

Champion for Disabled People

Report on Expenditure from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

"To assist the Leader and appropriate Portfolio Holders by advising on service issues which support and encourage active, independent and healthy lives for disabled people and to raise the profile of disabled people and their needs in the development of policy across Directorates."

As Lancashire County Council's Disability Champion I have this year awarded almost all of the £10,000 allocated as grant funding in support of organisations working with people with disabilities.

In making these awards I have taken into account a number of factors.

I have aimed to make provision to both groups supporting people with disabilities related to mental health and physical issues in equal part.

I have also tried not to award funding to the same groups from previous years and I have been more inclined to support groups who are seeking funding from a number of different sources although I have made some awards towards running costs I have preferred to fund projects.

The groups supporting people with disabilities are working in a challenging environment and every award we make is truly appreciated and the money is used to very good effect.

I have met with a number of groups to better understand the work they do and there is no doubt that people's lives are made so much better by the work, almost all voluntary, that they undertake.

***County Councillor Steven Holgate
Champion for Disabled People***

Applications I have awarded in 2015/16 are as follows:

Chorley and South Ribble Shopmobility – £950

Shopmobility provides electric scooters and manual wheelchairs to enable those with walking difficulties the opportunity to do a days shopping and enjoy the other facilities, i.e. Library, Banks, Community Centre etc. It is the policy of the Trustees to replace three scooters each year to ensure the equipment is in good order, they requested funding of £950 to purchase a new one. The electric scooters provide some independence to those with walking difficulties.

Lancaster Outrageous Ambition – £1,500

Outrageous Ambition is a community interest company aimed to fully involve disabled and/or disadvantaged adults alongside the wider community through the creation of a social enterprise which can generate sustainable revenue to support its operation and further development. Their work tackles these issues by providing a safe and welcoming environment to develop the necessary skills to increase voluntary and employment opportunities as well as contributing to local communities. They required the funding to put together a programme of health and wellbeing events for local disabled people from different backgrounds to work together in a peer support setting. Typically disabled people tend to associate with people with the same issues, they want to bring teams together to create a better understanding of working in teams, meeting new people and learning new things. They spent the money on sessional facilitators to work with the groups to increase social inclusion and develop an asset based community that could engage in micro enterprises to create pathways for progression.

Preston and Chorley Fibromyalgia Support Group – £250

Preston and Chorley Fibromyalgia Support Group have over 200 members coming from a wide area of Lancashire. The funding enabled them to offer hydrotherapy on a monthly/weekly basis. The hydrotherapy is extremely beneficial to anyone suffering with chronic pain conditions including arthritis, MS, etc. helping to reduce their pain and increase their mobility. It also helps offset the isolation felt by people suffering from chronic pain.

West Lancashire Positive Living – £300

West Lancashire Positive Living support people with learning disabilities. Some live with parents and some live in their own home with support provided by them which they call Supported Living. They planned to start a forum involving the people in Supported Living to meet up together and discuss any issues relevant to them. The aim of the forum was for them to get together at one of their houses where they live. At these meetings, they will discuss their aims and objectives of the forum, develop a constitution and appoint a chair. . The funding helped to develop this forum, by purchasing stationary for newsletters, refreshments, printer, cartridges and a laminator.

West Lancashire - Sporting Challenge – £700

Sporting Challenge are a group of Parent/Carers who provide sporting activities for around 30 people with learning disabilities in West Lancashire to keep them fit and healthy. The evening and weekend activities include Ten Pin Bowling, Aerobics, Swimming and Boccia/Kurling at local Sports Centres. Many people with a learning disability don't take part in any exercise activity because the family/carers who support them are unable to take them on such activities and they can't go on their own. Sporting Challenge provide sessional

workers who will collect them from where they live, support the people whilst they are at the sports centres and then return them home after the activities. The funding they secured helped to provide bowling, fitness and swimming sessions and covered their website / admin/ secretary costs throughout the year.

West Lancashire -Timesavers– £300

Timesavers was set up in 2010 by a group of parents who were concerned by the lack of paid jobs or work experience placements in administration for people with learning disabilities. They rent a small office in Skelmersdale and provide qualified sessional workers who collect their beneficiaries from where they live, support them whilst they are at the office, then return them home after their training/ work experience.

