



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release

### **Sam Allardyce to formally open Social Inclusion Service in Blackburn!**

Creative Support's Social Inclusion Service for people with mental health needs in Blackburn will be formally opened by Sam Allardyce, Manager of Blackburn Rovers, on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January. The launch event will run from 1pm to 4 pm and will include an exhibition of service user artworks and profiles put together by some of the service users showing what the service means to them.

Thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of all involved, the first six months of this innovative service funded by Blackburn with Darwen Council has already proved a great success. The service offers a range of service user led activities and special interest groups, including computer classes, day trips, a healthy lifestyle group, football group, fishing group and an art group, as well as providing personalised support as needed by our service users:

"This is a relatively new service and one which I access myself once or twice each week. Its ethos and delivery is refreshing; the staff are all well qualified and skilled, they are approachable, sensitive and are committed to enabling people who suffer from mental distress to recover in a way that is meaningful to the person and achieved at an appropriate pace.

As service users, we feel that Creative Support's staff are very good at recognising that we, both individually and collectively, had much skill and experience in living valued lives prior to illness and that these attributes are still part of us today - albeit a little smaller in focus. This recognition is much appreciated and in practice staff are keen to "learn" skills from us service users and vice-versa. This means that we feel able to work much more in partnership with staff and this has dramatically helped people on the road to recovery."

Maureen, Service User

The service users and staff of the Social Inclusion Service are excited by the participation of Blackburn Rovers' Sam Allardyce, an adopted local hero, and further motivated by his show of support for this important service.