



## OUR REACH GRANTEES EXPERIENCE 2024



**wwetb**  
Boord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Phoirt Láirge agus Loch Garman  
Waterford and Wexford  
Education and Training Board

**ReachFund**

SOLAS  





**Co. Waterford REACH Networking Event**  
**Greenway Hotel, Monday 18th November 2024**



**Co. Wexford REACH Networking Event**  
**The Presentation Arts Centre, Enniscorthy, Thursday 28th November 2024**

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# CONTEXT



'Given us an opportunity to come together with a common goal and friendships were forged'.



## Context

The purpose of the Reach Fund (formally MAEDF) is to provide funding to support educationally disadvantaged learners, initially a Covid response. The fund places a strong focus on community education as a mechanism to continue to support and engage with disadvantaged learners.

ETBs manage the application process on an annual basis and allocates funding under the following categories:

1. Learner assistance fund, inclusive of education outreach/mentoring projects/transport costs for learners/urgent educational response.
2. Innovative green projects.
3. Projects focused on increasing participation in learning with target cohorts.
4. Events/awareness campaigns that contribute to equality policy and legislation.
5. In line with the ALL strategy, specific actions that;
  - directly address those experiencing unmet literacy needs
  - target funding on access to technology and devices
  - expand community access to Wi-Fi and broadband resources
6. Community groups in pre-development phase to support the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups.
7. Support for refugee groups to support education and training delivery and promote/support cultural and social inclusion, including research and/or needs analysis.

From 2020 to 2024 WWETB has allocated Reach funding as follows:

Geographic Area	Funding Allocation
Co. Wexford	€ 1,215,576
Waterford City	€ 1,343,403.30
Co. Waterford	€ 528,941.06
<b>Total Reach Funding</b>	<b>€ 3,087,920.30</b>

# REACH 2024—funding overview



# REACH 2024—funding overview

## Co. Waterford and Waterford City funded groups

Co. Waterford		
1	Carbally Community Development	€ 14,842.00
2	Brothers of Charity - Co Waterford	€ 15,695.00
3	Carriglea Cairde Services	€ 5,150.00
4	Dungarvan Traveller Health Project	€ 11,787.00
5	Tallow Men's Shed	€ 2,943.00
6	Carriglea Community Group	€ 26,713.00
7	Access IT	€ 25,797.00
8	Dunhill IT	€ 10,479.00
9	Dunhill Community Garden	€ 21,962.00
10	Lismore Men's Shed	€ 5,872.00
11	Respond	€ 16,927.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 158,167.00</b>

Waterford City		
1	Waterford Women's Centre	€ 30,381.00
2	Waterford Area Partnership	€ 18,302.00
3	Amarach Nua – DID NOT PROCEED	€ 5,183.00
4	Top of the City Garden	€ 6,488.00
5	Aiseiri Ceim Eile	€ 23,050.00
6	TREO Waterford City	€ 9,818.00
7	Vita HUB	€ 20,792.00
8	PETE Focus Ireland	€ 21,316.00
9	Sailing into Wellness	€ 36,153.00
10	Down Syndrome Ireland	€ 9,110.00
11	Sacred Heart FRC	€ 29,200.00
12	Butler Community Centre	€ 21,900.00
13	BRILL FRC	€ 37,898.00
14	Brothers of Charity - Tory	€ 14,911.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 284,502.00</b>

# REACH 2024—Funding overview

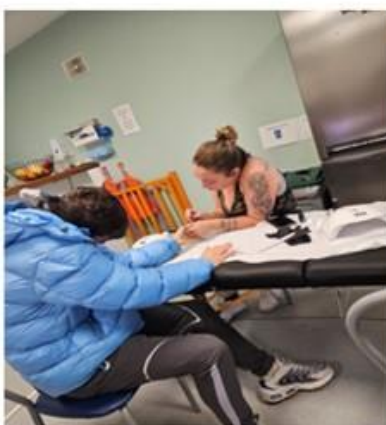
## North and South Wexford funded groups

