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BIG LOTTERY FUND NATIONAL WELL-BEING EVALUATION

Case study annex prepared by

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CONTENTS

1. Branching Out, Ecominds 4

A horticultural project which provides training to people with mental health needs and involves participants in community conservation and gardening work.

Impact: The project was found to greatly increase participants' self-esteem and self confidence which motivated them to become more active and seek other volunteering or work opportunities. The project also enabled participants to make new friends which had a positive impact on their mental well-being.

2. Cockney Sparrow, Active London 12

The project aimed to encourage social housing residents from the Peabody housing estates to become involved in wildlife conservation in their area through a particular focus upon birdlife.

Impact: Peabody residents appreciated the green space which the project provided and the opportunity to learn more about wildlife. The community events enabled residents to come together and created a sense of community spirit. The project also improved relations between different communities on the estate.

3. DIY Happiness, Well London 21

The project brought groups of women together to build a supportive community and explore ways in which the participants can develop resilient mental health and increase their wellbeing.

Impact: The project participants described gaining increased self confidence and self-esteem. The project provided opportunities to gain new skills and knowledge as well as develop new friendships with people from different cultures and backgrounds.

4. Dudley Healthy Retail, Living Well West Midlands 32

The project provided a fruit and vegetable stall outside of a primary school and family cookery classes in order to encourage pupils and parents to eat more healthily.

Impact: Parents were able to buy fruit and vegetables more easily because they were available next to the school and the cookery classes led to parents and children learning new cooking skills and thinking more about what they eat.

5. Family Cookery, Chances4Change 39

A family cookery course aimed at improving health and self-confidence, reducing social isolation and reaching families who may need additional support in other areas.

Impact: The project led to participants cooking their own healthy meals more regularly and families cooking and eating meals together at home. Friendships also developed between families and participants described feeling more confident and gaining other personal skills through taking part in the course.

6. Age UK South Lakeland, Fit as a Fiddle 45

The project involved providing a range of activities aimed at improving the wellbeing of older people across South Lakeland, including at home assessments, armchair aerobics, intergenerational activities and community events.

Impact: Participants increased their awareness of healthy eating and also increased their physical mobility. The project enabled participants to expand their social network and meet people more regularly and the intergenerational activities helped older and younger people to form friendships.

7. Food and Fitness, Well-being in the East 50

A series of workshops and courses which aimed to promote healthier eating and increased physical activity for people with learning difficulties.

Impact: People with learning difficulties reported feeling healthier after participating in the workshops and their carers, healthcare professionals and leisure centre staff felt they had a better understanding of how to help people with learning difficulties to have healthier lifestyles.

8. Batley Girls' High School, Food for Life Partnership 58

The project worked with the school and local farms and food suppliers to develop a whole school healthy food ethos and encourage pupils to eat more healthily.

Impact: Much healthier food was offered to pupils while in school and many pupils described choosing healthier food options. Pupils gained new cookery skills and learnt about how food is sourced. Visits to farms and food suppliers inspired some pupils with greater confidence and ambition to pursue a career in food.

9. Fresh 'n' Fruity, Altogether Better 69

The project trained community health activators, provided fruit and vegetable stalls and delivered events with the aim of tackling food deserts and encouraging healthy eating.

Impact: The fruit and vegetable stalls enabled people from deprived areas to easily access affordable, healthy food. The community health activators reported eating more healthily and participants gained new skills and knowledge in how to eat healthily. Other outcomes included increased self-confidence and motivation to take up volunteering or employment.

10. Get Walking Keep Walking, Travel Actively 82

The project provided a walking programme and local walking groups to encourage people to increase their level of physical activity and enjoy their local area.

Impact: Participants experienced improved physical health and fitness and described benefiting from the chance to make new friends and walk in a group. Volunteers described increased life satisfaction through helping others and participants gained increased self-confidence and self-esteem.

11. Growing East Middlesbrough, Local Food Programme 89

A community food growing project which provided training and food growing spaces to individuals and community groups.

Impact: The project enabled participants to gain new skills and a qualification in horticulture which helped some individuals to seek employment or volunteering. The creation of community growing spaces allowed people to come together and form friendships which reduced social isolation and increased self-confidence.

12. Growing Food for Life, Target Well-being 96

The project delivered a range of community engagement activities focused upon growing and cooking fresh fruit and vegetables within an urban environment.

Impact: The project resulted in more food being grown by the local community and local residents gained new skills and knowledge in horticulture. Participants made new friends and community pride increased.

13. Healthy Beginnings, North West Healthy Living Networks 102

The project delivered a wide range of activities for adult and new parents to increase healthy eating and physical activity levels.

Impact: Participants, especially pregnant women and new mothers gained greater self-confidence and a social support network. Participants' mental health improved and they gained new knowledge and skills in healthy eating, cooking and weaning.

14. Let's Get Cooking, School Food Trust 108

The project involved a school family support worker engaging families in cookery activities, including developing basic cooking, improving nutritional knowledge, and encouraging families to eat more healthily.

Impact: Families gained new skills in how to cook healthy meals and children were inspired to try different foods. The project improved family relations and relations between parents and the school and pupils and parents gained greater self-confidence.

15. MEND Fylde Coast, England on the MEND**114**

The programme involved a 10 week programme of nutrition and physical activity sessions to encourage young people to adopt healthier lifestyles and increase their mental wellbeing.

Impact: The principal outcome was that many participants succeeded in losing weight as a result of the course. This led to increased self-confidence and self-esteem and motivation to keep eating healthily and enjoying physical activity.

16. Mind in Gateshead Community Cafe, New Leaf New Life**125**

The project consisted of setting up a community cafe which was run in part by volunteers who had mental health needs.

Impact: The project generated significant personal outcomes for the volunteers working in the cafe, particularly in terms of increased self-confidence, reduced social isolation and increased motivation. The volunteers also developed skills and aspirations to seek employment opportunities.

17. Penwith Pathways to Health and Wellbeing, Well-being in the South West**133**

The project worked in collaboration with a number of key local partner organisations to deliver a wide range of activities to improve mental and physical health and well-being.

Impact: The project was successful in facilitating GPs to signpost patients to a range of activities to improve their health and well-being. Project volunteers were trained in healthy eating and reported changing their own habits as a result and many participants described feeling more energised and positive.

18. Poole Quay Foyer, Healthy Transitions**143**

The project worked with young people living in the foyer to teach basic cookery skills and how to eat healthily on a budget.

Impact: Participants reported losing weight as a result of eating more healthily and gaining self-confidence and new skills from participating in the scheme. The project also enabled residents to meet each other, socialise and develop new friendships which increased their mental well-being.

19. Roadshow, Time to Change**151**

The project involved a series of road shows at which local Mind staff and volunteers who had mental health issues talked to people passing by about mental health.

Impact: The greatest benefit was to the volunteers themselves who gained self-confidence through talking about mental health and felt less anxiety about the issue having talked to people about it. A feel good factor emerged from the road show and volunteers felt it was a very positive experience.

Case study themes

Key outcomes and success factors	Most relevant case studies
Increasing healthy eating	14, 15, 18.
Increasing physical activity	6, 7, 10.
Improved mental health	3, 13, 16.
Building self-confidence	1, 13, 11, 19.
Reducing social isolation	3, 10, 13, 16.
Teaching new skills	4, 5, 8, 12.
Providing training	1, 7, 9, 11.
Partnership-working	2, 6, 7, 17.
Holistic approach	1, 6, 8.

1 BRANCHING OUT

1.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Wellbeing Evaluation. In 2008, CLES was commissioned, alongside nef, to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Website](#).

The Branching Out project, delivered by Community Options in Bromley, Kent is part of the Ecominds Programme led by Mind and funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme.

Branching Out is a horticultural project which works with people with mental health needs to teach basic horticultural skills and improve green community spaces in the London Borough of Bromley. The project began in 2010 and has received Supporting Impact and Change funding for 2012/13. The project is now exploring ways of becoming self-financing. The horticulture classes are given at the TrEE centre in Bromley and the project works on community spaces all across the borough to carry out conservation and gardening work.

1.2 Project need

The project was set up to address five key issues:

- 1) **Enable people to improve their mental well-being** – the project's primary objective is to use horticulture as a way for people with mental health needs to improve their mental well-being. The project aims to improve participants' mental well-being by providing a supportive network, teaching new skills, spending time outdoors and enabling people to contribute to their local community.
- 2) **Enable people to improve their physical well-being** – by involving the participants in physical work in outdoor spaces, the project aims to encourage people to increase their physical activity. The project provides participants with basic gardening skills which they are encouraged to use after they have completed the course.
- 3) **Encourage people to eat more healthily** – healthy eating is considered to be part of improving mental health and independent living and so the project encourages the participants to bring a healthy packed lunch when they attend the course. Depending on the season, participants may grow vegetables and salad which they can harvest and eat at home.
- 4) **Enable people with mental health needs to gain qualifications** – the project involves all the participants completing a recognised City and Guilds qualification in Practical Horticulture. People who complete the course are encouraged to become volunteers for Community Options which offers the volunteers a range of training courses. The qualifications and experience gained through the project should help participants to secure paid employment in the future.
- 5) **Diminish the stigma associated with mental ill-health** – the project works with a range of local community groups to improve local public spaces. It is intended that connecting people with mental health needs to the wider community will increase the community's understanding of mental health issues and promote the contribution which the course participants make to the local area.



1.3 Activities

1.3.1 Accredited course in horticulture



The project primarily consists of a horticulture course which is taught two days a week over a period of five months. Participants spend one day a week at the TrEE centre where they learn practical horticultural skills and spend the second day doing gardening or conservation work in the local community. The participants learn skills, such as soil preparation and planting and then complete an assessment at the end of the course. Everyone is supported as they proceed through the course at their own speed and they take the assessment when they are ready.

1.3.2 Gardening in the community

The conservation and gardening work is done in collaboration with other community groups, such as the Friends of the Parks and Bromley Green Spaces. The work is carried out in a range of spaces across the borough, including public parks, churchyards, nature reserves and woodland. After a community session, there is sometimes a social event, such as cooking jacket potatoes on a bonfire.

1.3.3 Mental health support

Alongside the course, the participants are supported by staff from Bromley Mind to complete a personal Outcome Star and a Recovery Star. The stars look at ten areas of an individual's life and ask them to reflect on where they are now and how they would like to progress. Individuals are helped to complete a star when they begin the project and make an action plan for the change they would like to see. The participants review their progress after three months and again after six months.

As the course sessions take two full days each week, the participants have to bring a packed lunch with them to the site. They are encouraged to bring healthy food and to prepare everything they need the evening before to help them to become more organised and independent. The participants are provided with boots, gloves and waterproofs and at the end of the course they can keep the boots and gloves.

1.3.4 Signposting to other groups

Following the course, the participants are sign-posted to a range of community groups and volunteering and employment opportunities available in the area. The project leader works with each participant to identify opportunities and activities which interest them and supports them in joining new groups. Available activities include a music group, an art group, a running club and volunteering for Community Options or with other community centres.

1.3.5 Advertising the project

The project is advertised via the local media and in local shops. People can self-refer to the project or are referred by their GP or support worker. Many people hear about the project from a friend or community group. The project runs taster days where people who are interested can visit the project and decide if they would like to join. Most courses have around 14 participants, male and female, across a range of ages.



1.4 Impact

As part of this study, we spoke to the Branching Out project team as well as a project volunteer, a participant and a partner. We also reviewed project documentation, including monitoring data and reports. From the interviews and documents, we identified key outcomes from the project connected to improved mental well-being, increased physical activity, healthy eating, greater independence and employment and skills. Analysis by Community Options of the outcomes and recovery stars found that:

- ❑ 89% of people directly involved with Branching Out felt their involvement had maintained or had a positive impact on their mental health;
- ❑ 92% of participants felt their involvement maintained or had a positive outcome on their physical health.

The key outcomes which we identified are discussed below:

1.4.1 Greater self-confidence and self-esteem

There is strong evidence that the project improved participants' self-confidence and self-esteem through learning new skills, being supported by specially trained staff, monitoring their own progress and gaining a qualification at the end of the course:

'I kept going and with the strong support of the staff and past volunteers, I began to see myself thinking – I can do this, I can try outside help as well as here, I can travel, I can get here and say hello, I can pass the modules.'

Participants commented that spending time outdoors and having a sense of purpose has helped them to feel more confident and generally happier:

'I cannot emphasis enough how Branching Out has helped me. It has given me back my self-belief, confidence and self-esteem.'

'I feel calm and a lot better than I was before I came to the course.'

The statistical data collected through the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation reflects this finding showing that between beginning and completing the project, participants' life satisfaction increased to 6.5 from 5.1. There were significant improvements in participants' feeling good about themselves, feeling relaxed, feeling useful, thinking clearly and being able to make decisions.

1.4.2 Feeling more motivated



Many participants explained that having a routine and something to do every week really helped them to get going again. The challenge of having to organise oneself and travel to the site helped participants to have a more regular lifestyle. If someone cannot come to a session, they are expected to phone in before which encourages the participants to take responsibility and treat the course as if it were a job:

'The course has given me a purpose and structure to my weeks and has prevented me from major dips in my mental health through having this purpose.'

The course also helped participants to start taking an interest in things around them which is a key indicator of well-being. Some participants have become particularly interested in horticulture and conservation and have started growing plants at home and helping their family or neighbours with their gardens too:

'The course made me more aware of the nature around me.'

'It sparked an interest in woodland and plants; I've started reading up about the history of the countryside.'

1.4.3 New friends and better relationships

We found that in this project there was a strong connection between improved mental well-being and social well-being. Many of the participants commented that meeting people on the course greatly helped them to grow in self-confidence and feel happier. The course participants were often experiencing isolation before they joined the course and so spending time with others helped them to become more sociable and more optimistic:

'It helped my relationships with people I'm close too; I'm more sociable and outgoing now.'

'I especially liked meeting up with everyone twice weekly otherwise I would not have anyone to talk to as I don't have friends.'

The statistical data collected through the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation echoes these findings showing that after completing the course, participants' feelings of depression decreased significantly and feelings of loneliness and that everything is an effort also decreased.

1.4.4 Enjoying physical activities

The project involves being active outdoors but the activities are adjusted according to each participant's health and capability. Participants commented that they enjoyed spending time outdoors and felt fitter as a result:

'I definitely got healthier and I've taken up running since I joined the project.'

'My stamina has improved as I have built up my level of physical activity over the months.'

From talking to participants, we found that the self-confidence they gained from spending time with others and learning new skills motivated them to become more physically active outside of the project. The project team encourages the participants to join other groups and supports them in taking up new sports or joining a gym.

1.4.5 Eating more healthily

A key outcome of the project is that participants are far more likely to eat healthily after completing the course. This is reflected in the survey findings as well which show a significant improvement in beneficiaries' making an effort for food. The project leaders encourage everyone to bring a healthy packed lunch to the course and they talk about recipes and what to eat. Growing their own vegetables means that participants take fresh produce home with them and are more interested in eating fresh vegetables:

'The project inspired me to try new veg. I eat more healthily now and think about what I eat.'

1.4.6 Gaining new skills

The course teaches basic horticultural skills which participants can continue to use after they finish the course. Nearly all of the participants complete the course and gain a certificate or the full level one diploma. Some people use their new skills to look for work in horticulture or they start gardening at home or for others. What was most significant was the self-confidence and sense of satisfaction which participants felt as a result of learning new skills and completing an assessment.



1.4.7 Taking up volunteering and employment

The project places a lot of emphasis on encouraging participants to keep active once the course finishes. They are sign-posted to other volunteering opportunities and community group activities to help them to continue to improve their mental well-being. The project provides many opportunities to volunteer for Branching Out itself. Volunteers can go on further training courses, which helps them to become more employable and volunteers are given more responsibility. The end of project review found that:

- ❑ 9% of the participants have been successful at securing paid work since completing Branching Out. This is a very high success rate considering the health difficulties of the beneficiaries;
- ❑ 32% of the participants have gone on to a volunteer role including returning to volunteer with Branching Out.

Participants commented that moving on to volunteering or joining another group would be important for them to keep feeling better. Volunteering and joining other groups was found to be crucial for the sustainability of the improvements the participants made through the course.

'Volunteering helps you take the next step, you are given responsibility and you keep progressing.'

'I am training to be a human resources volunteer for Community Options. I will need to do more things so I don't go back to being more anxious.'

1.4.8 Transforming community spaces

As a result of the project's gardening work in the community, lots of green community spaces have been maintained or even transformed. The project has received numerous messages thanking the Branching Out group for the work they did in the area:

'Thank you so much to you and the whole Branching Out team for visiting our school's Nature Area last Wednesday. I couldn't believe how much work you had done.'

'Anyway you can quite understand how delighted everyone was to receive, and accept, an offer of gardening help from the Branching Out team.'

'I can't thank you enough for all the great work you have done.'

The project was also commended in the Bromley Environment Awards 2011 for the work that it has been doing in the community.

1.4.9 Better public understanding of mental health

Since it began in 2010, the project has worked with over twenty five different community groups, including primary schools, park groups and local charities to provide gardening or conservation work. The group took part in the Bromley 2010 Poppy Day Tributes and a Christmas Fair – supporting a local horticulture project for people with learning disabilities. Branching Out has also provided floral displays for Bromley Civic Centre events. This engagement with the wider community has helped to promote the contribution which people with mental health needs have been making to the local area.

To make more people aware of how horticulture can benefit people's mental health, Branching Out created a calendar for 2011 and distributed two thousand free copies throughout the borough. The project's achievements have also been publicised through local and national media, newsletters, Community Options website and promotional literature which is provided at every event the group attends.

1.5 Why the project works

The research identified a number of factors important to the project's success:

1.5.1 Gentle, flexible approach

The project is delivered in a flexible manner which is adapted to each individual's needs. People come to the project at different stages of recovery and they are supported in completing personal outcomes and recovery stars to help them to progress in the areas important to them. The taster days allow potential participants to visit the site and learn about the project without any pressure to commit to joining the course. The project leaders emphasise that the assessment is not mandatory and that participants are supported throughout the whole process:

'I was looking at other courses but they were all too intense, this course was perfect, you take a step at a time.'

1.5.2 Excellent balance of staff skills

The project is delivered by a staff team composed of horticultural specialists and mental health specialists. Having staff with complementary skills enables the project to provide mental health support as well as a recognised course in horticulture. The volunteers who are course 'graduates' provide support to the participants and add a lot of enthusiasm:

'My mental health has improved by talking to [project workers] straight away about issues that come up. [Project worker] has supported me when feeling down and vulnerable.'

The project has also benefited from effective partnership-working with Bromley Mind, Bromley Adult Education and Bromley Field Studies Centre which have each brought specialist skills and resources to the project. The partners had regular meetings and representatives from each organisation participated in a steering group to oversee the project. Communication between the partners was effective and this enabled all the necessary monitoring information to be collected from each organisation.

1.5.3 Gaining a recognised qualification

It is clear that the opportunity to gain a recognised qualification motivated people to take part in the course, helped them to find work in horticulture and, most significantly, improved their self-esteem. The course enables people who may not have been in formal education or training for a long time to regain confidence in their ability to learn new skills and succeed:

'[I enjoyed] the self satisfaction that I've completed something.'

