

What is The Community Links Project?

The Community Links Project is a work related learning provision that delivers bespoke, community based, life-skills building programmes 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 with our local community. All activities are lead wholly by service users

This project is delivered from the Connect Centre, Bowling Green Lane, Newport

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 **The Community Links Project** improve health and wellbeing, and 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 **The Community Links Project** improves quality of life for our service users, as this enables 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 sessions offered are created completely by our service users. Examples of programmes we have been asked to deliver so far include:

- model train restorations and customisations to exhibit
- baking dog treats for Ability Dogs 4 Young People and the RSPCA
- making seasonal gifts for people who live in Care Homes to help foster community spirit and reduce loneliness (for example making easter baskets to deliver to local Care Homes)
- baking cakes and holding fundraiser mornings to raise money for local charities
- 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
- horticulture sessions focused around gardening and growing in our allotment

How does it work?

Once a service user has decided they would like to access **The Community Links Project**, 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 any specific aims that we need to achieve during their programme. Before we start, we fill out feedback forms 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 will fill in further feedback forms every 3 months so that we can track the difference this project is making to their lives. Every activity will be constantly monitored and evaluated by the staff member delivering the project so that we can ensure that it remains relevant and focussed on the individual aims

The Community Links Project is created specifically for and with each individual service user. Each project is completely bespoke and 100% client-lead

This project is delivered at a cost of £10 per hour. This charge covers all costs relating to travel, equipment, materials, room hire 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

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