

# ACCESS ABILITY .ORG.UK

## 2015 Annual Report



**ENGAGE | EDUCATE | EMPLOY**



# Contents

## 1. Foreword

## 2. Who are we

- Our Projects
- Good Health Fund & outcomes
- Lancashire Adult Learning
- Access Ability Walks
- Access Heart Ability CCG Burnley
- Empowering Communities – St Bede’s A4A
- ECT Intergenerational Project
- CCG H&RV – Practical Ideas
- Community Fund First Aid Training
- Art Access
- Our Volunteers
- Plans For The Future
- Awards
- Our Partners

ENGAGE | EDUCATE | EMPLOY



# Foreword



During 2015, we focused on the growth of our 'Health and Wellbeing' element of delivery, providing a range of community projects that have enabled and empowered our members to engage in life changing opportunities. With our holistic approach we strive to reduce social isolation and welcome individuals to become members and access our services and activities, which are outlined later in this report.

At **Access Ability** we recognise and respect the diversity of people's needs and therefore enabling opportunities for all is at the heart of our vision. Providing accessible opportunities and information to health improvement and wellbeing initiatives has allowed our members to make informed choices and changes to improve their physical and emotional health.

The diverse range of these projects has enabled us to expand our team of peer support members, volunteers and staff. Providing opportunities for others to gain valuable experiences, share knowledge and build skills. I am extremely proud of the hard work of these extraordinary people, who continue to shape and develop our services to be inspired and unique to our members, ensuring we remain focused on the DPULO model.

During this year our working partnerships have continued to grow and this has been key to our development and success to date. On behalf of everyone at **Access Ability**, I thank each and everyone who we have worked with this year, details of which are highlighted in our partnerships section of this document.

Our plans for Going forward we are committed and determined to achieve more. Building further working partnerships will enable us to develop our reach and increase the number of members that can access support and our network of services.

Emma O'Connor, Managing Director



# Who Are We

**Access Ability** is a Disabled People's User Led Organisation (DPULO).

Our growing mission is: **"To empower deaf and disabled individuals to 'Unlock their Potential' through Engagement, Education and Employment"**

**Access Ability** provides support services to disabled and deaf people, potential employers, their families and community members within the North West.

Our community interest company has four key delivery elements which cross over to provide a totally inclusive support package these are;



**Learning & Skills**



**Employment & Enterprise**



**Health & Well Being**



**Community & Social**

Our projects provide a holistic approach to support, guidance and training through weekly job clubs and social groups within local accessible locations. We work in partnership with Disability Employment Advisors and Personal Cases Workers from Job Centre Plus. This ensures a smooth transition to our individual led programmes, created to empower Deaf and Disabled people to make informed career choices into employment, education through disability friendly workshops and support. We have identified the need to provide 1:1 support as well as social based groups, which provide opportunities for peer support and general group discussion.

Research has identified that individuals unemployed for more than 1 month are at higher risk of developing mental ill health (Department of Health), therefore more likely to isolate themselves from their community and society. Through our knowledge and expertise of supporting unemployed disabled and deaf people we believe that our holistic approach is vital for the transition into mainstream employment and activities.

Our team has specialist experience of supporting Deaf and disabled people with confidence building, raising self-esteem and supporting with literacy translation to ensure equal access into employment opportunities. We share our knowledge and collective experiences of disability issues and solutions in the workplace, for the benefit of the individual. With this knowledge we liaise with appropriate employers to identify suitable jobs, support the individual and the employer during the application process into employment through providing in work support, speciality training and BSL interpretation.

**ENGAGE | EDUCATE | EMPLOY**



# Our Projects

## The Good Health Fund

The Good Health Fund was a 6 month project starting in October 2014 and completing in March 2015. This was a continuation of our existing experience of working with the Remploy Blackburn Factory closure. In partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Public Health & CVS working towards the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Access Ability's continual aim was to provide a holistic approach which is in line with the evidence based '5 Ways to Wellbeing' supports, guides and provides different types of training (including employability skills) through weekly job clubs, social groups and healthy lifestyle initiatives within a local accessible community location at Blackburn Rovers Community Trust for mainstream individuals.

