

Uppertunity



Annual Report
May 2017 - May 2018

The Chair's Report

"Dream big, work hard, stay focused, and surround yourself with positive people"

This sums up the attitude of Uppertunity since it all began, especially in the last 12 months. So many positives have happened in the past, all due to the team of Uppertunity, and the support and encouragement of others.

Uppertunity moved its own premises, introduced new groups, offered new meaningful volunteer opportunities for our members and launched our exciting personal development program, Daring for Development.

Seeing our members grow and develop has been a gift in itself, and it spurs the team on more to continue to encourage and support.

So much has happened in the past year, and this report will hopefully be able to portray this to you.

We hope the next year brings just as much adventure and enthusiasm.

Danielle Gaffney du Plooy
Manager



Our History

Uppertunity came to be from its two founders belief that there were not enough opportunities for vulnerable individuals to develop and become part of their community. Uppertunity was formed on the 15th of September of 2015. In October 2015, the first therapeutic art group was set up, Scribbles!

Numbers increased steadily, and different groups were planned to see where things would lead. That's when Doodles was born! In June 2016, Doodles, our advanced therapeutic art group, started.

We held our first social event, an Oor Burns Lunch, in January 2016! It was set up to bring the community together and celebrate the hard work of the members. This led to more community events such as Craft Fairs and social get together's.

In February 2017, Uppertunity started to offer a tailor made therapeutic creative group, Squiggle Away! Then came monthly workshops such as Spray Painting, 3D printing and Photography & Photo Editing.

In March 2017, we took up a garden plot at the Tay View Community Garden, the start of meaningful volunteering for our members.

Uppertunity continued to listen to the members and responded! A new group was offered in April 2017, Totally Stitched, a social and creative textiles group.

A Milestone for Uppertunity took place on the 19th of June 2017...Uppertunity's own premises! Moving into The Circle gave us the space to take another big step... introducing the Capacity Building Program in July, better known as Daring for Development.

Since moving into The Circle, literally more doors opened and meaningful volunteer opportunities followed including Cooking for Change and Sewing for Change. New groups have been set up, and partnerships have been built.



Mission and Vision



Uppertunity is a Community Interest Company, providing a personal development programme and inclusive social opportunities for adults with additional support needs.

We provide activities and opportunities for individuals to better themselves and their lives, leading to long term self-reliance. We do this by offering weekly social and creative groups, our Daring For Development program and meaningful volunteer opportunities.

We believe that everyone has strengths and unique qualities that can positively influence their world. However, sometimes it can be difficult to know how to start.

We are here to empower people to move forward with confidence.

We have created a safe and nurturing environment, where individuals feel comfortable to test themselves and explore their talent and capabilities.

We are person centred, placing an emphasis on mutual respect and trust. Our members are a part Uppertunity and not merely a recipient of a service.

We challenge our members, advocating progress not perfection, encouraging individuals to make mistakes and to learn from them, and always give something a go.

Achievements:

Weekly Community Groups

Since starting with one group in 2015, Uppertunity now offers over 7 weekly groups. These include therapeutic art groups, walking football, creative jewellery making, learning Maths, Science and English through games, and social textile groups.

These groups are not just groups, they have an ethos. Our members learn new skills, develop their talents, socialise and learn how to develop relationships, and build their confidence. Members also learn about taking ownership, responsibility and respect. This is done by members agreeing to be part of Uppertunity's ethos which includes treating everyone with respect and having a positive attitude, as well as helping manage the groups. Recycling & upcycling also forms part of our ethos.

Alongside these groups, we offer meaningful volunteer opportunities to our members. The power of volunteering is immeasurable. It develops confidence, reduces isolation, creates community involvement, leads onto other roles and jobs, and much more.

Uppertunity aims to develop the community in every way possible and includes our members in this development. This is done through the various volunteering opportunities we offer. Each role not only helps our volunteers, but helps reduce isolation for the individuals we are helping, helps improve mental health for individuals involved and brings the community together.

Uppertunity now offers 4 different volunteer opportunities for our members:

- Shrubbers and Plotters garden volunteering, where members can also partake in the Grow and Learn award. Food grown from the gardens are used in the cooking groups and cooking volunteering, as well as donated to Dundee Food Bank. The gardens also aids visually, uplifting the moods of onlookers. Volunteers also partake in the Grow and Learn award.
- Creating for Charity, where members make items for other charities such as shopping bags for Dundee Food Bank, sensory cushions for PAMIS or talking puppets for Knit for Nowt
- Cooking for Change, where members make a meal for an isolated adult and make a social visit
- Dial-Op, a local telephone service to assist isolated adults, where our members who volunteer are the empathetic ear

The groups have become so popular, all now have waiting lists. Uppertunity has over 35 members attending the weekly groups, as well as over 25 members volunteering in the various roles.



