



## **'Commissioning Revealed'**

### **Event at the new Walsall Manor Hospital 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**SPEAKERS:** Diane Osborne and Steve Upton

**ORGANISING TEAM:** Kate Gant (Creative Health CIC), Karen Bell (Creative Health CIC), Kerry Hodgkiss (Walsall Arts into Health Co-ordinator; Arts Co-ordinator Walsall Manor Hospital), Max Bailey (Walsall Council Creative Development Team), Daisy Olsen (creativityteam)

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The NHS defines commissioning as:

*"...specifying and procuring services for the local population... which deliver the best possible health and well-being outcomes... (and) provision... within the best use of available resources"*

But for many artists, arts and community workers and those who exist outside of the NHS, the world of commissioning for health and wellbeing is a mystery.

We attempted to make this process clearer at the 'Commissioning Revealed' event at the newly refurbished Walsall Manor Hospital on Tuesday 9 November 2010. **Diane Osborne** (Teenage Pregnancy/Young People) and **Steve Upton** (Mental Health) are commissioners for NHS Walsall, who presented their efforts to link creative work with health.

#### **THE EVENT**

Karen Bell started the session, introducing the praXis network. Max Bailey introduced the Walsall Creative Development Team, who maintain a successful partnership with NHS Walsall.

**Diane Osborne**

**Maternity Commissioner (former Teenage Pregnancy Programme Lead), NHS Walsall:**

[View Diane's presentation](#)

Diane delivered a presentation regarding her work towards strengthening the delivery of PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) in schools, as part of the Teenage Pregnancy NHS team. At the start of her 2006-2007 project, it was discovered that very old resources were being used in schools. New resources were called for by the young people, so using the 11 Competencies in the World Class Commissioning framework, four DVD films were produced in collaboration with young people, one for each key stage, with topics that each age group had requested in a questionnaire at the start of the project.

Diane explained in detail each competency, which is the checklist that she uses to decide which organisations can deliver the outcomes required of a project (essentially to reduce teenage pregnancy rates). Leading from these competencies, Diane explained further what she would look for before commissioning an artist / organisation, and what recommendations she would make to anyone making an application.

This included:

- A high level of professionalism in the finished project
- Artists should try to identify a local lead in a particular area (teenage pregnancy, obesity, etc.) and the utilisation of high profile 'champions', which can be strong advocates
- Collaboration with clinicians to ensure the accuracy of information to be delivered
- Local knowledge of current trends (seek out this information from public health department for local demographics / statistics)
- Improvements in 'outcomes', and demonstration of value for money delivery
- Innovation
- 'Spend to save', tailoring of targets, incorporating local priorities of Local Area Agreements (LAAs)

Diane spoke more about the future. Artists can ask their local authority what the current and future priorities / targets are, and how they can help in their achievement. (This information might be found on local authority websites, in the form of statements or missions for the forthcoming year.) Even expensive projects may be given the 'go ahead' by the new government if they are proven to make a difference towards outcomes.

## Steve Upton

### Wellbeing Manager, NHS Walsall Community Health:

[View Steve's presentation](#)

Steve is less involved with commissioning directly on behalf of the NHS, although he does sub-contract work. There are similar targets for mental health to those discussed by Diane, but different boroughs have very different levels of staffing, which impacts upon the commissioning of arts and health projects that include their service users. As mental health is less quantifiable than something like teenage pregnancy, there is more of a shift towards community health, in provision and service delivery.

Steve spoke about 'Mind Matters', the most recent mental health promotion strategy for NHS Walsall. Steve explained that Arts projects have been incorporated into 7 of 8 domains within the strategy, often very successfully, with innovative processes that boosted the projects.

Steve emphasised that he looks for proven and evidence-based projects. The three main factors for mental wellbeing can all be supported by the arts, and they are outlined in the [Mental Wellbeing Checklist](#), produced by the National Mental Health Development Unit:

- 1 Enhancing control
- 2 Increase resilience and community assets
- 3 Facilitate participation and promote inclusion

These work hand in hand with the 5 Ways to Wellbeing, which are evidence-based ideas that promote wellbeing and recovery: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, Give.

What does Steve look for in project applications?

- Participatory and inclusive approaches
- Tell Steve how the idea you have can help with his work
- Tackle inequality and discrimination / Understand the impact of stigma and discrimination
- Involvement of experts, carers and service users – to make projects their own
- Work that addresses a range of factors
- Knowledge of mental health issues (as Diane said, know the local policy)
- Demonstrate that the work will make a difference and is effective
- Built-in evaluation, as projects happen, to ensure a lasting legacy and sustainability
- Value for money, in a competitive tendering process. The cheapest project will not necessarily be the one chosen

**Helpful documents regarding mental health policy:**

- ['New Horizons, a Shared Vision for Mental Health'](#) – the most recent mental health policy from the Government's Department of Health

- [‘No health without public mental health: The case for action’](#). Royal College of Psychiatrists, London. October 2010
- It is difficult to measure mental wellbeing, however this is discussed in a document called [‘Local Wellbeing: Can We Measure it?’](#) by Nicola Steuer and Nic Marks. The focus here is on wellbeing formed by social connections, allowing people to become resilient, and giving children tools for the future.

### **QUESTIONS RAISED / TOPICS:**

During the presentations, and after a short break, the presenters took questions and a discussion ensued:

**Q:** Who chooses the artform in the commissioning process?

**A:** Almost always a steering group, made up of professionals. There are big differences in what exists in local areas: most are lucky to have an arts team, and may have only one arts officer. praXis aims to set up links between artists and commissioners as much as possible and recognise good practice.

