

“Every borough should have a drawing shed. If I could come here and draw every week I'd sort stuff out that I can't do in other ways. It makes me feel calm”
Waltham Forest participant



CASE STUDY THE DRAWING SHED

Hoe Street, Waltham Forest

Project partner: Arts Council England

AIMS

The drawing shed set out to positively promote mental well-being through art. It was aimed at a diverse range of participants to help them connect at a deeper level with the drawing process and help them experience new ways of expressing feelings, ideas and thoughts.

APPROACH

The drawing shed was constructed in the cafe garden of the YMCA so that residents could see it arrive into the world! It was also wheeled around the community and got people talking and drawing together.

At each venue, the users took part in and helped shape a drawing workshop, which embraced the overarching aim of being exploratory, physical and fun.

People could choose a level of involvement (eg the style or amount of time spent), with support and encouragement from the project team.

INITIAL RESULTS

- **The drawing shed** was able to attract a mixed audience to interact with it as an architectural space/studio for drawing. Users included a wide range of ages including young people with disabilities.
- **Feedback** has shown an appetite for this kind of project to continue in the community.
- **Strong relationships** of trust were built up – particularly with some of the residents at the YMCA.
- **Increased confidence.** At the end of the Open Day, a group of four male residents spontaneously organised a ‘crit’ with a member of the YMCA staff – exploring the inspiration for a particular drawing and sharing this experience between themselves openly and comfortably and in front of others.
- **Community cohesion.** Some of these residents came back several times to help push the drawing shed around their community and meet people on the estate.



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Delegates discussing community engagement at the Communities in Control event, September 2008



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