'When I was very 'down' and feeling quite isolated I have had somewhere to go, people to be around, things to learn (about horticulture and myself... and others) plus a qualification to work towards.'

'My knowledge of horticulture has greatly improved and hopefully my diploma will help me to get into employment.'

1.5.4 Plenty of signposting to volunteering

The project was in creating sustainable outcomes. To achieve this, the project workers spent time working with each participant to identify volunteering opportunities and community groups which they could join. They also advertise any employment opportunities which may be suitable for participants to apply for. Participants commented that continuing to be involved in the project or another community group was really important for them to be able to keep building on the self-confidence they had gained through the project.

The project is now exploring ways of operating as a social enterprise which would eventually be able to employ course graduates to provide gardening services to clients. Branching Out has received funding from the Santander Foundation to provide level two of the horticulture course which will help participants to seek horticulture-related work.

1.6 Key lessons and recommendations

There are a number of recommendations which Branching Out and other similar projects may wish to consider going forwards:

- ❑ the course could be advertised more to attract more people to attend. Currently, participants mainly hear about the project from friends and so promoting it more visibly and widely would enable more people to know about it;
- ❑ the project has developed an effective model for supporting people with mental health needs and it has developed valuable resources and skilled staff team. However, due to a lack of staff capacity, the project only runs three days a week. To make the most of the resources which have been developed, another course should be run during the other two days of the week;

- ❑ Branching Out could try to develop more opportunities to discuss mental health with the community groups which the project engages with. The project works hard to promote the value of horticulture in overcoming mental ill-health and does enable people from the wider community to get to know people with mental health needs but more focus could be given to explaining common misconceptions about mental health to the wider community;
- ❑ a key challenge which the project has encountered is encouraging people to participate during the winter months. The project could explore ways of altering the course timetable so that more courses are run in the spring and summer or use more indoor locations during the winter;
- ❑ a further challenge to the project's success is the economic hardship which many people are currently experiencing. This is an external factor which is difficult to overcome but which has a detrimental effect on people's mental health and motivation to attend the course. The project should work to signpost participants to other sources of information, advice and support which could help them address other difficulties they are experiencing;
- ❑ the project is working to explore new possible funding models, including seeking commissioning from the area's clinical commissioning group and becoming a social enterprise which provides gardening services. Community Options should share its experience of exploring these new funding models with other similar groups so that others can learn from the project's experience;
- ❑ the project has not had very regular communication with the portfolio organisation, Ecominds due to a lack of funding provided for project management. While this has not caused any problems for the project, it is possible that both the project and the Ecominds Programme could have benefitted from greater sharing of best practice and advice.

1.7 How the project works

1.7.1 About the Ecominds portfolio

Ecominds is funded by the Big Lottery Fund through the Changing Spaces Programme. The portfolio consists of 134 environmental projects in England which support people with mental health needs. Ecominds is managed by Mind.

Branching Out has four key targets:

- 1) 80% of the 156 participants will report an improvement in their mental and physical health;
- 2) 30 volunteer participants learn the skills and confidence to set up or join a local environmental group;
- 3) 2,000 people in the community will have an increased understanding of the issues associated with mental illness and how meaningful activities like horticulture can help;
- 4) Up to 40 green spaces in the borough of Bromley benefit from environmental improvement.

1.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

In the first round of funding, the project has received £149,923 from the Big Lottery Fund via Ecominds. The funding was broken down as £21,229 in the first year and £73,812 in the second year and £54,881 in the third year. The project received Supporting Impact and Change funding totalling £85,000 for 2012/13. The original funding paid for the staff salaries, volunteer expenses, project management, equipment, a minibus and registering to be a certified City and Guilds course provider. Bromley Field Studies Centre (overseen by Bromley Council) provided space at the Tree Centre for the project activities. This is now managed by the Shaw Trust which leases part of the centre to the project.

Staffing

Under the original funding, Branching Out paid five part-time staff; a horticulture project officer (Bromley Field Studies Centre), an assistant project officer (Bromley Field Studies Centre), a senior outreach worker (Community Options), an outreach worker (Mind) and a project co-ordinator (Community Options).

1.7.3 Project outputs

Using the original funding, 57 people completed a Branching Out course, 103 local people with mental health problems attended an outreach session to learn more about how horticulture can benefit your mental wellbeing and at least 40 greens spaces in the borough of Bromley benefited from environmental improvements.

2 COCKNEY SPARROW

2.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with the new economics foundation (nef) to undertake the evaluation. This report is one of nineteen case studies that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

The Cockney Sparrow project, funded for two years from April 2009, is one of the projects funded by the Big Lottery within the Active London portfolio. Led by the Peabody Trust, the portfolio has received £4.6 million of funding from the Big Lottery to support more than eighty community led projects focusing upon promoting healthy eating, physical activity and good mental health.

The idea for the Cockney Sparrow project was conceived following consultation with residents on Peabody estates. The residents talked about what they'd like to see on the estates; wildlife was a big issue, with residents often complaining about pigeons on the estates and a lack of other wildlife and green space. Residents were particularly concerned about the lack of sparrow or birdsong on the Peabody estates.

The Cockney Sparrow project was developed by building upon existing partnership working between the Peabody Trust and London Wildlife Trust, and Peabody's role within the 'Neighbourhoods Green' initiative. Neighbourhoods Green is a partnership initiative that was initially developed between Peabody and Notting Hill Housing Group that aimed to raise the profile and highlight the importance of green and open spaces for the residents of social housing. The initiative sought to promote quality design and sustainable management of green spaces with Housing Associations and Arms Length Management Organisations by preparing a toolkit, case studies to promote good practice, and guidance related to the green space agenda.

The Peabody Trust's Activate London portfolio of projects has been developed from Neighbourhood Green's Natural Estates project that sought to work with residents to develop improvements to open spaces; work with residents to develop community action plans; and deliver estate based interventions that engage residents in improving green spaces and encouraging wildlife. The overarching aim of the Natural Estate project was therefore to encourage locally common wildlife to London housing estates.

The Cockney Sparrow project therefore builds upon the delivery focus of Natural Estates by encouraging resident's involvement in wildlife in and around Peabody estates through a particular focus upon birdlife. The project has been delivered in partnership between the Peabody Trust and the London Wildlife Trust, a partnership that was facilitated by Peabody's former Landscape Regeneration Manager, who already has a close working relationship with the London Wildlife Trust.

2.2 Project need

The Cockney Sparrow project is set up to address a number of key issues and meet the aims and objectives the Peabody Trust and the London wildlife Trust by encouraging the promotion of the natural habitat on housing estates within central London.

2.2.1 A reduction in wildlife on social housing estates

The UK Sparrow population has declined dramatically in past decades. The British Trust for Ornithology estimates that House Sparrow numbers have fallen dramatically in the UK over the past 25 years. More locally, the House Sparrow numbers in Greater London have declined by 68% between 1994 and 2009, with many areas of the capital now believed to no longer have a Sparrow population. The reason for the decline in Sparrow numbers is attributed to a number of factors, which include the loss of domestic garden habitats in urban areas which are favoured by the species. The Cockney Sparrow project has therefore placed an emphasis on promoting habitats favoured by the House Sparrow, by planting native hedgerows and installing bird boxes and feeding stations in inner city housing estates.

2.2.2 Meeting the strategic aspirations of the Peabody Trust and the London Wildlife Trust

The Cockney Sparrow project builds upon Peabody's work to promote the importance of green spaces within social housing developments due to the health and well-being impacts it provides for social housing tenants. Peabody's commitment to the provision and promotion of high quality green space in social housing developments has led to the organisation being instrumental in the establishment and delivery of the Neighbourhoods Green project in association with the Notting Hill Housing Group.

Neighbourhoods Green aims to highlight the importance of green spaces for residents living in social housing by seeking to raise the quality of green space design and management. The project promotes adaptable green space that can be used to promote a sense of community and pride in neighbourhoods, but recognises that social housing providers have traditionally underperformed in delivering high quality green space. It therefore provides guidance and advocacy support for social landlords, such as the Natural Estates¹ publication, which provides a guide to encouraging biodiversity on spaces managed by social landlords.

The Natural Estates publication advocates encouraging wildlife onto housing spaces and demonstrates the multiple benefits that can be generated. The report states:

'Perhaps the most important but hardest to define are the improvements to people's quality of life arising from being able to see aspects of the natural world on their door step.'

Quality of life is perceived to be generated by creating awareness of the natural habitat around housing estates and providing opportunities for enjoying wildlife with children. Natural Estates also promotes the development of wildlife focused project activity on estates, such as Cockney Sparrow, due to their ability to:

- ☐ contribute to the quality of the wider environment by making improvements at the local level and contributing to other nature conservation objectives in the area;
- ☐ providing solutions to estate management problems;
- ☐ making potential savings in grounds maintenance budgets through adopting less intensive management regimes.

The Cockney Sparrow project also contributes to a number of other strategic initiatives concerning the promotion of green space and encouraging wildlife on Peabody estates (e.g. the Cockney Sparrow project encourages resident engagement which compliments longer term investment in estate landscaping and the desire to encourage community participation in estate improvements). Peabody is currently undertaking the Improve project, a ten year programme of activity to improve door entry systems and open spaces on forty estates. The project also has a focus upon improving biodiversity on Peabody estates, and has a particular focus upon community consultation and engagement activity.

The Cockney Sparrow project also has clear links to the strategic aspirations of the London Wildlife Trust. The Trust's Strategic Plan for the period 2010-15 outlines a 'vision for London', generating a:

'A city where all people treasure wildlife and natural spaces.'

This aim is complimented by a mission that fits with the Cockney Sparrow project by engaging, inspiring and enabling Londoners to learn about and enhance their local environment, and to manage land for wildlife with local partners to high standards.

The Cockney Sparrow project therefore directly contributes to the strategic aims of both the London Wildlife Trust and Peabody Trust, providing a complimentary set of skills and resources for encouraging community participation, developing health and well-being benefits, and encouraging wildlife, particularly the declining bird species, back into central London housing estates.

¹ <http://www.neighbourhoodsgreen.org.uk/upload/documents/webpage/ANaturalEstate%20021006.pdf>

2.2.3 The importance of green space in generating health and well-being impacts

The Big Lottery Well-being Fund supports project delivery that generates outcomes related to the three strands of well-being – physical activity, mental health and healthy eating. The link between the activity delivered by the Cockney Sparrow project and the development of health and well-being outcomes has been demonstrated in past research conducted by CABE that highlights the importance of green space in social housing developments². Community Green concluded with four key findings that advocate the promotion of quality green space and provides linkages to the Big Lottery Well-being Fund:

- 1) green space is a public resource with a proven track record in improving people's health, but too many local green spaces remain unused;
- 2) people's concerns about safety affect their use of local green space and vary by ethnicity;
- 3) improving the quality of spaces will encourage more active use and exercise;
- 4) local people are best placed to know what they want from green space.

Improving green space was found to have a positive impact upon health and well-being for a number of reasons, such as providing positive impacts upon mental health by generating feelings of pleasure and reducing anxiety. Access to green space has also been found to promote moderate physical activity, particularly amongst children, where attractive and safe green space is provided. The research also demonstrates that the most significant health and well-being impacts are generated from green spaces that are closest to where people live, highlighting the importance of green space within social housing developments.

2.3 Activities

The Cockney Sparrow project delivered a range of community engagement activity and organising trips for local residents and schoolchildren to participate in bird watching and learn about the natural environment in their local area. The project has aimed to engage residents living in or around ten Peabody estates, including the Kings Cross ten, Whitechapel, and Penbury estates, focusing on estates that have previously been considered harder to engage. The following activities have been conducted in order to improve housing estate landscapes to benefit Sparrows and other wildlife, while also encouraging residents to become more involved in their local community.

2.3.1 Improving the natural habitat on Peabody estates

The Cockney Sparrow project has sought to improve the habitat for bird and wildlife on Peabody estates by planting hedgerow species such as hawthorn and blackthorn to encourage birds to nest. The project has also planted grasses and flowers to attract insects that nesting birds typically feed off. The natural habitat has been maintained and managed by Cockney Sparrow volunteers and Peabody's maintenance staff. Project volunteers were therefore provided with training to enable them to maintain the natural habitat, while green space improvements were incorporated into part of Peabody's estate management plans, providing an element of project sustainability.

2.3.2 On estate community engagement events



Community events were delivered on all the Peabody estates where the Cockney Sparrow project had a presence. Community events provided the opportunity for residents to learn about the birds living in and around their estate, how to identify different species, and how the local community could encourage more birds to live on their estate. On estate activity also provided residents with the opportunity to make bird feeders that they could then take home and participate in an estate bird watch.



² Community Green – using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health

Activity was provided to encourage the family to attend, including face painting and badge making, and free food and drink was supplied for those that attended. Community engagement activity on estates has also involved running events in partnership with The Bat Conservation Trust's urban bat expert, who provided presentations and learning before leading bat box making workshops for residents. These workshops allowed residents of Peabody estates to see a bat firsthand and understand their behaviour and natural habitat.

2.3.3 Wildlife monitoring

The Cockney Sparrow project has encouraged local residents to monitor bird populations on Peabody estates; this was achieved through the community based events that were run for Peabody residents but also by more specific project activity, such as setting up webcams to monitor bird boxes that were installed on estates. Training has also been provided to volunteers and Peabody residents to spot and record bird numbers on Peabody estates.

2.3.4 Visits to reservoirs and green spaces in London

The Cockney Sparrow project organised on estate community activity followed by a visit to a local reservoir or urban green space in London (typically Rainham Marshes or the London Wetland centre). Such visits have typically attracted a mixture of residents and their families that previously had an interest in wildlife, and those that were new to bird watching and became engaged through the opportunity to visit a nature reserve or open space with their family.



The visits to green spaces typically involved nature walks and were focused upon providing interactive learning for all members of the family. Led by the Project Officer, the sessions encouraged children to actively participate by using the binoculars provided to spot and watch birds. The sessions were informally focused, allowing children to explore and gain answers to any questions they had about birds and bird watching. The visit to the London Wetland Centre enabled families to visit the Discovery Centre in the afternoon, while residents that were more interested in bird watching visited Peacock Tower with the Project Officer which provided more detail about bird watching, the species present and the more technical aspects of the wetland environments.

In addition to directly engaging residents on Peabody estates, the Cockney Sparrow project has sought to involve a wide cross section of established groups and sections of society; therefore engagement activity has been focused upon youth clubs, faith groups, local hostels and schools. The activity detailed in the sub-sections below has been conducted in schools.

2.3.5 School visits

A range of activities have been conducted in schools to raise awareness of the natural habitat and wildlife that can be found in inner London. The Cockney Sparrow project has conducted three different types of sessions with schoolchildren that offer different levels of tutor led input and interactive activities:

- ❑ **interactive MS PowerPoint based sessions** – these sessions were initially delivered to teach children about the bird species that live in and around their local areas, their living environment and the habitats that can be created to promote bird numbers;

- ❑ **craft workshops** – the Cockney Sparrow project has delivered craft workshops where children help to make bird feeders and paint bird boxes. The session aims to encourage children to develop ownership of their local habitat and provide an environment that encourages birds into the local neighbourhood;
- ❑ **bird watching** – the project has taken groups of schoolchildren out of the classroom to experience bird watching firsthand. The initial classroom based activities mean the schoolchildren are able to identify a number of common bird species at this point.

2.4 Impact

We spoke to a range of beneficiaries, volunteers, staff and stakeholders as part of this evaluation and they highlighted that the Cockney Sparrow project was generating a very wide range of positive outcomes, including those linked to increasing the sense of community on Peabody estates and interaction with nature living in and around the estate.

2.4.1 Providing an opportunity to escape day-to-day life and interact with nature

Many residents commented on the benefits generated by the Cockney Sparrow project in terms of increasing quality of life for residents and providing a break from day-to-day life in central London. The following comments were provided to residents, highlighting the well-being benefits that are being generated for Peabody residents:

'Being from central London, it's important to get out and to provide them [the children] with tranquillity. It brings calmness to the children.'

'It [the project] allows the kids to experience wildlife and the countryside. You can't see the buildings and concrete you are used to, you forget you are in the city.'

Residents commonly spoke about being given the opportunity to explore green space and focus on nature in their local community. One project beneficiary who lived in a hostel close to a Peabody estate reported how the project acted as a release from their day-to-day life of living in central London. The project has allowed the beneficiary to get out of the hostel and build upon his passion for wildlife based TV programmes by visiting the London Wetland Centre and being provided with a first opportunity to see birds in their natural habitat. This beneficiary commented:

'I'm just used to tower blocks and concrete but this is free, you only need to bring a packed lunch and they help you to look at the birds.'

Beneficiaries are able to watch birds and wildlife due to the support provided by the Cockney Sparrow Project Officer, both in terms of the expertise provided from being an Ornithologist and the provision of free binoculars; sponsorship was secured from Optichron, meaning the project has benefited from having twelve sets of binoculars and a telescope available for beneficiaries to use.

2.4.2 Promoting and increasing wildlife on Peabody estates

The Cockney Sparrow project has provided information, knowledge and skills to local residents so they can take ownership of attracting wildlife to their estate. This has been achieved by working with residents to make and install bird boxes and feeding tables. The project has also worked with volunteers and residents to plant native hedgerows on Peabody estates which provide a natural habitat for the House Sparrow. The project has worked closely with maintenance and estate management staff employed by Peabody; this has ensured the hedgerows and bird boxes are maintained appropriately after the project has finished and act as element of sustainability for the Cockney Sparrow project by ensuring wildlife can be attracted to the estate on an ongoing basis.

2.4.3 A greater sense of community on Peabody estates

The partnership between Peabody and the London Wildlife Trust has been successful in encouraging residents to interact with each other and has generated pride amongst residents of the estate. Residents commented that attending community events had led to them having the opportunity to meet and chat with their neighbours and generated a sense of community.

A key element of the improvements to the sense of community was how, since attending the Cockney Sparrow project, residents had started to say hello to each other when they met in the street or stopped and briefly chatted to each other. The project had therefore given neighbours something in common to talk about and developed a better understanding between residents from different backgrounds. As a result, residents reported being more satisfied with where they live and spoke positively about Peabody as a landlord, and how other social landlords were unlikely to have provided similar project activity on their estates.

The Cockney Sparrow project has also worked to improve community relations by engaging residents in hostels that are within close proximity to Peabody estates, which has brought together local residents that would have otherwise been unlikely to interact. The Cockney Sparrow project has also delivered community engagement activity for residents from White and Bangladeshi communities from the Whitechapel estate that had previously treated each other with suspicion. The project allowed residents to work together to improve their estate, demonstrating how engagement activity focused upon developing conservation and the natural environment, can bring communities together.

2.4.4 Learning opportunities for Peabody residents

A number of residents commented on how they had benefited from attending Cockney Sparrow events by learning new skills or gaining new knowledge. Parents often reported how their children had been exposed to wildlife they had never seen before; this was particularly true for Peabody residents that went on the visits to the London Wetland Centre. Parents commented:

'The children have learnt about different species, their colours, behaviour and camouflage. The parents learn too. It's good, better than going to the library to educate them as it is real life.'

'The children like it because they can explore, ask questions about whatever they want, and learn about wildlife.'