Their charity aims to help overcome barriers to the employability of people with learning difficulties by supporting them to gain further skills and work experience in all aspects of office work such as use of Microsoft Office programs, photocopying, printing leaflets, making personalised greetings cards, filing and shredding. They believe that by providing this work experience and training in a supportive office environment it will help improve the opportunities of the people with learning disabilities to eventually find a work placement or employment.

Their funding contributed towards the cost of printer inks, paper and card to enable the people they support continue to gain the office skills their project is endeavouring to provide.

Lancashire Dementia Voices (Preston) – £1,000

Lancashire Dementia Voices required funding to set up and run supportive sessions locally for people with early/mid stage dementia and carers to attend in an informal setting to be able to talk with experienced people who already have dementia, to help explore different ways of supporting them with access to information and how to access such information. Help to communicate with health care professionals in primary or acute care settings. To foster knowledge about end of life care but in a non-frightening way, and to look at other aspects of care such as care homes or accessing support at home.

Group members, will encourage those with dementia, empower them to become active in their communities, and support each session. The project will be developed over 12 months and start in January 2016.

Bickerstaffe Pensioners Social Fund (West Lancashire) – £600

Bickerstaffe is a village and civil parish in the West Lancashire district of Lancashire. The local transport links are very poor and in such a community people especially the disabled and elderly can be rurally isolated and suffer as a consequence of this. Local organisations such as the church, school, mother's union and women's institute are a real lifeline. Bickerstaffe Pensioners Fund was set up to provide tea and entertainment, the funding allocated to them would assist with the refreshments costs at their trip to Llandudno.

Disability Equality North West (Chorley and South Ribble) – £450

Disability Equality North West facilitates a forum providing support and advice to disabled people in Chorley and South Ribble. The forum also facilitates local events, which aim to increase disability awareness and providing a platform for the VCFS sector and disabled volunteers to reach out and educate local communities about sensory, physical, mental, invisible and learning disabilities, as well as empowering disabled people to “have a voice” in the local councils, of Chorley and South Ribble.

They applied for funding towards the cost for facilitators, refreshments and materials for forum meetings. The benefits of the forums offer further outreach to rurally isolated disabled people from central and south Lancashire.

The Sewing Room (West Lancashire) - £600

The Sewing Room is a social enterprise that exists to inspire, educate and motivate – to make a difference to those women suffering from mental and physical difficulties. The individuals they work with experience significant personal and professional barriers. They are disadvantaged by a wide range of factors. Many live isolated and vulnerable lives disconnected from family and wider social networks due to mental health issues.

The reason for their request for funding is to provide a bespoke 10 week sewing course (1 day per week 10.00 am – 12.30 pm) aimed at women who, as a result of domestic violence and abuse. Apart from learning sewing skills, women will also learn the important value of keeping well and healthy and will be taught the 5 ways to wellbeing.

The funding enabled them to “buy-in” a fully qualified tutor, assistant well-being support tutor; room hire; dress-making materials, cottons, needs etc., refreshments.

West Lancashire Fibromyalgia Support Group - £300

The West Lancashire Fibromyalgia Support group is run by volunteers and their aim is to support sufferers of fibromyalgia a condition which the person suffers muscle pain and stiffness, fatigue, specific tender joints, poor concentration and IBS. They provide information of what is out there for them whether being health or financial and emotional support.

They hold monthly meetings at present where they try to bring a speaker that would be applicable to helping members to manage their condition. Every alternative month they also meet at West Lancs College Café just for a social get together which seem very popular. They do however, need to look at holding extra meetings in the evenings to accommodate some sufferers that do work and to also incorporate suffers from the Tarleton and Hesketh Bank areas. Mindfulness, healthy eating and exercise seem to be the way forward in helping to manage the condition but to achieve that and awareness of the condition they need funds. The £300 allocated would assist with the cost of the room hire and guest speakers, pilates and aqua aerobic sessions, transport and admin costs.

Visually Impaired Children's Support Group (Hyndburn) - £500

The £500 funding enabled the blind and visually impaired children to enjoy a Christmas Party that was adapted to their needs, in a safe environment at the blind society where they rent a room to run their groups. They enjoyed a visit

from a real reindeer and Christmas buffet along with Christmas party games and crafts.