Co. Wexford South		
1	Acquired Brain Injury Ireland	€ 8,629.00
2	Access 2000	€ 19,650.00
3	Active Conections	€ 21,894.00
4	ARC Raheen FRC	€ 18,326.00
5	Cumas Integrate Dance	€ 14,224.00
6	Grantstown Priory and Day Care Centre	€ 17,262.00
7	Ramsgrange Men's Shed	€ 10,306.00
8	SouthEnd FRC	€ 28,331.00
9	South West Wexford FRC	€ 9,015.00
10	Taghmon FRC	€ 10,286.00
11	Women's Collective Ireland- Wexford	€ 33,794.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 191,717.00</b>

Co. Wexford North		
1	Irish Wheelchair Association	€ 7,772.00
2	Enniscorthy Community Allotments	€ 11,160.00
3	Kilanerlin/Ballyfad Community Development	€ 20,695.00
4	Gorey Family Resource Centre	€ 21,773.00
5	GYNG	€ 23,774.00
6	Bunclody Men's Shed	€ 13,374.00
7	Kiltealy Men and Women's Shed	€ 27,262.00
8	Ragtree Equine Centre	€ 19,398.00
9	Askamore Community Council	€ 9,047.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>€ 154,255.00</b>



## Reach in numbers 2024



"It is a wonderful experience with nice people. I now want to open my own coffee shop one day". "I'm so glad I got involved"



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## Reach in numbers 2024

**Total funded groups**

**44**

**Distinct Learning Programmes**

**445**

**Reach in numbers**

**2024**

**Total Beneficiaries 2024**

**3945**

	Funded Groups	Distinct Learning Programmes	Beneficiaries
Co. Waterford	11	72	587
Waterford City	13	142	1446
Co. Wexford South	11	147	1153
Co. Wexford North	9	84	759
Total	44	445	3945

# REACH 2024—Networking



'Made a big difference to my home, garden & confidence.  
Was so enjoyable & lots of fun'.



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Eagla, Neamhdeas agus Easpaire  
Eagla, Neamhdeas agus Easpaire  
Eagla, Neamhdeas agus Easpaire



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# REACH 2024—Networking



Two networking events were held in 2024.

The purpose of the events was to:

- Bring together WWETB Reach funded groups
- Share ideas on programme provision
- Share ideas on engagement of learners
- Celebrate the highlights of Reach funding (WINS)
- Identify the concerns with Reach funding (WORRYs)

21/24 groups attended the Co. Waterford event

**87%** representation of funded groups

16/ 20 number of groups attended the Co. Wexford event.

**80%** representation of funded groups

Representing **84%** of total Grantees.









# CELEBRATING THE HIGHLIGHTS



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All groups were asked to note the wins from Reach funding – the positive stories and the benefits of Reach Funding.

These are presented under the Principles Underpinning the Community Education Framework



Community Education Framework Principle	Example of practice in Funded Groups
<p>Working in partnership with ETBs to ensure strategic approach <b>(14 responses)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participant led</li> <li>• Choose your own tutor</li> <li>• Utilizes local talent</li> <li>• The amount of people you can reach</li> <li>• Reach is a Win Win</li> <li>• Have the opportunity to work in other communities</li> <li>• The support received from WWETB x 2</li> <li>• Reach itself is a WIN WIN – open doors, new activities, new training</li> <li>• High level of engagement</li> <li>• Network event is good as you realize you are not a project alone but part of a larger group</li> <li>• Footfall into the service</li> <li>• Links within Service/different projects</li> <li>• We are reaching hard to reach</li> </ul>
<p>Facilitating diversity of learning and learners <b>(21 responses)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration x 2</li> <li>• Bring communities together x 5</li> <li>• Take people out of isolation x 2</li> <li>• New friend contacts x 3</li> <li>• Open to everyone no matter what background</li> <li>• Inclusive x 2</li> <li>• Inclusivity for service users with disabilities</li> <li>• Before Reach – very little activity or learning for community groups outside of literacy or cooking. Reach has allowed an expansion on this.</li> <li>• Creating awareness – seeing ability rather than disability</li> <li>• Connections/friendships</li> <li>• Extend social circle</li> <li>• Word of mouth can be the best advertisement particularly to vulnerable groups</li> </ul>
<p>Ensuring consistency in support for community education <b>(6 responses)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Boost mental health</li> <li>• Group cannot survive without funding</li> <li>• To have the resources to support the work that is going on</li> <li>• Being able to provide transport to and from project</li> <li>• Transport &amp; Childcare costs covered</li> </ul>
<p>Embedding technology to maximize community access <b>(2 responses)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing IT in a digital world</li> <li>• Being able to provide learners with equipment</li> </ul>



