



## Things As They Are – Letter of Support

Now in our ninth year, we have been using a model of education to create a community of learners consisting of local adults who have lived experience of mental health problems and university students. All of our 18 courses are run on the campus of York St John University and are taught by experienced tutors and York St John University students. Our success in promoting recovery through education has not only seen us become an award winning project (Times Higher Education, York Cultural Award, Health Service Journal), but supported and funded by the NHS.

Our ground-breaking and innovative approach has seen us leading research in the areas of Mental Health, Arts and Education and over the past year interest has come from other health and education providers, resulting in the Converge model being adopted in Newcastle and Leeds. This is an extremely exciting and important time of growth for our project. As our work moves to other institutions and throughout the city of York we have an acute focus on the journey we are carving for people to utilise; not only for the progression of students once they leave Converge courses, but also how we can open up the potential of our approach to younger artists and students. This is the reason for Converge supporting Things As They Are.

To support the development and delivery of Things As They Are, we will provide the input from one of our Support and Progression Workers and Theatre Tutors (the equivalent of 1 day a month initially), this will lend the support of Converge's infrastructure to Things As They are as well as practical support with facilitation and events management, publicity and it's dissemination. Our pool of tutors, artists, university students and volunteers will also be made available for the delivery of Things As They Are, as well as providing funding to cover the engagement of some of these individuals – for example, Converge funded the artist used to create the film from the initial festival.

This area of work is something we have been extremely keen to do for some time now, but have never had the capacity in which to do so – Things As They Are provides us with this. 2018 will mark our 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary and at our celebratory conference on June 18<sup>th</sup> 2018 we aim to present the achievements of Things As They Are, the benefits made to students and to the project as a whole and for our plan of how we will work in the future.

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