

CREATIVE ARTS AND POTTERY SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY
(PROJECT REF: 31053536)
ANNUAL REPORT (JANUARY 2018 – DECEMBER 2019)

1. INTRODUCTION.

This progress report provides an update of the first year's activity of the "Creative arts and pottery Supporting Mental Health Recovery" project funded through the National Lottery Community Fund.

Recovery pathways, for individuals with mental health issues, can be many and varied; an exploration of personal creativity is one such pathway which for many people can lead towards a more creative and emotionally sustaining life. A summary overview of the Art House's progression route pathway is attached at appendix 1.

2. PROJECT ACTIVITY.

a. Activity/attendances

Over the first 12 months of project funding we have extended our provision of art and pottery "recovery classes", with four groups currently running each week. These sessions are led by a combination of sessional tutors and volunteers with the primary aim to encourage an individual's creative expression but within an environment which allows them to work at their own pace (and also allowing for any health issues).

Additionally this year we have developed "stepping stone classes" where individuals have an opportunity to experience more structured curriculum based learning (similar to what would be offered through our commercial classes for the general public). We have successfully run four separate "Stepping Stones" classes (two distinct curricula: (i) Tile Carving and Lino Printing and (ii) Studies using a Maquette). Each of these classes ran for 6 weeks.

These developments have allowed a total of **85 students/project beneficiaries** to attend the Art House during 2018 (see appendix 2 for attendance information).

b. Student exhibitions

We have established a dedicated small gallery space to allow individual students/project beneficiaries to exhibit their work. Individuals are supported to plan for the exhibition, explore different options for displaying work, and provide an artist's statement and an opportunity for an exhibition preview for friends and family.

Many of our project beneficiaries have commented how proud they were in achieving a solo exhibition of their work and whilst the initial idea had felt intimidating they can't wait to exhibit their work again in the future.

c. Volunteers

We have had **16 active volunteers** during the first 12 months of the project funding (see appendix 3).

We have been successful in further extending volunteering opportunities across the organisation: enabling beneficiaries to help in the studio spaces, support the delivery of commercial classes to the general public (classroom assistant roles – sharing their technical skills with students), helping in the café and work front-of-house in dealing with enquiries from visitors using the building.

One of our project beneficiaries, given his life experience, is now volunteering for Crisis (whilst still volunteering at the Art House) whilst another individual has moved onto paid work (after being long-term unemployed):

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to volunteer and consequently move on to paid employment. Thank you for allowing me to work there and help me gain valuable experience from such a lovely friendly working environment with real positive professional staff. Thank you for listening to me from walking into the building for the first time and being so considerate with my disability and difficulties with such diverse understanding staff. Thank you for the tasks that I have learnt and the skills I gained which set me up for my future career path. The Art House has been an excellent valuable place to volunteer and I absolutely loved it”.

d. Steering group

This particular aspect of the project is still its infancy. We have established a small group of project beneficiaries/students who have helped to develop our curricula for the “Stepping Stones” groups and provide a feedback mechanism for the various studio activities that we have organised.

A key part of the development of this steering group, over the next two years, will be to support those individuals (or others) take on a more representative voice for the project beneficiaries/individuals attending the various “recovery activities” within the building.

3. PARTNERSHIP WORKING.

The initial concept of the Art House originated from extensive consultation with user-led groups, carers and mental health professionals in Sheffield.

We remain committed to working with other local agencies and during 2018, in recognition of the new funding and establishing our recovery work on a firmer footing, contacted a variety of local referral agencies and ran a number of taster sessions with staff/their service users. This has helped to maintain and develop an effective referral network and ensure regular new referrals into the project.

Agencies attending the taster sessions over the previous 12 months include:

- NHS Trust Occupational Therapists.
- MIND, Sheffield Mind Wellbeing Centre.
- Dementia Research Project / University of Sheffield.
- Michael Carlisle Centre - Older Adults Team, NHS Trust Hospital.
- South Yorkshire Eating Disorder Association (SYEDA).
- Heeley City Farm (working farm that offers various training courses and volunteering opportunities for individuals from various marginalised groups).
- Sheffield Alcohol Support Service.
- St Wilfrid's Centre (day centre for individuals with various health issues, including mental health).
- Big Issue North.

4. PROJECT OUTCOMES.

We have developed our outcomes monitoring system based on:

1. Primarily the Short 7-item version of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (SWEMWBS) a nationally validated tool to capture data on mental health services (the shortened version is based on a more comprehensive tool widely used by statutory agencies and research organisations).
2. An additional question associated with the student's feelings of "trust" (identified in national research as a key indicator of well-being and feelings of belonging).