Community Education Framework Principle	Example of practice in Funded Groups
<p>Delivering quality learning experiences (32 responses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boost confidence x 5</li> <li>• Learn new skills x 2</li> <li>• Fun</li> <li>• Variety x 3</li> <li>• Sense of belonging x 2</li> <li>• Different skills</li> <li>• No exams</li> <li>• Accessible x 2</li> <li>• Tea break is key</li> <li>• Giving the chance to look at the individual – the holistic approach</li> <li>• Interaction of members – identifying things in common</li> <li>• Being able to meet the needs of the learners and build a programme with personal focused support tailored to their needs.</li> <li>• By working at the pace of the learner, confidence builds.</li> <li>• Being flexible and listen to the learner's voice.</li> <li>• The hardest step can be the first day.</li> <li>• Having visual evidence – evidence of depth of work clear and also good to promote class to other learners</li> <li>• Being flexible allows us to adapt to group needs</li> <li>• While some programmes may look different to mainstream programmes, they are not. The approach and methodologies differ with trained facilitators.</li> <li>• Programmes improve the physical and psychological well being</li> <li>• Parents getting tools</li> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Great tutors</li> <li>• Tailor programmes to suit group need</li> </ul>

Community Education Framework Principle	Example of practice in Funded Groups
<p>Linking to pathways within FET and beyond <b>(15 responses)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New opportunities</li> <li>• Learners become tutors</li> <li>• Connections are made in the community and beyond</li> <li>• Creating pathways for progression</li> <li>• Achievement from progressing in FET courses (literacy/numeracy, life skills)</li> <li>• Life skill progression</li> <li>• Wider access to courses</li> <li>• Taking the learner on a journey</li> <li>• Opens doors to something else</li> <li>• Progression through REACH funded programmes from supported programmes to employment led programmes</li> <li>• Some learners that may be not in a position to take employment, have self employment opportunities</li> <li>• Programmes like Safe Pass and manual handling improve employment prospects</li> <li>• Activity based programmes have a huge impact preparing learners for different outcomes</li> <li>• Whole family benefits</li> <li>• Pathways to other courses</li> </ul>
<p>Tailoring approach to data and outcomes to reflect delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No 'wins' noted under this heading</li> </ul>

# WORRIES



**'Made new friends. Helps having a hobby for my mental health. I have learned alot on this course'.**





# WORRIES

All groups were asked to note their worries with Reach. These have been recorded as national and local.  
(National response required)

## National Worries

- Requirement of LDF
- Late funding x 5
- Funding category for people who do a lot of work at their own expense
- Gap in delivery due to funding and concern for learner continuity
- That the finances will continue
- Because there is no fee, this sometimes affects commitment from learners
- Pressure to spend money by 31<sup>st</sup> Dec when funding issued later
- More leeway on the categories particularly at the end of the year
- The timeline of REACH funding – not in line with academic year
- Funding will be restricted
- Difficult to access wheelchair accessible boats etc.
- Timing – can't start until May
- PLSS forms – the actual form/PPSN/Data Protection/fear of hacking/safety of their information
- Getting signature on PLSS
- Guidelines changing year to year
- Future Funding
- Timing of grant allocation
- Admin time (paid for paperwork not for planning)
- Council taking national grants – where is it going?
- Facilities (County)
- PPS number and learner detail form.
- Time frame for applications (stopping progression for learner)
- Squashing everything into last 7 months due to late start.
- Tutors cannot claim travel

# WORRIES

All groups were asked to note their worries with Reach. These have been recorded as national and local.  
(Local WWETB response required)

