



# Artist Advocate toolkit



Figment Arts developed a mentoring programme, supporting learning disabled artists to work with non-disabled artists to develop new skills, develop their creative practice and work on their independence and confidence as artists.

This toolkit is a practical guide based on our experience on the Level Up project. It has been developed by Figment Arts staff, learning disabled artists and non-disabled artists who worked on the project.



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# Role of the Artist Advocate

Learning disabled artists need support. The level and type of support will vary according to the individual. Here are some key points that you might want to think about if you are developing this role.



This toolkit starts with a description of the role of the Artist Advocate.

In our project, it worked like this:

The Artist Advocate is the person who provides support for the learning disabled artist.

The Mentor is offering specific advice and development for the learning disabled artist.

# Artist Advocates:

The Artist advocate is helping the learning disabled artist with their development, and so they should be someone who has a knowledge of and has been working in the visual arts.

- Work with the artist on developing an artists plan
- Encourage artist to be independent
- Think about the artists long term aims
- Make suggestions and give different options to help artist make decisions
- Provide support (make list of areas of support, eg to attend meetings and events and what is involved)
- Work on a plan with artists on what they would like to achieve from sessions
- Make documents into easy read with visuals
- Act as sounding board
- Keep the artist focused
- Work with the artist on prioritising
- Give feedback on writing and talking about work
- Act as link between artist and mentor
- Suggest links and other resources for the artist to look at
- Suggest opportunities for the artist to apply to
- Support the artist in making applications

## Example of an artists plan:

Things to work on	Artist and Details	Who is involved	When and number of sessions	Date Completed
Photography 	<b>Simon Roberts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and technical skills</li> <li>• Learn different camera functions <u>eg</u> shutter speeds, metering and exposure.</li> </ul>	SR SW CS DP	February and March 2019	

## Example of easy-read:

	<b>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March</b>  <b>Meet at ArtStudio01 at 10am – work in the studio</b>  <b>Independent</b>
	<b>12 midday - Lunch</b>
	<b>1pm – go to Tanya's Studio.</b> <b>Using <u>load Pro</u></b>  <b>Independent</b>
	<b>4.30pm – meet up to plan the Level Up Group</b>  
	<b>6pm – Dinner (early night)</b>

# Setting up mentoring sessions

Artist Advocate and learning disabled artist:

- Work on ground rules document before starting sessions
- Work on a plan of what you would like to achieve from sessions
- At first session establish a workflow system which the artist and mentor can use during sessions and for assignments, for example setting up new folders for storing images on the laptop
- How often will sessions will happen and timing of sessions
- Meet artist mentor in advance at the venue that mentoring sessions will be taking place
- Discuss how artist likes to work and let artists mentor know
- Artist to send mentor images of work that inspire them and why in advance to discuss at first meeting
- Establish how would like to keep in touch with mentor
- Artists Advocate to allow time to meet with artists between sessions to provide support if required and go through plan for next mentoring session

Example of ideas and inspirations collected by the learning disabled artist before the mentoring:



#### Photojournalism

Photojournalism moves beyond communicating a news story to evoke emotion and action in the viewer. The photojournalism format combines narrative with a sense of pace or urgency. Photojournalism differs from purely documentary, street or celebrity photography by its compelling emotional effect on the viewer.



# Mentor and artists advocate:

- Confirm ground rules
- Hours and plan of session to be agreed.
- Mentor to let artist and advocate know what need to bring to each session and whether working inside or outside
- Mentor to send assignment 4 days in advance of session to artist advocate, this allows time for artists advocate to put into a document with visuals and for advocate to discuss with artist before mentor session.
- Artists with learning disabilities often need extra time to process information, this should be factored in to planning of each session.
- Allow time in sessions for artist to write notes
- Establish how you would like to keep in touch with artist
- Mentor should be aware of not overwhelming the artist with too much content in each session

Keep it simple!

