

## MONITORING VISIT REPORT: Muscular Dystrophy UK - 11618

<b>1.1 Date of visit:</b>  5 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	<b>1.2 Name of visiting Grants Officer:</b>  Ciaran Rafferty	<b>1.3 People met with:</b> James Lee (Trailblazers Campaigns Officer); Tom Osborne (Trust Fundraiser) + Service Users
<b>1.4 Programme Area:</b> Working with Londoners: Positive transitions		
<b>1.5 Grant value:</b>  £42,500 over two years (£21,000; £21,500)	<b>1.6 What is the grant funding?</b>  Towards the salary and project costs of a work-experience programme for young disabled Londoners.	
<b>1.7 Purpose of the award:</b> This project falls under the <i>Trailblazers</i> banner within the MD organisation – a network of more than 400 young disabled people who work together on a range of national and local issues which are important to them. In so doing the aim is to gain access to education, employment and the services they require.		
<b>MONITORING INFORMATION</b>		
<b>2.1 Project Outcome 1:</b> <b>30 young disabled people have increased chances of finding employment or further work experience</b>  <b>Progress made:</b> Within the London area 26 young people have gained work experience so far. The organisation itself acts as a host employer as the facilities needed are there and the level of understanding and attitude amongst staff is high. The age range of beneficiaries has been between 16-20 and they have come from across London. Access to work experience has increased their self-confidence and reinforced the notion that they can achieve paid employment and or develop their other interests.		
<b>2.2 Project Outcome 2:</b> <b>30 young disabled people will develop knowledge of how to produce high quality CVs and job applications</b>  <b>Progress made:</b> This target has been achieved. The programme has incorporated employment workshops, tailored to the individuals, as well as hosting guest speakers from appropriate agencies (eg Remploy; BBC Extend). Feedback from participants has been good and the external speakers have made them aware of organisations (such as the BBC) which proactively encourage the recruitment of disabled people.		

### **2.3 Project Outcome 3:**

**30 young disabled people to report an increase in self-confidence and independence.**

#### **Progress made:**

This outcome was evident throughout the meeting, with the service users present each reporting on how much the project did for them in terms of increasing their sense of worth, their self-confidence, and their resolution to aim high.

### **GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS**

Compared to some other grants the number of beneficiaries may seem low but the nature of the work involved (ie requiring concentrated time spent on the individuals) and the specific client needs undoubtedly justifies the funding awarded.

The value of this project – and the professional way in which it was delivered – was reinforced by the presence in this meeting of three of the service users. Each of them accessed the project from different starting positions but all were explicit in expressing their satisfaction with what the project had done for them, particularly in increasing their self-confidence. For many, living with a long-term condition greatly reduces self-confidence and instils a belief that things can't change or improve. This project, they said, reversed that and helped them realise that they could set personal goals and be capable of achieving them.

All involved in the meeting – staff and service users – expressed ways in which the project could be improved, for example, by offering travel expenses, giving people more hands-on work whilst in work-experience placement, and having more recourse to assistive technology.

The organisation, as clearly expressed through this project, is exemplary in putting service users at the forefront of both determining and delivering its work. The *Trailblazers* project targets and is led by young people themselves and has had notable success on various issues, such as improving access to further education.

This visit came at the tail end of the 2-year funding period. Your officer did express that, owing to its uniqueness and London-wide benefit, it could be eligible for further support from the Trust. The organisation will consider this in the next few weeks and is likely to submit an application. As *Trailblazers* is a national campaign there could be scope for your officer to liaise with other funders to see if the London-work could be supported in other parts of the country, thereby making it accessible UK-wide.

There is also scope for your officers to promote - through its networks, including CoL networks - the value of providing work experience to disabled young people.