We use self-completion questionnaires, when an individual first comes to a well-being/recovery group and then we repeat the process after 3-6 months. This system provides a longitudinal comparison between a student's view of their own well-being prior to starting their attendance in the well-being groups and after an appropriate follow up period of time (usually 6 months).

Findings from the first 12 months are encouraging (see appendix 4). Allowing for the fact that a number of the students/project beneficiaries have still to complete the follow up questionnaire (after attending for 3-6 months), responses across the seven SWEMWBS questions and additional question on trust show a significant increase in the students/project beneficiaries own assessment of their well-being and their feelings of trust towards others.

So far approximately 12 individuals/project beneficiaries have been able to access our commercial art and pottery courses/workshops and enjoy learning opportunities with other members of the general public. As expected this is slightly below the annual projection. During year 1 of the project the primary focus has been to develop and introduce the new "Stepping Stones" classes which help provide an opportunity for students/project beneficiaries to access more structured curriculum based learning whilst managing their own health. As we gradually widen access to the "Stepping Stones" groups, in year 2 and 3, we would expect to see more students/project beneficiaries who are ready, confident and able to access the variety of commercial classes that we run from the Art House.

Please note - we use the term "commercial" to reflect the fact that members of the general public will book on these classes thereby providing a sustainable income source for the Art House. Where project beneficiaries make the transition onto these classes – as part of their progression pathway - there is no fee for them to attend these classes or workshops.

5. CASE STUDY

Our system of outcomes monitoring provides a succinct way of summarising the improvements seen across a number of well-being measures. However the figures fail to provide the real stories and successes behind these simple figures. Attached at appendix 5 is a case study of Mark who has been attending the Art House since we opened (August 2015).

6. SUMMARY OF PLANS FOR YEAR 2.

We will be undertaking an annual review of all our work, with the Steering Group, as we develop the programme of project activity into Year 2 of the project funding but key work areas already identified include:

- a. Development of a third “Stepping Stones” course/curriculum – which will be a lengthier course spanning a number of academic terms.
- b. Preparation for an exhibition (summer 2019) featuring a variety of artwork from the project beneficiaries. It is intended to use this event as a mechanism to encourage referral agencies to find out the latest information about what the Art House offers for their client group and hopefully highlight the evidence base regarding the benefits of various creative activities in terms of managing mental health conditions and well-being.
- c. Identify external agencies that can carry out the project evaluation.

7. PROJECT BUDGET

	Revenue		
	Budget (Big Lottery contribution)	Actual (Big Lottery contribution)	Difference
Year 1	£48,690	£48,690	0
Year 2	£53,350	-	-
Year 3	£52,060	-	-

