

## Customer and Communities Improvement Fund

**Woodworking Warriors: Supporting Veterans with mental and physical conditions.** This grant helped to deliver a wide range of woodworking workshops to veterans, their family members and others in the local community that were suffering from loneliness and social isolation. The project has improved health and wellbeing whilst reducing loneliness and social isolation of people in the communities of Co Durham, especially that of veterans and those suffering poor mental health. This was achieved by delivering a range of workshops in a variety of woodworking disciplines, Fine arts, crafts and heritage skills. The Woodworking Warriors also delivered services and carried out projects in the local community which helped with our clients' reintegration into the local community and progression into work.

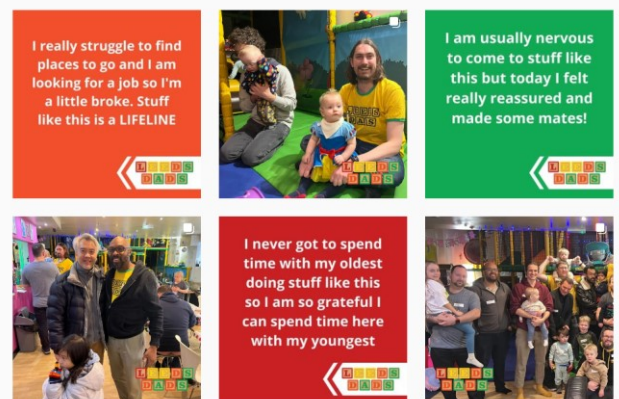
**Young Routes, Warrington Youth Zone.** Children and young people attend the Youth Zone to explore the themes of safe travel, independent travel on public transport, and broader issues of community safety. Over 200 young people in participated through weekly Junior (7-12), Senior (13-19), and Springboard (young people with disabilities) sessions using activities such as sports, arts, music, interactive workshops, educational sessions, social action, cycle maintenance, and family sessions to explore the themes and achieve outcomes for young people.



The project inspired numerous personal changes in the individuals participating in Young Routes including increased confidence and self-esteem, better social skills and communication, and improved ability to work in a team, negotiate, and compromise. Staff and volunteers regularly observed young people who were very timid at the beginning of the project, really coming out of their shell, becoming more vocal, and contributing well to the sessions. There has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour and in the long-term this project will increase independence when accessing travel – this can have a significant impact on both confidence and employment aspirations.

**Leeds Dads. Parenting support group for young children and fathers.** Leeds Dads brings together a diverse community of fathers for social interaction and support. The group enables dads to share their experiences, and signpost towards expert parenting support.

Leeds Dads is unique in supporting fathers to actively engage with their children and build lasting relationships. Playgroups and softplays are targeted in areas of deprivation – helping those with limited means to build meaningful connections with their children. Dads report that society doesn't value them the same way as mums. That they're isolated, and often seen as a problem. Vital support is provided to fathers who may be struggling and have limited access to their children. Leeds Dads activities are accessible and support men's mental health, which is extremely socially isolating.



### **CCIFX09 Footsteps, West Yorkshire. Supporting vulnerable women leaving prison.**

Footsteps is a holistic, person-centred support service at St Giles Trust that offers gender and trauma informed help to vulnerable women who have been involved in the criminal justice system and are returning to Yorkshire. Support is offered to these women via intensive 1:1 casework and a women's support group. Footsteps overall objective is to support and empower women who have been involved in the criminal justice system and who face Severe and Multiple Disadvantages (poverty, exploitation, abuse, addiction or mental health problems) to help them fully and equally participate in society.

These are women who have been chronically disempowered throughout their lives – as a result they struggle to engage with mainstream services and sometimes their needs are unfortunately too complex and high for smaller grass roots organisations. Footsteps fills a gap in this service provision ensuring that the most vulnerable women don't fall through the gaps and become "invisible".

At St Giles, lived experience is at the heart of our service delivery. Over 40% of St Giles employees have lived experience of the criminal justice system and 66% have faced complex disadvantages. Being helped by someone who has "been there" is powerful and our model has been proved time and time again to increase engagement, which accelerates the pace of progress for our clients. After all we can say "I've been there" and demonstrate first hand that there is a way out.

Our practical and emotional support ensures that the basics are in place (housing, benefits, debt clearance, building self-confidence, raising aspirations) to lay the foundations to move towards a positive future.

### **Cycling Without Age, York. Improving wellbeing of elderly people.**

Cycling Without Age improves the mental health and wellbeing of older and disabled people with restricted mobility by enabling them to get outside, be included in everyday life and connect with other people, their community and the natural world.

The CCIF grant has enabled Cycling Without Age to develop our service so we can offer more rides and reach more older and disabled people across the city. We have purchased a new Triobike Taxi or rickshaw and set up a new storage area in the north of the city from which to deliver Rides. We have established new working partnerships with care homes and community support organisations and recruited and trained 12 new volunteers.

Older and disabled people with restricted mobility are more likely to be isolated and lonely. The rides are an effective way to get them outside, enable social contact and reconnection with other people and their community.



### **InterActive Family Days, Whitby. Family outings for disabled children.**

The CCIF grant enabled local families to enjoy a free day out and the opportunity to socialise with other families in similar situations. Many of these families are struggling with, and disadvantaged by, economic circumstance, rural isolation, lack of transport, and the demands of caring for a disabled child. The Family Days were a real treat for them – it was a chance to visit new place and most had rarely had the opportunity to spend quality time socialising with other families. Support from Interactive staff was a huge bonus, allowing parents and carers to spend time with others, sharing problems and solutions.



No one understands the issues facing the parents of a disabled child like another parent of a disabled child. The project has enabled quality interaction and conversation for these parents and friendships have formed between parents that continue long after the Family Days.

For those parents whose children are in mainstream education, and who can find themselves isolated at the school gate, the support and understanding from other parents has been invaluable. Those living in the rural villages have been able to get out into the wider world and enjoy activities which lack of transport has previously obviated. Those whose financial circumstances prevented them from enjoying any activities involving cost have been able to enjoy a day out without worrying about expense. Families who felt different and marginalised and were unable to engage in social activities because of the demands of a disabled child have made new friends with whom they can socialise and share concerns. These are small steps towards community inclusion for everyone but they are positive ones.