

## **SECTION 1- Our Story to date.**

### **A. Policy Development and Decision Making**

- Dec 2012- Promoting Equalities Project (PEP) Steering Group established
- Autumn 2014- Macrobert Arts Centre Equalities Group established
- Discussion with Artlink Central to commission an equalities focused needs assessment for Stirling and Clackmannanshire
- Macrobert staff actively participate in a number of local forums including the Autism Awareness Working Group, Dementia Communities Forth Valley and the Stirling Arts Liaison Group.
- Equalities and Diversity has been embedded in Macrobert Arts Centre's Business and has been since 2012.

### **B. Creative Learning & Programming**

#### Outreach Tours

Early Discussions at the start of the project regarding equalities and inclusion of our local community was the catalyst for gaining funding for several outreach tours to areas of social deprivation.

Since the start of the project this has covered:

- April 2013: Innocence (Scottish Dance Theatre) Toured to Raploch and Cornton Nursery reaching 123 children. The nurseries were also given 6 dance workshops reaching 153 children.
- Nov 2013: Polar Bears Go Wild Tour to 6 nurseries- overall 525 children got access to the performance.
- March 2014: Sprawl (All or Nothing Aerial Dance) Toured with accompanying dance workshops to primary schools- overall 520 children got access to dance
- April 2014: The Pine Tree, Poggle and Me (Barrowland Ballet) work in progress at Raploch and Cornton- 60 children received this opportunity.
- Feb 2015: The Pine Tree, Poggle and Me (Barrowland Ballet) tour to 5 nurseries – 447 children overall with 2 extra dance workshops reaching an additional 108 children.

#### Dementia Friendly Initiatives

- Macrobert Arts Centre has been working with local charity, Townbreak for several years. During this time several projects have been developed and a strong working relationship has evolved. Townbreak participants and staff support Macrobert to test ideas and to develop programmes that are relevant and meaningful.
- April-June 2014-You Said You Liked the Dancing project where dance artist Janice Parker led weekly dance workshops for Townbreak at Stirling Community Hospital. This culminated in a dance workshop at Macrobert Arts Centre. Documentation was taken throughout the process resulting in an exhibition in our Arthouse which the participants were invited to attend.

- September 2014- Following this Macrobert initiated Monthly Dementia Friendly Events in house– piloted in September and October 2014 and then part of core programme from January 2015 onwards. Macrobert has now received funding from awards for all to support monthly Dementia Friendly events from April 2015 for one year.
- We are currently developing our relationship with Townbreak further through a Community Cinema project where we will be exploring cinema programming for people diagnosed with dementia. This project has commenced and will run till June 2015.

#### Inclusive Class Development

- January 2013- Macrobert continued their relationship with Glasgow- based company LOOP Theatre providing drama workshops for ‘Alloa Group’- a group of adults with additional supports needs from Clacks Centre Space.
- January 2014- A number of inclusive class [dance and drama] tasters were held for children and adults – including Camphill, Blair Drummond, Marchglen Care Home, Fishcross, Ochil House, PLUS and the Riverside Centre
- August 2014- Inclusive dance classes for adults piloted and introduced as an element of the regular weekly class offer.
- August 2014-Inclusive drama classes for adults piloted and introduced as an element of the regular weekly class offer.
- January 2015- a 10 week inclusive drama project was held at Ochil House- ASN school attached to Wallace’s High in partnership with LOOP Theatre.
- January 2015 -Inclusive dance and drama classes for children piloted [using a number of free tasters]. Inclusive dance will be introduced as a regular weekly class offer from April 2015
- A student, in her final year BA(Hons) in Performance at the University of the West of Scotland, has been gaining work experience with LOOP Theatre during inclusive adult classes

#### New Creative Voices

- Jan 2015- Macrobert wants to work with young people, aged 8-18, who are not accessing drama or Macrobert. We are doing this to build confidence and drama skills and to support a wider range of children and young people to shape and share their voices. We are committed to broadening the range of children and young people who access our venue and programme. This body of outreach work will be a bridge into Macrobert’s regular activities for children and young people who are interested and/or talented. The work has been supported by Young Start for two years and is led by a Drama Facilitator [0.8].
- Two young people at the beginning of their careers will be supported to gain the skills required to work with young people who face barriers to participation [as part of NCV] – funded by Children In Need.
- Currently working with 4 groups: Our Lady’s Primary (13), Raploch Primary (18), Alva Academy (12) and East Plean Primary (7) for 10 week blocks culminating in a visit to Macrobert Arts Centre to have a backstage tour and a sharing of their work.