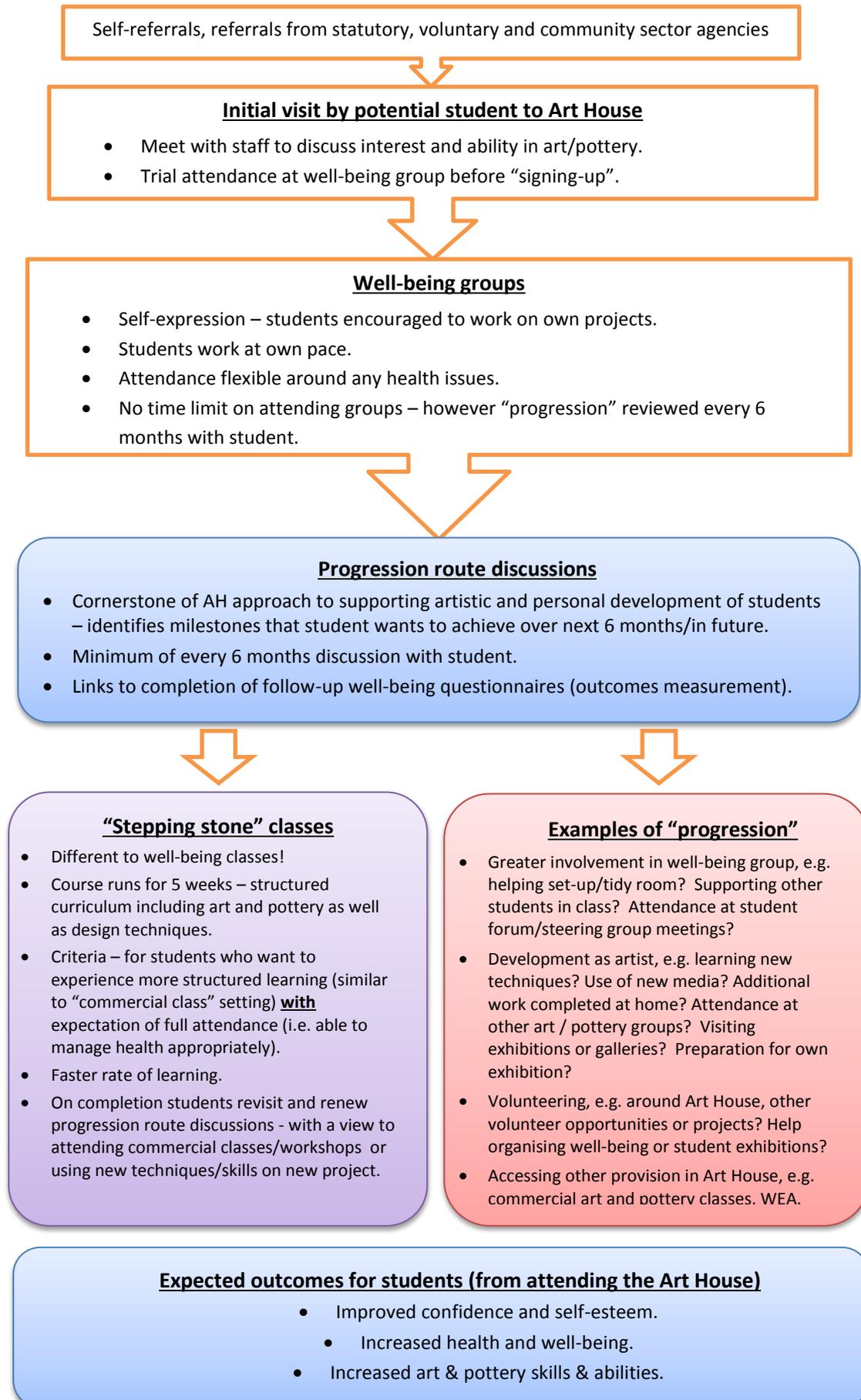
Notes –

- (i) The overall project expenditure is greater than anticipated. The difference (approx. £10k) is being funded through our commercial income streams in line with our overall financial model.
- (ii) A detailed expenditure breakdown is available on request.