Our existing successful partnership with Disability Employment Advisors and Personal Cases Workers from the Blackburn Job Centre Plus was continued as a referral stream to the individually led services available. Ensuring a smooth transition to our individual led programmes, created to empower Deaf and Disabled people to make informed career choices into employment, education through disability friendly workshops and support. We identified the need to provide 1:1 support as well as social based groups, which provided opportunities for peer support and general group discussion. We identified that this is required on a mainstream level as it has proven successful with this small group of Blackburn Ex-Remploy individuals with 81% in employment, voluntary placements or engaging in further training in such a short period of time, 94% of the group also participated in social, health and wellbeing initiatives. We are a service which is an alternative to 'Work Choice Support' as one shoe does not fit all. This funding enabled us to offer this specialist service to 24 Deaf, disabled or long term unemployed individuals with in BwD.

Our team has specialist experience of supporting Deaf and disabled people with confidence building, raising self-esteem and supporting with literacy translation to ensure equal access into employment opportunities. Our team shares our knowledge and collective experiences of disability issues and solutions in the workplace, for the benefit of the individual. With this knowledge we liaise with appropriate employers to identify suitable jobs, voluntary roles, support the individual and the employer during the application process into employment through providing in work support, speciality training and BSL interpretation.



“It was great cycling around Witton Park! I’ve never done it before. Plus I’ve signed up for my Beez card too.”



# Our Projects

## Lancashire Adult Learning



**Access Ability** recognise the importance of quality training, therefore our trainers are extremely experienced and experts in their respected fields. They are able to differentiate courses to suit the needs of individuals, ensuring all our courses are fully inclusive and delivered in a positive learning environment.

Access Ability hold a Service Level Agreement with Lancashire Adult Learning (Lancashire County Council), providing access non accredited courses supporting individual paths or career choices as well as working with other training providers / colleges. Since the academic year 2012/2013 our partnership has gone from strength to strength with progression routes available.

We are passionate about breaking down the barriers, educating people around disability, health and wellbeing. We have provided the following courses;

### **Academic Year 2012 / 2013**

Deaf Awareness & BSL Day

### **Academic Year 2013 / 2014**

Deaf Awareness & BSL Day  
BSL Foundation  
Mental Health Awareness

### **Academic Year 2014/2015**

Deaf Awareness & BSL Day (6 Hours)  
BSL Foundation (12 hours)  
Mental Health Awareness (3 hours)  
Mental Health First Aid (12 Hours)  
Youth Mental Health First Aid (14 hours)

### **Academic Year 2015/2016t**

Deaf Awareness & BSL Day (6 hours)  
BSL Foundation (12 hours)  
Mental Health Awareness (3 hours)  
Practical Ideas For Happier Living (4 hours)

Our current progression rates with Access Ability for the Adult Community Training that we provide for Lancashire residents through the Lancashire Adult Learning Contract is 39%

Up to the end of the 2014/2015 academic year as part of the LAL contract we have reached a total of 1094 learners.

From this number of learners progressing and accessing other courses just with Access Ability is 21%.

At Access Ability we are proud that our retention rates are so high and this is testament to all our specialist trainers' hard work and the partnership with LAL.



# Our Projects

## Access Ability Walks

Access Ability Walks started a 12 week pilot walking programme in September 2014 in partnership with the Ramblers, Re:Fresh and Blackburn Job Centre Plus. The aim was to set up a group is to encourage 'Walking for Health' as part of our Health & Well-being and Community & Social pillars of Access Ability.

The walks were accessible and easy paced for individuals with varying disabilities and low physical abilities, locally to Blackburn. Each attendee received an every step counts pack and step counter, which enabled them track their progress.

Working in partnership with the Ramblers Association, 7 members of the Access Ability walking group attended National Voluntary Walk Leader Training. This certification allowed them to develop the skills and knowledge to be equipped to deliver local community walks.

We then developed our Walks Project, through the assistance of a small pot of funds from the People's Postcode Trust. This enabled the project to provide weekly walking groups, delivered voluntarily by our newly trained disability walk Leaders (DPLUO). This enabled us to expand our number of attendees and develop our reach, which created walks which covered the whole of the Blackburn with Darwen area.