Achievements: Daring for Development

In July 2017, Uppertunity launched the first block of the Capacity Building Program. The aim of the program was to help individuals become more self-resilient, and assist them in realising their goals and aspirations, and how to achieve them. The program was expanded to 12 weeks, and included more workshops after feedback from our members. So far, 13 people completed the program, 10 staying on to volunteer with Uppertunity and 6 volunteering in outside organisations.

The program was renamed Daring For Development and includes 42 workshops, one on one support, sourcing volunteer opportunities and assisting in attending roles, assisting in finding other community and social groups outside of our own and taking part in a group bonding day at the end of the program.

This program has encouraged members to be more involved in their community, think outside of the box, and be more aware of what they can offer the world. Daring For Development has helped raise the expectations of many of the members attending the program.

Interview with A.Guardian:

With what Sally (Sally not real name) has achieved with Uppertunity, it is hard to predict how far they can go. Sally didn't have a focus and would often just be walking about. Uppertunity has given Sally a big purpose to the week. Sally looks forward to it, they are busy and learning, it is good for Sally's mental health. I would never have imagined Sally at an Allotment ever, but Danielle just has a magic touch to encourage them to do things that they would never imagine doing. Even the sewing I would never have imagined that before then there is the meal makers too. That's why it is hard to say about future hopes because Sally has come really far with Uppertunity and new things are still beginning to emerge.



Achievements:

Events

2017 has been nothing short of eventful for Uppertunity. Alongside the weekly groups and Daring for Development, we have held various events. The aim of these events is to bring the community together and integrate individuals of different backgrounds. We hope to show the community that no matter a person's ability, everyone has talent waiting to be used.

Have your say June....

We held a focus group In July 2017 to find out what individuals need or want to feel more part of their community. From the feedback, it was found that more meaningful volunteer opportunities are desired. Uppertunity responded and started Cooking for Change.



An Inspirational arts and crafts fair....

Uppertunity listened to its members and responded again after many members showing an interest of being mini entrepreneurs. We assisted our members in turning their artistic talents into money making sellers by hosting our first craft fair in September 2017.

An inspirational Christmas craft fair...

The first craft fair went so well, another one was requested. Uppertunity regularly assists our members with their entrepreneur skills and how they can develop themselves further. Some members have taken their skills further and are selling their artistic creations online.

Oor Burns Celebration...

We held a Burns Lunch to celebrate the hard work of our members who completed the Daring for Development program. The event was open to the public and had over 60 people attending. This will have been the second Burns Lunch held, and it seems it will be a tradition.

Two's Company...

Many members said they find it difficult meeting new friends or romantic partners. We listened again and held a social event in February where individuals with additional needs could meet like-minded people in a safe and fun way. The night was very successful, and many numbers were exchanged.

An inspirational spring craft fair...

The first two craft fairs were so successful, we just had to have another one in March. Our craft fairs are open to any individual with barriers, offering a safe space to show off their talent. The fairs are not about becoming millionaires, but creating confidence and bringing the community together.

What our members say!

What do you think about Uppertunity?

"I feel more at home here than in my house, the people have made me welcome and I feel at peace"

"I love the walking football group! And making new friends!"

"I love Doodles, and always learning something new"

"I enjoy all the groups, and getting to try new things. I also like meeting new people"

I feel more comfortable, I can be myself, I feel respected and happy"

"I enjoy the company and learning new skills, I always have a good laugh. I love the events as well"

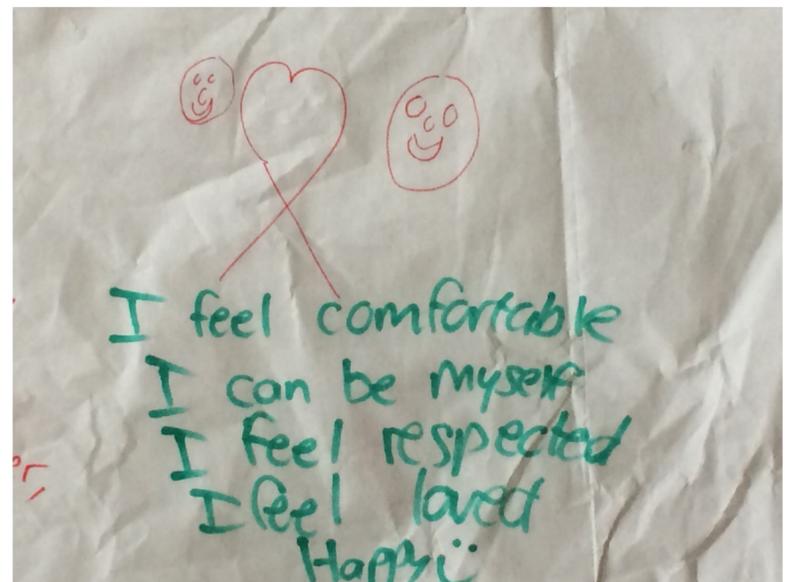
"I like that I am part of the group and get to help with the activities, and I like that everyone chats to everyone"

