



*Pictured left:*  
Momentum service users,  
Colin Stevenson (*left*) and  
Sandy Thompson doing  
research in the library.

## WHO SAYS LEARNING CAN'T BE FUN?

**A** **INNOVATIVE PROJECT** is making learning fun for people who attend Work Matters, Momentum's mental health service based at the Charleston Centre in Paisley, Glasgow.

The social research project is offered as part of the programme and is designed to enhance people's skills in using IT in an interesting way.

The programme is for people aged 16-64 years, who are registered as unemployed and who have a diagnosed mental health condition or history.

The social research group gathers once a week, with participants introduced to a cultural history subject relating to the community that they live in. The subject is researched by the group of service users which can include them going on a field visit and holding meetings with various people including those who work in museums, libraries, Councils and higher education institutions. The group then presents

their findings in the form of a display. Recently, these displays have been exhibited in public places such as the Paisley Town Hall, museums and on roadshows.

John McMahon, Work Matters Manager, says, "The idea came from giving people who were undertaking an IT course at Work Matters some light relief. I was aware that sitting at a PC all day could be boring, therefore, I decided to use my background in community arts to look at ways of getting people away from the PC while still having to use the learned skills of IT."

The most recent project undertaken by the service users involved them working in partnership with several Councils to develop and produce an interactive display illustrating the Paisley Canal. The service users produced a full report on the canal which included artwork, narration, stories and music to support an animation. The display has been exhibited at a number of locations including Paisley Museum and Scotland Street School Museum.

John continues, "The social research projects contribute to increased confidence and self-worth in the people who use our services. No matter what age or barriers people face, social research can work with anyone. Undertaking the projects also enhances people's communication skills, team-building skills and encourages them to develop relationships and to consider other people's views." ■

### Who to contact

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