

## **Creative Movement Project to support the health and wellbeing of those living with dementia**

*“Findings from a two-year study support growing evidence that regular dance activities can improve and prolong good quality of life for people in different stages of dementia.”* Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health at Canterbury Christ Church University and Green Candle Dance Company, demonstrates how dementia focused dance activities improves the physical and mental wellbeing for people with the condition, as well as their carers.

DANCE SIX-0 is an award winning, local dance company which champions regular dance classes and projects in Salisbury exclusively for older people since Sept 2015, bringing a wealth of health benefits to participants. They have recently tested the potential for a new class for people living with early on-set dementia (supporting a Dementia Friendly County) and now seek funds to develop the offer into a regularly established weekly class to build up core attendance.

Each class will be a drop-in session and will include gentle movement, creativity, props and music, which is known to increase wellbeing. Led by experienced dance artist Rebecca Seymour with a support teacher, each class will be facilitated in a professional manner and with maximum consideration for the needs of the participants. Carers are encouraged to join in as well.

At this stage we are seeking support to establish a core group of attenders, as part of a three year plan to create a sustainable delivery model. Once we have strong attendance record we will expand our funding portfolio to include the local CCG for continuation funding beyond Spring 2016 alongside a regular participant contribution.

### **Learning to date**

There are challenges to engage people living with dementia. To overcome them, we would employ different marketing strategies and invest more time in liaising with GPs, and gate-keepers, which would be effective in establishing this group and remove barriers to attendance.

- Rebrand as “creative movement” rather than dance.
- Relocate to St George’s Hall, Harnham, specifically to connect to the Singing for the Brain group which regularly has 30-40 attenders who have cited travel as the barrier to attendance.
- Representative photos are needed to get the “perception” right – is this for me?
- Numbers of attendees have fluctuated between 3-6 at initial sessions. Nevertheless, the impact for those who have attended is significant and people re-attend.
- Barriers to attendance need to be lifted - cost to get to the location is the prime issue.
- Make it a drop in class, rather than a term sign up.
- We need more time to build momentum for this project, and to establish ourselves as a regular fixture.
- Invest time in speaking to GPs direct and offering GP taster sessions, to provide more context to gain referrals.

Male participant said,  
*It's not what I expected, but I can see how it's doing me good and I learned something*

Female participant said,  
*It's fun. Nice gentle exercise.*

Carer at taster session said,  
*I'm quite sceptical about exercise classes, but I was pleasantly surprised here. There's no feeling of having to do it properly or in a special way. It was fun and beneficial and really social.*

Health development manager said,  
*I can see how this would be beneficial to patients.*

### **Budget**

£1686 for improved marketing and costs for autumn term x 14 sessions.

**£2722 for improved marketing and costs for autumn and spring term - REQUEST**

£3780 for improved marketing, autumn, spring and summer terms (full year)