" I like the company and it's an easy going group"

"I enjoy the activities and being able to come in and be myself. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, and there is always support when needed"

"I like all the different activities, I'm never bored. I'm learning new skills and have fun. I never used a sewing machine before, and now I use it on my own"

"I can let go of myself, my inner feelings come out. I like that there's no deadlines, and that I can take my time. Also, the members of the group are nice. Coming here means freedom for me. I feel very comfortable here, and I have support"



What new things have you done since doing the Daring for Development program?

"Volunteering"

"Travelling on my own"

"Night away, it was the first time I was responsible for myself"

"I tried something I wasn't comfortable with then decided it wasn't for me"

"I am taking more responsibility in looking after my flat. Coming to the programme, I feel happy and more confident"

"Responsibility, I make sure I am respectful"

"I keep myself busy and my flat and myself tidy"

The Team

Uppertunity is made up of passionate people who believe that we are all as happy as we make our minds up to be and that change begins with self.

The team running Uppertunity is made up of directors, paid staff and volunteers. Uppertunity's ethos goes further than helping develop the members, we aim to give a helping hand to other individuals who face barriers in finding work or volunteer roles.

At Uppertunity, we aim to create a supportive and caring atmosphere, where all staff and members feel welcomed, appreciated and respected.



Working in Partnership

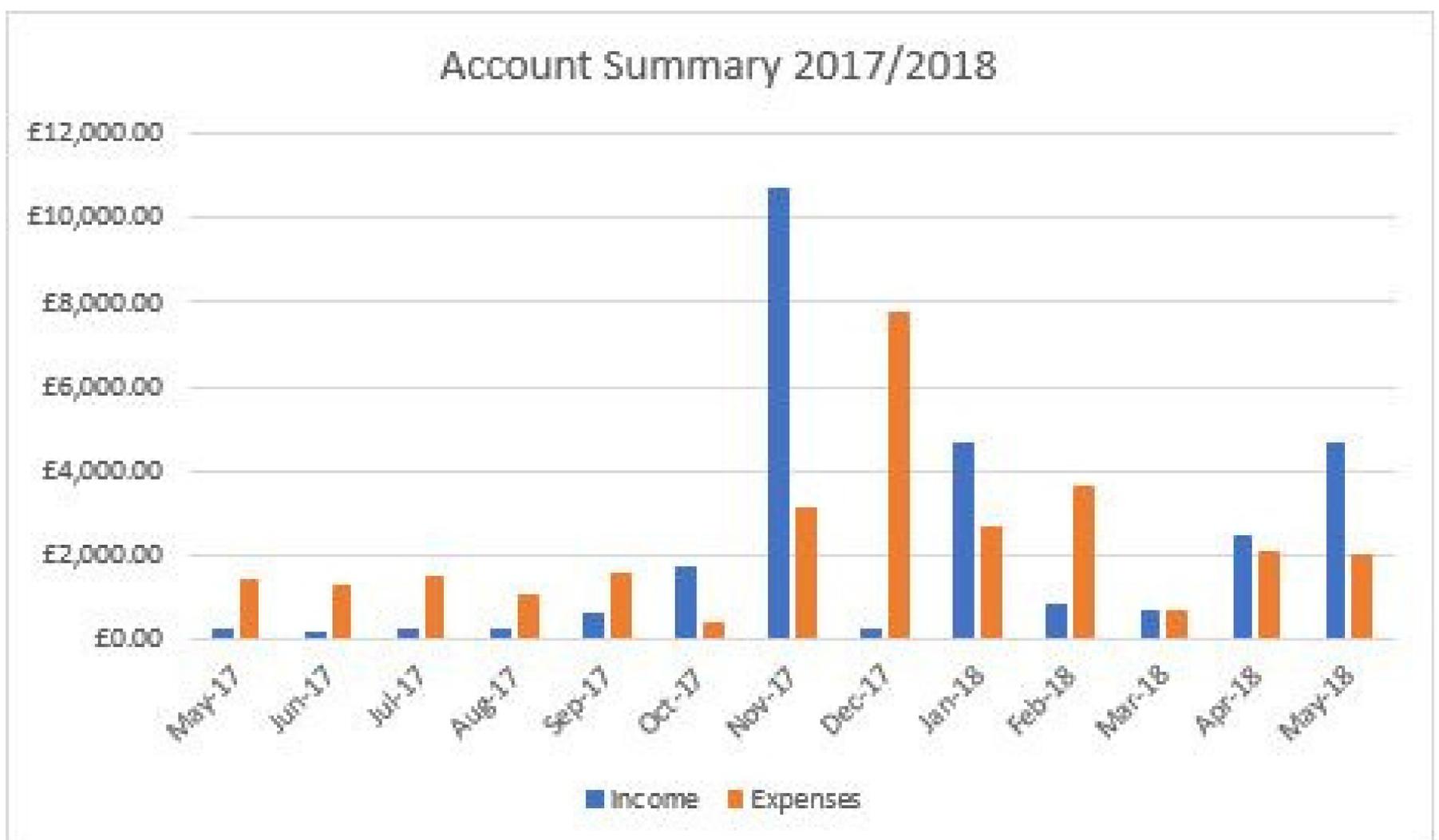
Funds and resources are limited we believe that to be innovative during these times it is vital for people to be in dialogue to enable organisations to work and develop together. Uppertunity strongly believes in partnership working, and continues to be open to work with like-minded groups.