## Local Worries

- Repetition of learner stories
- Monthly report can be a lot of work
- Paperwork x 4
- Premises
- No tutor pool
- Smaller groups
- Administration excessive
- Directory of tutors
- Trying to get the message out – to get more people involved
- Numbers are low for organisations that work with marginalised groups
- Restrictions - some organisations were advised no continuous enrolment & they had to have 8-12 people in the group
- Paperwork – digital and physical copies required – not ideal
- Access to tutors are limited in West. Waterford. Better access in the city
- Class participation and numbers. Getting participants started on their learning journey.
- Keeping learners engaged.
- Catering for the interests of all the parties can be a challenge.
- Capacity of worker
- Space/tutor co-ordination
- Get the right tutor
- SLA (Respond)
- Level of paper work
- Affects costings/relationships
- Level of funding available for Admin.
- Access to both Com Ed funding/ Reach funding
- Finding premises at suitable times (often demand for mornings)

**Please note: WWETB Community Education team have reviewed the local worries and implemented an improvement plan for REACH 2025.**

## Courses funded by WWETB



'A great new experience. Loved working & grooming the ponies and meeting new people'. 'Would love to do it again'.



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## Courses funded by WWETB Waterford City and County

*Conscious crafting* Thai Chi Crochet Therapeutic Art sustain-  
able **crafting** Art pottery Car maintenance Ex-  
hale art therapy **sewing** Art hand workshop fashion de-  
sign upcycling furniture miniature zen garden **connect**  
**café festive crafts furniture** upcycling **felt**ing wall mural creative  
writing **cooking BBQ & picnic workshop digital literacy**  
*Money Management* **Nail care DIY workshops** gardening **Drama**  
Speak your truth **film project movie making** reflective  
writing film production **photography** *mindful mosaic* **jew-**  
**ellery making** Community music **the happy**  
**course** percussion choir sound therapy music reading  
& singing drumming good bodies **life on purpose with pur-**  
**pose** women's health and wellbeing *group life coaching* **Social anxi-**  
**ety for adults Career pathways** expressive mindfulness  
*the power of you* Motorbike maintenance **First Aid & fire**  
**training Prepare to study** Sailing into wellness Brigid  
& Me Meditation autism parenting programme *Yoga* Women  
exploring options Physical Education Waterford Muay  
Thai *Self defence* Strength & condition *Dance* **Baking Soup &**  
**bread** Internet safety *Career prep for phones* Paediatric First aid  
**Barista beauty Woodwork** Stable management **Adventure pro-**  
**grams Outdoor education Fishing Social farming** *Active*  
*connections*

## Courses funded by WWETB Co Wexford

*Barista Training* Beauty courses Flower Creations Woodwork Horsemanship  
 Creative writing Art Herbalist *DIY divas* Willow weaving  
 Flower arranging Upholstery Woodturning Food preservation  
 Furniture refurbishment Horticulture Plot to pot Mindfulness Art Acrylic Miniature  
 Quilting *Trash Panache* Photography Sewing 3D art Soap making  
 Renewable energy Home maintenance *Time for me* Jewellery making  
 Learn to sing Printmaking ABAR training Needle felting Dried flower decorations  
 Recycled jewellery *Scrap fabric quilting* Driftwood houses  
 Ecoembroidery Botanical Gelli prints *Wreath making* Suncatchers Yoga  
 Cookery Informal English Wellsselfolgy Learning to grow Equality awareness  
 Painting Drama Button Stone *Rug hooking* Chicken wire craft  
 Decoupage Clothing upcycling Christmas crafts Gardening on a budget Outdoor wellbeing  
 Adventure therapy Inclusive dance *Drumming* Digital skills  
 Nature therapy Chair yoga Bevel *Stained glass* Wire sculpting  
 Pottery Basket making Leather crafting Sailing Training Kayak skills  
 Yarn Bombing Connect café Makeup *Welt felt*

Further details on all  
 courses are available  
 from the Community  
 Education Facilitators