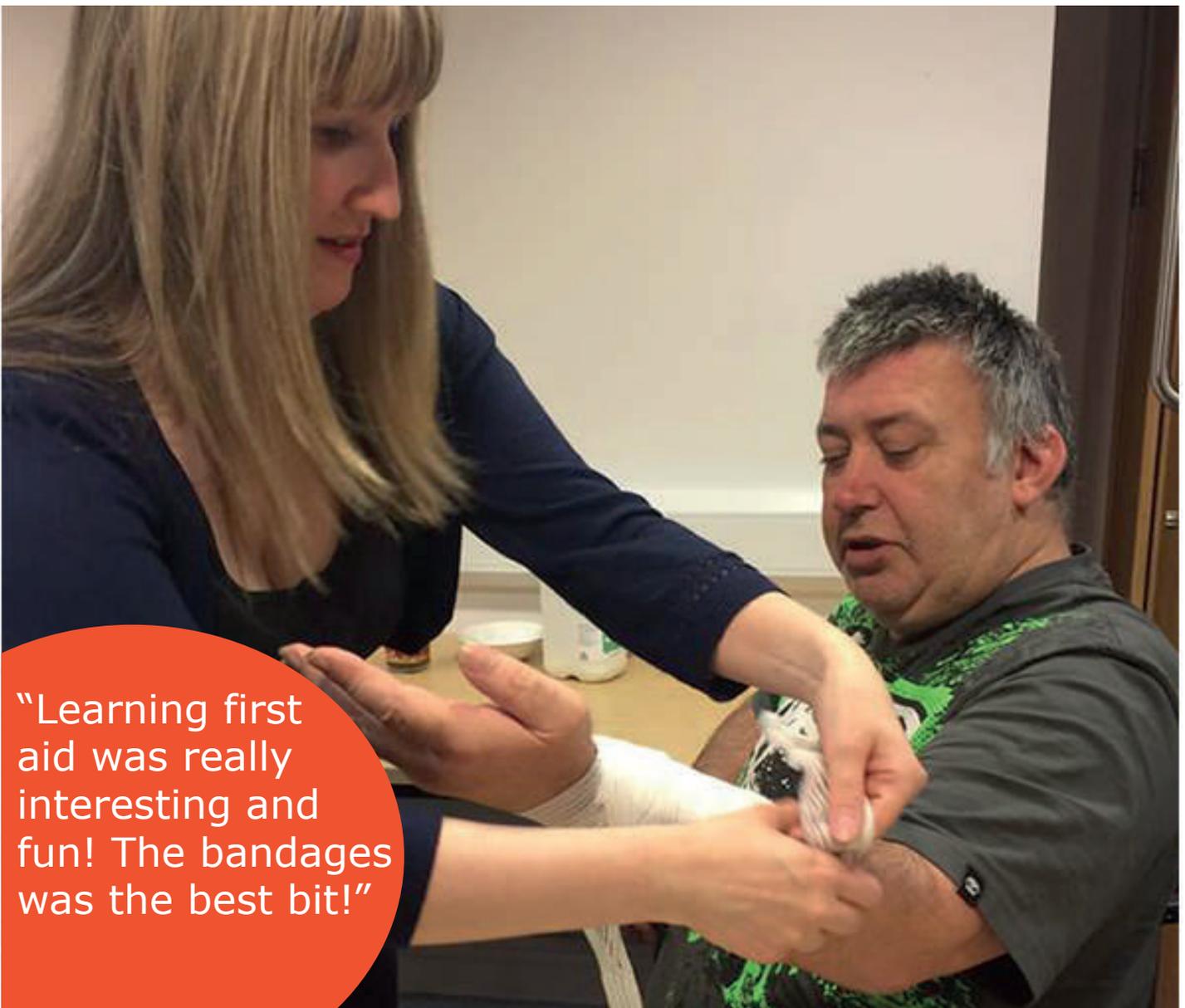




# Our Projects

## Community Support Fund – Blackburn with Darwen CVS

Linking into our walks project we held an accredited L2 Emergency First Aid Training course for our volunteer walk leaders. This was delivered by a local training provider through funding from Peoples Postcode Trust and Blackburn with Darwen Community Fund. This training opportunity enabled our walk leaders to recognise and assess a potential emergency situation, how to put someone into the recovery position, how to treat someone if they are bleeding or choking and how to perform CPR.