In the last 12 months we have worked with PAMIS and Dundee Foodbank to create charity items, we work alongside Scottish Autism and Dundee & Angus College to deliver outreach versions of our community programmes, and lastly, we work with the befriending projects of Foodtrain, Dial-Op and Meal Makers, as well as Project Scotland and Abertay and Dundee Universities assisting with placements.

Financial Breakdown

Uppertunity's income comes from:

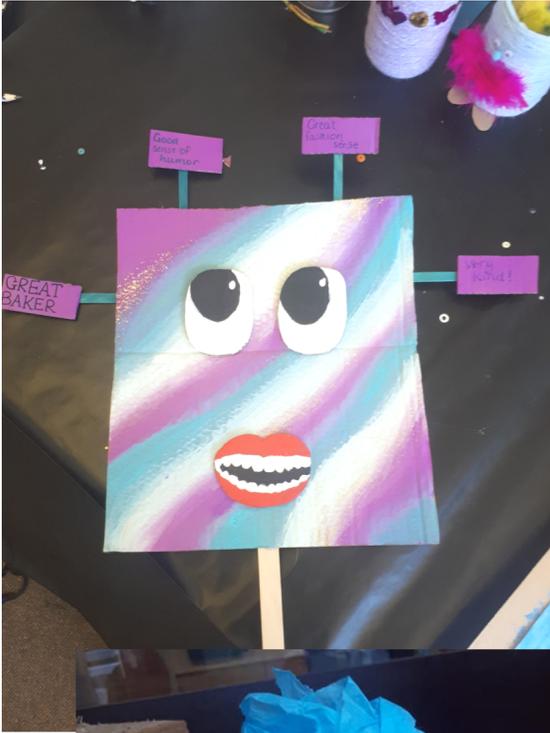
- Donations
- Weekly payments for groups and programs
- Funders



Thanks to our funders:

- Unltd
- Awards For All
- Al Maktoum College Foundation Scotland
- Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership
- Action Earth
- Dundee Futures Fund

Some showing off



Closing Note

2017 was an exciting year, and 2018 has been even more exciting and we're not even half way through! We have a bake off coming up, more craft fairs, another Two's Company and much more!

We would like to say thank you to everyone who has supported us on our journey and continue to do so, a big thank you to our amazing team who give so much, and a huge thank you to our funders who believed in us. Without any of you, Uppertunity would not be here today.

Uppertunity always has our members at the heart of our decisions and activities, and we will continue to do so. We are always listening to the needs of our members and team, and adapt to suit.

For our future, we aim to have regular events, more engaging weekly groups, four Daring for Development programs a year, and further developing programs such as mini entrepreneur program.

As we are continually growing and numbers are ever increasing, we always need helping hands. Please get in touch if you would like to be part of our journey.

Keep dreaming, keep achieving, and keep smiling! No matter your ability or background, if you set your mind to something, you can achieve it.



uppertunity.org.uk
Facebook: Uppertunity
07544984289
danielledp@uppertunity.co.uk