

Following Patient 36

The story so far



A DIY Theatre
Sharing Event





Who we are and what we do



DIY is an established Learning Disability Theatre Company based in Salford. We are member-led and most of our Board members are disabled people. We have been creating accessible and thought-provoking theatre and creative projects since 1994.

DIY's vision is a world where performers, theatre-makers and arts leaders with learning disabilities, are valued as part of the rich diversity of our cultural sector and our society.

We aim to:

- ★ **Challenge** preconceptions and barriers through high quality performance, education projects and research.
- ★ **Celebrate** diversity and creativity in all areas of our work.
- ★ **Promote** the achievements of performers and theatre-makers with learning disabilities and share good practice.

We offer:

- ★ Original performances which tour schools, colleges and theatres.
- ★ Drama projects with schools, colleges and youth organisations, including accredited Arts Award projects at Discover, Explore, Bronze and Silver levels.
- ★ Regular creative workshops and courses for adults with learning disabilities.
- ★ Training for Arts Award advisers, universities and practitioners.
- ★ Bespoke consultancy and training.



Following Patient 36 the story so far...

We still have a long way to go in creating our **Following Patient 36** Story but would like to share our research and development so far and get some feedback from you about what you think works and what we could do better...

The idea

In 2018, as part of The Lowry's Week 53 events, DIY members performed in Madhouse Re:Exit – a show developed by Access all Areas Theatre Company. DIY actors played **Patient 36**, a character who guided audiences around the fictional Paradise Fields institution in a show which took a critical and challenging look at Learning Disability History.

DIY members wanted to learn more about Learning Disability History. That was how the idea for our **Following Patient 36** Project was born.

Sharing the story so far...

Sharing Following Patient 36 with you

At the end of our year-long Research and Development Project, for **Following Patient 36**, we want to share what we have found out about Learning Disability History and the resilience of people with learning disabilities. It's been a really challenging project and some of the things we have been exploring have been difficult to talk about and make work about.

Having spent time developing creative ways to perform this work, we believe we have the foundation of a strong and memorable show which will share what we have found out. This sharing event is an opportunity to get feedback on the work we have done so far.



Following Patient 36 is a creative project - a story in words and images, based on what we've been finding out. It is a work of fiction, based on our research, not a documentary and is not directly related to the personal experiences of any individual.

Sharing our history

It is astonishing that so much change has happened within living memory in the ways in which people with learning disabilities have been seen and treated in our society. We need to talk about this history now, because it's only by knowing our past that we can understand our present and hopefully move forward to a better future for people with learning disabilities and for society as a whole.

Become part of this project - share your stories with us

We have learnt a lot and we know that there is much more of this really important hidden history still to tell. For the next stage of **Following Patient 36** we really want to hear from people about their experiences of Care in the Community in Salford.

If you have stories or experiences to share please get in touch.

Research

We have been looking at websites and finding pictures and personal stories of learning disabled people who were kept in institutions.

DIY members held interviews with local people who have experiences of Care in the Community in Salford. Company members agreed the questions beforehand and then took turns to ask people questions about their experiences.

People who lived in big institutions can find it very hard to talk about distressing past experiences. We soon realised that it is sometimes what is not said, when there is silence, that is as important as what is said.

These interviews were recorded and we intend to include some in the show.

You will be able to hear sections of the recordings at the sharing event.



Dormitory 1971 courtesy Gill Cott



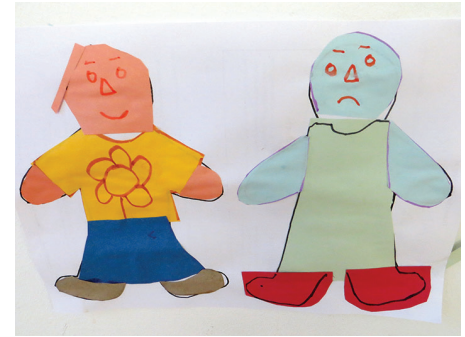
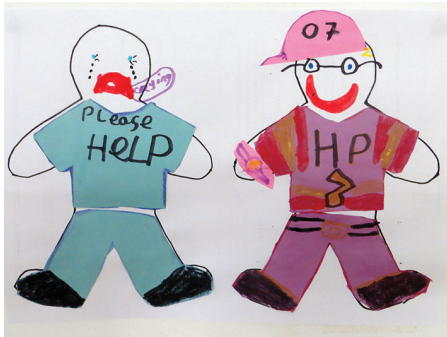
Side Room courtesy
Pathways Associates CIC

The Lancashire Learning Disability Institutions website has been very useful and Pathways Associates CIC have given us permission to use some of the photographs from their website.