## Learner stories





# Learner story—Co. Waterford

## *Testimonial by Pamela*

October 2024

*Being in the role of a parent for most of my adult life I never had the opportunity to go back to education, there were many barriers stopping me, traumatic events, poverty, grief, not dealing with grieving, lack of knowledge, little support, lack of self-confidence and not knowing who I was anymore, just a mother, where was the person gone. My self-esteem was at an all-time low. I felt that nothing I had done was right, I was no good at anything anyway, everything that had happened was my fault, I was no-good for my children, again I was just a mother, and I could not even get that right. What was the point in me being around, I was no good to anyone, I felt worthless. There was no way out of the big black hole I was in. What was I going to do with no career and no education? I felt like my life was over, I was in a very dark place and could not see a way out. To others my life seemed fine as I put on a smile for the outside world, I put on many masks for different settings. Do you know how exhausting that is, I do.*

*An outreach worker called to my door one day, sad to say I did not know what an outreach worker was at the time, however, I was invited to join a women's group. I thought that this was going to be a space for coffee and chats. I could not have been more wrong. Little did I know where this group was going to lead me.*

*First there was a meeting with Kate the Training and Development co-ordinator and Michelle the facilitator of the course from the Waterford Women's Centre. Run by the Waterford Woman's Centre and held in Portlaw, Time for Me, Health, and Wellbeing group, I learned that community education vs traditional education was a completely different style of learning.*

*With the support of this group, I got through some extremely tough times for this I will be eternally grateful. I learned that I was not alone, and other women were having some similar issues. With each group discussion we helped each other. Through this my personal development grew. Here I learned that it is not ok that I come last. To stop blaming myself for past events that were out of my control, nobody is perfect, and parents are still learning.*

*From what I have learned I now know more about the difficult times and challenges I experienced growing up as a child and can look at this time in my life through a different lens. Even though I still had a lot of struggles to deal with, my weekly participation within the group was essential to me. This was my first experience of community education. I knew then that I wanted to educate myself so that I could help others in the same way that I was helped and supported. I would love to see more people take part in these groups. There are a lot of women in the community who would really benefit from attending.*

*Through group facilitation with the Waterford Women's Centre, I learned that I must be responsible and accountable for my actions past and present, I cannot change the past, but I can be a better person in the future. The person I want to be.*

*I worked extremely hard through group facilitation with the support of the facilitator and the support of the other women whom at this point had become good friends, to be that person. To accept criticism well, understand the reason for it, learn and grow from it. Before now if I were criticised, I would get defensive and shrink into myself, feeling like a child been told off. Asking for help was not something I would have done much, for fear of been told no, or been made to feel stupid. Now I can, I do and will continue to ask for that help. If the answer is no, I will not take it personally. Everybody has their own stuff going on and might not have the capacity to help. This is why we must set boundaries be respected in them and be respectful of other people's boundaries.*

*Without knowing it my confidence was growing, and I was starting to put myself out of my comfort zone. Offering to represent our group with a speech at an event that took place in Dungarvan for women's international week. There was no way this would have been the case a few months prior to this. I knew then that I needed to do more, learn more, and have the education to help myself and other people. I was starting to feel empowered.*

*It was around this time that I was asked to be on the Portlaw enhancement committee as a parent representative for the school. In our meetings we had been talking about the old tennis court in clodaigh house as a place for the community to go, especially the children. The whole court needed renovating and the funding wasn't available. I put*

*this to my partner who is a landscaper, he took on the task voluntarily, with my help and some of the kids from our area. Foroige got the local kids involved with the clean-up and the school done the line marking. This gave me a great sense of achievement and joy. To be actively doing something to help the community was one of the best feelings I have ever had.*

*I feel I have gained a lot more self-awareness and awareness of others. My awareness is growing along with my confidence. I am more focused, motivated, and happier. Being happy was something that I lacked a lot in my life over many years. This has carried over in my house and the dynamics there has changed for the better. As I am changing and have the tools and learning to work out issues in a calm way I started noticing these changes at home, we live in a happier environment, this is because of what I have learned in group.*

*I had the opportunity to apply for the higher certificate in community education and personal development. I was supported in this by the group. They all thought this was a great idea and said that I would be good at. The support offered around this in the women's centre was brilliant, they were all so helpful and accommodating.*

*The course I am now attending is the Higher Certificate in Community Education and Development. The aim of this course is to work effectively in the community and voluntary sector. I will be working on analysing my personal life experience; therefore, I will gain experience in personal development through reflective shared lived experience with our group and facilitator, while supporting each other. This will give me the confidence, skills and knowledge which will allow me to work in the community effectively.*