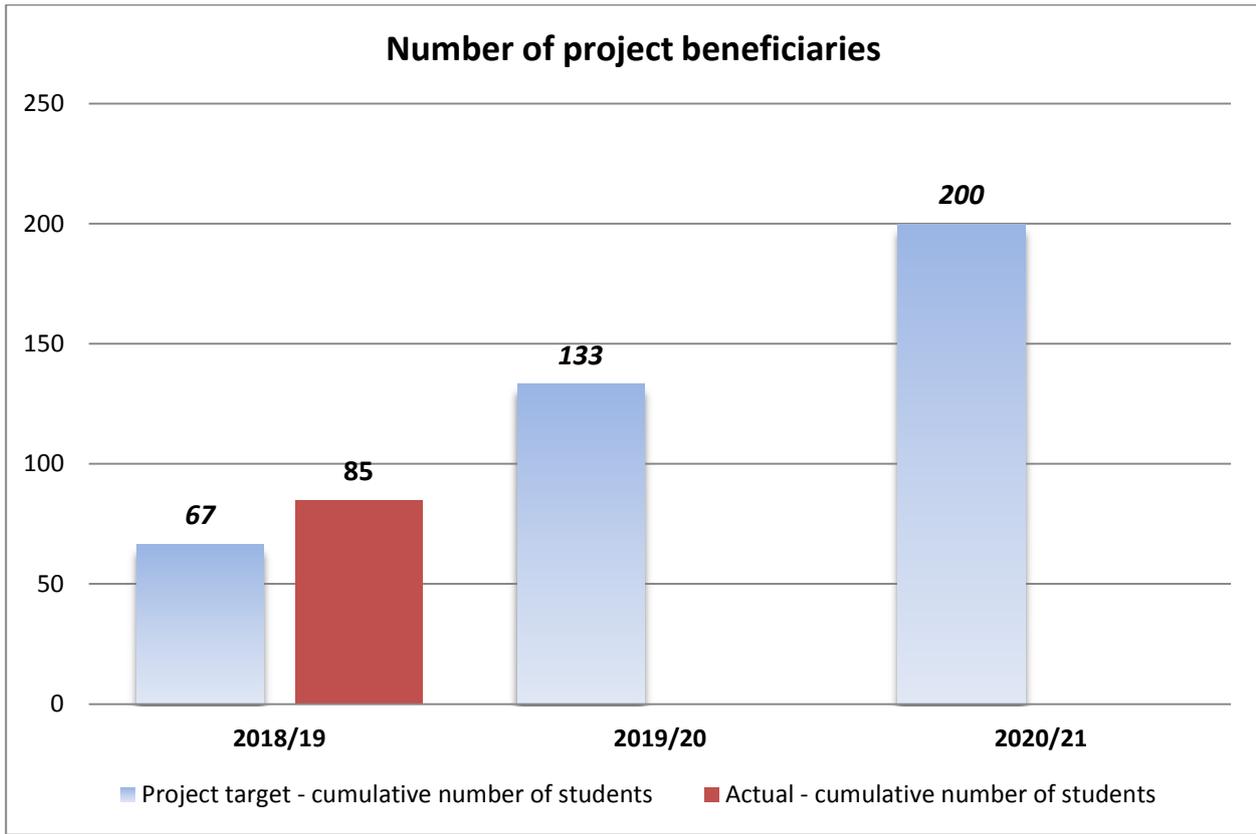
APPENDICES

- 1. Art House progression route overview**
- 2. Number of students being supported through project.**
- 3. Number of volunteers.**
- 4. Project outcomes –**
 - a. Self-assessment of “health and well-being”.**
 - b. Self-assessment of “trust”.**
 - c. Widened social networks.**
- 5. Case study**

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF THE ART HOUSE PROGRESSION PATHWAY



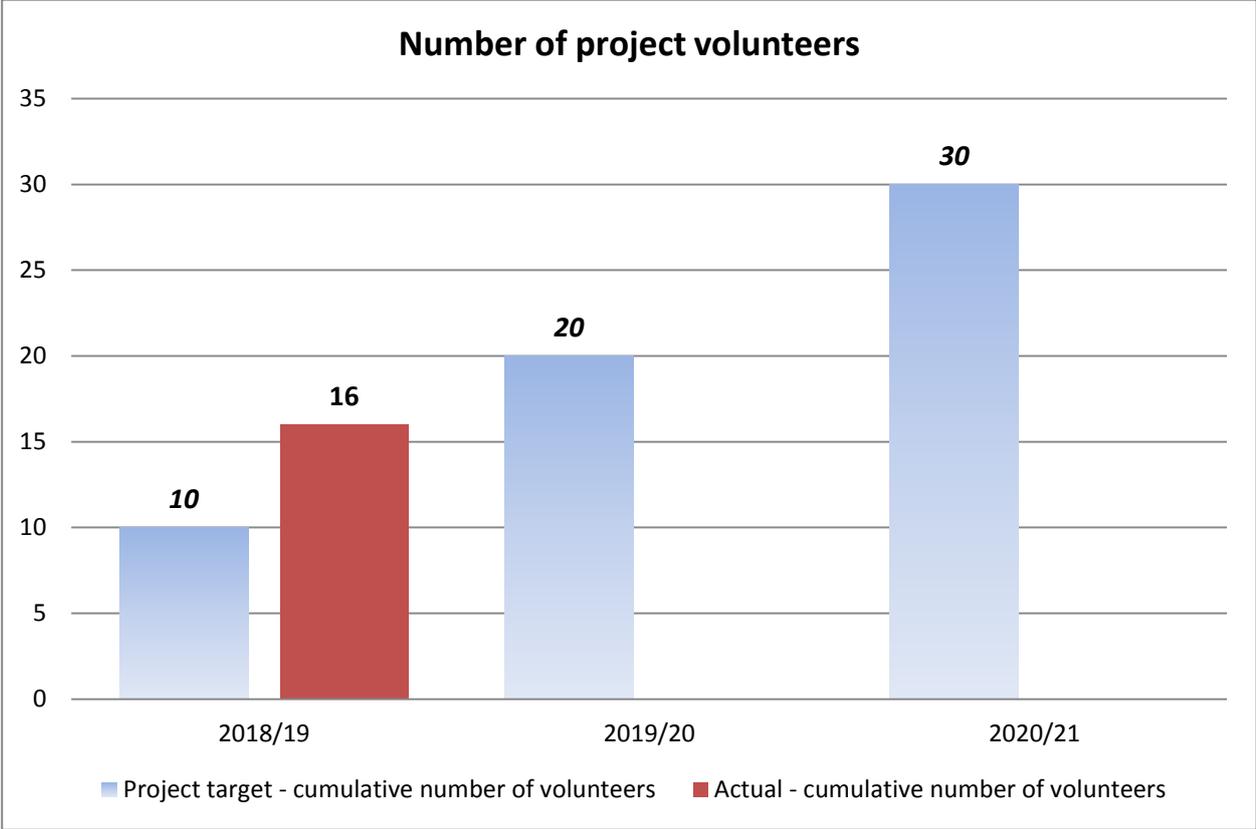
APPENDIX 2 – NUMBER OF PROJECT BENEFICIARIES.



