

Willis Newson provided consultancy to enable South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's (SSSFT) ongoing arts programme to develop and implement a robust evaluation framework for its work. This project was one of the pilots for our guided approach to evaluation.

The arts for health team at SSSFT work with artists, musicians, writers and other creative professionals to deliver stimulating arts-based activities for service users across the Trust. They wanted to evaluate to assess the impact of their programme on service users and staff and to advocate for the value of arts and health practice within the Trust. They also wished their programme to remain sustainable in the future.

The SSSFT arts and health team had a limited budget but were keen to develop a framework that would be tailored to their needs and feasible for them to deliver now and in the long term. Our guided approach seemed the most appropriate way to support them. We helped the team identify its aims and priorities for evaluation and gave support in developing an evaluation framework in response to these. We provided training, reinforced through mentoring and supervision at key points, on all aspects of evaluation practice including aims setting, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination. Because members of the team had the opportunity to test new skills, pilot evaluation tools and put their framework into practice with us on hand to provide advice, they now feel confident in their ability to implement evaluations in future.

As a standard part of project delivery, we routinely evaluate our own projects. In common with many similar projects, the SSSFT team experienced clear challenges relating to a lack of time and resources available for evaluating their work. However, our evaluation found that they were “now in a really strong position to go forward with a clear set of outcomes to measure, and a process to follow” and that the guided approach had worked well.

“We have gone from years of gathering masses of data but with no tools to collate or assess it, let alone a process to share it or reflect on it, to having a much clearer rationale for collecting data, tools to collate it, criteria to assess it against and a plan for reviewing and sharing it.”

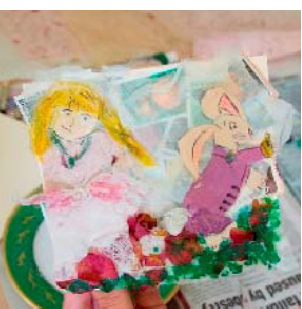
(Emma Yorke, SSSFT Arts for Health Coordinator)



“Nursery Rhymes and Fairy Tales” at the Brockington Unit. Image courtesy of the SSSFT Arts for Health programme website



A photography created by service users from Stonefield House. Image courtesy of the SSSFT Arts for Health programme website.



Artwork by a service user at the Brockington Mother and Baby Unit at St George's, Stafford. Image courtesy of the SSSFT Arts for Health programme website