The Cockney Sparrow project was complimented on its ability to engage with a diverse range of residents from different ages and backgrounds. However, residents reported that the project was particularly effective at engaging with young children due to the approachable nature of the Cockney Sparrow Project Officer and his ability to convey messages with real enthusiasm and in a way that children can easily relate to and understand. Children were taught about the behavioural patterns of different types of birds, how they eat and collect food, and how they could differentiate between male and females of the same species.

Case study – the Jones family

The Jones family have two children and moved onto a Peabody estate two years ago. They became aware of the Cockney Sparrow project after seeing posters about forthcoming events that were being held on the estate. They were encouraged to attend as the project offered a way of getting the children out of the house and was felt to be a much better way of teaching them about birds and wildlife compared to just using books. The Cockney Sparrow project provided the opportunity to visit the London Wetland Centre, something they were aware of but had never attended because of the cost involved:

'It usually costs £10 per head to get in here (the London Wetland Centre) but it's free with the project. It's brilliant for families like us who don't have the money.'

The Jones family were particularly keen on visiting the Wetland Centre; living in central London, they don't get the opportunity to interact with wildlife and open space as much as their parents did when they were young, and so they feel the children are missing out. Such days out were important to the family as they cannot afford to take the children away on holiday; therefore the day provided an important opportunity to get the children away from their day-to-day life on the estate. The Jones family also commented upon the commitment and dedication of the project Officer and volunteers:

'The fact that the project operates at the weekend is a brilliant thing. People are giving up their time at the weekend to organise events for the community on our estate. It makes the estate a better place to live and feels like someone cares about us and where we live.'

Adults and older residents also commented about the new skills and knowledge they had learnt. Residents commented on how they always noticed birds on the estate but could now name them and knew about their feeding and breeding habits. As a result, residents felt more able to support the wildlife on their estates which will help to promote the natural habitat on Peabody estates in the future. The opportunity to learn how to make a bird box that will attract nature was particularly valued, as was information related to why bird numbers had declined and what residents can do to take ownership of the wildlife in their local area.

2.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the Cockney Sparrow project has proved successful.

2.5.1 The skills and expertise of the Cockney Sparrow Project Officer

Feedback from partners and beneficiaries of the Cockney Sparrow project primarily attributed the success of the project to the Project Officer and the support provided by volunteers. The Project Officer was highly praised, with partners feeling his skills set and enthusiasm for wildlife, particularly birds, was essential in successfully delivering the project. The knowledge for bird watching and promoting the natural habitat was particularly praised, as was the ability to enthuse and engage residents of a diverse range of ages and backgrounds.

The success and delivery of the project has also been heavily reliant upon the volunteer support to help the Project Officer coordinate and deliver community engagement activity. The project has benefited from volunteer support from approximately seven people, three of which did not do any other volunteering activity outside of the Cockney Sparrow project. Volunteers have provided a significant amount of staff resource to the project, fulfilling roles such as helping to organise and administer community engagement events (such as staffing stalls, distributing leaflets and engaging with local residents) and physical conservation work (such as planting and maintaining hedgerows). As a result, volunteers have been up-skilled by the Project Officer to undertake community engagement activity, particularly children and older residents, and have also gained key skills related to ecology and nature preservation.

2.5.2 The partnership to deliver

The partnership between the two delivery organisations has been key to the success of the Cockney Sparrow project. Peabody and the London Wildlife Trust have now developed a close working relationship, building upon the knowledge held by a senior member of staff that has worked for both organisations. The knowledge and skills brought to the project by the London Wildlife Trust, in terms of urban wildlife, compliments the need to further develop natural green spaces on housing estates as a way of making social housing a more attractive place to live. Working with the Peabody Trust has not only provided an ideal urban setting for the project's delivery but also ensured sustainability can be achieved, as measures installed to increase the natural habitat have been included in the estate management plans. The partnership therefore supports the findings of '*Natural Estate*' which promotes the development of green spaces for residents of social housing to promote well-being and improvements to quality of life.

Other partnerships were important in facilitating the community events, such as delivering sessions in partnership with The Bat Conservation Trust which proved popular with young children. The project also worked in partnership with the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, ensuring the project could provide residents with free entry to the London Wetland Centre.

2.5.3 A focus upon engaging local schools

The Cockney Sparrow project paid particular attention to targeting engagement activity at local schools offering them the opportunity for the Project Officer to deliver craft workshops and undertake bird watching sessions. The project found that targeting schools was a particularly effective way of engaging with the wider community and encouraging adults and the wider family to engage in community events. Children were found to be particularly enthusiastic towards learning about the wildlife living in their local area, while also providing a route into the wider local community.

2.5.4 The urban nature of the project setting

The Cockney Sparrow project has been particularly successful to the location in which it has been delivered; housing estates in central London. The perceived inaccessible nature of green space or settings where wildlife could be readily seen means the project has been particularly successful in engaging residents. It is therefore likely that the project would be successful in other major urban cities but may not lend itself to being so successful in small towns or semi-rural locations. Project visits to the London Wetland Centre have been a major part of the project's success, with many residents suggesting the opportunity to visit the Wetland Centre and get away from living in a major city provided real added value to the wider community engagement activity delivered by the project.

2.5.5 The attention given to publicising the Cockney Sparrow project

The London Wildlife Trust have developed particular skills and expertise in engaging residents in deprived urban areas, particularly as a result of delivering community events targeted at children and families. The project has also been particularly successful in gaining high profile publicity (e.g. the Cockney Sparrow Project Officer has gained publicity for the project on BBC TV and radio, in particular the project was featured on Springwatch). Such high profile publicity has acted to break down barriers for the project by generating local interest and familiarity with the project and, as a result, residents of Peabody estates have been more willing to get involved in project activity.

2.6 How the project works

2.6.1 About the Activate London portfolio

The Activate London portfolio aims to improve existing physical activities and encourage participation in healthy, physical recreational activities. This is been achieved through innovative ways using a range of approaches that ensure inclusion of all age groups, gender and cultural affiliations, ensuring that fun is had by all. Activities include healthy walks programmes for different abilities, community football games, yoga, street games, circus skills and wildlife based project activity.

The Peabody Trust led the bid for Activate London to be delivered through a consortium of seven Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) who between them operate in every London Borough. The following RSLs are working within the Activate Partnership:

- 1) Broomleigh Housing Association;
- 2) Circle Anglia;
- 3) Community Based Housing Association;
- 4) Family Mosaic;
- 5) Metropolitan Housing Trust;
- 6) Peabody;
- 7) Southern Housing Group.

Activate London sought to engage with 43,329 individuals across London having been awarded £4,685,388 from the Big Lottery Fund and was delivered between 2007 and 2011.

2.6.2 Project inputs

Costs

The Cockney Sparrow project was provided with a total of £100,000 of revenue funding which was used to fund staff time, organise and facilitate community events (e.g. the production/design of marketing material and the purchase of material) and provide transport for beneficiaries to visit London based bird and wildlife sanctuaries.

Staffing

The project is staffed by the Cockney Sparrow Project Officer and a number of volunteers which have delivered all aspects of the project's delivery. This includes organising, publicising and delivering community events, gaining the buy-in of estate management staff from Peabody, and coordinating visits to the London Wetland Centre.

2.6.3 Project outputs

The Cockney Sparrow project sought to engage with 1,000 residents to improve their physical activity through participating in social activities based on Peabody estates. The Cockney Sparrow project engaged with 1,347 residents and thus achieved 135% of its target.

3 DIY HAPPINESS

3.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with the new economics foundation (nef) to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

DIY Happiness is one of the constituent projects of the Well London portfolio, the group of health and well-being projects funded by the Well-being Programme that is being delivered across twenty London Boroughs.

The South London and Maudsley (SLaM) NHS Foundation Trust leads the Well London mental health and well-being theme, and delivers DIY Happiness together with three other projects focused on improving mental health. DIY Happiness grew out of a series of internal stress management workshops for SLaM staff entitled 'Happy at Work', and adopts a positive psychology approach in seeking to build on people's strengths in order to enhance their health and well-being.

SLaM piloted the DIY Happiness approach at a 'Love Croydon' event, held in June 2008, on a deprived estate in the Borough. Delivery of the Well London funded project commenced in summer 2009 in Haringey, Newham and Tower Hamlets, with activity in the other fourteen boroughs following in four waves between January 2010 and March 2011. A final celebration event will be held in June 2011.

3.2 Project need

Many of the more deprived areas of London are characterised by significant public health issues, with a high incidence of mental ill health. Traditional approaches to addressing mental health problems tend to target people who have, to some extent, 'broken down', with less focus placed on preventative approaches intended to reach people before they are in crisis. DIY Happiness adopts the latter model, aiming to increase the resilience, control and self-efficacy of its participants:

'The project aims to steer people away from the idea that mental health is synonymous with mental illness, and begin to move people towards seeing mental health as a positive resource which can be improved and protected by making small effective changes.'³

Rather than focusing on the individual in isolation, DIY Happiness follows a community focused approach:

'Mental health problems cannot be brought under control by treating individuals (with mental health problems) one at a time.'⁴

In bringing a diverse group of women together, the project seeks to develop mutual coping mechanisms and social networks, building individual and community level resources to support future health and well-being. It was decided to focus on women in order to provide a safe environment in which participants could explore and discuss issues relating to their lives, many of which are gender specific. In particular, DIY Happiness aimed to provide overloaded women with the space and time to consider their own well-being and how they might improve it.

In the words of the SLaM lead for the project, DIY Happiness:

'Aims to introduce low cost ways to improve well-being... Small steps to improve your life which can be transformational.'

³ *DIY Happiness Project: research evaluation report* (University of East London, 2011), p.2

⁴ *DIY Happiness briefing notes* (Well London, 2010), p.2

The project is structured around six core areas: body; mind; spirit; people; place; and planet. These areas, which come together to form the 'Happiness Wheel', draw on the approach outlined in the 2008 Foresight report *'Five ways to well-being'* which suggests that building the following actions into a person's day-to-day life will enhance their personal well-being:



- ❑ **connect** – invest time in building connections with the people around you;
- ❑ **be active** – discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness;
- ❑ **take notice** – be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling, and appreciate what matters to you;
- ❑ **keep learning** – learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun;
- ❑ **give** – looking out, as well as in, is rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.⁵

The original aims of DIY Happiness were articulated in its application for Well London funding:

- ❑ to deliver mental health promotion messages in a humorous, interactive way;
- ❑ to increase awareness of the determinants of psychological well-being;
- ❑ to improve knowledge of what people can do to build on strengths, increase optimism and enhance health;
- ❑ to produce a concrete set of 'happiness' resources to provide information in a humorous way;
- ❑ to incentivise community ideas and actions that promote happiness in local communities;
- ❑ to weave new connections between people with a common interest in well-being.⁶

The project also had a strong research focus, looking to identify resources that can be used to help people preserve their mental health and well-being, and to assess whether the well-being of participants had changed as a result of their involvement with the project.

There is strong 'fit' between the focus of DIY Happiness on the determinants of health and well-being and the aims of Well London as a whole. Together, the six themes of the Happiness Wheel constitute a holistic approach that integrates physical health with mental and emotional well-being. In doing so, the project contributes to the full range of portfolio aims around mental health, healthy eating, physical activity and community development and cohesion; according to one of the project partners interviewed for the case study:

'It encompassed the Well London approach in a way that people could relate to.'

DIY Happiness also contributes to all three of the Well-being Programme outcomes, most particularly to:

*'People and communities have improved mental well-being.'*⁷

3.3 Activities

DIY Happiness has undergone significant change since the initial Well London bid, which centred around a 'theatre in health' education production, where the audience explored the relationship between wealth and well-being by talking to actors in character.

⁵ See *Five Ways to well-being: the evidence – a report presented to the Foresight Project on communicating the evidence base on improving people's well-being* (new economics foundation, 2008)

⁶ *The Well-being programme stage two application form: Appendix A – Individual project details (Can Money buy Happiness?)* (Well London, 2007), p.21

⁷ *Well-being: an introduction to our new programme* (Big Lottery Fund, 2006), p.3

The project was originally entitled 'Can money buy happiness?' reflecting a further core element in which participants were given a pot of money to take forward ideas over how they might improve their happiness and well-being and that of their local community. On becoming DIY Happiness, the latter element was retained (albeit in modified form), but the theatre in education activities were discontinued in favour of a series of workshops. In addition, a happiness game was developed.

The project has been delivered in twenty particularly deprived neighbourhoods across London, identified through early scoping work undertaken by Well London, as experiencing significant health inequalities. In practice, however, not all of the participants have been resident within the areas targeted, so the project has benefited women from a range of different socio-economic backgrounds.

3.3.1 DIY Happiness workshops

A series of eight weekly workshops were held in each of the Well London Boroughs around the theme 'Can money buy happiness?' The content of the workshops was designed to map elements of positive psychology across the six areas of the Happiness Wheel, with activities reinforcing the underlying theory and ensuring the focus was practically orientated: marrying the science of happiness with what goes on in women's everyday lives. Following the first week when participants were introduced to the theory and the Happiness Wheel, the workshops followed a successive pattern, inspired by the 'Five ways to well-being' actions:⁸

- ❑ body (be active) – including a focus on healthy eating and healthy living;
- ❑ mind (keep learning) – covering education, new skills and creativity;
- ❑ spirit (give) – content on hope, appreciation, spirituality and meaningfulness;
- ❑ people (connect) – focused on relating, engaging and social connections;
- ❑ place (take notice) – considering the home, belonging and community;
- ❑ planet (care) – reflecting on the environment and the bigger picture of living.



Practical activities are linked to each of the themes with flow activities, in which time seems to pass quickly; chosen for their positive impacts on well-being:

*'We know that people who have a sense of flow in their professional and private lives live longer.'*⁹

Activities undertaken included: flower arranging; laughter yoga; reading; drawing; craft based sessions (including play dough modelling and making gifts); and undertaking a local walk to observe and photograph unusual and/or beautiful

effects. Local partners, including representatives from other Well London projects, were invited to one of the workshop sessions to talk about what they did and to signpost participants to relevant activities and providers.

Food was provided before the workshops, and colour was used to give a bright and energetic feel to proceedings. The sessions began with some form of relaxation exercise, followed by a recap on content from the previous week. Literature was provided for the women to take away, in order to reinforce the messages and provide a resource they could refer back to at a later date if needed.

3.3.2 Dare-to-dream

Workshop participants were encouraged to 'dare-to-dream' – to develop ideas for something they felt would increase happiness and well-being. Qualifying participants (those attending six or more workshops) were allocated up to £500 to put their plans into action. Initially, there were few boundaries to the ideas that were accepted, which included individually or family focused plans, such as the purchase of a new computer, gym membership, driving lessons and home decoration. However, following discussions with stakeholders, the approach was modified to ensure that wider community benefit would result, with workshop attendees encouraged to work together to identify the best ideas, and subsequently to pool their monies to support them.

⁸ These are given in brackets after the happiness wheel theme. Note that 'Planet' was an additional theme introduced by the project team to supplement the Five Ways to Well-being actions

⁹ Project staff quote, in *The Pursuit of happiness* (Guardian Society, 6 April 2011)

A range of community focused projects resulted, including: setting up craft and reading groups; tai chi classes; a family happiness group; a support organisation for local residents; trips to the theatre, seaside and a number of visitor attractions; purchase of massage equipment in order to offer therapeutic sessions to young mothers on an estate; the purchase of camping equipment for the community; and a bicycle for communal use.

These projects have, in many instances, provided an ongoing legacy to follow-on from the DIY Happiness workshops, enabling participants to continue to invest in improving their own well-being and that of fellow community members.

Dare-to-dream was introduced during the workshops, with the final workshop dedicated to finalising the planning process. Subsequent support was provided by the project team and workshop facilitators who had been recruited from the University of East London, together with Well London partners who were acting as Borough Coordinators for individual areas.

3.3.3 Happiness game

The happiness game was designed by the project team and workshop participants, with the assistance of a social marketing company. It consists of a series of cards providing practical tips and advice on ways to be happier, with players able to collect and keep the cards, and add their own tips. It has been facilitated at a number of community events across London, with the tips shared through the DIY Happiness social media channels on Facebook and Twitter. The game is also designed for use as a public consultation method and, with some adaptation, could be used to assist asset mapping, identify gaps in service provision relating to well-being, or to gather insight into particular groups and audiences.

The wider aim was to share messages relating to the Happiness Wheel themes more widely, encouraging people who had not participated in project workshops to become involved and pledge to act on some of the tips, and to gather further evidence regarding the well-being of individuals and communities, and ways in which this well-being might be secured and enhanced.

3.4 Impact

As part of the case study research, we spoke to: project staff; partners from Arts Council England, London Borough of Croydon and University of East London; facilitators recruited to assist in workshop delivery; and women who had participated in the workshops and follow-on Dare-to-dream activity. The interviews highlighted the range of positive outcomes resulting from involvement with DIY Happiness, as detailed below.

3.4.1 Increased confidence, self-esteem and empowerment

Consultation with workshop participants highlighted how involvement with the project had helped to increase their personal confidence and levels of self-esteem. For some of the women, the 'Spirit' workshop on showing appreciation had made a particularly powerful impact:

'We learnt the importance of showing gratitude – it's important and powerful to thank and encourage people. It's empowering – little acts of love, sowing a seed that comes back to you.'

'One of the main benefits for me was learning how to be appreciative. It's given me a very positive outlook... gratitude is really powerful.'

For another participant, the '*revelling in the everyday walk*' they were invited to take around the local estate had proved uplifting:

'It made me much more confident about looking around me. I notice much more, changes, information, things you can do. I'm much more observant now.'

3.4.2 New skills, knowledge and information

Involvement in the workshops had given participants the opportunity to try out a range of different activities, often for the first time. The women developed new skills in various art and craft techniques (the flower arranging session proving particularly stimulating for many of them), and learnt about the links between nutrition, physical exercise and well-being. One woman who enjoyed the reading session had gone on to enrol on a creative writing course, resulting in one of her short stories being published in an anthology of student work:



'I continue to write in my spare time – not so much to be published, as to paint a picture and make the stories interesting enough for my family and friends to enjoy, as much as I love writing them.'

Another participant in the series of workshops said simply:

'I can now think more clearly.'

For one of the University of East London facilitators who had delivered workshops in three London Boroughs, the experience had proved invaluable:

'Team teaching is a very specific skill... it helped my confidence, seeing what worked and why. I developed people management skills.'

3.4.3 Social interaction, relationships and inclusion

Many of the women who took part in the DIY Happiness workshops had led relatively isolated lives due to the roles they undertook and the pressures of time they were under, language barriers, and/or their status as new arrivals to the local area. The group of participants was typically very diverse, with a high proportion of women from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, a mix of different socio-economic circumstances (in addition to people experiencing significant financial disadvantage, more middle class women also took part), a range of age groups, and a variety of cultural and life experiences. For many workshop participants, the experience of building relationships with women with whom they would never normally have had the opportunity to interact with was one of the most valuable benefits:

'It was probably one of the best things I'd ever done... very welcoming, the mix of people, all with their own stories and wanting to talk to you, share and support you. We all grew together, and for me personally, it made me realise that life is tough but you can cope with it in a different way.'

'It was a diverse group. I embraced them, we understood each other... people tend to stay where they're comfortable, but it broke down barriers, mistrust.'