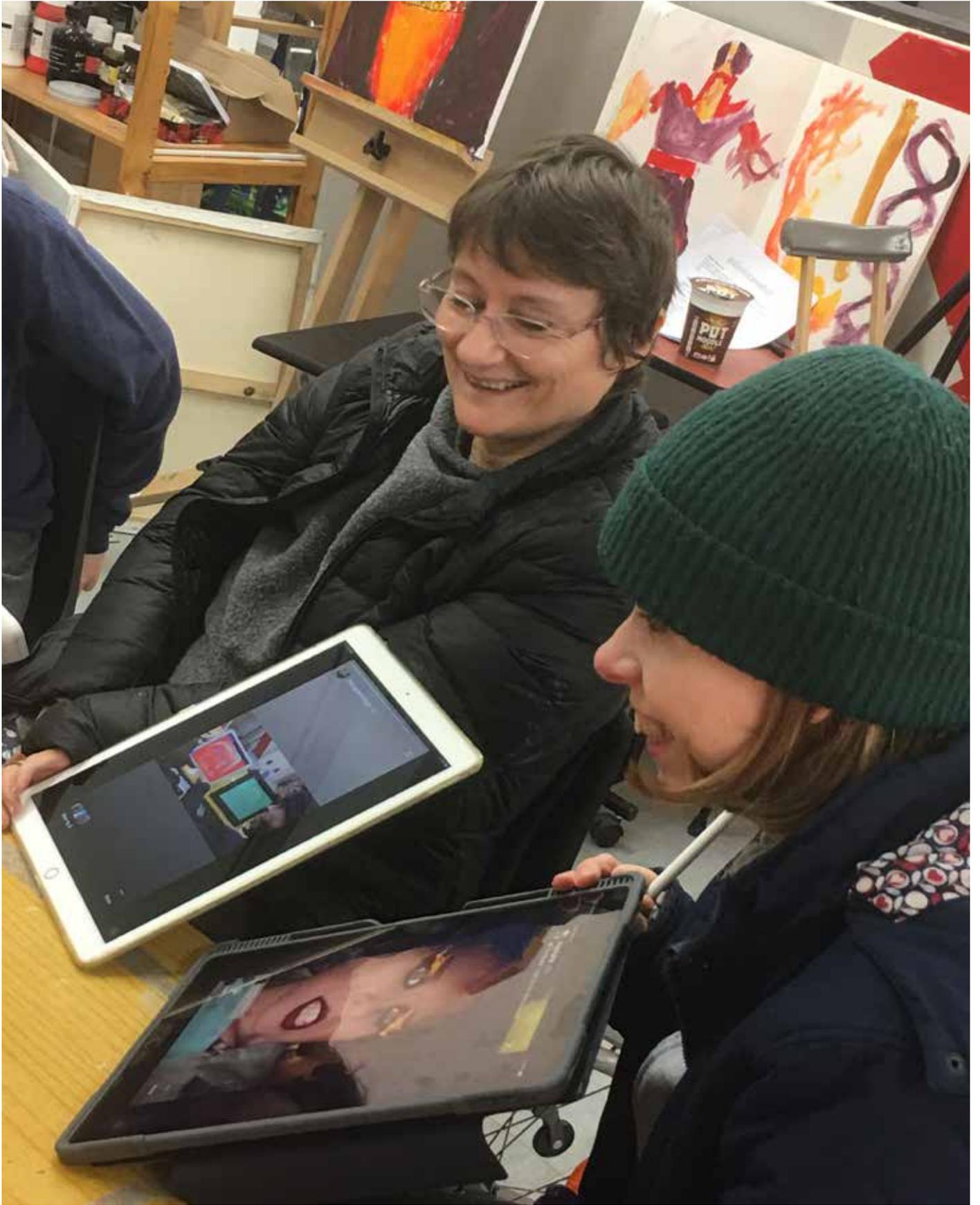
Build the relationship - take time



# During mentoring sessions

## Artist:

- Recap on last session with mentor
- Ask mentor questions
- Artist and mentor to work on a checklist which can be used for assignments and when sessions have finished.
- Let mentor know when want to have breaks
- Allow time at end of session recap what learnt with mentor and go through notes with mentor which artist has taken during the session.
- Feedback after each session to artists advocate.
- Establish how you would like to keep in touch with mentor



## Artist Advocate:

- Artists advocate to discuss plan for day with artist and mentor at start of session
- Feed in and make suggestions to artist and mentor when appropriate which helps to support artist
- Take notes during session.
- Artist advocate to capture feedback after each session
- Allow time after each session for artist and advocate to have a feedback if artists would like to

# Example of feedback collection:

Part 4 - evaluation will be completed by Sarah and the Artist mentor. This will inform the next session planning.

