

Part A - General Information

Organisation/Individual Name

The Wheelchair Skills College

Organisation Type/Structure

Community Interest Company (CIC)

Theme/Nature of Project

Children, Youth Development and Families

Company/CIC Registration Number (if applicable)

13442090

Project Name (if same as Organisation Name, please leave this blank)

Wheelchair skills in school

Name of Lead Contact

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Website

<https://www.wheelchairskills.org/>

Social Media Handles (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram etc):

<https://linktr.ee/wheelchairskills>

Part B - Project Proposal

Project Mission: A snapshot of the project's intention (50 words max)

Work with a range of stakeholders surrounding the lives of young wheelchair users to create a 360 degree learning environment to create a programme that embeds essential developmental wheelchair skills that will boost confidence and independence of kids using wheelchairs to increase their life opportunities.

Situation (250 words)

There are a number of reasons that a young person may use a wheelchair that will often revolved around mobility issues. Conditions that cause mobility issues can be congenital or acquired. Wheelchair users may be ambulant or need to use it all the time, they could be using their wheelchair on a permanent or temporary basis. However, people use a wheelchair, the social stigma involved impedes their ability to use it as a tool for independence.

According to the National Wheelchair Data Collection, there are an estimated 64,000 young people in England who need a wheelchair to be mobile.

When given a wheelchair, there is no system in place to ensure that the skills enabling the use of that wheelchair is taught. There may be ad hoc sessions taught, but not anything that is reflecting the needs of the young people using wheelchairs.

Through pilot wheelchair skills sessions run at a number of Special Educational Needs schools in South London throughout the first half of 2022, we identified positive outcomes for young people and staff members through peer led wheelchair skills sessions.

When delivering the training, we also recognised that the delivery model did not meet all the needs of the students. Although there were clear benefits recognised, the length and frequency of these sessions meant that there wasn't full engagement in the sessions and young people did not leave with the skills embedded.

Complication (250 words)

For every year that young people go without learning the essential life skills of how to use their wheelchair, the more negative habits will be picked up and social stigma will continue to shape their ideas of what they can achieve. This is also true for their support circles including parents and teachers.

One of the main issues is the social stigma and ideas of what wheelchair users are capable of. Ableist views are so ingrained in society that those people who are there to support don't have the information to give the best opportunities to gain as much independence as they can.

Lack of knowledge around how to use a wheelchair feeds into creating more dependent behaviour in the classroom environment and home environment.

Young people using wheelchairs often have things done for them because everyone involved believes they need the support, when this might not always be the case. In creating more dependency, there are real consequences and a lifelong adverse impact on their mental and physical wellbeing.

Young people are not getting the best chance to access life opportunities as they are not given the fundamental skills that enable them to do tasks that most people take for granted eg going to the shop, out with friends, playing sports.

In teaching wheelchair skills, we are challenging the social stigma around using a wheelchair. We can challenge the passive ableism holding people back from reaching their potential and taking on the same life opportunities as their non-disabled peers.

Solution (250 words)

Our wheelchair skills in school project will work with 3 partner schools in South London to coproduce a new programme of wheelchair skills using a 360 degree learning environment to be integrated into the lives of young people to teach them the essential life skills they can use to be as independent as possible when using their wheelchair.

Using the Design School's "Double Diamond" framework for innovation, we will work with stakeholder groups to better understand this complex situation and build something that meets outcomes and works for everyone involved.

Our three stakeholder groups will be young people, their parents and staff at the school (teachers, teaching assistants etc.) who will meet up separately and work through activities that are tailored to each group. There will be a project steering group with a lead from each of the partner schools that will support the work in that school.

We will initially be working toward identifying issues that are affecting the independence of young people across different settings at home and school as well as gaining a better understanding of all the people involved. We will then design a programme of activity that is tailored to each setting and finally will move to piloting and reviewing the programme across our partner schools.

This project will run across the next academic year with a vision of rolling out a completed wheelchair skills programme to all schools across the country where it can be further tested and refined through continuous feedback.

Part C - Wider Support

How would the Stephen Lloyd Award network of partners' support be beneficial to your project? (250 words max)

The wheelchair skills in school project is one within a bigger organisational vision that will require additional funding. We need support to diversify our income streams and understanding ways in which to do this would be hugely beneficial.

As a new organisation there are also areas of support around core functions that would be welcome in HR and financial issues. Although we have experience of this, extra support in developing new process and guidance on how to do this would mean huge savings in resources, both time and money.

During the first year, we aim to develop a working prototype that can be scaled. In order to scale, we plan to offer the programme in an e-learning package to schools across the country. Delivering training to new partner schools would make this a sustainable activity. We would also like to support other organisations with similar lived experience skill sets to develop their own training programmes.

I have a lot of experience from delivery and development of programmes working for different third sector organisations, but there are a lot of new elements in working as a start-up. Mentoring support from someone

who has experience of the areas that are new to be would be very useful - specifically support around scaling of this operation.

Part D - Financial Justification

In general terms, please explain how the winning funds would be used to carry out your project. (50 words max)

Funds will be used to support staff costs in overseeing the project, facilitating workshops with all stakeholder groups and related expenses, promotion of the activities through different media streams, development of training materials at home and school, launch/celebration event with all stakeholders at the end of the project.

Part E - Supporting Information

Governing Documents: Where relevant, please upload any recent charity accounts and governing documents as attachments.

- [13442090_newinc_2021-06-07.pdf](#)

Team: We would like to learn a little more about the individual or team invested into the project. What are your individual credentials? Is there a story behind how you or your team all came together to support the project? (75 words max)

I have been using a wheelchair for 16 years following a motorbike accident and teaching wheelchair skills for 14 years. I have been able to achieve so many things in my time using a wheelchair, both personally and professionally and I place a large part of that success on having wheelchair skills as a foundation to build on. I also have almost 10 years working in programme management working for disability charities.

YouTube Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU2ZclJqgn0>

Additional References: You are welcome to provide a list of up to 5 links with any relevant supporting material or visuals, as further reference

<https://www.wheelchairskills.org/blog/representation-matters>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61bbc912be06782a56d96eb9/t/6294858bd2e89b155a5474a5/1653900687652/forwardsummer2022.png>

Page 14 - https://issuu.com/disabledliving/docs/kidz_to_adultz_magazine_issue_17?fr=sZilhNjEzMzcz

Page 27 - [https://edition.pagesuite-](https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=c10d5c89-dd49-409d-99ef-b01d5e38a384)

[professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=c10d5c89-dd49-409d-99ef-b01d5e38a384](https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=c10d5c89-dd49-409d-99ef-b01d5e38a384)

<https://senmagazine.co.uk/sen-online/sen118/#p=63>