3.4.4 Greater resilience

Some of the workshop participants interviewed for the case study suffered from depression, either as an ongoing issue or in the past. One of their central motivations for taking part in DIY Happiness was to help them cope better with the issues in their lives and the demands placed upon them:

'I'd been through a very difficult couple of years, including the death of my father, and I hadn't really recovered. I've got two small children, had been made redundant, and had had to care for my mother. There was no space in my life, and no time for me... I'd just come off antidepressants.'

As discussed previously, the DIY Happiness workshops aimed to equip participants with tools and resources they could use to manage and enhance their personal resilience and self-efficacy. Consultees confirmed how valuable the project had been in this respect:

'It gave me techniques around coping... when I see the signs, I can look around, think about the people around me.'

'After the workshops, there were more challenges, including my husband being made redundant, but I was able to deal with them. Otherwise, I would have gone to pieces.'

3.4.5 Enhanced happiness and well-being



The project had evidently made a considerable difference to the personal happiness and well-being of those involved. Participants were more willing to value the positives in their lives and to adopt an optimistic outlook:

'We realised that we did have things to be happy about.'

'I generally felt better – it gave me something to focus my intellect and emotions on.'

The case study findings are supported by the DIY Happiness evaluation conducted by the University of East London, which identified an increase in positive feelings, such as a sense of belonging and hope in the future, enhanced ownership of individualised sources of resilience, and a positive impact on personal growth, control, and the ability to establish relationships with others.¹⁰

The evaluation report also places strong emphasis on the importance of the new connections and networks established by the women, and the role of the workshops in acting as a catalyst to inspire and energise participants to stimulate emotional and practical change in their lives:

*'[There is] a core overarching message: the sense that the [DIY Happiness] project serves as a robust kick start for positive well-being and enhanced life satisfaction.'*¹¹

These findings are confirmed by feedback from a participant in the Ealing workshops, as quoted in a recent quarterly monitoring return submitted to Well London by project staff:

*'I have enjoyed every minute of the sessions, you have given me the strength and confidence that a woman should have in herself, and also to love and care for others. You have really turned my life in a new direction, and moved me forward with a smile on my face.'*¹²

3.4.6 Wider impacts

One of the key aims of DIY Happiness was that its messages, tips and tools would flow out to a wider audience, thereby benefiting a far bigger pool than the direct workshop participants. Social media channels (the project's Facebook and Twitter networks) are a key mechanism through which the project has sought to do so, alongside the happiness game facilitated at community events during 2010/11. Although it is beyond the scope of the case study research to explore the effectiveness of these approaches, it was clear that some of the women who had taken part in the workshops had become evangelists for the project, and were disseminating its key themes to others:

'It has had an impact on my children – we talk about being positive, encouraging them to cope with challenges at school. It's hugely important.'

'I've gone back to teaching... and am trying to use well-being techniques to turn around my approaches – leaving the children with a happy memory at the end of the day. I'm also sharing the ideas with other teachers.'

One of the project partners interviewed for the case study was clear over the wider impact the project would have:

'[Involvement helped] to strengthen the women's personal confidence and their ability to support others – this has huge impacts on family dynamics and community dynamics. There is an understanding of what develops and sustains well-being.'

Some of the community initiatives set up through Dare-to-dream have also proved important in terms of wider impact. Projects such as the tai chi class set up in Croydon, and the Kensington and Chelsea craft group, have attracted a significant number of attendees, many of whom were not involved in the DIY Happiness workshops.

¹⁰ *DIY Happiness Project: research evaluation report* (University of East London, 2011). See, in particular, p.34

¹¹ *ibid*, p.34

¹² *Quarterly Reporting Pack: GLA Provision of Funding for the London Health Commission's "Well London" Programme 2007 – 2012* (South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, 2011), p.11

Project participants in Waltham Forest set up a group called 'Ask Freda' (the 'Friends of The Drive and Attlee Terrace', two local estates), which looks to support local residents and signpost them to appropriate advice and provision. Ask Freda involves some of the core workshop participants, alongside other local people:

'It became a core vehicle for action in the community, and a core group for the Well London team to talk to.'

3.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why DIY Happiness has proved successful.

3.5.1 An integrated approach

DIY Happiness has adopted a highly integrated approach to the enhancement of health and well-being. In focusing on the 'Five ways to well-being' areas and adding 'planet' to them to bring in the broader environmental dimension, the project has helped its participants to improve their physical and mental well-being in an holistic manner, unlike many other interventions that only focus on specific aspects of the overall agenda. One of the Well London thematic leads interviewed for the case study commented on the unique nature of DIY Happiness in this regard, and the added value it was bringing to the wider work of the portfolio:

'There are little elements here and there that other people are also doing, but nothing that ties it all together – it has real depth to it.'

3.5.2 A sustainable model

Big Lottery Fund support for DIY Happiness comes to an end in summer 2011 and, at the time of writing, alternative funding streams had not been identified. Although this places the future sustainability of the project itself in doubt, the sustainability of the outcomes it has achieved appears secure. Workshop participants now have resources at their disposal with which to maintain and build their personal well-being, and some of the Dare-to-dream projects provide a tangible legacy that is helping to sustain the community networks and support mechanisms that were established initially in the workshop sessions. If adopted more widely, the happiness game will also help to ensure that DIY Happiness messages continue to inform the thinking and behaviour of those people playing it.

3.5.3 Feeling valued and having fun

One of the central factors behind engaging women in the workshops was to ensure that they felt valued. Some of the tangible ways in which the project team demonstrated this value included providing food at the start of the sessions, putting flowers on the tables, and choosing attractive raffle prizes:

'The team made you want to be there every week. They made you feel comfortable and valued, and were very supportive.'

Beyond this, however, it was also vital that participants enjoyed themselves. Theoretical content was brought to life by undertaking fun activities, many of which represented useful tools to break down barriers and encourage social interaction and connection.

3.5.4 Individual personality and capability

The success of the workshops was highly dependent on the personality, skills and experience of the facilitators. Participants consulted for the case study paid testament to the empathy of the session leads, and the way they managed to interact successfully with diverse members of the group. Of course, this represents something of a challenge to attempts to replicate the approach elsewhere:

'The workshops were really good... [This was] largely down to the facilitators. Without them, it's not easily transferable... you couldn't do an off-the-shelf DIY just like that.'

3.6 Recommendations for the future

The case study findings point to a number of recommendations for the future. As project activity will soon come to an end, the main focus is to identify learning that might inform the future work of Well London partners and other organisations involved in delivering health and well-being interventions.

3.6.1 Preventative approaches

The holistic approach adopted by DIY Happiness has proved highly effective for the women involved, and it is clear that the project has more than met its stated objectives. An important element behind this success was the way the workshops avoided focusing on people's problems, but instead took a positive angle in seeking to build up their happiness assets and resources. Given current policy moves to place greater emphasis on preventative approaches in addressing public health issues, the DIY Happiness model provides a good example to inform other health and well-being interventions.

3.6.2 Underpinning activities with theory



The balance between theoretical and practical content, and the way the two were interlinked, was key to the success of the project:

'It was succinct... very boiled down, to five or six different elements, which made it very manageable. You could definitely take it away and apply it to your life.'

The overt approach adopted by the project in discussing positive psychology theory and research evidence with workshop participants provides a valuable learning point for

similar interventions. Project staff were insistent that people's ability to understand the underlying evidence base should not be underestimated:

'People hugely appreciate being treated as someone who can understand complex arguments, as intelligent adults. You should assume people are capable of understanding – watch them, encourage them to question, invite them in to discuss the issues.'

However, one facilitator commented that the amount of content they were expected to deliver, and that workshop participants were expected to digest, was over ambitious:

'We tried to pack too much in, and time was sometimes an issue. On reflection, it would work more effectively with less theory and a greater focus on experience.'

3.6.3 Gender specific provision

There is considerable evidence of the role that gender differences play in relation to mental health, and the consequent importance of considering mental health in gender specific terms. A report on the well-being of women that was published by the National Mental Health Development Unit (NMH DU) in 2010 highlighted the role of socio-economic realities in women's lives, such as the competing and often unsupported multiple roles they undertake, and the low status and values that society typically attaches to these roles.¹³ For many of the women participating in DIY Happiness:

'Their whole motivation wasn't to come and learn to be happy, but to come and have some time for themselves.'



¹³ *Working towards Women's Well-being: Unfinished business* (National Mental Health Development Unit, 2010), p.9

Many men also experience mental health and well-being challenges, and are fully deserving of support of the type offered by DIY Happiness. One consultee felt that the project would have been stronger from a community development point of view if it had involved men, perhaps by running a men's group alongside. However, she commented that:

'There was a real need to have a safe space to share issues, and men and women's issues tend to be different. It was important that it was gender specific, and that women got the ball rolling – they have a hub position, a social role.'

Resource considerations would obviously have to be taken into account if the target group for a similar project was widened to include men. However, a mixed gender group would be unlikely to generate the same dynamic between participants as was evident in the DIY Happiness workshops, with a negative impact on other outcomes also likely. Furthermore, there is a practical consideration concerning the choice of workshop activities, as it can be challenging to find something appropriate that interests men and women equally.

3.6.4 Engagement and coordination at the local level

DIY Happiness promoted the workshops to local women in a variety of ways, including: printed material such as posters, flyers and the Well London newsletter; attending community events; and using Well London partners and local organisations as conduits through which awareness could be raised. Word of mouth was central to engaging people, with attendance at the second workshop often higher than the first. The project has also enjoyed some high profile publicity, including coverage on BBC Breakfast and in the Guardian Society supplement.

Each of the Well London partner organisations acts as Borough Coordinator for three or four local areas, taking responsibility for local networking, partnership working and advocacy. This model provided an ideal opportunity for the individual projects to establish links and generate interest in their activities. For DIY Happiness, the process of recruiting workshop participants was a challenging one, due to a lack of capacity and short lead in times prior to commencing delivery in the individual boroughs. As a result, a strong onus was placed on the role of the Borough Coordinators in signposting local connections and opportunities that the project might tap into. Although this worked well in some boroughs, the coordinator position was frequently neglected, in part because the responsibilities attached to it were not uniformly understood, and because it was under resourced with no dedicated income stream attached to it.

In building a programme (or portfolio) of activity for delivery across a wide area – as opposed to a collection of disparate projects – there is clear value in investing in this type of coordinator position: to ensure that partners are committed to the achievement of a common set of objectives and outcomes; that delivery is as joined up as possible; and that opportunities to cement links across the programme, and with other local partners, are maximised.

A further issue with regard to the Well London model concerned the target geographies: twenty highly deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), one in each of the Well London Boroughs. Whilst targeting a small geographical area can be highly effective in addressing localised need, LSOA boundaries rarely reflect 'real' neighbourhoods, and the relatively small population can increase the challenges involved in recruiting local people. This was the experience of DIY Happiness, especially given that many of the women they were seeking to engage were from hard to reach, socially isolated groups. Furthermore, the logistics involved in delivering in twenty separate locations are significant, and in coping with the demands this raised, project resources were spread thinly.

3.6.5 Project design

The nature of the Dare-to-dream element of the project changed significantly over the first two years of delivery, moving from an individually focused model with few restrictions over the sort of ideas that were funded, to an approach that only provided support to plans that would bring wider community benefit. Although there is no doubt that the most successful ventures are bringing ongoing benefit to their local areas, Dare-to-dream has proved to be one of the more contentious areas of the project, generating some tension between workshop participants with competing ideas, and a degree of confusion and frustration due to the lack of clarity resulting from shifting guidelines and boundaries. Initially, there were internal difficulties in purchasing capital items for some of the agreed ideas due to financial and management issues at SLAM, which led to delays in obtaining a credit card.

The project has also had insufficient capacity to support getting Dare-to-dream plans off the ground, although in some instances Well London Borough Coordinators and other local partners have played a pivotal role in this regard. For one of the facilitators:

'It was structured wrongly. We started doing it right from the start, getting people to think about it. There were lots of rules about what could be done, they changed, and it was unclear and difficult to explain. It got in the way of people actually enjoying the sessions.'

From a research point of view, exploration of the 'Can money buy happiness?' concept is valid and interesting, and publicity around the Dare-to-dream grants helped attract people to the workshops; however the concept might have been thought through more carefully from the outset. Although Lottery funding is not the same as public expenditure that draws on tax receipts, political sensitivities nevertheless remain around the purposes to which funding for projects such as DIY Happiness should be put – it is natural to expect concern to be raised over grant allocations that solely benefit an individual recipient and their family. In designing the project, and subsequently amending it, the DIY Happiness team would have benefited from increased and more open dialogue with Well London and Big Lottery Fund staff over the types of usage to which Well-being Programme funds should be put.

3.7 How the project works

3.7.1 About the Well London well-being portfolio

Well London is a £9.5 million programme designed to build stronger communities by encouraging people across London to work together to improve their neighbourhoods and their health and well-being. The programme comprises twenty projects, focused on promoting mental health and well-being, improving healthy eating choices, increasing access to open spaces, encouraging physical activity, and mobilising culture, tradition and creativity in order to enhance well-being. Alongside these projects, additional initiatives seek to build confidence and practical skills by providing opportunities for people to become involved in volunteering and project delivery. These initiatives form part of a wider strategy to sustain the positive outcomes emerging from the work of Well London by empowering communities to continue to improve their health and surroundings once portfolio activities have ceased.

Well London commenced work in 2007; project delivery will cease in 2011, although evaluation and research activity will continue to capture evidence of the extent to which Well London has been effective in reducing health inequalities. This research has formed an integral element of the portfolio, and has generated considerable interest at regional and national levels, from organisations such as the NHS, Medical Research Council and Wellcome Trust.

The Well London Alliance comprises: Arts Council England, London; Central YMCA; Groundwork London; the London Health Commission; London Sustainability Exchange; South London and Maudsley NHS Trust (the DIY Happiness lead organisation); and University of East London. Overall, management responsibility and legal accountability rests with the London Health Commission and the Greater London Authority.

Project delivery is targeted towards twenty LSOAs across London which demonstrate particularly high levels of multiple deprivation¹⁴, with the portfolio aiming to reach 80,000 residents over its lifetime. The main objectives pursued by Well London are:

- ☐ to increase opportunities for making healthy eating choices;
- ☐ to increase uptake of healthy eating choices;
- ☐ to increase opportunities for healthy physical activity;
- ☐ to increase levels of healthy physical activity;
- ☐ to increase mental health and well-being;
- ☐ to encourage more positive community perspectives on mental health and well-being;
- ☐ to enhance mental well-being.¹⁵

¹⁴ Identified through Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data

¹⁵ Taken from *Well London Strategy: delivering Well London* (Well London, 2007), p.15

The portfolio's community development focus also seeks:

- ❑ to increase community capacity to identify health/well-being needs, to leverage existing services and projects, and design and deliver well-being activities;
- ❑ to deliver greater mutual understanding and community cohesion.¹⁶

Alongside these objectives, in keeping with the ethos of DIY Happiness, the portfolio has the broader aim of:

'Giving people the chance to get together and have fun.'¹⁷

3.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

DIY Happiness received £441,000 in funding from the Big Lottery Fund Well-being Programme. In the original application to Well London, two thirds of this funding (£290,000) was earmarked for activities in 2009/10, with relatively little resource dedicated to either the start-up phase in 2007/08 or the final months of delivery in 2010/11.

Data on project spend were not available for this case study, but areas of expenditure included staff salaries and management costs, workshop materials and venue hire, Dare-to-dream grants, and design and production costs, particularly for the happiness game.

Staffing

DIY Happiness was led by a team of non-clinical mental health promotion workers. In addition to the full-time project lead, the Mental Health Promotion Coordinator at SLaM, the Mental Health Promotion Projects Manager for all four of SLaM's Well London projects, and a part-time administrator, provided office support as well as helping to deliver workshops.

Six facilitators were also involved in workshop delivery, recruited from the University of East London MSc in Applied Positive Psychology. They were paid a daily rate to cover workshop delivery and follow-on support, preparation and travel time.

Freelance tutors were engaged on an ad-hoc basis to deliver some of the workshop activities, including flower arranging, reading and laughter yoga.

3.7.3 Project outputs

Many of the original output targets outlined in the 2007 DIY Happiness application to Well London are no longer relevant, due to the changed focus of the project and the discontinuation of the theatre in health performance approach. A summary document produced by project staff states that: 320 women have participated in workshops delivered between 2009 and 2011, with 149 workshops delivered across the 20 Boroughs; and 60 Dare-to-Dream investments have been made.¹⁸

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ <http://www.london.gov.uk/welllondon/about/> (accessed 27 May 2011)

¹⁸ *DIY Happiness – summary* (Well London, 2011), p1. Note that the Camden course, held in spring 2011, was discontinued after a couple of workshops due to an insufficient number of women attending

4 DUDLEY HEALTHY RETAIL

4.1 Introduction

This report details the findings of case study research undertaken by the national evaluators of the Dudley Healthy Retail project, established and run by the Dudley Public Health Department. The project is funded under the Living Well West Midlands portfolio and targets schoolchildren and parents in order to increase the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in a low income area. Ultimately, it is hoped the project will improve attitudes to healthy food and eating.

4.2 Background and rationale

In 2006, Dudley Public Health Department submitted a proposal to the National Social Marketing Centre to become a national demonstration site. The National Social Marketing Centre is a strategic partnership between the Department of Health and the National Consumer Council. It was formed in response to the Government's *'Choosing Health White Paper'* (2004), which made a commitment to a national review of social marketing.

The proposal was successful, and in the same year that Dudley was chosen as a national demonstration site, the Big Lottery Fund's well-being portfolio – Living Well West Midlands – was launched. The Dudley Public Health Food and Nutrition Team then proposed a programme of activities to the portfolio based on a social marketing approach.

Living Well West Midlands is supported by the West Midlands Regional Assembly and is currently in the process of delivering 29 innovative health and well-being projects across 14 locations in the West Midlands. The projects are delivered through a partnership of public, voluntary and private sector organisations, and focus on encouraging people to participate in exercise and eat more healthily in order to improve physical and mental well-being.

Working to ensure that Dudley residents have access to healthy affordable food has a long history in the area. The Dudley Food Network, a joint research project between Dudley Priority Health and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, first started to examine and tackle the issue in 2003. A number of food cooperatives were implemented across the Borough; these cooperatives were predominantly volunteer led and aimed to buy fresh produce in bulk and sell it on at cost price. Unfortunately, due to the intense time involved and heavy commitments on volunteers of retailing fruit and vegetables, the initiative floundered.

As a result, the multi-agency Dudley Food for Health Action Plan (2004-2007) focused on the need to support local shops operating in deprived areas to develop healthy retailing practices. This was reinforced in the Dudley Food for Health Action Plan 2007-2010:

Social marketing is an approach to health improvement and health services design that uses the systematic application of marketing, alongside other concepts and techniques, to achieve specific behavioural goals for a social or public good.¹⁹

Taking a social marketing approach to health improvement is a new approach for Dudley Public Health specialist promotion teams which have traditionally focused upon health inequalities, empowerment and the social determinants of health. This has included advocating for and engaging with individuals and communities to develop social capital and seek changes within systems using participatory techniques. The advantage of social marketing techniques is that they include a very strong health focus and the success of initiatives is measured in terms of behaviour change.