“Learning first aid was really interesting and fun! The bandages was the best bit!”



# Our Projects

## Empowering Communities – Awards for All

This project was developed to provide training around deafness and mental health, to raise community awareness and understanding on disability and well-being. Through a variety of workshops and progression training in a local secondary school pupils, volunteers, parents, local residents and teachers. This project encourages people to adopt more inclusive attitudes, build communication skills and develop new life skills which help to make our communities more inclusive. The project delivered Deaf Awareness & British Sign Language BSL introductory sessions, focusing on key aspects of communication and understand the barriers deaf people face. As well as Mental Health Awareness sessions enabling people to identify mental health issues and gain a greater understanding of how and why positive and negative mental health affect people.

## TESTIMONIALS

*"I have always wanted to learn sign language, but never been able to afford it as I am unemployed and disabled. I have now got the confidence to go to college to enrol on a level 1 course."*

*"Found helping people in the past daunting, afterwards asking myself 'am I dealing with this situation in the right way?' but now I feel much more confident in dealing with young people's mental health"*



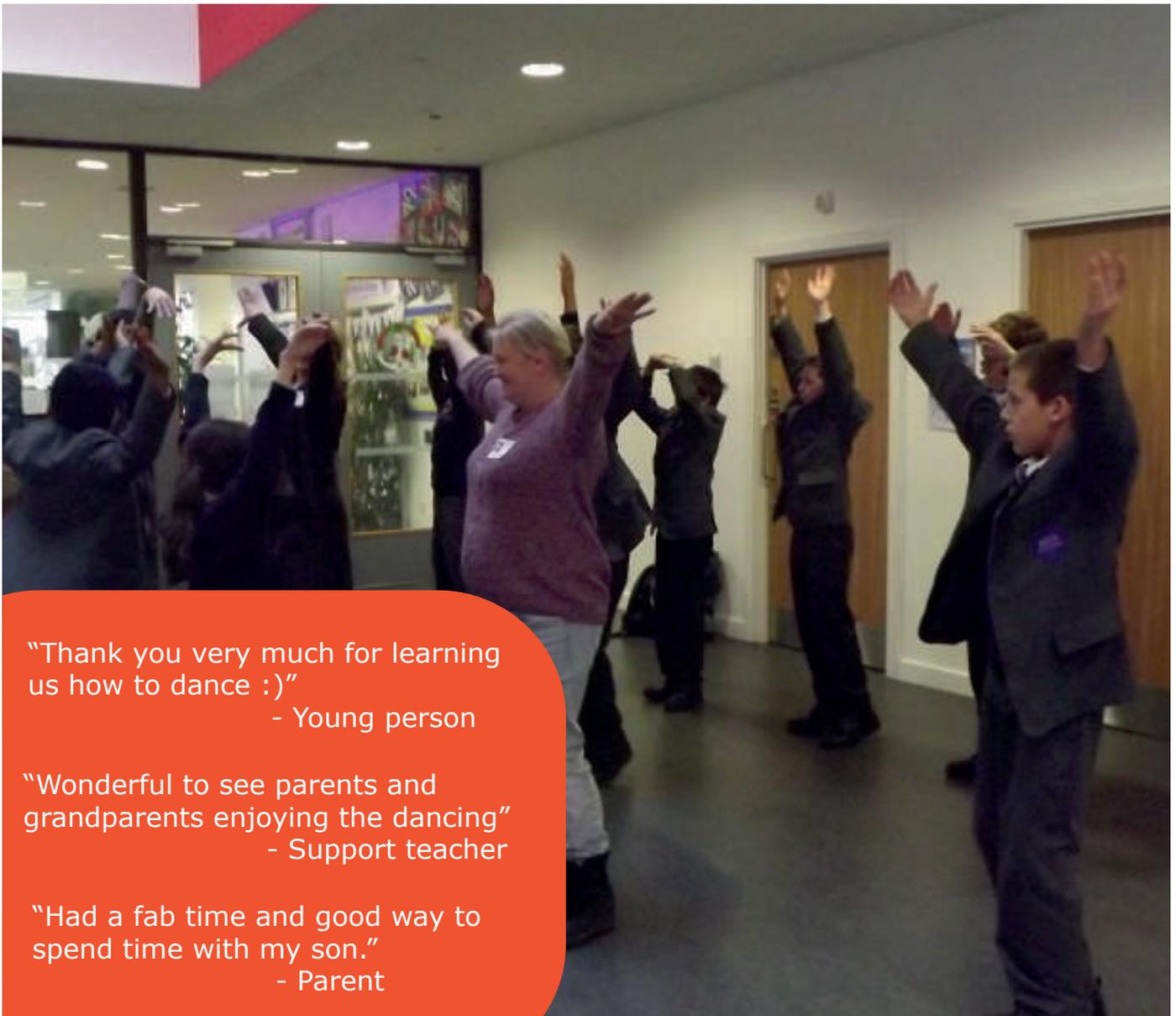


# Our Projects

## Intergenerational Dance Project – Ernest Cook Trust



The craze of Strictly Come Dancing inspired young people to begin an activity that is fun, which prior they may never have considered. Using this positive influence we provide an activity for young and old alike (families) that delivers with solutions to key risk factors and has positive health benefits to those involved.



"Thank you very much for learning us how to dance :)"  
- Young person

"Wonderful to see parents and grandparents enjoying the dancing"  
- Support teacher

"Had a fab time and good way to spend time with my son."  
- Parent



# Our Projects

Our key aim of the project is to create a cross generational link/family approach between age groups. We identified that opportunities for different age groups to participate in activities together was limited. All the individuals from the school / community groups who have participated will be invited to a showcase celebration event to complete the project. The aim is to encourage all to learn new skills, dispel any negative perceptions, create stronger relationships between family members, teachers, health and wellbeing benefits and build on understanding each other needs.

The sessions are bespoke to the location, individuals and group capabilities. Our sessions are fully inclusive around disabilities and additional needs.

To support the intergenerational element of the project and family learning, the young person's family members, teachers and support staff are all invited to attend a number of sessions as well as the celebration event. Individuals will be trying easy paced beginners' Latin & Ballroom dancing within an accessible location, learn the skill of listening and artistically interpreting music.

