

Devon, Cornwall and Somerset,
South West England, UK



Positive People Programme

Keyword(s):

Lifelong learning, inclusion, confidence building, empowerment, disadvantaged groups of learners, community education, labour market and VET, basic skills education, health and family education, outreach activities, environment and sustainability education, young adults, participation



Introduction

Positive People, a partnership project led by social enterprise Pluss, operates across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset offering a learning lifeline to the most socially excluded and vulnerable people in society. The project won a Festival of Learning award in 2020.

The project includes many different learning opportunities, tailored to suit individual needs. Just a few examples of activities delivered through Positive People include the Feel Good Shop in Plymouth which brought the community together to learn how to live a healthy life through the project's health and wellbeing partners, learn about managing finances from the Citizens Advice Bureau, learn how to get the most out of their digital devices, and much more. The project also ran two local community radio shows in Cornwall, helping people learn about media while showcasing to the community what learning opportunities are available to them. The Feel Good and Fly project worked with young adult care leavers, helping them learn valuable life skills, and social prescribing has helped people learn how to stay healthy and well, reconnect with society and get active. Positive People also teach

people to live sustainably and inclusively by running lots of activities around living a sustainable, ethical life, learning how to connect with others and give something back to the community.

For a short overview of the project, watch this video produced for the Festival of Learning Awards: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNB6N-y3IHE&t=11s>

Main challenge

Many people in the area where Positive People operates lack basic skills, have been unemployed for over a year, have a disability and/or don't have upper secondary level qualifications. Many people feel helpless because they think these things will hold them back. By helping them learn what steps they needed to take in order to move forwards and take control of their barriers, Positive People have supported over 9,000 people to date to achieve a positive outcome, ie to move into education, training or employment/self-employment.

Timing

The Positive People project began in March 2017 and is currently funded until June 2023. Within the project there are a multitude of learning activities running which are tailored to the individual needs, and timescales vary. Individuals are also referred to other existing provision in their local areas.

Objective

Positive People aims to help every individual learn to regain their confidence, learn to believe in themselves again and learn to manage their mental/physical health. Having these important foundations to build upon is the greatest way to improve resilience, strength and ambition for the future.

Target group

The learners come from every type of background, with every type of story. Positive People supports anyone who is out of work and over the age of 18 who would benefit from learning, including people with a physical or mental health condition, physical or learning disability, people with addictions, parents, veterans, homeless people and people who are lonely and isolated.

Geographical range

Positive People works with learners in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset in South West England, UK.

Stakeholders and partners

Positive People works with a range of partners (in total around 250 specialist partners), and the learning opportunities are unique and tailored to each person.

Core partner organisations include:

Cornwall

- Chaos
- Cornwall Development Company
- Active Plus
- Pentreath
- Cornwall Marine Network
- Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change
- We are With You
- Konnect
- Pluss

(More information about each of the partners working in Cornwall can be found here: <https://pluss.org.uk/positive-people/areas/cornwall>)

Devon

- Cosmic
- Devon Community Foundation
- POP+
- Torbay Community Development Trust
- Pluss

(More information about each of the partners working in Devon can be found here: <https://pluss.org.uk/positive-people/areas/devon/>)

Somerset

- Abri
- Cosmic
- Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership
- Pluss

(More information about each of the partners working in Devon can be found here: <https://pluss.org.uk/positive-people/areas/somerset/>)

Strategy / materials

The individuals receive tailored 1:1 support and are then referred to learning opportunities that are suitable to them. The format, timescales and content of these varies but includes subjects such as sustainable living, photography, health and wellbeing, digital, cooking, media and many more.

Resources

The project receives funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund.

Compliance with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

A large part of Positive People's work is teaching people to live sustainably and inclusively, delivering lots of learning around living a sustainable, ethical life.

Innovation(s)

A key aim of Positive People is to add value to the provision that is already there. The model is designed to support the individual on a 1:1 basis to understand their needs and what they want to achieve, and then refer them into suitable provision, often delivered by small voluntary and community organisations that are able to offer very specialised support.

Success parameters

The project aims to support individuals to achieve a positive outcome to either move into education, training or employment/self-employment.

Impact

Positive People have supported over 9,000 people to date to achieve a positive outcome, ie to move into education, training or employment/self-employment.

Some examples of learner stories:

- Carl's story:
<https://pluss.org.uk/positive-people/positive-people-cornwall/carls-story-we-a-re-with-you/>

- Betty's story: <https://pluss.org.uk/self-employment/bettys-story-i-was-losing-my-identity/>
- Adam's story: <https://pluss.org.uk/positive-people/positive-people-cornwall/adams-story-the-positive-people-difference-2/>
- Andrew's story: <https://pluss.org.uk/pluss/andrews-story-forever-grateful/>

Impediments

The project was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and some of the activities had to be stopped or delayed (such as the Feel Good Shop). Some activities were held online, and many activities began to take place outdoors as restrictions began to be lifted.

Replicability

Central to the project's model is the aim to add value to existing provision in the region by working with learners to identify their individual needs and refer them to the learning provision that is most suitable for them. This means that the learners have access to an extensive range of opportunities that they may otherwise be unaware of. This approach can be replicated in any other geographical area, and tailored depending on the needs of the individuals and the provision that is available.

Website/Social Media profile(s) of the initiative

<https://pluss.org.uk/positive-people/about/>

Contact details

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