In light of this, before the project was designed in full, a series of research activities were undertaken which ensured that whatever form the project took it would be grounded in local need.

In the 20% most deprived areas in Dudley, primary research was undertaken on levels of fruit and vegetable consumption, and geographic mapping of food retail outlets was also undertaken. Food for Health Advisors also visited food outlets to explore the availability and quality of fresh fruit and vegetables.

¹⁹ French, Blair-Stevens, 2006

Following on from the primary research, three specific research areas were focused on:

- 1) areas characterised by high levels of deprivation;
- 2) areas with perceived poor access to fruit and vegetables;
- 3) areas with low fruit and vegetable consumption.

The geographic areas were Hawbush in Brierley Hill, Gads Green in Dudley, and Fatherless Barn in Halesowen.

Qualitative research was then undertaken in each of the areas, supplemented by stakeholder interviews. The research found that the parent/child dynamic had a major influence on levels of fruit and vegetable consumption. Issues included:

- ☐ many parents not being fully aware of the benefits of consuming fruit and vegetables or how to prepare them;
- ☐ wastage of food and money, with less healthy options easier to prepare;²⁰
- ☐ many families had irregular meal times and a culture of snacking throughout the day;
- ☐ supermarket deals were of utmost importance;
- ☐ vegetables were boring and did not satisfy feelings of hunger.

Further scoping was then undertaken with:

- ☐ parents with children of primary school age;
- ☐ the children themselves;
- ☐ the wider community around the school.

The area ultimately chosen for the project was the Hawbush Estate. This choice was based on several reasons, including that the area had:

- ☐ the highest proportion in the Dudley Borough of Year 5 and 6 pupils who ate only one portion (or less) of fruit and vegetables per day;
- ☐ the highest proportion of overweight and obese children in Year 6;
- ☐ the highest proportion of lone parent households;
- ☐ low proportion of households without access to a vehicle;
- ☐ highest concentration of fast food outlets and takeaways within the Brierley Hill area.

Discussions with the community about potential solutions focused on a mobile shop and a school fruit and vegetable stall. Additional pre-testing was undertaken which concluded that the mobile fruit and vegetable shop was not an option due to the cost and staffing involved which may have had an impact on project sustainability. In light of this research, it was decided that a fruit and vegetable stall, based twice a week in the playground of the Hawbush Primary School, was the preferred option for tackling the underlying rationale for the project.

4.3 Project design and delivery

4.3.1 Objectives

The project's objectives are clearly focused on addressing the underlying rationale and benefiting the target groups for the project, both parents and their children. The fruit and vegetable stall aims to offer the opportunity for parents to access fresh fruit and vegetables at affordable prices on a twice weekly basis during term time. The healthy eating message is reinforced to children in school through healthy cookery classes run by the Dudley Healthy Retail Project Manager. Easy to make recipes using seasonal fruit and vegetables available on the stall (produced in plain English) are also provided with purchases to encourage parents to make healthy meals.

²⁰ Understanding attitudes and perceptions of fruit and vegetables in Dudley: A Qualitative study conducted by the National Social Marketing Centre for Dudley PCT, April 2008

The focus of the project also fits with the wider objectives of the Living Well West Midlands portfolio which are:

- ☐ people and communities having improved well-being by providing a proactive approach to promote positive mental health, physical activity and healthy eating;
- ☐ increasing the capacity of the community and voluntary sector to engage in the well-being agenda and supporting effective partnership working across the public, voluntary and private sector to support children, parents and the wider community;
- ☐ increased sustainability to deliver long term activities that support improvements in mental health, physical activity and healthy eating.

4.3.2 Inputs

The project has received £59,750 of funding from Living Well West Midlands for the two years of project delivery. The project began in December 2007 and will end in November 2010. There is no match funding, although support is received in kind in the form of the teachers time to promote the healthy food message and to encourage parents to use the stall. The head teacher at the school also sits on the steering group for the project and is a positive advocate for the project.

Project expenditure has been divided between staffing costs (although these are still a relatively small proportion of the available budget) and funding for the original research, to ensure the project addresses local need. The fruit and vegetable stallholder also receives a small cash subsidy of £20 twice a week to ensure it is financially viable for him to run the stall.

At the time of writing the case study, the project was slightly behind in terms of project expenditure due to difficulties in recruiting and appointing a suitably qualified individual to take on the project management role, which led to a delay in project spend in this area. A project manager who has the necessary experience to run cookery classes with the children and is also a qualified nutritionist was appointed over the summer of 2009. The project now has the necessary capacity to deliver activities to the full.

4.3.3 Activities

There are two main avenues which the project is taking to increase the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables whilst simultaneously seeking to increase the demand for them in Hawbush. The activities which have been undertaken include:

- ☐ branding;
- ☐ engaging with the local school;
- ☐ sourcing a local fruit and vegetable supplier;
- ☐ developing a service level agreement.

The research which was undertaken by the food and nutrition team at Dudley NHS, and supported by the National Social Marketing Centre, highlighted that cost was always going to be a key factor for parents in whether they decided to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables. In light of this, the project has been branded as 'Bostin Value' – a fresh approach to food. In the Midlands, 'Bostin' is synonymous with the meaning 'great' or 'fantastic'; it is hoped that by branding the project in this manner, parents and children will see the stall as a positive development.

Demand is currently being stimulated through leaflets, free tasters and the provision of free, practical and seasonal food skills sessions. These sessions take place during term time at Hawbush Primary and St. Paul's Community Centre during the school holidays.

Taster sessions have the advantage of offering the opportunity for parents and children to try new foods without worrying about the cost implications or waste. The food skills sessions aim to address skills in the preparation and cooking of seasonal fruits and vegetables, and to address the cost issue by exploring budgeting ideas and ways of cooking cheap meals using leftovers.



A local greengrocer has been contracted to supply fruit and vegetables at the school and community centre in line with the timings of the practical sessions. Special promotions, such as special offers, ready made up bags of fruit and vegetables, and recipe cards for quick and easy meals, are also available.

4.3.4 Target beneficiaries

There are currently two target beneficiary groups for the project: the parents of children at the school; and the primary schoolchildren attending the school. It can also be argued that the fruit and vegetable stallholder is a beneficiary of the project, as the project is offering a business opportunity, although a subsidy for the stall is needed as profits are not large. The stallholder has extended his reach by supplying to a local community centre close to the school, which in turn has boosted the stallholder's profits and enabled the users of the community centre to access affordable fruit and vegetables locally.

In the longer term, it may be the case that the wider community surrounding the primary school benefits, as the local shops start to stock fresh fruit and vegetables as demand rises.

4.4 Performance

4.4.1 Outputs

The project's outputs focus on practical steps taken for the project to start implementing and delivering activities. Examples include:

- ❑ six focus groups to scope the need and demand for the intervention in the original three target areas;
- ❑ the establishment of a project steering group;
- ❑ 21 stakeholder interviews;
- ❑ production of a scoping report;
- ❑ questionnaire development to evaluate the impact of the project upon adults in the area;
- ❑ development of project branding and marketing material;
- ❑ development of food diaries for local children.

4.4.2 Outcomes

The project is starting to produce outcomes for its target groups. The schoolchildren are benefiting from the healthy food message through the food preparation classes in school, and the fact that they receive one fresh piece of fruit a week through a government scheme implemented by the school.

Some of the schoolchildren's parents have participated in the parental cookery classes, leading to them trying healthier recipes at home, which the children have benefited from. Several children consulted as part of the case study research said they could now cook simple recipes from scratch. There was also a broad understanding that fruit and vegetables were a healthy option and something which could be chosen other than crisps and chocolate.

There was also a broad understanding among the children that fruit and vegetables made them stronger and had a knock-on effect in terms of enabling them to participate in physical exercise:

'I always have a piece of fruit before I go to my boxing club because it gives me energy.'

Several parents consulted as part of the case study research said they were using the stall to top-up on fruit and vegetables as a supplement to their weekly shop. Many parents do not have access to a car, and research cited the cost of bus fare was a barrier to buying fresh fruit and vegetables twice a week; the stall is therefore providing an opportunity for parents who would not normally be able to buy fresh food locally to do so.

The stall first started to offer produce at the school shortly before the summer holidays, thus it is still relatively early in the project delivery to comment on outcomes. The Project Manager has started to come up against barriers to parents using the stalls, with price being the main issue; initiatives to demonstrate that the stall is competitive with supermarkets, such as price comparison offers, are planned. To what extent this is a fact or a perception on behalf of parents will need to be addressed before the stall can reach more people.

4.4.3 Impact on wider conditions

The project has been working with a fresh produce consultant who, in the research stage of the project, visited shops local to the school to examine the quality (where available) of fresh fruit and vegetables. The quality was found to be poor and the cost prohibitive to encouraging local people to make purchases.

Since the stallholder has been visiting the school, local small retailers have started to raise concerns that the stall is taking away from their business; however it is difficult to state that this is the case due to the lack of fresh fruit and vegetables available in the shops in the first instance.

In the future, once demand has been sufficiently stimulated, the fresh produce consultant and stallholder plan to work with the shop holders in order to encourage them to stock affordable fresh produce. In this sense, the possibility definitely exists for the project to impact on wider conditions.

4.4.4 Equality and diversity

The residents of Hawbush are predominantly of White ethnic backgrounds; the backgrounds of the children and parents benefiting from the cookery classes and using the stall reflect this.

4.4.5 Additionality and sustainability

The project steering group is taking a very practical approach to both the delivery of the project and potential plans for future replication and sustainability. The project is set to continue until November 2010 and a proportion of project time to date has been spent on research and consultation; this is a strength of the project, enabling it to become established on solid foundations, based on local knowledge and need.

The project is certainly producing additionality for parents who would struggle (outside the supermarkets) to find fresh fruit and vegetables locally. One of the project's strengths is that it is not only increasing supply, but working on increasing demand through project related activities, such as cookery classes for parents. Benefits are also gained from individuals in the community centre, for whom the stallholder visits on the same day as the school.

Although the schoolchildren would get a limited number of cookery classes as part of the curriculum, they certainly wouldn't be in receipt of as many without the presence of the Project Manager. These classes will also undoubtedly benefit from the delivery of a qualified nutritionist.

Monitoring and evaluation will continue to be undertaken in a systematic manner and, if demand for fresh fruit and vegetables increases, it will suit the fruit and vegetable seller to continue to visit the school. There is also the possibility of local shops stocking fresh fruit and vegetables once they have worked with the fresh produce consultant; however if demand remains low the project team will seek to learn from this experience and seek other avenues to pursue.

4.5 Processes

4.5.1 Partnership working and the delivery approach

Taking into account the historical approach to providing access to affordable fruit and vegetables in Dudley, a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary steering group was formed in December 2007 to lead the project, who subsequently played a role in guiding the initial scoping phase. As the project developed, it was recognised that some members of the group would not be required to play as prominent a role.

The partnership now consists of the National Social Research Marketing Centre, the Head Teacher from Hawbush Primary School, a fresh produce consultant, and Dudley Primary Care Trust, comprising: food and nutrition; public health information; and public health PR and marketing officer.

The steering group has been a key strength of the project, guiding its work from project inception to the present, and supporting an approach to flexible delivery which has allowed the Project Manager to try new avenues and means of engaging parents.

The project's relationship with Living Well West Midlands has been good and mainly limited to monitoring visits.

4.5.2 Publicity, promotion and engagement

The project has a proportion of its budget set aside for publicity and promotion and is constantly seeking new avenues of engagement with parents. The project has produced flyers advertising the fruit and vegetable stall and simple recipe cards which are given out to parents who use the stall.

The project team are also considering other ways of attracting more parents to the stall, including giving away raffle tickets to win a mountain bike with every purchase. Two assistants (who are also parents) to the fruit and vegetable stall are also in the process of being appointed. Working on the same days the stall is at the school they will speak to parents in the playground and take free samples to encourage them to buy.

The project is also tying together the cookery classes for the pupils while seeking to engage with parents by offering samples of food the children have made during the school day; however despite these efforts, at this early stage the project is struggling to get parents to buy from the stall.

4.5.3 Monitoring and evaluation

The project submits quarterly monitoring reports to Living Well West Midlands, quarterly updates to GHK Living Well West Midlands portfolio level evaluators, and an intensive evaluation is underway run by the National Social Marketing Centre. This evaluation is focusing on:

- ❑ **parents** – self completion questionnaires have been completed in order to collect baseline data. These aim to measure consumption, variety, perceived wastage of fruit and vegetables, and confidence in preparation skills associated with cooking. This data was analysed by a researcher at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. These questionnaires will be repeated at intervals of six and twelve months;
- ❑ **teachers** – in-depth interviews are planned with teachers in order to gather qualitative information on the food skills sessions and children's engagement with these;
- ❑ **measuring sales** – sales (in terms of volume and cash) of fruit and vegetables from the stall are being monitored via stock sheets. In depth interviews will be conducted with the supplier and structured verbal questionnaires with customers in order to ascertain the types of people using the stall, what is being purchased, and any changes which are taking place in people's fruit and vegetable routines.

The baseline data was collected before the school summer break and will be repeated again before Christmas 2009 in order to monitor change over time. The project was also nominated by Consumer Focus and the National Social Marketing Centre to win an award at the Social Marketing Learning Demonstration Sites Awards Ceremony at the House of Lords. Dudley Primary Care Trust Public Health and Nutrition Team attended the awards and were one of the successful nominees.

4.6 Conclusions

4.6.1 Key lessons

It is still relatively early days for the project in terms of the measurement of outcomes for parents and children of Hawbush Primary School; however an extensive period of research took place before the project started in order to match local need with project provision. The project has evolved from an original concept of working with local shopkeepers to increase their provision of fresh fruit and vegetables, to providing a stall and complimentary cookery classes (for both children and parents) in a community setting.

Taking the social marketing approach has been useful in that the initial hypothesis for the project, providing access to healthy food, was a driver of consumption; however research with residents and stakeholders highlighted the influence the parent/child dynamic has on fruit and vegetable consumption. This can be evident in both a positive and negative sense: negative in terms of 'pester power' for sweets and chocolate; and positive in terms of children asking for fruit. This is borne out by research undertaken by the national evaluators. Some children reported hearing their friends asking parents for fruit from the stall, but were told it was too expensive.

As part of the research for this case study, the national evaluators spoke with parents who had not yet used the stall. Reasons for not using the stall included not liking fruit and cost:

'I just don't like fruit, I'd rather eat crisps.'

To what extent this is a perception rather than a reality remains to be seen; however it is an issue which is constantly being tackled by the project team (e.g. most recently through the promotion of price comparison on the stall with leading supermarket prices).

The flexibility to constantly keep trying new ways to engage with parents and children is a key strength of the project and a supportive steering group has assisted in the project's development. The project still has over a year of delivery left and it is likely that it will start to make inroads with those parents who are reluctant to approach the stall. Hawbush Primary School was chosen because of early project research which highlighted that the area scored highly on a range of indicators relating to levels of healthy eating and negative attitudes to fruit and vegetables. In light of this, the project is working with one of the most hard to reach groups; therefore it is unsurprising that it will take time to shift behaviour.

For those using the stall, there are a range of benefits of having access to fresh fruit and vegetables, providing a place to top up during the week when paying to get to the supermarket twice a week may not be an option. Children at the school are benefiting from the healthy eating message which is reinforced by the healthy cookery classes.

4.6.2 Opportunities for the future

There are several avenues open to the project in the future. If the stallholder starts to make sufficient profit through visiting the school, the £20 a visit project subsidy could be withdrawn. The plan is to implement this from November 2010, but this will be dependent on increased demand, sales and profit margins.

In a sense, this is a pilot project that is taking an approach that has not been undertaken before, and seeking new avenues is part of the process of getting parents to buy fresh produce and cook recipes from scratch. If the project is found to be successful, the model definitely has the scope to be rolled out to other schools in similar areas.

The work of the project has almost come full circle, in that the local shopkeepers whose businesses are closest to the school have started to complain that they feel the stall is taking away from their sales. As previously stated, this is difficult to understand as research by the fresh produce consultant at the start of the project indicated the supply of fresh fruit and vegetables was poor or non-existent eighteen months ago. However, this has provided an opportunity for the project to engage with the shopkeepers who can now gain access to the fresh produce consultant's services and who may start to stock fresh fruit and vegetables as part of the project's exit strategy.

5 FAMILY COOKERY

5.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with nef to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen case studies that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more information about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#). The Family Cookery project is part of Chances4Change, the South East of England's portfolio of well-being projects.

Family Cookery is run by the Sunshine Centre, a Sure Start centre for children and families in Banbury. The centre aims to provide support and services for families in deprived areas of Banbury, and to help people improve their health and well-being.

5.2 Project need

The project is designed to reduce the impact of deprivation, exclusion and health inequalities on families in the Banbury area. Family Cookery targets 'at risk' groups and aims to address the following issues:

- ❑ **poor health** – Family Cookery aims to improve health by providing adults and children with the skills and knowledge to make healthier choices through simple and affordable ways to change their diets;
- ❑ **social isolation** – the project aims to reach out to isolated families through activities which are designed to encourage positive social interaction and provide opportunities to build stronger relationships within the family and wider community;
- ❑ **low self-confidence** – by helping people acquire new skills, both in the kitchen and socially, the project aims to improve the confidence and self-esteem of participants in their wider lives and encourage them to feel more able to contribute to their community;
- ❑ **access to support** – the Family Cookery team see the courses they run as a way of connecting with 'at risk' or isolated families and providing week by week support. Building this relationship is particularly important for target families who may be in need of more in depth or longer term support. It is hoped a positive experience with Family Cookery activities may encourage families to attend the Sunshine Centre more regularly and to feel comfortable approaching the centre for support with specific concerns or needs.

5.3 Activities

The project activities are designed to provide opportunities for families to develop skills and confidence in cooking healthy food, for them to engage with one another, and to become comfortable interacting with the project staff.

The main activity is the delivery of courses teaching families how to cook together. The courses run for one term (in the school year) and consist of weekly classes teaching basic cookery skills to small groups of parents and their children. Each week of the course covers a different meal idea, and the recipes are designed to:

- ❑ be simple to follow and recreate at home;
- ❑ contain aspects that can involve the children;
- ❑ use relatively few ingredients;
- ❑ use easily available and affordable ingredients;
- ❑ create healthy meals.

The Family Cookery team has also run one day events, such as the 'Picnic Bus' family day out, where families came together on the morning of the event to cook and prepare a picnic lunch. The menu was carefully designed to provide a variety of ideas for healthy and tasty food for lunch boxes and snacks, and to show how simply these could be put together. The families then travelled on a bus provided by Cherwell District Council to share and enjoy the picnic they created. Afterwards, the families took part in some outdoor games.

5.4 Impact

As part of this study, we spoke to the Family Cookery team at the Sunshine Centre, the cookery teacher, and a number of families. The discussions identified a range of positive outcomes linked to healthy diets, family life, well-being and self-confidence. These are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

5.4.1 Improved diet and understanding of healthy eating

Overwhelmingly, the beneficiaries said that since starting the cookery course they cooked freshly prepared meals more often; even those who had not often cooked at home had tried making at least one or two of the recipes from the classes. Those who had cooked regularly before attending the course commented that they had learnt new meal ideas or used new ingredients:

'I cook new things now. I really like a couple [of the recipes] we've done.'

