

What is Connections?

Connections is an outreach life-skills building programme for children and young adults with additional needs on the Isle of Wight aged 8+. Through this project service users can access a range of highly individualised programmes that enable integration and development within our local community, and build skills for work and life

Our aims here are very clear: to provide a bespoke programme of activities that are created and driven by the participating children and young adults. The activities we offer through **Connections** improve health and wellbeing, as well as building skills for work and life. This service is committed to driving positive outcomes for young people

The benefits of this project are huge, not just to the participating service users but also to everyone else who is involved. Taking part in **Connections** improves quality of life for our service users, by enabling them to become really involved with the local community through this outreach work. This results in a project that each service user can have real ownership over, while improving feelings of self-belief and achievement for each participant

All individual activities offered are created completely with our service users and have variations of the same core aims. Examples of programmes we have been asked to deliver so far include:

- model train restorations and customisations to exhibit
- making seasonal gifts to sell
- immersive sensory sessions in our dedicated sensory room for those with more complex needs
- gaming sessions for those who find face to face socializing difficult and benefit from more virtual interactions

Participants are involved in all areas of project delivery in order that they can build experience and confidence in a wide variety of daily living tasks. Core life skills targets of these project include:

- developing money management skills
- developing time management skills
- increasing confidence in social environments
- being able to identify emotions
- being able to self-identify a personal achievement

How does it work?

Once a service user has decided they would like to access **Connections**, we find out what their individual interests are so that we can design a programme together. From the very beginning we make sure that we are clear with the specific aims that we are working towards. Before we start, we fill out Connections Project Plans with all participating service users, so that we are able to understand where they are in terms of self-confidence and what they identify as areas of strength and weakness

We complete Connections Targets forms each week so that we can track in real time the difference this project is making to the lives of each service user. Every activity will be constantly monitored and evaluated so that we can ensure that it remains relevant and focussed on the individual aims

Connections is a programme written in real collaboration with each participant. Each project is completely bespoke and 100% client-lead

This service is delivered at a cost of £15 per hour. This charge covers all costs relating to equipment, materials, room hire, admin and preparation time. Service users would also need support funded through our 1:1 Buddies Service at an additional cost of £15.50 per hour. This project is delivered from the Connect Centre in Newport Town Centre

If you would like to find out more then please contact Jenny on 07875 949 584 or email connectiow@gmail.com