



PRESS RELEASE

Wac Arts Awarded the Camden Council Contract for Short Breaks for Children and Young People with Disabilities

Date: 10th March 2017

Wac Arts is pleased to announce that they have been awarded the Camden Council Contract for Short Breaks for Children and Young People with Disabilities for the next 3 years. Established in 1978, Wac Arts is a vibrant charity based in Belsize Park, transforming the lives of thousands of young people through its broad range of programmes in performing arts and media. Wac Arts Disabilities and Inclusions team have been at the forefront of providing much needed services to children and young people with disabilities for over 25 years, and this contract will ensure the continued provision of high quality services for these young people in Camden. Delivering a range of integrated and mainstream inclusive programmes, Wac Arts is a safe and welcoming space for children, young people and their families.

Working with the Children and Young People with Disabilities Services in Camden to develop and improve services on offer, using accessible methods of consultation that put young people at the centre of decision making processes, Wac Arts will work with local charities KIDS and PACE (Play, Adventure and Community Enrichment) in order to deliver these important programmes as well as a wide variety of other activities as part of their core work.

The contract will fund after school and weekend clubs where young people can engage in arts, media and inclusive sport activities in a safe and supportive environment. Wac Arts will be able to provide holiday clubs, outdoor camps at accessible activity centres, transitions support designed to help young people develop skills for transitioning into adulthood and buddying and advocacy services that put the young people at the centre of the service – both as users but also as decision makers. KIDS will provide home based short breaks that will offer the child or young person an opportunity to explore new interests and develop independence. The short activity-based trips are designed in consultation with families and enable the child or young person to enjoy new experiences, explore a new area, meet new people as well as make friends.

Camden KIDS workers may take a child or young person out into a community setting, such as to the cinema, bowling or to the local swimming pool. This enables young people to engage in new experiences whilst providing a respite from their caring responsibilities to families. Alternatively, a KIDS worker can work with the child or young person in their own home, or accompany a family on an outing to ensure all members of the family to have an enjoyable shared experience.

PACE will provide Overnight Adventures, a specialist overnight sleepover service for small groups of young people with a range of disabilities and/or complex health needs. This will provide a fun, friendly, safe and stimulating environment where young people are able to learn new skills, gain independence and develop friendships whilst engaging in fun activities. PACE will also provide Positive Behaviour Support - a one to one service for young people with challenging behaviour and

non-verbal communication needs. Delivered from in or around the family home depending on the individual care and social needs of the young person, the service will provide short breaks to families and manage and apply a range of behaviour management plans.

“The renewal of the Camden Council contract with Wac Arts will allow us to continue to deliver hugely beneficial programmes for children and young people in Camden,” said Head of Youth Inclusion Jo Yeoman. “We look forward to working with KIDS and PACE to support young people to develop new life skills, grow in confidence and most importantly, have fun in a safe and supportive environment.”

Dionne Usherwood, Head of Children’s Joint Commissioning at Camden Council said, “We are looking forward to a successful working relationship with Wac Arts and partners in order to further develop our Short Breaks offer.”

Notes to editors:

Wac Arts is a vibrant charity based in Belsize Park, which transforms the lives of thousands of young people through its broad range of programmes in performing arts and media. From its inception in 1978, Wac Arts has been supporting young people aged 5-26, who are experiencing exceptional hardship, by providing outstanding levels of arts training, with a focus on innovation and excellence.

Wac Arts have an extraordinary track record for developing diverse talent and our mission is to create a centre of excellence, nurturing potential through the power of the arts.

Wac Arts has a broad range of programmes including disability and inclusion, workshops in professional approaches, junior and senior classes, a full time Diploma in professional Musical Theatre, and weekend arts courses, such as aerial and circus training.