Healthy eating outcomes are being monitored through the project's self-evaluation activities for the Chances4Change portfolio level evaluation being managed by Building Blocks²¹. The 2010 end of year report indicates that as the project intended, beneficiaries are making healthy changes to their diets. Before involvement in the project, the average number of days a week on which families had eaten fresh fruit or vegetables was five; after involvement this average was seven, and in total 51% of those who were evaluated²² had increased their score.

One parent described the difficulties she experienced trying to persuade her children to eat healthier food. She was finding the course helpful because the support of Family Cookery and the other families on the course was starting to get the message across:

'I wish my kids would eat better but it's difficult as their parent, sometimes they are more likely to listen to other people.'

At the beginning of each course some children were very reluctant to try new foods, but by the end they were trying all the dishes being prepared in the classes. For these children in particular, the project has been successful in introducing families to new and healthier ingredients and meal choices:

'We had kids coming in at the start who hardly ate anything; by the time the five or six weeks were up they were eating the whole meal. We consider that a win.'

5.4.2 Stronger family relations

For some families, taking part in Family Cookery had been the first time the family had ever sat down and eaten together. This had been a positive experience and several families have commented that since being involved they try to eat together more regularly at home. Other families found that, as well as learning new cooking skills, the course helped them discover how cookery could be made into a fun, social activity they could do together as a family:

'I think it's important to learn to cook when you're young and it's nice to do with the kids.'

'I cooked before at home but I didn't really know how to get the kids involved.'

The one day activities, such as the picnic bus, were particularly good at engaging the whole family whereas in most cases only one parent attended the cookery course. However, on one course, two parents had taken it in turns to participate so that both were able to pick up new skills and spend some quality time with the children:

'We had a family where one week the mum came and the next week the dad, so it was the whole family getting cooking.'

²¹ Building Blocks is a project in the Chances4Change portfolio but maintains distance by being separate from the main portfolio management

²² 37 parents were involved in the evaluation, out of 53 who were involved in the activity

The beneficiaries we spoke to had all recreated at least some of the recipes used on the course at home, meaning some of the health benefits were extended to family members who had not participated. Families who cook or eat more together at home after being part of Family Cookery also felt this had led to improvements in the relationships between family members. This is an important legacy for Family Cookery; through their participation, many families cook, eat and socialise more together, leading to social and health benefits which are being sustained beyond their involvement with the project.

5.4.3 Enhanced social well-being

Family Cookery activities combine the promotion of healthy eating with situations designed to facilitate social interaction. Fostering improved relationships, and reducing isolation and exclusion are some of the project's key aims. Some of the softer outcomes being reported by beneficiaries indicate that Family Cookery was able to meet these objectives. Participants were very enthusiastic about the course as a social event. Friendships and support networks which had developed between the families were felt to be one of the main benefits of participating:

'We're friends in the group and we help each other.'

For many families, the course is a valued opportunity to socialise and the classes become an event in the week which participants look forward to. Once involvement ends, the participants lose this regular social activity and support from Sunshine Centre staff. At the close of one course, beneficiaries commented:

'I'll really miss it; I don't know what I'll do next week.'

'I came for the girls. They think it's great and it's been good for them, but I've really enjoyed myself too.'

After participants finish the course some of these social benefits also end; however some families stay in contact and sustain the new friendships they have made. In particular, several families on one course became such good friends through Family Cookery that they have continued to cook and eat together at least once a month, often recreating the recipes they learnt on the course.

5.4.4 Increased confidence and self esteem

Of particular note is the impact on the confidence and self-esteem of participants. Several of the beneficiaries we spoke to had become confident enough to adapt recipes from the course. Parents became more confident in their ability to cook from scratch and make healthy choices for the family:

'I'm not much of a cook but they make you confident.'

'I could cook a bit before, but pastry and things like that I couldn't. Now look, I'm doing it!'

The effects of this confidence extended beyond cookery. One particular example is a beneficiary, whose increased confidence helped her to develop new leadership skills, becoming a mentor for others on the course. She had been referred to the project by Social Services and was initially uninterested in the idea of a cookery course. However, she turned up and participated fully, gaining confidence quickly and became so supportive of the other participants that the Sunshine Centre team wrote to Social Services praising the progress she had made:

'[At first] she really did not want to come, but she got involved and enjoyed the cooking. The next week another family joined and she really took it upon herself to help them find things in the kitchen... she found confidence she didn't know she had.'

5.4.5 Wider impacts on communities

The project also aims to promote healthier eating in the wider community. There is some evidence of this happening; parents taking part in the courses often mentioned that they share the recipes and advice from Family Cookery with friends and other parents at their children's schools. Depending on how often these recipes are used and whether they are passed further along, Family Cookery could be having a multiplier effect on healthy eating and cookery, with recipes being passed through social networks. The team hope that the project will disseminate knowledge and ideas for healthy snacks and lunch boxes among the families of children in the two host primary schools.

5.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why Family Cookery has proved successful.

5.5.1 Flexible content

On each cooking course the recipes are tailored to the participants, meaning the recipes are pitched at the right level of cooking ability and include family members with allergies or special dietary requirements. This has included providing recipes for Halal and Coeliac diets. Family Cookery tries, where possible, to accommodate requests to include recipes for specific dishes. The extra effort to ensure that recipes will be useful to the families in the group is something that is highly valued by the beneficiaries:

'They've been really good at including me in the class. After all, why learn to cook something I can't eat?'

'I asked about doing this last week, I thought it was something nice the kids could join in with.'

As the course progresses, each family builds up a folder of the recipes used on the course, making it easy for beneficiaries to recreate the dishes at home. Recipes can be daunting for those who do not feel they can cook proficiently, but the Family Cookery format helps to overcome this barrier. Recipes are selected or adapted so that each one consists of just a few, easy to follow steps. The cookery teacher and Sunshine Centre project staff work closely together to make sure the recipes are healthy, affordable and contain short lists of ingredients. Family Cookery introduces families to new ingredients and meal ideas, and because they only use ingredients which are widely available, the recipes are accessible and achievable for families to recreate at home:

'Normally, you'd just look at a recipe and think it's too hard but this one, it's just four ingredients... they start easy and it builds you up.'

'They use the things you can easily get in at home.'

5.5.2 Targeted delivery

Family Cookery is an inclusive project and the team endeavour to include any family expressing an interest in the activities. At the same time, they target recruitment toward families and children in the Banbury area who are identified as being in need of extra support and who may be socially isolated. This is intended to assist in achieving the project's aims of addressing the damaging impact of deprivation on families and improving their diet and nutrition.

Family Cookery achieves this by engaging participants through word of mouth and referrals from schools, Social Services, health providers and other local Sure Start centres. The referral process is aimed at those families who, because of their social isolation, are unlikely to be in the networks reached through word of mouth.

The Family Cookery project shows a good understanding of the communities it seeks to engage (e.g. activities are free of charge, making it more likely that deprived and isolated families will feel able to participate). The ingredients used are inexpensive and readily available in the local shops, ensuring that families will be able to make the dishes at home. The recipes are chosen to be easy to read and follow, which is ideal for the children and reassuring for parents who are not used to cooking dishes from basic ingredients. To help those with low self-confidence feel able to participate, the Sunshine Centre provides a high level of support for families during recruitment and once they are involved in Family Cookery activities.

5.5.3 Accessible courses

The project worked hard to help families overcome barriers to engagement. The courses have run in three local venues: the Sunshine Centre; and two Banbury primary schools. This provides options of different times and locations so families are able to select a course which is convenient for them to attend. The team works closely with the two primary schools to identify families or children who may be in need of support, thus in many cases children can attend straight from school. The venues are also chosen to offer a familiar and non-threatening environment in which to participate.

Family Cookery estimates that around a third of all beneficiaries were from the target group; whilst the project initially struggled to recruit participants, both word of mouth and referrals increased towards the end of the funded period, as families and service providers became more aware of the project's activities and the associated benefits.

Many of the outcomes experienced by beneficiaries arise directly as a result of the social and family orientated format of the project's activities. The children tended to be more willing to try new foods when they were involved in the cookery. Including both children and parents in the activities meant two generations of the family learning to cook and socialise together, helping prevent childcare becoming a barrier to participation. With the cookery course, parents knew they had the support of the Family Cookery team and that the children would be eating well, having fun and learning new skills:

'No one wants to look after them after school; everyone has been working and are exhausted.'

'Here they're making things and having fun... at other classes you'd have to find somewhere to put them like a crèche.'

The connection made with some of the families is an important part of what the project has achieved. Relationships of trust and respect have been built between families and the support staff, even in cases where people have been very reluctant to engage with the activity. This rapport makes it more likely families will engage with support or even seek out services. In this way, the progress made by Family Cookery could prove invaluable in helping to further reduce the impacts of inequality and deprivation.

5.5.4 Addresses a gap in provision

If the Family Cookery programme had not gone ahead, it appears that many of the benefits described above would have been lost. Cherwell District Council had previously run basic cookery courses; however these finished before Family Cookery began. Other basic cookery or healthy eating courses are available in the area, but the Family Cookery activities stand apart from these in a number of ways:

- ☐ there is a choice of times and local venues;
- ☐ the recipes are tailored to the needs of each group;
- ☐ parents and children participate together;
- ☐ the classes are free of charge.

Participants commented that without the class they would not have made changes to their diets or taken up a different activity:

'If we weren't here, do you know where we'd be, just sat at home.'

5.6 Recommendations for the future

- ☐ There may be a benefit from forging further partnerships to sustain the project activity and to link into other well-being and health services in the area.
- ☐ Referrals and targeted outreach to families is one of the project's strengths and, if at all possible, should be retained for the future.
- ☐ Engaging parents and children together has proved to be a successful approach, with changes in the healthy eating behaviour being reinforced within the family.
- ☐ Training volunteers to teach and lead their own family cookery groups may be a way for the centre to continue to provide activities after the funding ends. This would be an excellent next step for people who progress on the course, but it would mean less direct contact between Family Cookery beneficiaries and the Sunshine Centre's staff. This contact has been important in building people's trust and willingness to engage with support.

- ❑ With well-being and happiness moving up the political agenda, there may be opportunities for the Sunshine Centre to grow its relationships with Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council²³, which recently identified Banbury as in particular need of targeted assistance in health and social inclusion.
- ❑ The Sunshine Centre should continue to develop the relationship with the NHS healthy eating project, and look for similar opportunities as they arise. Healthy eating interventions may be of interest to local GP surgeries when their expected powers to commission health services are brought in.

5.7 How the project works

5.7.1 About the Chances4Change portfolio

The Family Cookery project is managed and delivered by the Sunshine Centre, which alongside the cookery classes provides a wide range of services for children and families. The project contributes to the healthy eating theme of the Chances4Change portfolio.

Chances4Change is run by the South East Coast Strategic Health Authority and consists of 62 projects across the South East which aim to help and encourage people of all ages to eat more healthily, be more active, and improve their mental well-being. The portfolio received £5.6 million from the Big Lottery Fund Well-being Programme. The focus of the portfolio is to address hidden health inequalities in the South East and improve the health and well-being of the region's people.

5.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

The Family Cookery project received £20,000 of funding from Chances4Change; this was to be spent over a three year period, which came to an end on 31 December 2010. The funding has been primarily used to contract the teacher for the family cookery course, and to provide ingredients and basic cookery equipment for all project activities. There were no further sources of funding, although the Sunshine Centre has input significantly into the project. This has included the time committed by two staff to manage and deliver the project, and for the use of its facilities as one venue for the cookery courses.

Staffing

Delivery of the project has been coordinated between the two members of the project team from the Sunshine Centre and a contracted cookery teacher. Recipes for the activities are supplied by the cookery teacher and agreed with the team at the Sunshine Centre, in terms of their fit with the families involved and the project's healthy eating aims. Organisation of the activities, venues and support has been the responsibility of the Sunshine Centre team. Family Cookery has been run by an experienced team from the Sunshine Centre which has provided similar activities in the past; as a result, the project has not been significantly involved with other Chances4Change projects or the portfolio itself, with the exception of some assistance designing self-evaluation tools that fit with the portfolio as a whole.

Whilst the Sunshine Centre is the sole organisation delivering the project, there has been some involvement of outside organisations. This has included initial contact and support from the Chances4Change portfolio. Two local primary schools have hosted cookery courses, giving the Family Cookery project access to their kitchens and facilities. Finally, Cherwell District Council provided the bus for the picnic bus activity.

5.7.3 Project outputs

The Chances4Change funding for the Family Cookery project ran until 31 December 2010; by this time, the full £20,000 had been spent. Overall, 392 beneficiaries have been reached by Family Cookery; this figure includes both parents and children involved in Family Cookery courses or activities.

²³ Oxfordshire Children's and Young People's Plan 2010-2013

6 AGE UK SOUTH LAKELAND

6.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with the new economics foundation (nef) to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen which will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

The Fit as a Fiddle South Lakeland project is one of a number of projects within the Age UK portfolio. The research for the case study was undertaken in February 2012 and involved consultation with Age UK South Lakeland's Hugh Tomlinson (Chief Executive), Dave Thompson (Services Manager), Sue Rimmer (Helpline and Coordinator of 'happy and active' events) and Terry Williams (Community Officer). A number of beneficiaries were also consulted who had participated in armchair aerobics and intergenerational projects.

The project has also participated in the survey element of the National Well-being Evaluation, for which a selection of results have been incorporated into this case study. A desk review of key data and documentation relating to the project was also undertaken.

At the national level, Fit as a Fiddle aims to support older people aged 50+ by improving their physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being. It has received £15.1 million of funding from the Big Lottery and has delivered projects across all nine English regions. Fit as a Fiddle South Lakeland is primarily run by Age UK South Lakeland, comprising over 50 staff and 200 volunteers. The organisation's services cover the whole of South Lakeland, a predominantly rural area which can lend itself to older people suffering from isolation. Age UK South Lakeland provides tailored information and advice for older people, campaigns and organises village drop-ins and lunch clubs, and works with older people in order that they can remain independent – living in their own homes wherever possible whilst maintaining a good quality of life.

Funding from the Big Lottery has been used to provide a raft of activities for older people across South Lakeland, including at home assessments, armchair aerobics, intergenerational activities and community events.

6.2 Project need

The project was established in order to address a number of key issues pertinent to the health and well-being of older people across the South Lakeland area.

6.2.1 Improving the eating habits of older people

Fit as a Fiddle South Lakeland has sought to improve the eating habits of older people, many of whom live alone and find it easy to slip into poor food habits. The project has sought to introduce older people to new foods and to remind participants of the links between good food and positive levels of well-being. This element of the project fits particularly well with Age UK's National Strategy, which has one strand dedicated to promoting the benefits of healthy eating amongst older people.

6.2.2 Increasing levels of physical activity amongst older people

The project has also sought to increase levels of physical activity amongst older people through delivering armchair aerobics. Project staff estimate that in the first week of a five week armchair exercise programme, 60% of participants are unable to stand up from their chair unaided; this falls to only 25% at the end of week five.

Improving levels of physical activity amongst older people is important to improve muscle strength and balance; which in turn increases levels of physical confidence. This element of the project also shows strategic fit with other objectives of Age UK, providing opportunities for the organisation to speak with groups about fall prevention. Anecdotal evidence from district nurses within South Lakeland suggests that, since the project began, they have had fewer referrals from health professionals regarding older people who have experienced falls.

6.2.3 Creating opportunities for older people to interact with others and improve levels of social well-being

A key element of the project has been intergenerational work and providing information to older people on services available to them locally. Both elements have been designed to provide opportunities for socialising and interacting with people with whom older people may not ordinarily come into contact with. This is recognised by the team at Age UK as an important part of the project as it enables older people to feel more connected, involved and valued within the communities in which they live. These types of activities can contribute towards improving levels of social well-being; this is particularly crucial given the distinctly rural geography of an area such as the South Lakes.

6.3 Activities

Fit as a Fiddle South Lakeland has delivered a range of activities which have been designed to improve the lives of older people across the area through providing opportunities for exercise, eating more healthily, increasing occasions for social interaction (including with those from younger generations) and providing information and advice for older people on health and well-being issues.

6.3.1 Armchair aerobics

Classes have been held for older people in residential care homes and in community venues throughout South Lakeland. Classes run once a week for five or six weeks and older people participate in seated exercises designed to improve strength, movement and mobility. Classes are run by workers from Age UK South Lakeland, but wherever possible volunteer leaders from within groups are recruited to continue to arrange and lead classes once the initial period of support from Age UK has ended.

Classes are free and the project has worked with South Lakeland Housing in order to engage with older people in their network of care homes. Other sources of referrals have included GPs and COPD (heart and lung specialist) nurses. It is estimated that over 3,000 older people have been reached through this strand of the project.

6.3.2 Happy and active events

Fit as a Fiddle has also used project funding to deliver 'happy and active' events across South Lakeland. These events have been used as a means of providing information to older people living in rural locations as to the services available to them. They have also been used as a means of providing older people with opportunities to sample activities which help to improve their well-being. Age UK has worked with a number of partners to deliver events, including local charities, the fire service, the police, and local and district councils.

On average, the events have been held every two to three months throughout the past four years in community venues; Age UK has also provided transport to events for older people if needed. Village agents (who are not funded through this specific project but are employed for ten hours a week by Age UK to engage with older people in rural areas and connect them to services) have been used to spread the word about 'happy and active' events.

'Happy and active' events have been used to enable older people to undertake taster sessions in activities available locally, which could improve their well-being. Taster sessions have included tai chi in the Alexander technique and aromatherapy.

6.3.3 Intergenerational work – 'The way we were'

A further strand of the project has been 'The way we were' element, which has seen older people in primary schools throughout South Lakeland, working predominantly with the under 5's. This element of the project has been coordinated by Age UK staff who have linked older people with schools. The aim of the project is to encourage older people to try something they would not normally do and encourage children to learn from them. Activities which have taken place as part of this strand have varied, from older people talking about their remembrances (e.g. the Second World War or living next door to Beatrix Potter) to activities focusing on food, with pupils being shown how to bake bread or make butter using traditional utensils and methods.

6.4 Impact

We consulted a range of beneficiaries, volunteers, staff and stakeholders as part of this evaluation who highlighted that the Fit as a Fiddle project was generating a very wide range of positive outcomes. These are explored in more detail below.

6.4.1 Increasing awareness and importance of healthy eating

This has been an important element of the project and impacts are particularly evident through strands such as 'The way we were' and exercise classes. In terms of 'The way we were', Age UK staff have worked with the Healthy Schools Coordinator for Carlisle who has commented that:

'The Age Concern project has been fantastic. It has brought food alive for the children in the schools, helping them to explore and understand where food comes from – how it's made and what it tastes like. They have learnt about the history of food, and about different life experiences, cultures and backgrounds. Healthy eating as a topic can turn adults and children off as they think it is boring, this approach certainly hasn't.'

One legacy from the project will be the creation of a recipe book of traditional recipes from the area.

The way we were – Ambleside and Langdale

In Ambleside and Langdale, 'The way we were' focused on food themed activities. Again, initial reminiscences included one of the older volunteers recalling how they met Beatrix Potter when they were a small child, which led to food activities at Ambleside Primary School, including making apple pie and smoothie tasting. The remembrances led to an audio recording being made of the stories of meeting Beatrix Potter, using the words of the older people but read by one of the younger children.