Notes

- Target for three years of project = 200 students/project beneficiaries.
- During year 1 we had 85 students/project beneficiaries - currently above target.

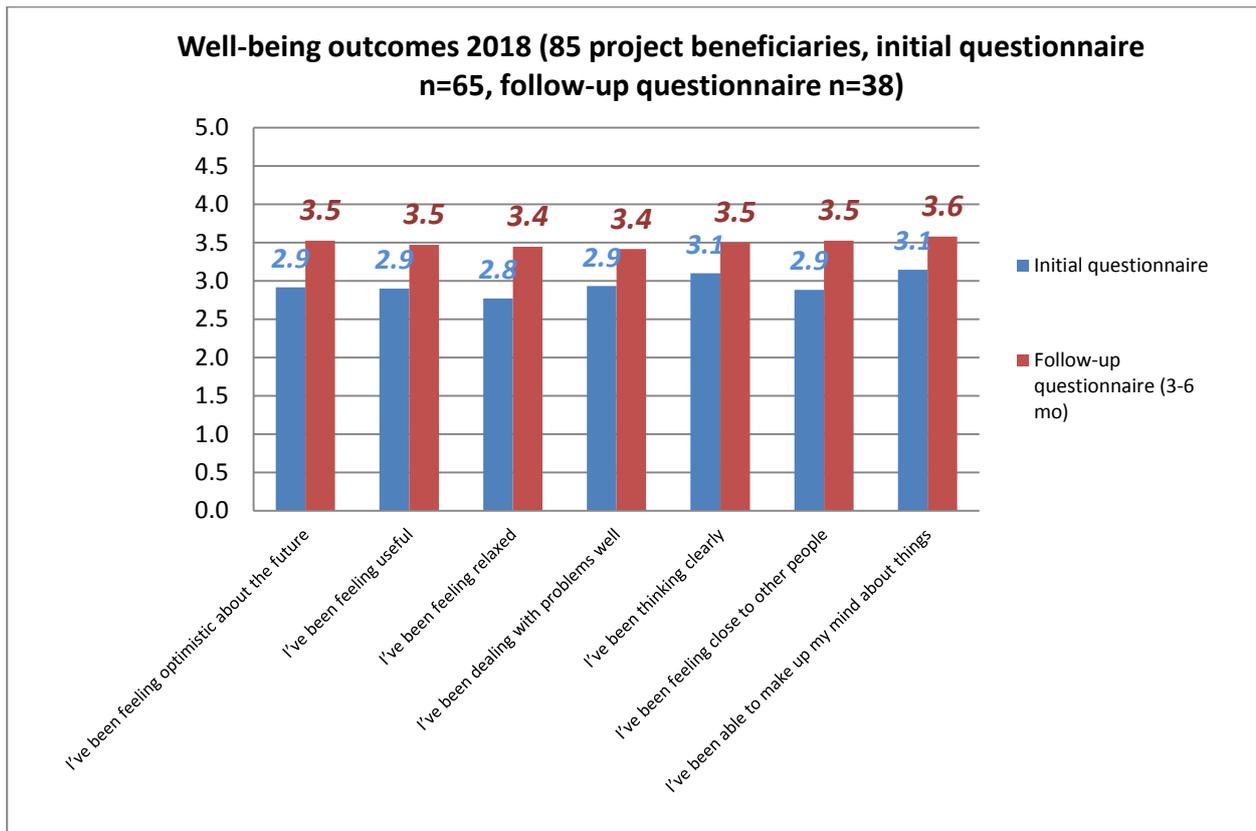
APPENDIX 3 – VOLUNTEERS.



Notes

- Target for three years of project = 30 volunteers.
- During year 1 we had 16 volunteers - currently above target.