### Arts In Transition

- Macrobert is the base for a project, led by Artlink central, to support P7 children with additional support needs as they transition into high school. The project will take place during the morning of Friday 31 March 2015, with 60+ pupils working with a range of artists in different spaces to create original work. The resulting exhibition will be hung in Arthouse for the month of April.

### Sensory Tour

- In response to a group of deaf blind adults resident in Falkirk the Macrobert team led a sensory workshop – exploring costumes and props from previous pantomimes on 5 March 2015. The event was experienced by 10 deaf blind adults and their support workers/loved ones.

### Programming

- Wendy Hoose (19 March 2014)
- If These Spasms Could Speak (17 Sep 2014)
- Signed, captioned & audio described performance of Panto / Aladdin (19 Dec 2014)
- Butterfly (29 Jan 2015)
- The Edibles (30 May 2015) created for 3-7 year olds with additional support needs.
- That Funny Blind Guy (25 Sep 2015)
- Introduction of relaxed film screenings for people with additional support needs.
- sub-titled, captioned and audio-described film screenings
- Africa In Motion Film Festival
- Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival
- Refugee week

## **C. Audience Development and Communications**

### Audience Development

- Online surveys conducted during 2013 with the aim of improving understanding of our audience's access needs.
- Engagement with Audiences. Developed partnerships with a wide range of community organisations including Enable, Artlink Central, Camphill, Blair Drummond, Stirling Young carers, PLUS, Scottish Autism, Speur Ghlan, Barnardos.....
- A Stirling University second year Marketing student undertook a 30 hour work experience placement, reviewing the marketing of our monthly dementia friendly events and suggesting ways to strengthen links with partner organisations and individuals who would benefit from attending.
- Audit of current programme as part of Autism Awareness Month, April 2015, in partnership with families supported by Scottish Autism and Speur Ghlan.

## Communications

- Two artists (Rosie Gibson and William Letford) commissioned to work on PEP, creating works responding to the project.
- Staff blog set up and administrated by Rosie Gibson during 2013, a number of 121s with staff members featured on the blog alongside Rosie's own reflections and learning.
- A review of our website saw more tagging of events to signify if they were Autism Friendly, an accessible event or suitable for people diagnosed with dementia.
- A review of our live brochure – new layout with accessible events more clearly highlighted i.e dementia friendly events, accessible events, captioned/signed/subtitled events.
- A review of our cinema guide saw more presence given to subtitled screenings and the new mention of our monthly autism friendly screenings.
- A review of our e-newsletter saw the addition of 'ways to get involved' including mention of our dementia friendly events, inclusive dance and drama classes.
- Social media engagement with Solar Bear via Twitter and Facebook.
- Autism Friendly Screenings once a month – presence in cinema guide & tagged on website
- Since May 2014 Box Office protocol changed. Sales advisors began to ask all customers "Do you have any access requirements?" whilst taking any ticket booking – To date we have had 184 regular customers answer.
- These 184 customers initiated the creation of "criteria group" customers on spectrix allowing the system to flag if a customer has access requirements. This allows sales advisors to allocate specific seating without having to ask the same questions for each booking.
- A review of the language used at Macrobert:
  - Changed the ticket type from 'registered disabled' to 'disability discounted ticket'
  - Changed the name of 'carer' to 'assisting companion' on all our literature (internally and public facing)
- Following a review of the language we use we introduced a 'carer comp' – allocating one free ticket to anyone purchasing a 'disability discounted ticket'. Removed 'Do you require 121 care?'

### **D. Building**

- Project undertaken to improve lighting in main toilets making them more user friendly
- Jazz stage in foyer flattened making space more user friendly, removing the steps as obstacles for audiences with restricted mobility.
- Hooks installed on front doors allowing doors to be held open creating easier access for large groups.
- Stage 1 of signage update undertaken Autumn 2013: designed and installed signage around the venue.
- Audit of premises as part of Autism Awareness Month, April 2015, in partnership with families supported by Scottish Autism and Speur Ghlan. Identification of 'chill out' room [Wallace's Den].

- Audit of premises by Dementia Services Development Centre, University of Stirling in August 2014 – resulting in planned changes to flooring, greater awareness of mirrors and glass within the building and improved signage.
- Greater awareness of spaces when programming events, specifically acoustics
- Relationships developed with University estates to support improved parking for blue badge drivers during events.
- On recruitment of a wheelchair user as a sales advisor at box office reasonable adjustments were made to the location of the ticket printers (good for all staff) from under the desks to on top of the desks (this in the long term has helped comply with health and safety as all staff were at risk of RSI). The location of info sheets were also changed on the pillar between terminal 2 & 3 to a suitable height for chair users.