In Langdale, themes around 'celebrating the land' were developed between older and young people. Local themes, such as sheep farming and felt making, were learnt about. Vegetables from the school's vegetable patch were used to bake carrot cakes and make a healthy stir fry. Comments about the session included:

'It was good to meet some of the older people in Langdale who I hadn't met already and the cooking has been good fun as well. It's got the children eating vegetables they don't normally eat, so that's always a good thing. I've really enjoyed it!'

A selection of participants in exercise classes have also completed the questionnaires from the national evaluation. Although healthy eating is not a primary focus of the Fit as a Fiddle project, the results of the survey have shown that when older people started the course of exercises, 79% of participants did not enjoy putting effort into their food and 38% were below the recommended levels of five a day for fruit and vegetable intake. However, by the end of the five or six week period, it was evident that participating in exercise on a regular basis had had an impact on improving attitudes to eating more healthily, particularly in terms of the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed.

6.4.2 Improving levels of physical mobility

The armchair aerobic element of the project has been particularly successful in improving levels of physical mobility amongst participants. As stated earlier, it is estimated that this part of the project has reached over 3,000 people and health professionals locally have reported anecdotally that they feel as though they have dealt with a lower number of referrals caused by falls since the project has been operational. The ability to get in and out of a chair independently and to move confidently within the home environment is crucial in improving the quality of life for older people. The project has certainly helped many older people in this.

As part of the national evaluation survey work, evidence suggests that older people who participated in armchair aerobics saw statistically significant improvements in their enjoyment of undertaking physical activity as a result of their involvement with the project.

6.4.3 Increasing opportunities to improve levels of social well-being

It can be argued that all elements of the project contribute towards increasing feelings of social well-being and connectedness amongst older people. The 'happy and active' events have provided an opportunity for older people living in the same village to come together, socialise and sample activities available locally which will improve their well-being and provide them with opportunities to socialise on a regular basis.

Armchair aerobics have enabled older people from the same communities, sheltered housing schemes and care homes to come together once a week to participate in exercise; this has led to people socialising on a more frequent basis, despite having lived in the same accommodation for long periods of time. People participating in armchair aerobics were more likely to feel more connected to their community as a result of participating in sessions.

6.4.4 Valuing older people in society through intergenerational projects

Connected to increasing levels of social well-being has been the fact that older and younger people have come together through the project in a variety of shared activities, such as historical remembrances, food growing, healthy cooking and craft activities. This has provided both older and younger generations with the opportunity to socialise and learn from one another, which has been of significant benefit to both groups. There have been a number of unexpected long term benefits to this element of the project, including primary schoolchildren going into sheltered housing to sing for the residents, older people going into schools to have lunch with the children once a week, and the creation of a book of traditional recipes specific to the South Lakes area.

The way we were – Crosscrake, South Lakes

In Crosscrake, a rural area in the South Lakes, the project was coordinated by a community artist, employed by Age UK and delivered through a small group of active older people made up of community members who lived near the local primary school. Five sessions were run in total at the school, the first of which was a reminiscences session, which led to other activities, predominantly based on making food using traditional recipes, methods and utensils. The children were shown how to bake bread, make butter and use the butter to make shortbread. The food was made and eaten together and gave the young children an idea of where local food came from.



One of the older volunteers commented:

'The interaction between the children and the adults was lovely to watch. The look on the children's faces in the butter making session, the surprise on their faces when the cream made butter, they really enjoyed the food they made, they ate so much! Often, there seemed to be no gap in the ages – the children and adults were equally engrossed in what they were doing.'

6.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why Fit as a Fiddle has proved successful.

6.5.1 A strong understanding of the needs of older people

The project has benefited from a strong understanding of the specific needs of older people in the South Lakes area. This has resulted in the creation of a project which has been able to meet the specific needs of older people, whilst meeting both the strategic aims of Age UK, the Fit as Fiddle portfolio, and the Big Lottery's wider Well-being Programme.

6.5.2 Commitment and variety of staff involved with project delivery

The project has been delivered by a variety of different staff team members, some of whom work on the project full time. Different staff roles include: community workers; armchair aerobic leaders; a contracted arts and cultural schools engagement officer; and an organiser of the 'happy and active' events. This team have kept the needs of older people at the heart of their activities and plans. This is evident in the variety and number of activities which have been delivered, and the positive impacts which have occurred in the lives of older people.

6.5.3 Evidence of firm partnership working and volunteer engagement

Fit as a Fiddle has benefited from both strong partnership working and the support of volunteers to help deliver the project. Partnership working is evident, with South Lakeland Housing having been an important partner in ensuring the armchair aerobics could be delivered to as many older people as possible through their housing schemes. Partners have also been used to help deliver 'happy and active' events (e.g. the local police, councils, holistic practitioners, and a variety of voluntary and community sector organisations).

The role of volunteers has also been important in the project, in terms of ensuring project sustainability. Whilst initially run and supported by Age UK staff, armchair aerobic sessions have always tried to recruit a member of the group to learn the exercises in order that they can lead the group after the initial six week period of classes has finished.

6.6 How the project works

6.6.1 About the Fit as a Fiddle portfolio

The Fit as a Fiddle project is a five year portfolio and has received £15.1 million for activities across England and £1.2 million per each England region. Each region has had their own regional coordinator that has supported projects in the regions. Projects have aimed to improve the well-being of older people through activities focused on physical activity and healthy eating. In addition to what has been delivered at the local level, there have also been two national projects focused on developing volunteering and educational resources.

6.6.2 Project inputs

Costs

The Fit as a Fiddle project was provided with £50,000 to £60,000 for each of the five years it was operational.

Staffing

The project has been staffed by a team of paid staff members and volunteers. Project funding had contributed towards the funding of five staff members, including: a services manager; 'happy and active' events coordinator; and community officers.

6.6.3 Project outputs

It is estimated that the project has reached over 3,000 older people throughout its lifetime.

7 FOOD AND FITNESS

7.1 Introduction

This report details the findings of case study research undertaken by CLES Consulting on the Food and Fitness project run through the Norfolk Learning Disability Services Directorate. The project is funded under the Well-being in the East portfolio of the Big Lottery Fund's Well-being Programme 'delivering a healthy active future' and provides people, primarily those with learning disabilities, access to education in healthy eating and physical activity.

The research was undertaken in August 2010 and involved consultation with the Food and Fitness Project Manager, Karl Jackson, key partners (Ellen Vinlint from Active Norfolk and Janet Baker from Norwich City Council) and a number of beneficiaries who have been involved with the project. A desk review of key data and documentation relating to the project was also undertaken. Evidence from the case study research has fed into the wider findings of the National Well-being Programme Evaluation.

7.2 Background and rationale

The Food and Fitness project has promoted opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities to achieve their full health and fitness potential. It is not an original concept; the project originates from a pilot which had aims of increasing physical well-being and ensuring retention of knowledge and sustainable outcomes that would outlive the duration of the project's activities. The current project is primarily designed to help adults with learning difficulties to eat healthy foods and take part in regular physical activity.

Food and Fitness has a three year lifespan, from 2008 to 2011, with funding coming directly from the Big Lottery. It will end in February 2011, having delivered all of its outputs and outcomes. It is one of 25 projects from the Well-being in the East portfolio, which is designed to impact upon 100,000 people across the East of England through £3.9 million of investment.

The original pilot upon which the Food and Fitness project is based was created due to the need for those people with learning disabilities to gain a basic understanding of healthier eating and wider fitness. The developing obesity crisis, and increasing numbers of people with learning disabilities who are overweight, is an increasingly prominent issue which has not had a major profile within policy circles. People with learning disabilities overall have higher levels of obesity than the rest of the general population, with evidence showing that many live a sedentary lifestyle. This is linked to a number of barriers within the population of those with learning disabilities, meaning it is more difficult to project the message about healthier eating and fitness issues than with a mainstream audience.

There are a variety of causes which are likely to increase levels of obesity in people with learning disabilities. Many have a high proportion of calorie intake contributed by:

- ☐ snacking between meals;
- ☐ a diet including a high consumption of milk, wheat and dense sugary foods;
- ☐ low consumption of fruit, vegetables and fibre.

Low levels of physical activity also compound this problem. Limited availability of community leisure facilities, staffing shortages and transport limitations, as well as a lack of clarity in day services and residential home guidelines, have been identified as key barriers to increased physical activity.

It is also recognised that those caring for people with learning disabilities are crucially important figures in helping them become healthier through their eating and fitness habits. People with learning disabilities tend not to seek support from the healthcare system unaided, so those closest to them carry a responsibility to develop their lifestyle.

There was clearly a gap in provision for dealing with these issues which formed the key rationale of the project:

'To help Norfolk's learning disability population, and those entrusted with their care, increase their knowledge in how to develop a healthier lifestyle that is sustainable and will reduce levels of local obesity among this cohort of the population.'

The numerous symptoms behind the causes of obesity in people with learning disabilities required a multi-faceted approach in the development of a programme for health promotion and health education.

7.3 Project design and delivery

The project's aims and objectives are clearly focused upon addressing the underlying rationale and benefiting those with learning disabilities, as outlined above. The overarching aim of the project was to:

'Create a supportive environment for adults with learning difficulties to engage in healthy eating and physical activity.'

Underlying this principal aim were a number of key objectives to help both the direct beneficiaries and other individuals who can support them. The first of these was around training a number of key target groups which included carers and support workers, leisure providers (e.g. staff from sports centres) and healthcare professionals. This would be delivered through a number of short courses. A key objective from the start of the project was to educate people who influence those with learning disabilities on the need for eating healthily and engaging in physical activity. It was recognised at an early stage that many carers themselves do not have a healthy lifestyle; therefore it is difficult for them to provide the appropriate care to those with learning disabilities. With regards to leisure providers and health and social care professionals/primary care staff, there was a need to make them aware of the needs of those with learning disabilities to enable them to access mainstream services. It was a necessity to fully engage with these groups to ensure that changes made through the course of the project to diet and physical activity patterns would be sustainable in the long term.

The other key objective was to train, educate and support those people with learning disabilities on the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity. For all target groups (beneficiaries, carers, health and social work staff, leisure centre staff), the main delivery method was to be through workshops which would provide information and guidance, recommendations, and how to achieve them. Each of the courses was tailored for the audience and incorporated behavioural change models.

The key objectives underlying the project have wider resonance with that of other associated organisations. Inclusion is a key element of Norwich City Council's objectives and the project has provided the expertise for the Council to feed off in meeting its aims. One of Active Norfolk's objectives is to bring more people with learning disabilities into sport and physical activities, and the joined up working with the Food and Fitness project has been a key factor in ensuring this has been achieved.

The focus of the project also links clearly with all three of the objectives of the Big Lottery Fund's Well-being Programme:

- ☐ people and communities have improved mental well-being;
- ☐ people are more physically active;
- ☐ children, parents and wider community eat more healthily.

7.3.1 Inputs

The project has been funded through £140,000 from the Big Lottery Fund over its three year lifecycle. In staffing terms, this has paid for the Project Manager who has been solely responsible for the delivery of the outputs, and an administrator. Other key areas of expenditure have been on: resources for the workshops (the main delivery vehicle); food models and objects of reference to be used both within and outside of the workshops; and producing and developing a DVD which has been disseminated across the County to carers and beneficiaries, a key tool in promoting and educating healthy eating.

There are a number of organisations and groups who have been involved in delivering the project. Key partners have included local authorities from across Norfolk, Active Norfolk and People First of Norfolk.

Active Norfolk is the sports partnership for the County; they aim to provide the single source of information for players, organisers, supporters and the media, working in partnership with Norfolk's local authorities to increase participation in sport and physical activity. They have worked closely with the project to develop and promote activities for those with learning disabilities.

People First is a self advocacy group for people with learning difficulties and, from the outset, they were well placed to deliver training packages, helping the Project Manager deliver some training workshops.

Finally, the role of the local authorities has been important; sports development officers have been heavily involved in helping put together courses, training and leveraging resources from across the County.

7.3.2 Activities

The nature of the project meant that most of the activities were based around learning objectives; therefore the primary learning method used was a series of workshops, as outlined below:

- ❑ workshops and short courses for people with learning difficulties which were extended for people in hard to reach groups;
- ❑ workshops and short courses for carers (paid and family) who often have total control and influence over food and lifestyle choices of those they care for – these workshops incorporated ways of overcoming specific barriers for people with learning difficulties;
- ❑ workshops and short courses for community learning difficulties team staff (health and social care professionals) and Primary Care Teams; these promoted the use of action plans, including goals and incentives for behaviour change;
- ❑ workshops for sports and leisure providers to ensure their services were accessible and inclusive for people with learning difficulties;
- ❑ development of Local Partnership Action Groups to promote physical activity and healthy eating, and providing information and support to make sustainable lifestyle changes. These were originally developed during the pilot process; during the lifetime of the Food and Fitness project, they were embedded within the community ensuring the inclusion of hard to reach groups. These groups were set up for Norfolk North, East, South, West and Norwich, pulling people together, primarily to make sport more accessible and create opportunities in their area. Each group is hosted by a learning difficulty organisation, with the co-chairs also having learning disabilities, to ensure that the client steers the direction that the group is taking.

In addition, there were several offshoots (e.g. taster sessions provided in table tennis, curling, archery, etc.). These popular events have been supported by Active Norfolk, the Food and Fitness project and other partners; as a result, there have been adult learning disability games days which have brought individuals together from across the County.



7.4 Performance

7.4.1 Outputs

Across the three year period, the project has exceeded its main targets in terms of delivery of workshops to a specified number of individuals. The targets were set by the project at the outset and were agreed by the Big Lottery. Outputs achieved included:

- ❑ training over 420 adults with learning disabilities;
- ❑ training over 410 carers/support workers;
- ❑ training over 65 sports leisure providers;
- ❑ training over 100 individuals from community learning difficulties teams.

The original targets agreed with the Big Lottery are outlined below and have therefore been exceeded:

- ❑ training 450 adults with learning disabilities (150 per year): at the time of writing there were still some outstanding workshops and therefore the target will have been comfortably exceeded;
- ❑ training 300 carers/support workers (100 per year);
- ❑ training 60 sports leisure providers (20 per year);
- ❑ training 150 individuals from community learning difficulties teams (50 per year) – this is the only target which has yet to be exceeded, due to internal issues within the organisation.

7.4.2 Outcomes

The main impact is that those with learning disabilities generally feel healthier since the workshops; indeed many have lost weight and blood pressure has fallen too. Many are now actively involved in carrying out the shopping for 'good' foods, and now understand the difference between 'friendly' and 'unfriendly' food groups – several of those consulted are now cooking their own meals. Many feel happier in themselves and the increased levels of exercise have also been important in this regard. Importantly, nearly all of those consulted have their own individual and bespoke food and fitness action plans in place as a result of the programme, illustrating the lasting legacy that the project may have. A selection of comments from the beneficiaries is shown below:

'I've enjoyed doing it and it makes me happy.'

'It's fun and interesting.'

'I enjoyed the group – Karl (the Project Manager) helped me to learn more.'

'The session was very good and interesting, drawing different foods was fun!'

From the carers' perspective, there has been considerable feedback as to how the workshops have changed diets and practice significantly; how they shop and the ways in which they prepare food has been affected immeasurably. They are now much more involved in meal planning and goal setting for those they care for, which includes working with those with learning disabilities to understand what types of activities they like. This is essential; if there is no 'fun' component to engage those with learning disabilities, the desired outcomes are less likely to be achieved. The quotes below highlight a selection of comments encapsulating the experiences of the carers:

'Excellent course; really motivational, informative, very well presented. Good paperwork to take back to the workplace and good access links to get things moving.'

'I have found this course to be really interesting for my job and my family. It has been a real eye opener.'

'Excellent content, made to realise what can be achieved with moderate effort.'

'Very interesting, shocked at some of the foods which thought were healthy but were not; will be checking fat and sugar contents in future.'

Perhaps most importantly, the wider well-being of the beneficiaries has been improved markedly, with the crucial recognition by many of the client group of the link between healthy eating and exercise in achieving this. Additionally, the social interaction with others on the same course, workshop or sports event has also been particularly important in this success.

From the partners' perspective, the project's outcomes have been very positive. Working with the Food and Fitness project has raised Active Norfolk's profile considerably, and the joined up working has meant that people across the board are as involved as they should be. Providing a healthy eating and fitness advice service under the same umbrella has been invaluable, a key impact being that both organisations have been able to take the projects out to many different rural areas across Norfolk where people often cannot access resources; this is where the set up of action groups across five different areas of Norfolk has been vital in ensuring local delivery and priorities are catered for. These groups will be a key tool going forward, perhaps providing the most important legacy from the project. From the viewpoint of local authorities, a key outcome is that communication with people who have learning disabilities has been enhanced considerably, and they now have a much improved understanding of their needs.

In terms of strategic added value, there are a number of key conclusions:

- ❑ the project has influenced project partners and local authorities (e.g. those in local authority sports development units now take into account the needs of those with learning disabilities and will in future categorise learning disability from physical disability). Norwich City Council now bears in mind those with learning disabilities for all elements of sports development plans (e.g. through the use of pictures and visual representation);
- ❑ the project is likely to have influenced little in terms of high level strategic planning, as there has been very little involvement from management at a senior level. Staff are stretched, especially at ground level, and have not been able to dedicate as much time or resources to this project as they would have liked. The majority of the Norfolk Learning Disability Service Teams have not been as involved as they should have been, making it difficult to effectively communicate the message (the service being a partnership between the NHS and Norfolk County Council whose Adult Social Services host the organisation);
- ❑ there is a need for a strategic framework to be able to influence and package what carers do; only at the higher management levels can you actually influence carers' activities. In strategic plans there is a need to consider what support carers actually provide; and care plans should include reviews about active living, healthy eating and what it can do. Unfortunately, until health gains a place higher up the agenda this will not be done and there will be no strategic alignment;
- ❑ the action groups are very innovative and the way in which local authorities became involved in these is important; making them realise that changes in provision did need to be made for people with learning disabilities. The groups are a good example of networking and bringing different activities together under one umbrella. Local authority involvement was very important in terms of leveraging resources (e.g. Norwich Disability Sports Forum); Norwich City Council hosts the group, ensuring that those with learning disabilities drive the agenda forward. The Council and other partners act as enablers to ensure the types of activities those with learning disabilities require are provided. This is achieved through having complementary stakeholders involved in both the action group meetings and local delivery.



7.4.3 Impact on wider conditions

The impact of the workshops has been wide ranging in nature. The beneficiaries are reporting that their overall well-being has been enhanced and many reported feeling happier within themselves having increased their social skills. The impact upon carers has also been particularly notable, with many reporting complete changes in the way they are approaching their duties and in their own dietary habits and physical activities. The consultation work showed that carers and support workers are now attempting to spread the message of healthy eating and physical activity within their places of employment, such as the residential care homes, and approaching management about developing new ways of working in the future, although this is a long term process which takes time to embed.

