

# People & the DALES

Diversity Access Learning Environment Sustainability

## Case Study

### Mental Health Support Group

Kamran is a Community Development Worker with Sharing Voices Bradford an organisation providing support to improve mental health and well-being, Kamran mainly works with BME men aged 18 – 55. His work focuses on building rapport with and providing support to individuals to build confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to access services and also get out into the community. One focus is improving fitness and he runs a drop in at a local gym, out in the community so people are using general services and getting out and about.



Through visits with People and the DALES Kamran really saw the benefits of being outdoors on people's well-being and mental health. Most people in the groups coming out had not been out of Bradford before.

“One service user commented on an early visit to Malham that this was the first time he really felt like he didn't need his medication. This really brought home the powerful impact of the serenity of the countryside on well-being.”

Groups are often mixed backgrounds / faiths / spirituality and this is an important focus of their work. Kamran was keen to explore the benefits of how the outdoors can make people feel at ease. The relaxed atmosphere made it easier for users to chat amongst themselves and also open up to support workers



Kamran was looking to diversify the support on offer to his users. He himself is a keen walker but he had always followed someone else when out walking and had never taken groups out. Finding out about the People and the DALES group leader training was a godsend! Having the opportunity to develop his map reading skills, learn about leading groups and lead walks increased his confidence. Walks could provide a new way of working with clients an opportunity for physical activity, a space and a chance to 'just be in the outdoors', but also to connect and meet with others.

Since the training Kamran has run a range of walks for clients to a range of dales locations including Malham, Ingleton, Pen-y-ghent, and Buckden Pike. This summer they gave out timetables to service users and people went off to the Dales for days on their own

“ *This wouldn't have been possible without the familiarisation through the project. People would not have had the confidence to do this, to do these things independently.* ”



In addition they now have a regular programme of walks in the local area. These visit places like local parks and the canal, use public transport and are centred on places near to where different clients are living. The impetus for these comes very much from the users themselves.

The organisation has seen the benefits of this new way of working and now have other members of staff who are Walking for Health trained and some are trainers for W4H cascade programme. Through developing the walking groups they have also formed new and improved partnerships with other organisations across the District.

“ *It's great to have the opportunity to use these new skills to give something back that can be continued and provides a great benefit to clients* ”

People and the DALES – Diversity, Access, Learning, Environment, Sustainability - is a nationally recognised community outreach project run by YDMT, funded through the Big Lottery's Access to Nature programme. The project works with disadvantaged groups, from urban areas bordering the south of the Yorkshire Dales, who have little or no previous experience of the countryside. Running since 2009 the project has enabled over 4000 people to take part in a wide range of fun, active and thought provoking activities in the countryside.

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