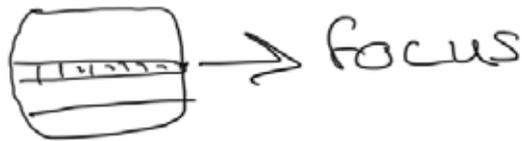
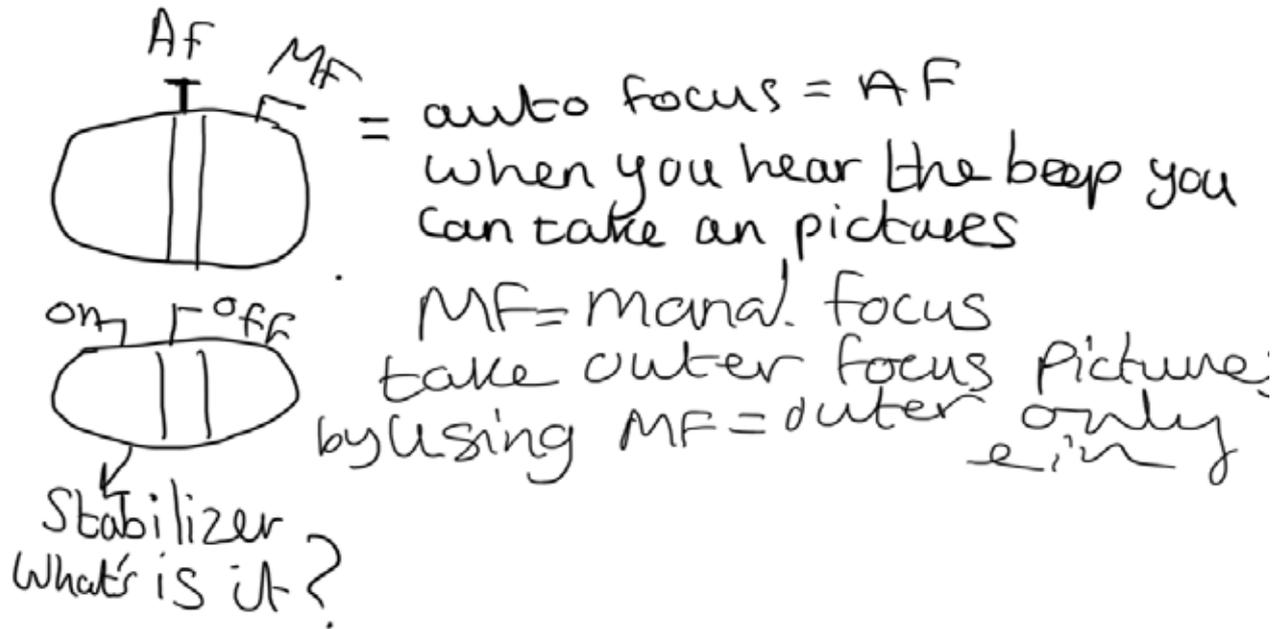
Evaluation and feedback - Sarah to complete after each session	
What have I learnt and new ideas?	how to use AF AF e MF to shoot closer giving time on notes
What worked well?	Very showing e let me doing put notes
What did not work so well?	<del>the</del> I hoped will remember all the info catch up, might be nice visual photo's
What would I like to follow up on?	3 photo's shot setting camera
Are there any links and artists to look at before and after each session?	

check light  
on notes  
step by step

# Mentor:

- To be aware that artists with learning disabilities often need extra time to process information.
- Artist mentor needs to be flexible regarding the amount of planned content covered at each session with the artist
- Understanding that not all planned topics may be covered or discussed during some of the sessions.
- Recap on last session and give feedback
- Ask the artist questions
- Allow breaks
- Allow time for artist to take notes
- Set an assignment for next session
- Work with artist to write a checklist which can be used on assignments and after sessions have finished.
- Allow time for reflection and feedback after each session
- Fill in feedback forms

Example of learning disabled artist notes:



Plug media (card) - select Photo's app.

select import button - select phot or import all = press import keep once finished with you can delete or easy term. ask keep on.

- \* Photoshop is good for creative
  - \* lightroom is for processor & better & easy to use Photo's app
- Photo's in Photo's = import photo's in - lightroom app.
- \* Next up get's lightroom
- ... an island ex island.

# After mentoring sessions

Artist:

Work on topics covered in the session

Artists Advocate:

Maintain link between artist and mentor

Mentor:

Set assignment for artist to work on, or suggest some follow-up activity

Example of mentor set assignment:

Photography mentor sessions with Simon Roberts

Assignment to be completed for 15th January 2019

<b>Create two or three portraits and self portraits</b>	
	<p><b>Use your canon camera</b></p>
	<p><b>Make a series of Pop Art inspired portraits</b></p> <p><b>Create multi works around same themes, topic or subject matter</b></p> <p><b>These could be based on</b> <b>Colour and texture</b> <b>Political</b> <b>Positivity and joy</b> <b>Pop Art</b></p>



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