

Social Audit Report 2017- 2018 for Going For Independence CIC (GFI)

Company Registration date October 20th 2008 No. 6729549

For financial year 21st October 2017 to 20th October 2018

Part 1 Description of the company's activities and impact

Going For Independence (GFI) core business

The Going For Independence CIC was established in 2008 to enable individuals to be able to access independent advice and information about equipment, gadgets and home / work adaptations (including Telecare) to help them to live independently and safely with the best possible quality of life.

We are advocates for the work of Independent Occupational Therapists and facilitate connections between individuals and OTs and support the social model of disability.

The company has developed collaborations and links with a number of key national organisations and with local organisations in the North of England that share our vision for people to be empowered to live independently with choice and control over their lives.

We now also provide direct services for people in the community to help to reduce social isolation and to help people to learn new skills.

Political and Financial pressures

2018 has been a year of significant change with continuous reductions in welfare provision for older people and those with disabilities.

Competition for funding is difficult to access for charities and small enterprises and we have chosen to change our management structure by growing our Board of Directors to enable us to apply for grant funding as our voluntary charitable work continues to expand.

During 2017-2018 the GFI CIC has benefited the community in the following ways:-

1 Creative Social Activities for isolated older people

Following the success of a voluntary pilot scheme in 2017 we applied successfully for Big Lottery Awards for All grant funding to run creative social activities for people who are Blind or visually impaired providing tailored sessions with individual support to enable participation. Through this link to we were able to reach older people by building relationships and reducing their isolation, including people in the Ageing Better programme in Middlesbrough.

At the end of the project in November 2018 we held an event to bring groups of visually impaired people together from across the Tees Valley region, which we hope to do again as feedback showed how much this was enjoyed and appreciated by those involved.

2 Inclusive Art Department

In 2018 we set up a new department within GFI to offer a bespoke and supported art and craft activity workshops service and have been able to deliver these for other organisations across the NE Region, including for Asian Elders and for people with dementia. Through these activities we

are able to reach people in the community who may find the specialist information we provide on independent living timely and helpful.

3 Board Game development

Through 2018 GFI worked with Teesside University on the development of a table-top Board Game using technology so that it can be played inclusively by people who are Blind. This included the beginnings of a design of a mobile phone App with audio dice functions. Work will be ongoing through 2019/2020 with the university to take this further.

4 Art Exhibition of work by Blind and Visually impaired

In June 2018 Directors of GFI worked with the Focus on Vision charity in Stockton to put on an art exhibition of the work of Blind and visually impaired people in the Redcar Palace Arts Gallery, which was very successful and raised awareness of the abilities of people with sensory impairments, extending our reach into the community.

5 Applying for further funding

As a social enterprise with Directors putting in a lot of voluntary time our Lottery-funded project was very good value for money and was very successful with positive feedback from our participants. The Board of Directors decided to make further applications for Lottery funding for projects in 2019 and beyond and invested time to start this process in 2018.

Part 2 – Consultation with stakeholders

During 2017 and 2018 our Creative Social Activities project meant we were communicating directly with a range of new stakeholders in the community across the Tees Valley region. Through this project we provide services for older people, people with visual and other sensory and physical impairments, carers and people with dementia and for Asian Elders.

GFI also has a wide business and professional network locally and nationally including new links made with Teesside University, older and disabled people, young people and children with disabilities, families, friends and carers, Occupational Therapists and health and social care professionals.

Summary

2017-2018 was a successful twelve months for Going For Independence, with expansion into service provision for people for whom there are few opportunities to access suitable activities in their local communities; feedback and evaluation from our work shows we have had a direct impact on improving peoples' health and wellbeing. We were able to recruit a local staff member who has helped us to deliver our project work, who has also benefitted from learning about independent living, using this information in their own wider network.

Our flexibility and voluntary work gives us the ability to work in innovative ways, and our new links with Teesside University will help us to spread the word to graduates about including social value in their future work and businesses.

Pam Bennett - MD Going For Independence CIC
January 2019