*A big win for me as an adult learner. Without the women's centre and what I learned there I would not be where I am today. I am delighted to be able to say that I am back in education and feeling free, happy, and empowered, for many years I did not believe this was possible. My judgment has changed for the better. I did not realise I was so judgemental and that is on me. Being critical with myself but gentle also took a lot of work. Learning my values and how important they are to me, the importance of setting boundaries for me and others. Changing old ways of thinking. Critical thinking was new to me, I did not realise the importance of this until I became aware of it. Being told to ask question and question everything was new. As children we had been taught to do as we were told and not to ask questions. This is still the case in traditional education. There is still so much to learn I am looking forward to every minute of it. I am also looking forward to opportunities that will come up. Changing communities for the better.*

*My biggest worry as an adult learner is a family emergency or ill health on my part will stop me continuing with my education, that I will retract to the shell of a human I was. I cannot go back there.*

*Surviving and struggling as I did for a lot of my life. Wearing a mask all day every day, hiding my true self from the world. But who does this serve, no one.*

*Words of wisdom. If you are a woman stuck like I was and reading this I beg you, get out there and find a group. If you know a woman who needs this help, get them out there. Your circumstances do not matter in these spaces. Get out of your comfort zone and do something for yourself. Be kind to yourself your only human, be kind to others you do*

*not know what their story is. Know your self-worth, you have strengths. No regrets they do not serve a purpose they just cause unhappiness.*

*I hope that my words inspire you and the people that you think need this safe space find a group and find your voice*

*To all who was there to support me on my journey. Thank you from the bottom of my heart .*

*Pamela*





## Learner story—Co. Wexford

*Isolation, Isolation was the reason I wanted to join the Community allotment. After I retired, I began to realise I was socially very isolated. This was starting to affect me emotionally. Isolation can make you feel very vulnerable emotionally. It can have a big impact on your mental health.*

*During my first contact with the Allotment I was asked why I wanted to join. I replied that I could grow cabbages and potatoes in my back garden but I could not grow a community out there.*

*Digging my plot is keeping me physically fit, eating my organic vegetables in keeping me healthy but the biggest benefits have been emotionally. I did an introduction to horticulture ,it ran over a number of weeks. I was made to feel welcome and I met a lot of nice people. I learned a lot and was able to implement my new knowledge immediately. I did an introduction to Herbalism, it was an amazing course.*

*I now make my own apple cider vinegar, lots of lotions and potions, I am making things now to use as Christmas gifts. The classes were great. During the classes we had a lot of banter, and a lot of laughs, we had tea and chats and sharing of knowledge I met new people from the community and people from the wider community.*

*I spent a long time in the town without knowing a lot of people but now people wave to me in the street and say hello. I feel a sense of connection.*

*The fact that the courses are free is a great benefit.*



*I am living on a pension. If I had to pay for these courses that money would have to come from a limited budget. I am so happy that I can do these courses and not be stigmatised by my lack of funds.*

*I don't know who pays for these courses but I want to say a big thank you. The use of the word Life changing is bandied about a lot but for me this has been life charging. I also want to say a big thank you from the people I have met and spoke to on the allotment , non national, unemployed and pensioners who say they appreciate the opportunity to be involved in the community.*

*I can now say that the real benefit to me is that I now feel emotionally stronger.*

