

## Crossbody Bag Sewing Workshop - Case Study

### Background:

This group of women first came together during one of our Multiply Beginner's Machine Sewing courses. They got on really well together, forming close and supportive friendships and went on to attend one of our intermediate level sewing courses too.

Their love of learning, sewing and being together then brought them back to us, and they expressed an interest in finding out how they might be able to apply for their own funding for further sewing courses. We explained about the limited amount of funding streams available and that they would need to consider becoming a consolidated group in order to improve their eligibility to apply for funding. We then spoke with Bridget from Third Sector Leaders (TSL) who offered to come and speak to the group, to explain how a consolidated group would be organised and run and also to grant the group a pot of funding from the Well Connected Grant, allowing them to develop their sewing skills and further their learning, whilst also giving them the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on becoming an official group.

### What We Did:

We looked to support the group by running a 5-week short course where each participant would create their own crossbody bag. This not only introduced the group to some new skills, but also allowed them to embed and develop the skills they had touched upon during previous sewing courses. A bag is a useful item, and also something which individuals expressed an interest in being able to make for others – potentially even with the prospect of setting up a small business selling hand-sewn items.

We used the Well Connected funding to deliver 5 lots of 4-hour sessions, each with a short break in the middle for a light lunch. By timing the sessions to start at 10am, we reduced the stress of earlier morning starts for the group, and the provision of lunch also acted as a way to reduce external stressors.

Each participant made their own unique crossbody bag with individual differences, such as a secret zipped compartment, to best suit their needs.

### Participant Feedback:

*"We are so grateful for this extra opportunity. Sometimes you feel like you're just invisible in society, but this has made us feel really valued. So thank you!" – VM*

*"My confidence has come on in leaps and bounds since I started learning to sew with Dawn. I can't believe how nervous I was when I first started. I'm like a different person." - CB*

*"Coming to this group has really helped me. I've made new friends, tried new things, and even been brave enough to help other people without feeling silly!" – J*

*"We are going to all get together after the summer to have a good think and talk about what we should do next. We are a bit nervous at the thought of being our "own" group, but Bridget from TSL definitely helped to explain it to us in a straight forward way. We'll let you know how it goes." - LR*

We would like to extend our thanks from everyone at Support to Recovery: from staff, to volunteers, to course participants – we are hugely appreciative of the ongoing support and encouragement from everyone at TSL.

