MONITORING VISIT REPORT: Westminster Arts 11808

1.1 Date of visit:	1.2 Name of visiting	1.3 People met with:
	Grants Officer:	
10 th August 2015		Kathryn Gilfoy (Resonate
	Tim Wilson, accompanied	Programme Manager);
	by Mrs Littlechild	Lucy Warren (Projects
		Coordinator); Seiwa
		Cunningham (Resonate
		Artist); various service
		users and Westminster
		Arts' volunteers.

1.4 Programme Area & Outcomes:

Older Londoners - People living with dementia and Alzheimer's

1.5 Purpose of the award:

£72,000 over three years (£17,000; £25,000; £30,000) towards Westminster Arts' Resonate programme.

MONITORING INFORMATION

2.1 Project Outcome 1: To reduce the isolation of people with dementia and their carers living in the community

Progress made: In the first year of grant funding the charity has delivered a range of one-to-one arts sessions for dementia sufferers and their carers. It has also provided a creative befriending service for those living independently but at risk of isolation as well as group-based reminiscence workshops. There has been music, arts appreciation and art-making activities to encourage engagement at a number of venues across Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea.

2.2 Project Outcome 2: To enable those living with dementia in care homes to retain a sense of agency and well-being

Progress made: Westminster Arts' care-home based services had included poets in residence and café concerts by students from the Royal Academy of Music. The creative approaches used are designed to encourage residents to express their wishes through new means, such as poetry, in order to improve the understanding between those living with dementia and their carers. The monitoring report provided by Westminster Arts included several examples where care plans had been improved to take account of new information generated by the arts sessions.

2.3 Project Outcome 3: To raise awareness of dementia and the needs of those living with the condition and their carers, contributing to a dementia friendly society.

Progress made: The funding provided by City Bridge Trust for Resonate's programme manager has allowed the charity to share its learning at Age UK's conference, the European Reminiscence Network conference and the Dementia Congress. Part of the Resonate programme (Music for Thought) was featured in a research project on the arts and dementia and is featured at http://mmaking.co.uk

In addition, the charity has trained care home staff, project volunteers, and arts

venue staff on ways of working with dementia sufferers. The first year monitoring report provided by Westminster Arts included several case examples highlighting the improved understanding of and engagement with dementia sufferers, particularly in residential care homes.

GRANT OFFICER COMMENTS

The visit took place at St Vincent's Day Centre, Queen Caroline Street, Hammersmith, where Westminster Arts were running a mosaic design workshop. This was one session from a six-week programme for clients whose dementia was still relatively mild and who are able to live relatively independently.

The group of fifteen clients were being led through a structured programme towards the production of a large mosaic on a garden wall. Work had begun with a reminiscence and word-association task, before developing ideas further through sketches, felt-making, and collages. The activity that we saw was the start of the mosaic-making where clients had the opportunity to handle tiles and craft a drink coaster based on their initial sketch design. It was a ninety minute session starting with tea, biscuits and newspapers, before work began.

All clients were clearly very absorbed in the work, and the activity provided an opportunity for the participants to talk about their lives, their families, their workhistory, and their interests. Whilst the workshops were generating good quality art work, the primary emphasis of the activity was on socialisation and engagement. The activities provide a good level of stimulation for clients, and support the work of the day-centre through the provision of skills additional to those of the permanent staff. Westminster Arts hopes that its work will help demonstrate that clients at a range of levels can engage with quite complex activities, and that people should not be 'boxed in' by preconceived notions of ability.

The empathetic approach taken by Westminster Arts impresses not only in the activities which we saw during the visit, but also for the positive difference this can make to the participants through improved communication and enhanced care plans.

The inclusion of carers in the design of the Resonate programme has helped deliver practical support through offering respite time and signposting to support services such as counselling. The intention of the charity to tackle the loneliness experienced by many carers means that activities are designed with this client group in mind.

Westminster Arts is currently a small organisation (its most recent accounts show a turnover of <£100k), but is gradually expanding its services through the tri-borough area. It has engaged with relevant Clinical Commissioning Groups and won the support of a number of local partners but acknowledges that this is taking some time and fundraising remains a challenge.