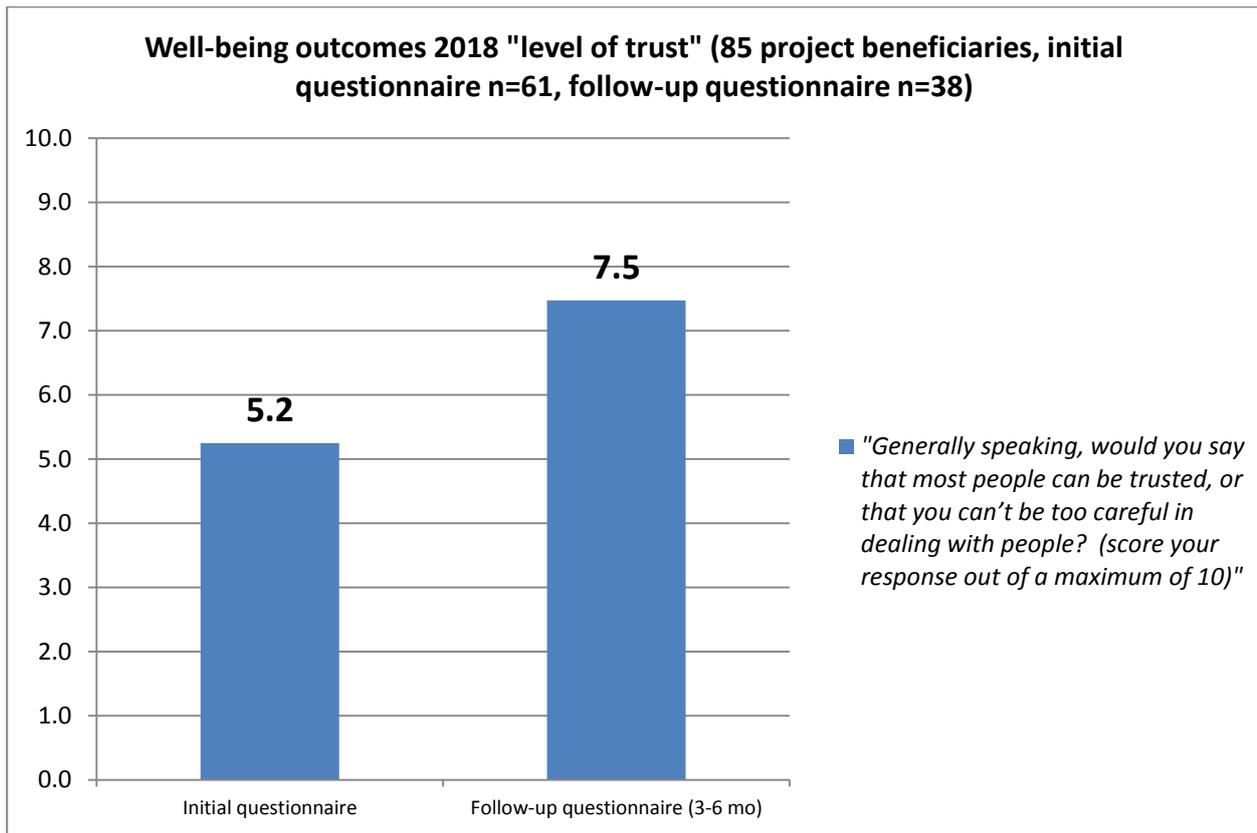
APPENDIX 4 – “WELL-BEING” OUTCOMES.



Notes

- Our outcomes monitoring system is based on the Short 7-item version of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (SWEMWBS) a nationally validated tool to capture data on mental health services).
- We issue a questionnaire featuring the seven questions from SWEMWBS as a student first comes to a well-being/recovery group and then repeat the process after 3-6 months – the student completes the questionnaire and scores each question on a scale of from 1 through to 5 (5 being the highest score and indicating positive agreement with the statement).
- This system provides a longitudinal comparison between a student’s view of their own well-being prior to starting their attendance in the well-being groups and after an appropriate follow up period of time (usually 6 months).
- Results from the first full year indicate (even without completion of all follow-up questionnaires due to the time lag) a significant increase in the students/project beneficiaries own assessment of their well-being (across all seven measures) .

