



cultureshift

Project Story

Get Into Trains

Get Into Trains: Summary Report

Start Date: 11.02.2020

End Date: 10.03.2020

Participants: 23

From: Lewes

Via: Seaford

To: Eastbourne

Supported by: Sussex Community Rail Partnership



Culture Shift Pilot Project

Working together with



AC:RP
communityrail.org.uk



TESCO

Bags of Help

THE IDEA

Culture Shift has a portfolio of work which has included learning disabled adults as a primary beneficiary group since 2013, including the Arts Connect programme and the band Delta 7.

Through the work, it became apparent that a recurring theme was transport. Often, this was seen as a major barrier to participation but it also was a source of fascination and interest. In particular, trains were frequently referred to as a preferred mode of transport and yet access was sometimes a challenge. It was therefore an ambition to pilot a project where trains and train stations became the focus for inspiration. Combining heritage, creative inspiration and the development of important life skills and confidence. This was the starting point.

In early 2020, pre-pandemic, Culture Shift delivered a series of 3 pilot Get Into Trains sessions, working with Sussex Community Rail Partnership. Delivering to groups of learning disabled adults and their carers to explore trains in new and creative ways. Each of the 3 pilot sessions were based at a different location in East Sussex; Lewes, Eastbourne and Seaford train stations.

THE FOUNDATIONS

The designated lead artist, Anne Colvin, is highly experienced in working with learning disabled participants with a particular interest in outdoor environments. Anne worked closely with Catherine Simmons, Community Rail Line Officer, project volunteers and support staff, with a focus on;

Accessibility - Identifying locations within each station to create accessible and safe pop-up 'studios' for the sessions to be based in.

Culture - Planning station tours, allowing participants to explore the hidden stories of the station history and creative tasks, inspired by the environment.

Life Skills - Supporting participants to develop life skills and confidence in travelling by train.

"Going somewhere different each time was good. Learning new things and getting to know then different staff working."

THE ACTIVITY

Each of the 3 sessions incorporated a variety of elements;

1

Physical Activity -

Such as doing a guided tour of the station, pointing out features, like the Every Ironworks at Lewes Station.



2

Creative Tasks -

Drawing, taking photographs and making a temporary installation on the concourse of Eastbourne Station.



3

Social Interaction -

Sharing stories and history, reflecting on experiences of train travel and interacting with others, including station staff.



"We learned about pressing the button in an emergency and how to ask for information. I liked looking inside the driver's cab and asking him questions."

THE IMPACT

Social Benefits - Everyone travelled to and from the sessions by train and enjoyed the shared experience of train travel. Participants were encouraged to share memories, discuss the joys and challenges of train travel. Also speaking directly with station staff, asking questions and developing good relationships with new people.

“It was good meeting in the cafe in the station and being around other people when I was drinking my tea.”

Skills Development - Opportunities for both train fans and others who were nervous of trains, to become more informed about and familiar with their local train stations. People were guided through the process of planning a journey, buying tickets and travelling safely in a creative and supportive way. Collaborative skills were embedded in this project within group creative tasks such as creating group collages and temporary sculptures.

‘Having the station staff involved in the project was a real bonus.’

Mental Health Improvements - Transport is an area of everyday life that we know can be a source of anxiety and frustration for many learning disabled people. By facilitating a sense of creative enjoyment in travel, this project was seen to ease stress for some participants and generate a sense of confidence, freedom and independence.

“It was great to see how at home people became at the stations. I really believe this experience has helped to break down a lot of anxiety about using public transport.”