

# Play it!

## Playwriting as a means to provide ESOL training for people who experience homelessness

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### Background

Participating in the arts can inspire, motivate and challenge us, increase our confidence, self-esteem and skills and provide opportunities for future training and employment (Homeless Link, 2014).



### What was the need?

Our service at Olallo house delivers support to men and women who have no recourse to public funds and are street homeless. Inspired by the need to offer the people we support with innovative services, and the opportunity that the arts present, SJOG collaborated with the Lot Production to pilot Play it! – A scheme providing accessible pathways to playwriting and drama.



### What did we do?

A pilot workshop with 10 residents of Olallo was held. The session followed an approach of start it, say it, shape it, set it and was led by an actor/writer.

We found that each person engaged fully even if a little nervous and confidence improved. Confidence not only in writing and communicating but also in presenting themselves and having a go.

It also proved a great leveler. As our colleagues sat in and participated in the sessions everyone was a novice. This had the effect of developing relationships across the group and fostering a sense of fun.



### What next?

We've tweaked delivery following the pilot acknowledging

- Inter-group communication: residents are diverse in first-languages spoken which leads to social isolation
- Participant-led boundaries: residents have varied backgrounds and requirements including access needs
- Variation of personal goals: residents attended the pilot for multiple reasons, all of which are worthy of addressing

### Outcomes

- Increases social inclusion
- Improves mental health/wellbeing
- Develops work skills
- Challenges prejudices