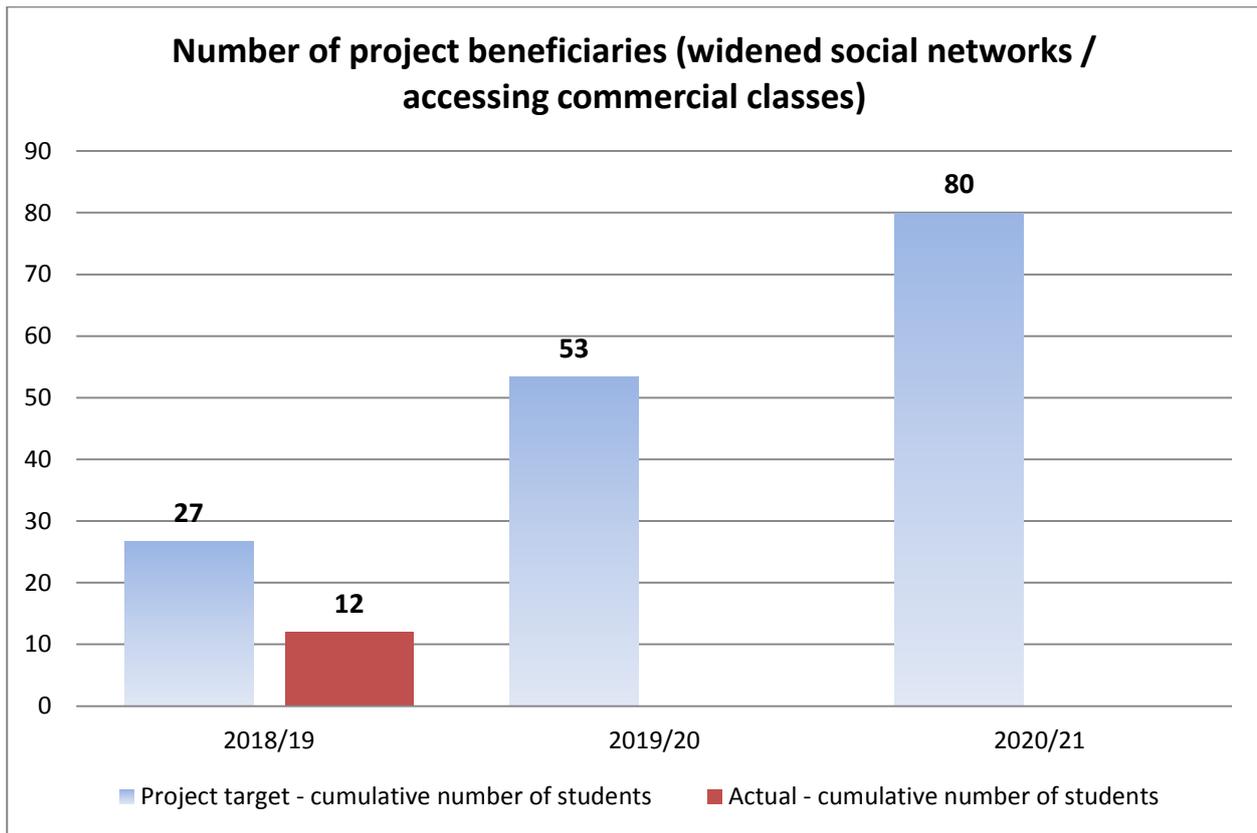
APPENDIX 4 – WELL-BEING OUTCOMES CONTINUED.



Notes

- In addition to the SWEMWBS questions we have included an additional question associated with the student's feelings of "trust" (found from national research to be a key indicator of well-being and feelings of belonging).
- This question provides a similar longitudinal comparison between a student's view of their own feelings of trust prior to starting their attendance in the well-being groups and after an appropriate follow up period of time (usually 3 - 6 months).
- The student completes the questionnaire and scores the question on a scale of from 1 through to 10 (10 being the highest score and indicating positive agreement with the statement "people can be trusted").
- Results from the first full year indicate (even without completion of all follow-up questionnaires) a significant increase in the students/project beneficiaries own assessment of their feelings of trust towards others.

APPENDIX 4 – WELL-BEING OUTCOMES CONTINUED.



Notes

- As part of initial project plan a number of students/project beneficiaries attending our well-being/recovery groups indicated that they viewed our commercial classes (attended by the general public) as a significant part of their own progression route (both in terms of learning new art techniques but also being part of a wider artistic community that wasn't identified as "well-being" or "recovery").
- The overall target for the three year project is 80 project beneficiaries (from the total of 200) to have access to a learning opportunity in our commercial art and pottery classes.
- In year 1 so far approximately 12 individuals have been able to access our commercial art and pottery courses/workshops (annual projection of 27 project beneficiaries each year, year 3 target of 80).
- As expected this is slightly below the annual projection. Year 1 has focussed on introducing the new "stepping stones" classes which help provide an opportunity for students/project beneficiaries to access more structured curriculum based learning whilst managing their own health. As we gradually widen access to the "stepping stones" groups, in year 2 and 3, we would expect to see more students/project beneficiaries who are confident and ready to access the variety of commercial classes that we run from the Art House.