An artist practitioner present spoke of the prevalence of reactive work, responding to briefs, and that it has not seemed easy to give commissioners the artist’s own ideas. It was reiterated that ‘burning issues’ could / would be given attention, if they correlate to the commissioner’s own priorities.

**Q:** What should be said to persuade people/commissioners who aren’t already aware of the power of arts for wellbeing?

**A:** Steve Upton said that evidence and proven outcomes are strong persuasive factors, i.e., proof that your idea works.

It was discussed that it is also important to keep note of the person who is responsible for commissioning work, as there can be a high turnover of personnel. Keep in touch with your advocate within an organisation.

Diane said that she would expect proactivity from artists, that they should be doing their homework on local and central concerns.

### **SUMMARY GUIDANCE FOR ARTISTS:**

1. Target commissioners who are specific to your area of interest – find the lead person, but don’t waste time on someone who isn’t passionate. (Passionate people might move jobs, but they don’t lose their passion!) Find your friendly commissioner and be proactive!
2. Present your idea, what you want to do and send it in.
3. Show your evidence base (this can be others’ work, but show how you can replicate it), and explain why they need you. Show commissioners how you can achieve their targets for them.

4. Quote eg. NICE guidelines / Royal College of Psychiatry, etc. Invest time in finding this information out and be clear about what you want to offer.
5. Be aware of funding times. April is when funding begins, but there is often little budget left by November and the next year is unknown. In January underspends may be identified, so this may be a good time to enquire. By February/March, most departments will know what the budget for the next year will be.
6. Look at new policies and ideas.
7. There is strength in numbers, and local arts teams are willing to answer your questions.
8. Keep an up-to-date list of email contacts.

#### **USEFUL LINKS / POINTERS:**

- [Integrated Youth Support Service](#): various organisations working in partnership to support young people in accessing services. A major part of the remit is 'positive activities', of which the arts are a large part
- [NICE guidance](#) for mental health
- [Royal College of Psychiatry](#)
- [Healthy Child Programme](#): Government-recommended framework of universal and progressive services for children and young people to promote optimal health and wellbeing.

#### **COMMENTS FROM DELEGATES ABOUT THE EVENT:**

'Good practical advice for artists to develop opportunities'

'Good insight into the practice of commissioning / tendering process'

'Very useful exploration / explanation of arts in health & how to develop opportunity'

'Really useful meeting other professionals in the field'

'Really practical & useful information about the commissioning environment'

'Thank you'

'Positive and inspiring'

'Practical tips to consider when sending out tenders. Useful websites and resources to help me plan future projects'

'Learned not to be scared to be proactive with own project ideas'

'Thank you. I got a lot from this event.'

'A very good event, I'm glad I came.'

'I'm always impressed how connected Walsall is – I wish Sandwell – Birmingham could be like this.'

'Really useful to hear what it is we need to know in approaching [commissioners]'

'Heard lots of really useful information on priorities of PCTs and commissioners'

**DELEGATES:**

Moya Lloyd	Walsall CDT	<a href="mailto:lloydm@walsall.gov.uk">lloydm@walsall.gov.uk</a>
Simon Quinn	Drama Practitioner	<a href="mailto:Fireduptheatre@aol.com">Fireduptheatre@aol.com</a>
Jacqui Rodger	Creative Solutions	<a href="mailto:jacqui@creativesolutions.org.uk">jacqui@creativesolutions.org.uk</a>
Charlie Jordan	Artist	<a href="mailto:charlie@charliejordan.co.uk">charlie@charliejordan.co.uk</a>
Jenny Peevers	Arts Council England	<a href="mailto:jenny.peevers@artscouncil.org.uk">jenny.peevers@artscouncil.org.uk</a>
Robin Wade	Escape Community Arts in Action / Robin Wade Ceramics	<a href="mailto:robinwade@clayworks.co.uk">robinwade@clayworks.co.uk</a>
Caroline Jariwala	Artist	<a href="mailto:carolinejariwala@hotmail.com">carolinejariwala@hotmail.com</a>
Cathryn Ravenhall	Warwickshire County Council	<a href="mailto:cathrynravenhall@warwickshire.gov.uk">cathrynravenhall@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Rach Flowers	Warwickshire County Council	<a href="mailto:cathrynravenhall@warwickshire.gov.uk">cathrynravenhall@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>
Pauline Bailey	Holistic Arts & Media	<a href="mailto:pauline_holisticarts2@yahoo.co.uk">pauline_holisticarts2@yahoo.co.uk</a>
Carl Plant	NHS Local	<a href="mailto:carlplant@me.com">carlplant@me.com</a>
Felix Pepler	Get on the Radio	<a href="mailto:felixpepler@btinternet.com">felixpepler@btinternet.com</a>
Tonya Bolton	ICU Transformational Arts	<a href="mailto:tonya@icu-transformational-arts.com">tonya@icu-transformational-arts.com</a>
Sarah-Jane Watkinson	Women & Theatre	<a href="mailto:sjwatkinson@womenandtheatre.co.uk">sjwatkinson@womenandtheatre.co.uk</a>
Kim Hill	Artist	<a href="mailto:philip.hill@mypostoffice.co.uk">philip.hill@mypostoffice.co.uk</a>
Kate Broom	Birmingham City University	<a href="mailto:Kate.Broom@bcu.ac.uk">Kate.Broom@bcu.ac.uk</a>
Yvonne Flavell	Artist	<a href="mailto:yvonne@textile-artist.co.uk">yvonne@textile-artist.co.uk</a>
Allan Jones	Freelance Artist	<a href="mailto:brushead@btinternet.com">brushead@btinternet.com</a>
Jamila Walker	Artist	<a href="mailto:jamilawalker47@hotmail.com">jamilawalker47@hotmail.com</a>