Service User

Starling CIC

Grant received: £13,855

Starling CIC reached 72 people over 4 **Pop-Up café sessions**. They also conducted consultations across Greater Manchester for neurodivergent community members and professionals. Cafe sessions up-skilled professionals with neurodiversity awareness and inclusion strategies including how to be neurodivergent friendly. Attendees were consulted about what makes a

neurodivergent friendly space and created designs for their 'ideal' spaces.

Following these sessions, Starling CIC developed a **1hr webinar 'Neurodiversity Awareness' training** in collaboration with their Neurodiversity Champions. If you would like to attend one of these sessions you can [book a place here](#).

The culmination of the café feedback, consultations and discussions are presented in their **short video series, Neurodivergent Friendly Social Spaces**.



SICK! Productions (Find Your Move)

Grant received: £14,000

SICK! Productions built on the learning and feedback from disabled young people to restructure and create **'Find Your Move.'**

This is an accessible programme of touring workshops for young disabled people in North Manchester to explore movement and mental health and explore what movement should look like for them.

An accessible Disability Disco took place in April 2024 to celebrate the achievements with the young people.

Following the project, learning from is being incorporated within SICK! Production and their partners ways of working to change

the way events are co-created with young disabled people. The project highlighted that the key factors to include disabled young people in movement and dance festivals and events are;

- removing expectation
- being flexible to adapt delivery
- slowly progressing based on individual ability
- supporting practitioners with additional needs to lead these spaces.

Touring workshops to visit groups at their regular meeting place and times, ensured that they had the support of their group leaders and support staff when designing work and events.

Flourish Together CIC (Social Enterprise changemaker development pilot programme)

Grant received: £13,980

Flourish Together CIC recruited 7 d/Deaf and/or disabled women changemakers who co-designed the project to feature a tailored social venture development programme focusing on key tools, a Peer learning event and 'Train the supporter' event, along with intensive individual support.

They delivered monthly insight and peer learning sessions which included Developing the Business, GDPR & Managing Data, Working with Reduced Hours and Income Generation.

Each changemaker accessed up to 6 hours

intensive one-to-one holistic support for capacity building, business development support encompassing bid-writing, financial planning, employing people with disabilities/health conditions, marketing, pitching & presentation.

They also hosted two Social Enterprise supporter days which included an inclusion group showcase, a commissioner insight panel and conversation cafés.

Some members of the cohort took part in an episode of the Flourish podcast - listen [here](#). Read the full evaluation of the project [here](#).

LGBT Foundation

Grant received: £13,900

In partnership with Greater Manchester Autism Consortium, LGBT Foundation delivered a pilot LGBTQ+ Neurodivergent Community Programme consisting of regular events, workshops and social spaces both in person and online.

The events were led by Neurodivergent LGBTQ+ people and resulted in reduced social isolation, increased confidence and an increased sense of belonging for participants. Participants were able to feedback and influence the development of the events and social spaces for all of the LGBT Foundations social events

Participants engaged with the LGBTQ+ community to develop a 'Model of Working' to share key insights into how to develop effective models for engagement for LGBTQ+ communities who are autistic or neurodiverse. This includes:

- co-production
- representation
- flexibility and accessibility
- consistency
- safety
- asset based
- person centred

This model and more information can be viewed [here](#).

Manchester Deaf Centre, Bolton Deaf Society and Walthew House (Stockport)

Grant received: £13,455.40

The organisations, along with the d/Deaf-led project steering group, brought d/Deaf people together with mainstream providers of health and wellbeing services to identify barriers and identify changes needed to improve access.

Colleagues from Manchester Deaf Centre visited MoveUrmston where they shared evidence about the different barriers that d/Deaf people experience and the key improvements that they would like to see. This includes:

- Communication – the need for basic BSL and deaf awareness for staff, video relay option for live communication, QR code to access BSL versions of important info, written information in plain English.
- Gym, Swim and Exercise classes – need for deaf-accessible options eg deaf or BSL-using personal trainers and exercise instructors.
- Health and Safety – need for flashing fire alarms.

Trafford Leisure's Health and Wellbeing manager said:

“The visit proved extremely beneficial to us and we will definitely utilise the feedback to support our commitment to inclusion across the business.”

Four leisure centres were visited in total. Each were provided with an action plan for d/Deaf awareness and access. Staff members from one centre attended a short Introduction to BSL course, another booked a bespoke BSL tuition for staff along with early discussion of co-developing a deaf-accessible swimming lessons for children.

Four GP surgeries were visited. Adjustments made include d/Deaf awareness, procedure adjustments and visual signage.

A care home and hospital setting were included within the visits and d/Deaf awareness training was delivered to care home staff, with on-going communication around adjustments with hospital.

Resources

This section brings together some resources from project providers in order to help increase accessibility and inclusion for d/Deaf and disabled people.

- [Attend a 'Neurodiversity Awareness' training webinar](#) - Learn about the basics of neurodiversity in this one hour online training by Starling CIC. They want to support professionals across a range of sectors to become more aware of the simple considerations they can make to accommodate those who may be neurodivergent, whether they have a diagnosis or not.
- [Watch 'Neurodivergent Friendly Social Spaces'](#) - A series of videos that explore access and inclusion for disabled and neurodivergent communities, particularly in social spaces such as cafes, bars and restaurants.
- [Listen to the Flourish podcast](#) - Flourish's Supporting Women in Social Enterprise podcast is packed with tips, insights and interviews to help social entrepreneurs and other changemakers and create the change they see needed in communities and society at large.
- [Read 'Best practice model for working with LGBTQ+ communities who are also autistic and/or neurodiverse'](#) - find out how you can develop effective models for engagement for LGBTQ+ communities who are autistic or neurodiverse, by the LGBT Foundation.
- [Learn with Henshaws Hints and Tips Library](#) - Henshaws' Hints and Tips library is their home for articles, videos, tips, tricks and useful information. Whether you are living with sight loss, supporting someone who is or simply want to educate yourself, explore our helpful resources, inspiring stories and how-to guides to learn more.
- [Read 'What D/deaf people want'](#) - a summary by Manchester Deaf Centre of what the priorities of d/Deaf people are. This funding was used to progress towards these priorities.

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