Divine Days Community Arts CIS (West Lancashire) - £500

Divine Dance is a Creative Dance group that meet weekly to rehearse and perform across West Lancashire raising awareness of additional needs, promoting inclusion and acceptance. Dancing is proven to reduce stress and depression, it increases energy and serotonin, improves flexibility, strength, balance and endurance. Dance increases mental capacity and cognitive processes which can have a lasting and positive impact on and individual adult with additional needs.

All their dancers have additional needs and they asked for funding towards the cost of costumes and ballet shoes for their 15 dancers.

Empower Women's Mental Health Support Group (West Lancashire) - £500

The group offers valued support and friendship to women living with depression, anxiety and social anxiety. They also have women referred to them from the job centre who are on long term sick due to stress. A lot of the women are addicted to alcohol and prescription medication. The group show's them alternative coping strategies and sign posts them to other groups in the community to give them a purpose to get up and leave their house of a day. Once the women have attended the group for a few weeks they then support them onto awareness courses for mental wellbeing, confidence building and coping strategies with the option of going onto accredited courses in alcohol and substance misuse, mental health eventually going into to voluntary roles and eventual employment.

The funding was used towards the hire of the venue, materials and refreshments for the women's mental health peer support group and mediation.

Skem Men-Aces Disability Football Club (West Lancashire) - £500

Skem Men-Aces football club for people with disabilities was set up in 2006 it has always been their dream to own their own mini bus. Through many hours of fundraising they have raised the much needed funds but have a shortfall. The funding of £500 completed this shortfall and enabled them to receive their mini bus. Having their own mini bus alleviates the financial burdens of hiring mini buses and coaches to get them to and from football matches thus allowing them to use their funds on other items such as training equipment. They are a proud and well respected club in their community so keeping their kits and appearances in good shape helps the team to keep their identity and be proud of who they are and the club they belong to.

Rosendale Rays Special Needs Swimming Club - £536

Rosendale Rays Special Needs Swimming Club has been running 10 years at Marl Pits Pool. The running costs are about £12,000 per year – kept so low by a small team of volunteers who give their time and admin facilities, otherwise the costs would be over £40,000. They are a unique club that provides sport for their special needs relatives and family as a whole, but importantly, for the vital social support it provides for the children, adults, carers and parents of those with a learning difficulty or disability. The funding of £536 paid for the monthly hire of the pool.

Hyndburn Homewise Society - £500

The funding of £500 helped with this project to ensure that disability aids that are no longer required are sanitised, checked for safety and made available for sale at an affordable price. All staff have been trained Trusted Assessors and are able to provide free assessments of clients' needs for disability aids; they now have a choice "new" or "good as new" equipment.

This service assists people ensuring their safety, wellbeing and independence thereby delaying/avoiding their health deteriorating. It reuses publicly funded equipment to delay the need for more health related interventions, thereby not only providing a vital service but reducing the waste taken to the top.

Schedule of Expenditure for 2015/16

County Councillor Steven Holgate - Champion for Disabled People	
Applicant	Amount of Grant
Chorley and South Ribble Shopmobility – new electric scooter	£950
Outrageous Ambition – Sessional facilitator	£1,500
Preston and Chorley Fibromyalgia Support Group – hydrotherapy sessions	£250
West Lancashire Positive Living – stationary for newsletter	£300
Sporting Challenge (West Lancashire) – sporting activities and website	£700
Timesavers (West Lancashire) – printer inks, paper and card	£300
Lancashire Dementia Voices (South Ribble) – support sessions	£1,000
Bickerstaffe Pensioners Social Fund (West Lancashire) – room hire and entertainment costs	£600
Disability Equality North West (Preston) – Facilitation, refreshments and material costs	£450
The Sewing Room (West Lancashire) – 10 week sewing course	£600
West Lancashire Fibromyalgia Support Group -	£300
Visually Impaired Children's Support Group – Christmas party	£500
Divine Days Community Arts CIC(West Lancashire) – dance costumes and ballet shoes	£500
Empower Women's Mental Health Peer Support Group (West Lancashire) – support sessions	£500
Skem Men-Aces Disability Football Club (West Lancashire) – mini bus	£500
Rosendale Rays Special Needs Swimming Club – Hire of swimming pool	£536
Hyndburn Homewise Society Limited - Disability Aids Project	£500
TOTAL SPENT	£9,986