

6 January 2012

Lifted by a Lens

A group of aspiring photographers have been learning the tricks of the trade as they roam the streets of Huddersfield, capturing the many moods of the town, and what is important in their lives.

An exhibition of their work, **Lifted by a Lens**, will be launched on Thursday 12 January at the Media Centre Café, 7 Northumberland Street, Huddersfield HD1 1RL, from 4 to 7pm. The event is free to attend.

Supported by Connect Housing's Independent Living Team, the six photographic hopefuls have been working toward a certificate in Personal Digital Photo Processing from the National Open College Network. Every week the group gathers, either to seek out new photo opportunities and inspiration, or to learn how to use software such as Adobe Photoshop to edit their shots and prepare them for development. Tuition has been provided by Fusion Housing (formerly SHAP /Inroads); a community organisation which aims to help young people in Kirklees find their way back into learning and employment, and additional support has been provided by Sianne Thomas, a photography student at Blackpool and the Fylde College (Associate College of Lancaster University).

One of the photographers is Nancy Clegg, a Connect service user who struggles with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and depression. She became involved with the photography project at the suggestion of Rachel Dunne, her support worker. 'We were looking for something to get me out of the house,' she says. 'I was feeling a bit run-down, and needed an external focus.'

Nancy is also supported by her parents, both of whom are artistic, and she hopes that her photography will provide them with a common interest. 'It is something active and positive to engage with them that's outside of my illness.'

Connect's Independent Living Team provides support for people in a variety of situations across Kirklees, helping them to maintain their housing, manage their finances and gain the skills and confidence necessary to pursue their ambitions.

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