

# Start

## Art and Gardening for mental wellbeing



**Contact us:**

Telephone:

Arts Team: 0161 257 0675

Occupational Therapist: 0161 257 0696

Website: [www.startmc.org.uk](http://www.startmc.org.uk)

Email:

Administrator:

[patricia.culbert@mhsc.nhs.uk](mailto:patricia.culbert@mhsc.nhs.uk)

Occupational Therapist:

[Juliette.angus@mhsc.nhs.uk](mailto:Juliette.angus@mhsc.nhs.uk)

Manager:

[wendy.teall@mhsc.nhs.uk](mailto:wendy.teall@mhsc.nhs.uk)

## Referring to Start is easy!

Just fill in an AMIGOS entry stating the reason for referral, make sure the relevant documents are up to date on AMIGOS, and telephone your referral through to Reg Connor at Hillside on 0161 273 2016

Note that:

- an IB is not required to attend Start
- there is no waiting list at Start at present

## What is Start about?

Creativity is something we all share. It is part of what makes us human. We all enjoy creative play when we are young, but we tend to lose touch with this aspect of ourselves as we grow up, losing touch at the same time with a powerful way of expressing our emotions and exploring ourselves.

Getting back in touch with these skills, in a way that benefits wellbeing, is the basis of Start's mental health interventions.

## Why work with creativity?

Research shows that working with creative, meaningful activity such as art can help with recovery from mental illness. This is because creative activity impacts on the psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains, benefiting the service user at many levels and in many ways.

## What can Start offer people?

Start offers an experience of creativity to its service users that is enjoyable and unique in that it specifically targets the rebuilding and protection of wellbeing.

Through individual programmes of creative learning and self-reflection, each service user can become skilled at using their inner resources to rebuild mental health and gain new strategies for self-care.

On receipt of referral, users are offered an initial assessment where they are shown around the studios and can ask questions and meet some staff members.

If offered a place at Start, they will then enjoy a series of short placements in a number of studios across Start (called rotations). This helps with change-management and maximizes the breadth of experience. All rotations are goal focused, with users setting their own goals in negotiation with the tutor. Moving on, aspirations and goals are in discussion throughout a person's time at Start.

Studio activities change from time to time but currently comprise Photography, Animation, Painting and Drawing, Textiles, Ceramics, Gardening, and Mixed Media including Mosaic.

Users review their own progress after each session through filling in a diary about their learning. They can have support with this task if needed.



Progress is reviewed by Start staff and users together, through regular reviews, which help to guide the user towards personal goals both within and beyond the service. There is much support available to help each person succeed.

To this end, groups are quite small, with a good deal of interaction with other users in the groups to build confidence and sociability.



*“Start helped me return to being an individual who accepts the responsibility for my own life.”*

# Who can attend Start?

People can be referred into Start by using the Social Inclusion Referral Form or by using the telephone referral method described on the front page. See below for more about the criteria for referral.

## We ask that people referred to Start:

- have some interest in creative activity, although no experience is necessary
- are willing to try to engage with a learning process that is directed, goal-focussed and involves some basic reflection
- enjoy following tasks
- have an acceptable level of alertness and sense of responsibility around tools and equipment
- are willing to try to work in small groups
- are willing to try to attend regularly, given support to do so

## Criteria for acceptance

Person diagnosed with severe and enduring mental illness and/or critical or substantial social care needs.

Has clearly identified social care needs in the last 6 months as reflected within the MANCAS (MANCAS areas 1,4,6,8,12,13,17) or Community Care Assessment under FACS criteria.

The service user is not resident in NHS or LA funded 24 hour supported accommodation (unless part of transfer CPA care plan).

## Please ensure the following are up to date on AMIGOS

Care plan or CC4 including a care plan and a crisis plan, specifying support available in the event of needs changing

An up to date MANCAS (including score sheet) or CC4 needs assessment

A risk assessment and management plan where risk to self/others or psychological health have been identified as 2 or above in the MANCAS score sheet.



*“Start has helped me refocus on what my life is about. New skills learnt at Start help me keep well. I can influence my mood towards uplift, to feel well and happy.”*

Together we are better

## What people who use the service say

*“For 3 hours a week I can actually look forward to being relaxed in a creative environment. It is one of the only times I feel relatively relaxed in my week.”*

*“I’ve got my life back because of Start. I used to be really insecure and couldn’t speak to anyone – being at Start helped me to talk to people and enjoy myself again.”*

*“Being at Start and doing the artwork gave me respite from the torment, and strength to go home and deal with things. It gave me a sense of pride and a belief that I could actually do things. It has helped me recover from my illness and live a normal life.”*

*“Coming to Start and using Start as a stepping stone, has given me the courage to go to other classes that aren’t linked with mental health services.”*

*“Having new ideas is my favourite thing about Start. I like coming because I get interesting ideas, different to what I normally have myself. It makes me more understandable in public life in as I talk more sense – it’s a constructive idea that orders the brain.”*

*“My family think it’s important [that I come to Start]. My confidence is helped as I can say I’m pleased about something I did at Start to my sister when she phones. It makes her feel more secure knowing that I do constructive things away from home.”*

## Who works at Start?

Start is run by a multi-disciplinary team of creative professionals and an Occupational Therapist. The mix of skills offers an effective package of support that enables our unique style of intervention to encourage people to move on into further mainstream opportunities.

## Praise for the work of Start

Start’s approach is praised by former National Director for Mental Health in England Professor Louis Appleby, who acknowledges the work as pioneering and effective:

*“I am a big fan of Start and the tremendous work they do, and as I am tasked with the rolling out of this type of work across England, I am keen to see Start’s practices more widely used”, he said, on his second visit to Start.*



*“By developing my creativity I have developed self-confidence that not only overlaps into everyday life but also allows me to take on challenges that I have avoided for decades.”*