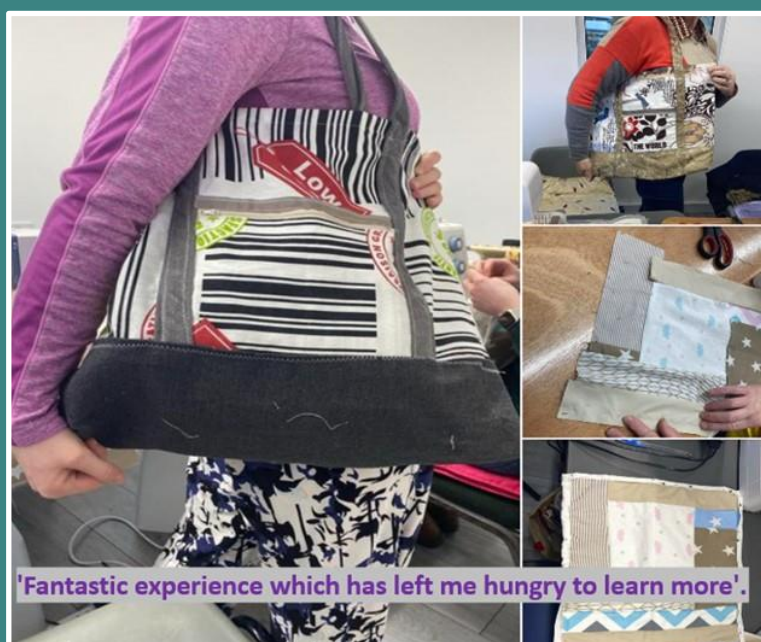
*Jean*



'Dancing makes me feel free. It gives you more freedom of anything else regardless of who you are'.



'I feel better in my body/mind and soul after my weekly gardening session'



'Fantastic experience which has left me hungry to learn more'.





'When finished, we had a small piece of furniture that we could be proud of and each of us could say 'I made that' and bring it home for a member of the family to commandeer with suggestions as to where it should reside within the home'.



'To be part of this project was eye opening. It started off small and look where it finished'.



'The calm and friendly atmosphere makes me feel more confident'.

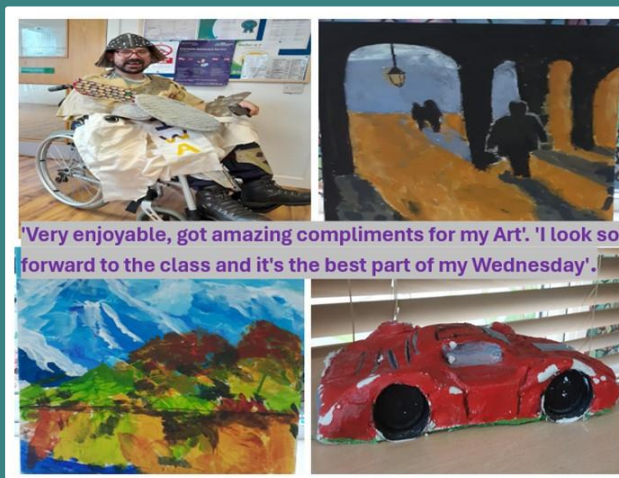




'I enjoy painting different images.  
This was a very happy experience'.



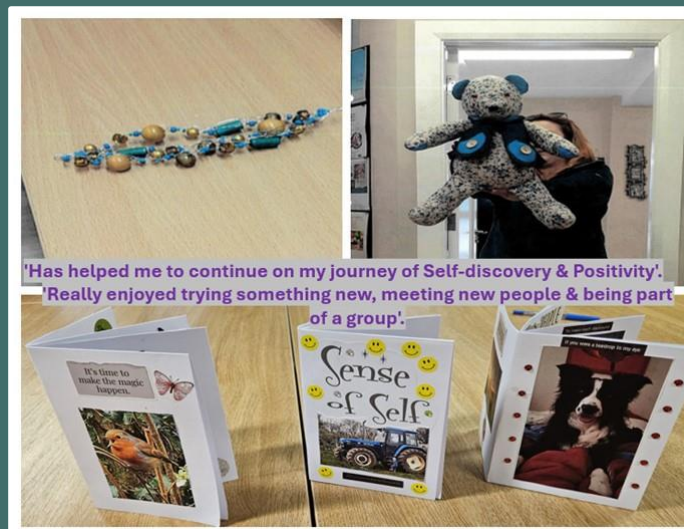
'We learn from each other and our tutor. The classes are so  
diverse. It's so empowering with women supporting women'.



'Very enjoyable, got amazing compliments for my Art'. 'I look so  
forward to the class and it's the best part of my Wednesday'.



'Brought out a creative spark in me which I totally enjoyed'.  
'Having a great time, very sociable while learning loads'.  
'Thoroughly enjoyable'.



### WWETB Community Education 2025

For further information please contact the Community Education Facilitator in your area:

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