The project is led by a highly experienced tutor and our Healthy Lifestyle Specialist who has led projects like this is close by districts to meet the aims of a local music and performing arts venue as well as local NHS priorities in and out school environments, as well as indirect outcomes of obesity rates and rural isolation successfully for young people.

This project allows connection with young people and supports family learning which will have a positive impact on behaviour and educational attainment, promoting health behaviours in a fun and interactive way.

One of our projects being run locally is being supported and funded by the Ernest Cook Trust. So far, we have worked with Blackburn Central High School with Crosshills, more schools to be identified to work with in 2016.





# Our Projects

## Practical Ideas for Happier Living Pilot



Working with the Mind Matters, we have been funded by Hyndburn & Ribble Valley CCG's and CVS through the social prescribing grants.

We are rolling out a pilot in the two areas of the new evidenced based "Practical Ideas for Happier Living" workshops developed by Action for Happiness.

Working around the evidenced based 10 Keys for wellbeing these workshops are allowing participants to up skill in 6 'healthier' habits which have a direct impact on our happiness.

## Outcomes

The overall average of the participants showed a reduction in feeling of stress and anxiety as well as increased wellbeing. Therefore an improvement in overall health and wellbeing through a focus on the quality of their daily life.

## Access 'Heart' Ability

A healthy lifestyles social club combining heart health, exercise, healthy eating and cook & eat practical interactive sessions for the Burnley area.

The Access 'Heart' Ability project aims to improve the health and wellbeing of adults who are Deaf or have a disability and/or specialist needs to make small changes in their daily lives to support behaviour change towards better heart health. The project will track changes through individual exercise and food diaries to share learning and development with others in the group.





# Our Projects

We will do this by providing a 10-week programme which supports behaviour change through education, information and fun activities which will create positive attitudes towards taking responsibility for heart health in a friendly environment which also provides peer support.

Specialist activities will be delivered in a weekly social club consisting of:

-  Exercise taster sessions
-  Cook and eat sessions
-  Interactive heart health education
-  Activities which promote heart health

We aim to also engage with participants' networks of other local support services that will help the encouragement of healthy habits to make changes in their daily lives beyond the end of the project.

