



Centre: Carlisle Youth Zone

Adviser: Phillippa Chapman

Level: Silver

Context

Carlisle Youth Zone delivered Silver Arts Award with Chris, a young blind musician. He had previously completed Bronze at another centre and was keen to move on to Silver. Chris has mild learning difficulties and plays various instruments including the bagpipes, flute, clarinet, piano and accordion.

Despite being an enthusiastic musician, Chris and his adviser Phillippa found it difficult to find opportunities for him in his area, and travel is an issue for Chris. However, Chris was able to work with a freelance musician experienced in delivering quality music sessions with young people.

As there were no other young people at Carlisle Youth Zone doing Silver at the time, Chris's adviser Phillippa was able to work one to one with him.

Approach

Perhaps the biggest challenge for Chris was that he was not able to read all the information. In order to help Chris understand the requirements of the award, Phillippa talked through each section with Chris: "I felt it was important not to just ask leading questions and to try and help him do it as independently as possible."

They made recordings of Phillippa talking, as well as communicating via email which could be read by a screen reader. This was difficult at times, but they took it slowly in order to give Chris all the time he needed. This did mean that sometimes a lot of time was spent in rooms talking rather than playing instruments!

To learn the lyrics he had written, Carlisle Youth Zone were able to translate these into Braille. Phillippa has ordered a copy of the Gold Arts Award booklet in Braille for Chris to use when he starts Gold, which she thinks will be a big help.

For his arts challenge, Chris wrote the music and lyrics to a song, and digitally re-mastered it himself. He set himself milestones of which instrumental part to write first, and at what point he would need support from the musician. For his leadership project, Chris planned and delivered a series of music workshops for young people in Carlisle Youth Zone's inclusion club.

Chris chose to collect all his evidence in audio format. Although this presented many challenges (e.g. difficulty transferring files to different devices), it meant that Chris had complete ownership over the content and was able to review his progress by listening back over previous recordings. Chris needed support with putting his recordings onto disk for the moderator.

Impact

The Silver Award made a big difference to Chris in terms of giving him a focus of something to achieve that nurtured his talents and interests. He also got some paid work out of the project in the form of a Burns Night where he was the piper. Chris will be starting his Gold Award with Carlisle Youth Zone soon.

'I've really enjoyed doing my Arts Award, it's helped me to feel more confident about my music and I really enjoyed performing and sharing my music with other people.' *Chris, Silver Arts Award achiever*

'In our city there are few truly inclusive, accessible, affordable opportunities for young people to take part in arts activities that nurture their individual talents and interests and allow them to work towards a qualification that increases their employability and opportunities within the arts sector. Being an Arts Award adviser has meant being able to offer this through our youth centre.'

Phillippa Chapman, Carlisle Youth Zone

Adviser advice

'As Silver involves so much planning and reviewing, if doing Silver Arts Awards with young blind people I would recommend getting some good software that helps them to record their progress, such as something that converts speech to text but that can be used independently by a blind person.'

Phillippa Chapman, Carlisle Youth Zone

If you are delivering Arts Award with young people who are visually impaired, you can request young people's Bronze, Silver and Gold booklets in accessible formats including unlocked PDF, large print and Braille. Please see www.artsaward.org.uk/accessibility for more information

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