Voice and Power for Homeless and Vulnerable People through New and Emerging Technologies

Your Entry

Please do not exceed 1500 words in total.

1. Your contact details

| Organisation | Papworth Trust (Museum Street Centre) |

2. Name of the project you are entering for The LankellyChase Digital Empowerment Awards

| My Safe Social Network |

3. Award category you are entering

| Social Networks |

4. Describe your project in one sentence

| A comprehensive and bespoke project including a mainstream qualification course in Safe Social Networking skills that was written with and for the support of vulnerable disabled adults to access social networks and communicate with peers, friends and family in a safe and meaningful way. |

5. Specify the setting(s) where your project is delivered (e.g. homeless agency, housing organisation etc.)?

| The course and supporting work is delivered within an adult day care environment, that serves the purpose of disabled adults gaining skills to lead the lives that they choose |

6. What are the project’s objectives?
To provide, within a qualification framework, the opportunity to set up and use personal online accounts, that allow for disabled adults to manage their online presence in a safe way, to interact with their peers and develop their friendships and relationships with people in a meaningful way, both online and in a face to face context. To ensure that the people who support disabled adults have the understanding, knowledge and confidence to support disabled adults fully and to have continued use of social media outside of the day-care environment.

To reduce social isolation often experienced by vulnerable disabled adults as a result of their vulnerable status/disability/mobility and all too often their financial position.

The reduction and prevention of hate crime online as well as offline and the empowerment of vulnerable people to form positive relationships and recognise signs that could lead to abuse and or abusive/negative relationships.

7. What are the project’s activities?

- IT sessions, completing tasks towards proving competence in the use of social networking, using platforms of own choosing
- Talks and discussions in literacy based groups about safety online and the issues that link to this
- Discussion with external parties to the centre, including the Suffolk Hate Crime Service and the police
- Tech night sessions, where disabled adults, their family, carers and support workers are able to learn together to improve understanding, share knowledge and work together to form a safe framework of support
- Independent living skills session that focus on relationships both online and offline, and in how the two worlds interact

8. What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

- Disabled adults have interacted with families and friends, developed positive and progressive relationships and built on existing friendships
• Disabled adults have developed friendships independently, without the reliance of support workers and staff to instigate and facilitate meeting friends and friends of friends

• People have also gained skills and are able to recognise issues and keep themselves safe online

• Disabled adults have gained the confidence to report issues that they are uncomfortable with including ‘mate crime’ and cyber bullying

• People know who to go to, to ask for support, advice and guidance on keeping safe if they become unsure about new online situations

• People are able to prove competence to relatives and carers, and so break down barriers and assumptions that they will be unsafe if using social media

• Families and carers have an understanding of the qualification framework and process within the centre, as well as the underlying skills that are being developed by the disabled adults that they help to support

• Family and carers of disabled adults have growing confidence in the use of social media and a greater awareness of security and privacy issues online as well as ways of keeping people safe and routes for reporting issues

9. How is your project evaluated?
OCN unit certification is gained by a growing number of disabled adults proving their competence and skills in using social media

- The records of disabled people involved in the project over time and the numbers of people involved who support these disabled adults throughout their daily lives

10. How would you spend the prize money to develop the project?

We would love to be able to use prize money to develop our existing qualification criteria and to run consultation with wider groups of disabled people, to develop (with OCN-open college network) new qualification units that would further support and develop the skills of disabled adults in using online media. We would like to be able to purchase up to date accessible technology ie tablets and smartphones and develop our learning programmes in a way that disabled adults will have the opportunity to become familiar and confident using new technologies in their daily lives. We would like also to be able to staff and run further session for the families of the disabled people we work with and the wider community of carers and support workers who are essential for the support of our community disabled adults and young people.