In 2015 we have run 1 of the 10 week courses with 2 x 10 week course to be started in 2016.

"I am now doing extra football at BFC because of attending this course"



“Great meeting new people, experiencing new places locally and it’s free!”  
- Weekly walker





# Our Projects

## Art Access

Art Access is an arts project specifically targeted at Deaf or hard of hearing individuals in the Lancashire area, co-ordinated by a Deaf tutor. The weekly class will provide access to learn new skills or develop existing talents within a range of different artistic mediums. The course will provide a range of different classes which may include painting, drawing, embroidery, printing, origami, t-shirt design & creation and card making.

Weekly classes are run every Wednesday for 2 hours in a local community setting.

The project will be running for 15 weeks starting November 2015 to be completed in February 2016.



*"I had a lot of fun doing arts and crafts. I really enjoyed the card making, I've even started making things at home too."*

Art Access is funded by Action for Deafness.





# Our Volunteers



Volunteering has a variety of benefits including increasing your skills, experience as well as your confidence and mental and physical health, having proven to help combat depression, improve your mood, reduce anxiety and stress and has been known to lessen symptoms of chronic pain and heart conditions. It's also a great way to meet new people and create connections within your community and improve your career prospects.

Our volunteers are a new venture for Access Ability this year to allow us to continue our work in the communities, increase our capacity and continue to make our services peer led.

The current roles that we are offering are;



Walk Leader



Health & Wellbeing Project Assistant



Arts Project Assistant

Throughout 2015 we invested 142 training hours into up skilling and providing the confidence to deliver projects for our volunteers and in return we received a very much appreciated 232 volunteer hours.

Our aim for 2016 is to increase our current offering of roles and volunteer engagement hours to enable our continued support for Deaf and disabled individuals within the North West.

For more information and to express your interest in volunteering do not hesitate to get in touch with us.



# Plans for the Future

-  To gain funding to prolong the Walks Project beyond April 2016 to ensure sustainability within the community
-  Reach a wider target audience in other areas of Lancashire with projects similar to the Healthy Hearts Project
-  Create new working partnerships in the North West to provide a wider network of support for hard to reach individuals.
-  Continue to invest training opportunities for our staff and volunteers to increase our engagement hours with Deaf and disabled individuals.
-  We are currently working towards achieving the Workplace Wellbeing Accredited Charter, so that we are actively promoting health and wellbeing internally for our staff and volunteers as we do externally with the individuals we connect with.





# Awards Shortlisted

## Awards Shortlisted in 2015

-  Finalist for the Standard MHFA Champion Award 2015 at the MHFA England Annual Awards.
-  Finalist for the Skills Provider Award with the Lancashire Red Rose Annual Awards 2015.
-  Finalist for the 'High Growth Award' and 'The Newcomer Award' with the Blackburn & Darwen Hive Business Awards 2015
-  Finalist and "Highly Recommend" for the Training & Development with the Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative Awards 2015





# Partnerships

## Mindsmatter

Talking Therapies provided by Lancashire Care



Investors in Diversity

## Action for Deafness



## THE WORKPLACE WELLBEING CHARTER

NATIONAL AWARD for ENGLAND



## East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group



We Do WELLBEING



## Lancashire Constabulary

police and communities together



## healthwatch Lancashire



## The Consortium

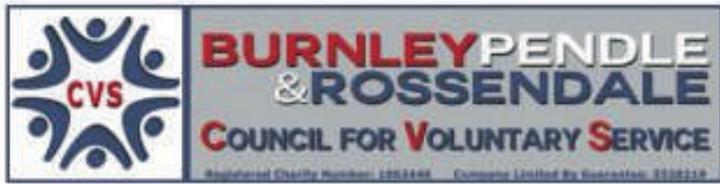


## burnleyfc in the community

Registered Charity No: 1155895



**LOTTERY FUNDED**



Office for  
Disability Issues



Access Ability CIC  
Blackburn Rovers Enterprise Centre  
First Floor, Suite 10  
Ewood Park  
Blackburn  
BB2 4JF

[info@accessability.org.uk](mailto:info@accessability.org.uk)  
01254 841762