## **E. Recruitment and Training**

In order to support and cater for the array of audiences that utilise our Arts Centre, our staff has undertaken training in a number of areas:

- January 2013 - All staff Intro to PEP
- April 2013 - Disability Awareness Training with Robert Softley, Gale and Mairi Taylor from Flip and Josh Hepple, University of Stirling student and Edinburgh Festival Fringe Equalities trainer.
- May 2013 – Unpacking Equalities with Jo Verrent.
- Sept 2013 – Older People & Reflective Practice (Speaker from SCDS).
- Jan 2014 – Equalities toolkit update from Creative Scotland.
- April 2014 – Creative Scotland Self-Assessment and preparing for first Dementia Friendly event.
- September 2014: prior to our first Dementia Friendly Event on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 staff members from our box office and front of house departments attended Dementia friendly training.
- October 2014: Child protection training- look through our policy and train staff on protocols.
- December 2014 and January 2015: Deaf Awareness training by Solar Bear. Following training staff attended Deaf Theatre Club events such as the Aladdin Pantomime and Butterfly, to represent Macrobert Arts Centre and welcome, through BSL, the deaf community to the performances. Our Box Office Manager has since enrolled on a 20 week BSL Level 1 course from February 2015.
- All members of the team got a refresh on the hearing loop and audio description equipment
- The employment of a wheelchair user (part time 15 hours per week).
- Go & See Fund – opened to all staff since Aug 2013 with suggested Equalities themed Edinburgh Festivals performances alongside a simple application form for staff to apply to ‘go and see’ performances or venues etc. with an equalities link.

## **SECTION 2- Our Ambition**

Our ambition is to embed equalities practice in our everyday thinking in every part of the organisation. Our journey up till now has been made up of many small but important steps which we hope are making a noticeable difference. We do however have a long way to go and have many plans to progress in the future.

Our ongoing Creative Learning / Programming:

- Enhanced programmes – relaxed performances, dementia friendly events, Inclusive classes.
- Review and refresh approach to autism friendly screenings, in partnership with audiences.
- Continue to develop our relationship with Solar Bear, seeking advice on print used and what pieces of programming could be put forward as Deaf Theatre Club events.
- Looking to have regular programmes that can be for Deaf Theatre Club.
- Moving forward we are hopeful to develop our relationship with PLUS+ further by providing drama workshops.
- New Creative Voices – increase the capacity of our drama classes and include additional artforms such as visual art.
- Ongoing commitment to offer high quality Dementia friendly events
- More programming offers for LGBT and BAME.

### **Audience Development and Communications**

- Ongoing commitment to ensure all Macrobert print materials are as accessible as possible - Live Guide / Cinema Guide / Event Print (increasing font size / reduction of reversed out text / simple clearer messaging / access info to have its own page in the Live Guide from April 2015).
- Ongoing commitment to improving the accessibility of all of our digital marketing activities – website / Facebook / Twitter etc.
- Ongoing commitment (& project) to make website more accessible – bigger text, images, videos.
- Increased focus on accessible activities in existing communication channels and the exploration of appropriate new channels that work for audiences with access requirements.
- Maintain and develop relationships with organisations like Solar Bear who can make suggestions on best practice for marketing to audiences with access needs.
- More communication with audiences of our access advancements including wheelchair bookings online.
- In January 2015 the visual interactive seating plan for our ticketing system was amended to allow wheelchair bookings to become available online – This will go live in Autumn 2015 and in the run up to this it is our ambition to this effectively communicate this new system so many have knowledge of its existence and can access it.
- Family Ambassadors Group created to allow feedback and better provision to families.

- Doors Open Day (7 Sep) – programmed as an inclusive and open event to all.
- Improve consultation [on-going conversations] with a wide range of audience groups who benefit from support.

#### Building

- Second phase of signage review and re-design in line with re-branding exercise.
- Flooring upgrade throughout entrance, foyer, café bar and restaurant designed in line with access and visual impairments.
- Explore possibilities for moving/removing poster boards in front of access toilets (feedback received from users that this is an obstacle more than a privacy screen)- Better access to
- Hooks to be installed on other heavy doors within Macrobert for easier access.
- Exploring Autism Friendly Accreditation.
- Access audit – Artlink Central [pending].
- Replenish furniture e.g. more comfortable chairs with arms for more frail patrons during creative learning activity i.e. Dementia Friendly Events.
- additional workshop space – allowing broader programme.
- Creation of a comfortably furnished ‘break-out’ space for relaxed performances.

#### Training and Recruitment

- Fortnightly BSL catch ups with Macrobert Staff scheduled to allow practice in BSL
- Autism Awareness training – April 2015 [tbc] .
- Re-word and update our job application forms to become both age and gender neutral.
- Work towards all staff delivering activities to receive training to allow them to work inclusively.

Go and see fund continued to