Freedom & Control

In the spring of 2019 we did some movement sessions with Susan Guest, which helped us think about 'freedom' and 'control'. This has helped us to use physical theatre to explore these ideas further. So far, we've been concentrating on inside the institution. We think it's important to explore some of what it feels like to be in an institution, in order to start to understand what it feels like to come out of an institution.



Choice & Identity

We have been working with designer Nerissa Cargill Thompson to design our costumes for the show. We drew images of the colours and fabrics people might wear inside and outside the institution, based on our research.

This brought us to thinking a lot about choice and identity.

We found out that inside the institution people had no clothes of their own. Everyone had to share everything, including clothes. Nowadays we have the choice to choose our own clothes – we all like different styles and colours and we all like doing different things.

We have chosen our own logos for the T-shirts the characters in the performance will wear when they leave the institution. This will demonstrate how people with learning disabilities did, and do, make choices and create their own identities.

Creative Writing

DIY has been writing about what we have found out and how this has made us feel. One of our members in particular, Sharron, has been inspired to do a lot of writing about Learning Disability History. We have recorded some of our writing so that it can form part of the soundtrack to the performance.



Film Making

We have been working with film-maker Hilary Easter-Jones to create film sections for the show. Although we've worked with Hilary for many years, we have never worked with her on a performance piece, so one of the creative opportunities and also challenges of this project has been finding ways of integrating film and live drama.

This is something we're still exploring and would love to have your feedback on.

Because some of the Learning Disability History is so difficult to think about or present, we have been experimenting with using shadows as a way of dealing with some of the most distressing aspects of institutional life.

Hilary has also worked with us to make a film about the process of the project to date. This will be shown at the sharing event. We hope it gives a good flavour of what we've been doing so far.



Following Patient 36 Performers



David Austin



Amy Carter



Sharron Casey



Angela Chadwick



Joan Lavin



Charlotte Little



Robert Noble

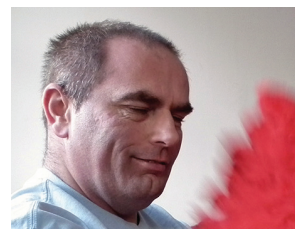


Martin Riley

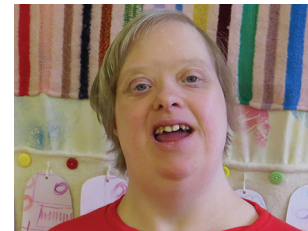
Thank you for
joining DIY to share
what we have found
out about Learning
Disability History.



Cathy Rothwell



Paul Traynor



Anna Ward



During this project DIY have been working with:

- ★ Sue Caudle (Artistic Director)
- ★ Mary O'Neill (DIY Supporter)
- ★ Hilary Easter-Jones (film-maker)
- ★ Richard Easter (soundtrack)
- ★ Nerissa Cargill Thompson (designer)
- ★ Ian Dean (technical support)
- ★ Susan Guest (movement)
- ★ Sarah Atter (song-writing and musician)

Photograph Acknowledgements:

Images of Brockhall and Calderstones Institutions courtesy:

- ★ Brenda Kay, Duncan Mitchell, David Whalley, Gill Cott, Lancashire County Council Museums Service, Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, Pathways Associates CIC.

Image of Prestwich Mental Hospital

- ★ Martin Parr (www.martinparr.com)
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Thanks to:

- ★ Niki Woods and New Adelphi Theatre – for use of venue & technical support during our residency to develop the show. (www.newadelphitheatre.co.uk)
- ★ ECHO - Eccles Community Hall Organisation. (www.ecclestownhall.org)
- ★ Nigel Ingham and Pathways Associates CIC – for support with research & use of images (www.lancslearningdisabilityinstitutions.org.uk)
- ★ Proud & Loud – for the loan of labcoats.
- ★ Jeanette and Lorraine at Lindley Travel.
- ★ Chethams School of Music (music workshops).
- ★ The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England for funding this work.

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Next steps

Over the next two years, DIY will continue to research local Learning Disability History and will be developing the show which you have seen today for a wider audience. We will also be creating a show and workshops to tour local schools.

It's not too late for you to be involved, so if you have stories or experiences to share, DIY would really like to hear from you.



★ www.diytheatre.org.uk

 DIY Theatre Company

 @diytheatre

 diytheatreco

★ 0161 212 4984

★ diytheatre@gmail.com

★ The Angel Centre
1 Saint Phillips Place
Salford M3 6FA

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andreadesigns ref: 90437

Following Patient 36 is funded by:



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
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