APPENDIX 5 – Case study - Mark's Story (as at January 2019)

Interview between Sarah Vanic (Pottery Well-being Coordinator) and Mark.

I first met Mark in the pottery of the Occupational Therapy Department at the Michael Carlisle Centre here in Sheffield. We engaged in one to one pottery together with the hope of Mark moving into a group setting held off the ward, but Mark's story begins much earlier than this.

At the beginning of 2014, at the age of 18, Mark stayed at the Crisis House, Sheffield for one week because he was experiencing an extreme state of poor mental health. Without warning or preparation Mark was then admitted directly to Burbage Ward at the Michael Carlisle Centre. He was detained on a 'Section 3' for a period of 6 months. This meant that he was unable to leave hospital of his own free will. Mark appealed against this decision but was unsuccessful. At the end of his section he was deemed still unwell and detained on another 'section 3' for a further 6 months. He appealed and yet again was unsuccessful.

In total, Mark spent 11 months in hospital until securing supported accommodation and living independently in a flat of his own. I detail the length of hospital stay because for a young man like Mark this was a substantial amount of time and indicates the severity of his mental health. It also indicates the fragility of mental health and the time it can take for an individual to gain strength. Having a long stay in hospital also means that you 'hand your life over to others.' Often decisions are made for you and the ward environment is not like the world outside those doors.

Prior to Mark's admission he was on the path to becoming a joiner. He attended and completed level 1 Brickwork and level 1 & 2 Joinery at Sheffield City College. His predicted route and dream was to go to college, become an apprentice joiner and make his parents proud of him. Unfortunately, Mark found the college environment very stressful and did not share these detrimental experiences with anyone and as he states "sugar-coated it" hence he became very depressed. His mental health deteriorated and his situation worsened. In hindsight Mark believes that he did not deal with this period of his life very well and did not have the ability to ask for help or even know where to turn.

In hospital Mark started self-harming, taking overdoses, and becoming more depressed. He describes the shock of this new experience as "being stripped of your power, and "like electric and water...they don't get on". During his admission he engaged in OT sessions in pottery and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and was administered with a course of 6 Electroconvulsive Therapy treatments which send an electric current through the brain to trigger an epileptic seizure.

Mark states on reflection that he has come to an understanding that depression can run in the family and perceives that this also may also be possible in his case. Since then, he has educated himself so that he is able and prepared to manage depression and understand it's symptoms and outcomes. It was a long slow process of trying to feel himself again.

On discharge, Mark's transition from hospital to home was measured, carefully considered and approached in small stages. Due to his courage and ability to accept guidance he eventually moved into supported accommodation. He described feeling very nervous on entering the 'real world'. During this time, Mark starting attending a weekly Inspired Potter's class held at Chupinka Pottery which then led on to regular sessions at the Art House Pottery. He has been a consistent, regular attender and has taken to the medium of clay and explored all the hand-building techniques on offer.

When offered the opportunity to become a volunteer, Mark was excellent in his approach and professional in his manner and has built up a good rapport with staff and students alike.

Through progression pathways offered at the Art House, Mark has taken on more and more commitment to challenging and achieving real, solid goals. I shall detail a few of the targets Ben had set for himself through his progression pathway at the Art House. All of these are new and do not come easily to him.

- Submitting and exhibiting his work in student annual exhibitions
- Attending and partaking of pottery and other socials
- Volunteering in the Art House Pottery: 1 hour a week helping to maintain the pottery studio and increased this to 2-3 hours a week.
- Attending commercial wheel thrown classes. These courses are designed to be for the general public and they are without the mental health support He has completed 4 x 6 week courses
- Has agreed to take part in a specialised large exhibition this summer highlighting one's journey and well being
- No readmissions to hospital
- Currently in the process of making a large tile mural destined for the café courtyard.

Throughout this time Mark has also increased other opportunities for skill development and work prospects as well as looking after his health. His weekly timetable presently looks like this.

- Sunday, Monday off
- Tuesday am. – Cooking development in a group setting
- Tuesday pm. – Art House volunteering
- Wednesday – Art House Inspired Potters Class (Recovery Group)
- Thursday – Cooking support 1-1 in the home
- Friday – Volunteering at a cattery
- Saturday – Attending a commercial pottery wheel throwing class at the Art House.

Mark describes being asked to volunteer at the Art House as 'a real boost' to him, and has increased his confidence, sense of well-being and worth. He believes he is not the same person that he once was, before he entered hospital but hopes to gain paid employment and possibly pick up Joinery again as: " He's got a shed load of tools!"