7.4.4 Additionality and sustainability

There has been a major gap in provision for educating those with learning difficulties in the need to eat healthily and lead an active lifestyle. The outcomes achieved by the project would not have happened in its absence; there are a lot of services coming into place now such as community nutritionists, health connectors and trainers, who all have responsibility to provide advice about food and fitness as part of their work to the general population. However, it is unlikely that those with learning difficulties would have been targeted as they have been in this project and thus may still be excluded.

The Food and Fitness project has also raised awareness to other organisations (e.g. local authorities) about how they need to modify their approach to those with learning disabilities. There has been a marked change in the behaviours of those who have been involved within the project:

- ❑ consultation has highlighted that the bespoke diet and fitness plans are being acted upon to meet the needs of the individuals concerned; this is important in creating sustainable change in Norfolk;
- ❑ the action groups are a key element of sustainability and will become a legacy of the project. The groups now operate independently of the Project Manager (coordinated by Active Norfolk), with partners' involvement providing a sound basis for the group's future development. The project outcomes and the legacy that it has created will provide the best possible chance for the objectives to be met in a sustainable way, where they will be entrenched within future behaviours and activity;
- ❑ there is a clear willingness from people to work with this client group, however it is often a slow process with returns over the long term; this does not lend itself to generating much funding as there are no quick wins.

7.5 Processes

7.5.1 Partnership working and the delivery approach

The partnership working across all aspects of the project has been progressive and effective in a number of ways. Importantly, the partners have brought a degree of credibility to the project which has strengthened the key messages and allowed the project to be taken seriously. It has been of considerable benefit to all sides, meaning all those involved have taken away something of value. The partners found the Project Manager to be very accessible, providing links into learning disability issues and creating dense networks that would not otherwise have been achieved – this is very important in terms of building a lasting legacy.

Sharing resources was an important element of the project from the outset and all partners have worked to do this; the project has been able to put on events, taster sessions and 'get involved' days that have all been funded by partner organisations. Additionally, local authorities have funded the venues for the action groups, using appropriate venues such as sports centres. Therefore it is clear that the partnership working arrangements have provided clear added value to the project, not just in terms of strategic added value, but in providing the basis for long term sustainable change in behaviours of people with learning disabilities.

There has been limited involvement from the regional project portfolio, as many of the activities were limited around specific workshops and did not require any support. However, there were a number of longstanding issues which included an evaluation tool that was not accessible for people with learning disabilities; despite the offer from the Project Manager to help tailor the evaluation tools there was a lack of progress.

Additionally, the website developed for the project was not fit for purpose (not accessible to the target group – those with learning disabilities); unhelpful when trying to promote their achievements. However, it should be noted that the portfolio management team have been supportive throughout and have recognised the issues the project faced. It appears that not enough money has been in place to make changes regarding the issues highlighted, which raises questions around the portfolio's initial resource planning procedures.

7.5.2 Publicity, promotion and engagement

On the whole, the project has been promoted reasonably well considering the resources in place to deliver; however there have been internal issues within the Learning Disability Services Directorate, with the messages about training not being disseminated as widely as they should across departments.

To a degree, the project has relied on carers groups, word of mouth, doctors surgeries, libraries, and sending material to private providers. However, it is difficult to provide effective marketing in Norfolk, particularly for such a targeted subject, due to it being a large county with many disparate communities. The material itself was well produced, although if the resources had been in place it may have benefited from development through marketing professionals.

The results of the publicity and promotion have clearly been effective, illustrated by the numbers of people who have attended the workshops exceeding the original targets.

7.5.3 Monitoring and evaluation

The project has been monitored and evaluated in accordance with the requirements of the Big Lottery. There was a great deal of consultation with carers/support workers regarding development of appropriate post-workshop questionnaires for the individuals with learning disabilities; these were developed to be fully accessible, using methods appropriate for this cohort. Training sessions for all other cohorts included detailed evaluation questionnaires. There were also a number of focus groups targeting the carers and support workers throughout the lifetime of the project; these were important in ensuring the project met the needs of the target groups, with the carers and support workers being the catalysts for long term change.

In terms of reporting, there has been a consistent quarterly system in place which was provided to the portfolio, outlining the key outputs and milestones the project has reached at each point in time. Each year, a financial report was developed outlining inputs and outputs.

7.6 Conclusions

7.6.1 Key lessons

In short, it was the drive and enthusiasm of the Project Manager (who had to do deliver on his own albeit with the support of partners) and approach to wide ranging engagement which has led to the success of this project. He has effectively used the feedback received from both partners and target groups to build and develop the programme effectively. The project has been crucial in helping provide the framework for sustainable change – from the action groups, bespoke behaviour plans, stronger networks, and the ability of local stakeholders to work together to create change.

A key success factor for the project has been the right organisations being involved from the outset. Importantly, the Project Manager and partners have developed the activities around the needs of people with learning disabilities rather than being prescriptive in their approach. Going down this route of providing bespoke solutions is an important aspect for other projects to learn from.

A key indirect impact has been the wider levels of well-being developed as a result of the activities, whether through workshops or sports taster days. They have provided the client group with an environment for social interaction, and the wider messages of healthy eating and physical activity has made the group aware of how they can improve both their physical and mental well-being.

The training that was offered as part of the project has been different from what is currently available. There are currently a plethora of courses on food and fitness but not in the way the Project Manager has tailored it for those with learning difficulties: games; interactive working; and visual representation that appeals to them in a way they can understand. Delivering the message to this cohort is about repetition, represented in a 'fun' way to reinforce the message. The evaluation material has included a lot of comments about the innovative style and approach, alongside the development of a DVD that has inspired many to engage. There are clearly key lessons to be learnt about how future provision should cater for those with learning disabilities (not just in food and fitness but across all learning and development activities).

Engagement with managers at the highest level of independent care providers needs to happen at the beginning of the process; however there is no evidence of this to date. Often, there are no managers in attendance at the workshops, resulting in elements of the session preaching to the converted. Managers therefore need to receive the training and be involved at an early stage.

There is also a lesson to be learned about where such projects should be based in future, in terms of organisational structure and maximising leverage. This project has been delivered through the Norfolk Learning Disability Services Directorate, but may have been better placed in public health. In doing so, it would have had more leverage and power, more support from likeminded professionals, and ultimately would have increased the potential for more resources.

In terms of opportunities for the future of the project or similar work, there is no real need for the Food and Fitness project anymore, as it has achieved what it set out to do and it would ultimately result in future duplication with other emerging activities. There are now many health trainers in place, which is a national initiative and will be operational for an extended period of time, delivering knowledge about well-being and healthy eating to the general population. These trainers now need to be up-skilled on how to engage with people with learning disabilities – part of their role is in engaging with the whole population after all. Stakeholders should use the Food and Fitness project to share the experience gained and the lessons learnt, to illustrate the most effective methods for future engagement. There is still an issue around a gap in provision within the Learning Disability Services Directorate and a need for advice and support within the service which is embedded within a long term strategy to lower obesity levels of those with learning disabilities. For this to happen, there needs to be an individual who is able to take on the mantle of health and well-being in the future; however whether this will happen after the departure of the Project Manager is open to question.

Finally, the key message emerging from this project is that partners, including the Big Lottery, need to be aware of the work that is going on in this area and work closely together to avoid duplication. They should work with what is already available, with many individuals and resources showcasing progressive innovative work. Tying together good practice and not 'reinventing the wheel' is essential for long term success in ensuring the best possible provision is being developed.

8 FOOD FOR LIFE PARTNERSHIP – BATLEY GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

8.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with the new economics foundation (nef) to undertake the evaluation. The case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more information about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

The case study focuses on activities aiming to transform the food culture at Batley Girls' High School (BGHS) in West Yorkshire, undertaken as part of the wider Food for Life Partnership (FFLP) portfolio.

Before becoming involved in FFLP, BGHS was already strongly committed to sustainability and environmental practices. It was involved in the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) Sustainable Schools Initiative and the national Healthy Schools Programme, had received Green Flag and Yorkshire in Bloom Awards, and set up an eco-committee with local feeder primary schools. The school has also been awarded Rural Dimension status by SSAT, in recognition of its commitment to increasing student awareness and understanding of the countryside and the environment.

BGHS decided to sign up to FFLP in late 2009 in order to further its aims around sustainability and well-being, and to help bring together the different initiatives it was undertaking. Furthermore, in becoming a FFLP Flagship School in April 2010, BGHS was committed to working with other local schools and the community in Batley to support wider moves to enhance food sustainability.

As a Flagship School, BGHS benefited from support provided by the various partner organisations involved in FFLP: the Soil Association; Focus on Food Campaign; Health Education Trust; and Garden Organic. FFLP activity within the school has been spearheaded by the Assistant Head for Extended Schools, supported by other committed staff and Kirklees Catering Service personnel.

8.2 Project need

The initial drive to change the food culture at BGHS came from the school Catering Manager, who was concerned about the unhealthy nature of the school dinners, and saw the opportunity that involvement with FFLP might bring to accelerate and embed the changes she was in the process of making. In addition to addressing poor dietary habits, FFLP seeks to bring about more sustainable food systems by looking at food sourcing, and addressing a lack of skills and knowledge around cooking and a lack of understanding about where food comes from. Wider research undertaken for the School Food Trust, as reported in a FFLP impact report, found that:

'Lunchtime was the key period that governed whether or not a child felt happy in school.'²⁴

One of the issues identified as a priority for FFLP activity at BGHS was to improve the lunchtime experience, particularly for the younger year groups.

The BGHS Food Policy was developed by FFLP School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) in November 2010. It outlines a mission statement:

'To influence and improve the health of the whole school community by equipping pupils and their families with ways to establish and maintain lifelong healthy and sustainable eating habits. This shall be accomplished by providing high quality food education skills and food service, and by ensuring consistency in food messages throughout the school day.'²⁵

²⁴ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.4

²⁵ *Whole School Food Policy* (Batley Girls' High School, 2010), p.1

Underlying this are four key aims:

- 1) **food leadership and school food culture** – ensuring that the school plays an important role, as part of the larger community, in promoting family health and sustainable food and farming practices;
- 2) **food quality and provenance** – ensuring that pupils and staff receive tasty, nutritious, affordable and safe food during the school day, and have easy access to a water supply;
- 3) **food education** – enabling pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat, and developing core skills to do so by providing relevant curricular, cross-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities;
- 4) **community and partnerships** – sharing learning and best practice with stakeholders, the community and school partners, including BGHS feeder primary schools.

These aims, and the activities undertaken to achieve them, contribute to the wider ambitions of BGHS, as encapsulated in its strap line '*Achievement, Respect, Transformation.*'

8.3 Activities

The four programme partners deliver different aspects of the overall FFLP offer:

- ❑ **Soil Association** – a Soil Association Farm Links Officer visits Flagship Schools to discuss how they might use visits to local working farms as an educational resource. BGHS' first trip took place in summer 2010, to Swillington Organic Farm near Leeds, and provided the opportunity for pupils to understand where food comes from and connect with the production process. BGHS has its own farm within the school grounds, with poultry and goats alongside a range of produce; the goats came from Swillington, following the initial visit, and have helped to cement a strong link between farm and school that will include ongoing visits to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to visit the farm during their time at the school;
- 
- ❑ **Flagship Schools** – receive support from a Soil Association Food Sourcing Coordinator who works with them to help source local and ethical food for school meals. BGHS has achieved the FFLP Bronze Award, the criteria for which includes ensuring that at least three quarters of dishes on the menu are freshly prepared, that farm assured meat and free range eggs are used, and menus are seasonal. BGHS also meets several of the food provenance criteria for the Silver Award, such as including a range of locally sourced items on its menu, and ensuring that some products meet fair trade standards. A considerable amount of organic produce is grown at the school and used in the kitchen, with labels used in the dining room to identify salad and other items on the delicatessen bar that were grown onsite;
 - ❑ **Focus on Food Campaign** – each Flagship School receives a visit from the Focus on Food Campaign Cooking Bus, an articulated lorry that opens out into a cooking classroom. It visited BGHS for a week in early 2011, with cookery sessions provided for pupils at BGHS and its feeder primary schools. The main priority, however, is to provide training to staff around teaching food technology/cookery and using healthy ingredients; Cooking Bus sessions were held for staff from BGHS, local primary schools and Kirklees Catering Service. In addition to the Cooking Bus visit, a Focus on Food Campaign representative visits Flagship Schools to help them develop their food technology and cooking curriculum, and (for the Silver Award) to support the setting up of a school cookery class for pupils, families and members of the wider community;
 - ❑ **Health Education Trust** – the Health Education Trust provides expert input on school food policy, and works with Flagship Schools to set up a SNAG; this acts as a steering group to set up and embed the FFLP culture in the school and involves staff, pupils, the school catering team, and members of the local community.

At BGHS, the Health Education Trust Policy Officer helped to facilitate the first three SNAG meetings held during the school's initial term of Flagship status, and supported the development of the new BGHS Whole School Food Strategy. The Health Education Trust organised a regional seminar for Flagship Schools across Yorkshire and Humber, held in November 2010, which was attended by BGHS. This provided an opportunity for BGHS staff and pupils to network with other participating schools and share learning from their individual experiences;

- ❑ **Garden Organic** – the Garden Education Officer at Garden Organic visits Flagship Schools to assess their needs and provide training and support around growing skills and composting. She also took part in the BGHS Green Fair event, to which feeder and other local schools and community members were invited in order to learn about approaches to growing produce. Other work at BGHS in which Garden Organic has been involved includes a wormery workshop for pupils and staff, and an 'Apple Day' attended by pupils from local primary schools. BGHS also benefited from the support of Garden Organic in developing an annual growing rota, aimed at ensuring a predictable year round supply of produce, and avoiding oversupply during the school summer holidays.

The work of the four partners is closely interlinked, in order that a holistic, whole school approach is adopted:

'It's about the whole food culture... from planting to plate.'

The work of the FFLP Regional Coordinator is important in this respect; other aspects of this role include helping Flagship Schools to reach out to other local schools and the local community, and wider stakeholder engagement and partnership development.

In practice, FFLP activities vary considerably from school to school, and are driven by the identified needs and ambitions of staff and pupils, alongside considerations of the cost and workload implications of planned activities. BGHS undertook a survey of pupils, particularly to find out their thoughts on how the lunchtime experience at the school might be improved. Following this, FFLP helped to support the implementation of new arrangements in the dining hall, including queue barriers to rationalise and speed up the previous system, a new dining area for Year 7 children, colourful displays featuring both the daily menu and information on healthy eating, and a top table.²⁶



The BGHS Farm Manager has been active in working with local feeder primary schools to encourage their gardening and growing activity. This has involved visits from the schools to BGHS, and return visits in which BGHS pupils have helped to lead activities with the primary schoolchildren. Much of this work has drawn on BGHS' status as a Visual Arts College, with its commitment to sustainability expressed in creative activity such as making robots out of recycled materials, and developing new gardens focused on curriculum areas such as science and maths. The school is keen to ensure that sustainability issues crosscut its curriculum, and has built FFLP activities and themes into its Citizenship GCSE and the broader PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) curriculum.

Flagship status also involves giving advice to other schools interested in achieving FFLP awards. BGHS has been approached for assistance from a number of schools, particularly to seek help and support in arranging farm visits:

'They do a lot of outreach work, and are well known as a hub of best practice.'

Outreach activities also extend to the local community, who have access to a community garden at the front of the school, and some of whom benefit from allotment plots within the school grounds.

In March 2011, BGHS hosted an awards event for other West Yorkshire schools that had successfully met the FFLP Bronze Award criteria.

²⁶ Note that initiation of some of these developments (most notably the Year 7 dining area) preceded BGHS becoming a Flagship School

FFLP also works closely with local authority catering providers. The Kirklees Catering Service achieved the Bronze Catering Mark in July 2011; it is responsible for school meals at BGHS, and has been instrumental in helping to drive the initiative forward within the school.

8.4 Impact

As part of the case study research, we spoke to BGHS staff and schoolchildren, the FFLP Regional Coordinator and local partners, including representatives from Field Lane Primary School (a BGHS feeder school), Kirklees Catering Service and Kirklees Council. The discussions highlighted the range of positive outcomes resulting from involvement with FFLP, as detailed below.

8.4.1 Healthy eating knowledge and practice

Findings from the wider national evaluation of the Well-Being Programme show that before taking part in FFLP, two thirds (66%) of BGHS students who responded to the initial survey questionnaire were eating fewer than five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. The drive to improve nutritional standards at BGHS has helped to embed knowledge around healthy eating, and raised awareness amongst pupils of the five a day message, and the need to reduce intake of salt, sugars and hydrogenated fats and oils. The school has banned sweets, crisps and other unhealthy snacks, alongside fizzy drinks, and there has been a noticeable improvement in the nutritional content of lunchboxes. In general, pupils are encouraged *'to become more rounded consumers'* and to take these messages home to their families:

'I now eat about three pieces of fruit a day – it used to be about three a week.'

'My family tries to buy its eggs at school now or get free range.'

Around 10-15% of food used in school meals is grown onsite, and water is on offer at more points around the school. There is greater variety in the menus on offer, and pupils felt the quality had improved:

'There's different healthy food, and plenty to choose from – nice curry, fish pie, pasta bar, sandwich bar, jacket potatoes, salads [and] fruit.'

Pupils have also gained knowledge around food sourcing, derived both from growing activities at BGHS and the visit to Swillington Organic Farm:

'None of us have had much contact with the countryside... I'm now more aware of where our food comes from, and think about what I eat.'

Awareness of the wider food cycle had increased, with one pupil commenting that she now understood how composting can contribute to growing further produce:

'The process doesn't stop with eating the food.'

FFLP has also provided a platform to explore cultural issues relating to food (e.g. a discussion about whether the school goats could be eaten or broader issues such as Halal meat and vegetarianism). A presentation at the regional seminar for Flagship Schools on battery hens led to the issue being covered in a BGHS assembly, which evidently had a significant impact on pupils:

'The assembly affected a lot of people in the school... it was disgraceful to look at. All animals should be treated the same, have freedom.'

8.4.2 Learning new skills



One of the principal desired outcomes from FFLP is to encourage cooking skills, both through direct engagement with pupils, and through work with school staff to embed approaches to teaching cooking and food technology. According to a Kirklees Catering Service staff member:

'Preparation of food in school has become much more popular, the children are getting involved, and the adults too... the whole thing is fantastic.'

For a teacher from Field Lane Primary School who attended a Cooking Bus session at BGHS:

'The visit helped us to sort out our food technology curriculum... they showed us how you can set up to teach 12-15 children at one time, even with less facilities.'

Subsequently, Field Lane decided to employ a teaching assistant every afternoon to lead food technology work with Key Stage 2 children, and to embed this focus into other curriculum areas such as maths (e.g. weighing ingredients) and geography (exploring where food comes from). Similarly, FFLP activity at BGHS is embedded in other areas of the school curriculum, most notably citizenship, science, maths and geography.

Pupils also learnt new skills around growing and animal husbandry:

'I learnt a lot about looking after animals – what they eat, and how to look after them... I'd never been to a farm before.'

In addition to the 'hard' skills discussed above, pupils also gained 'softer' skills in areas such as leadership, team working and communication. One pupil member of SNAG:

'Realised I could make a difference. It made me think it might be a future option – being a good leader.'

8.4.3 Increased confidence and self-esteem

Pupils who had been involved in visits to feeder primary schools had obviously derived considerable benefit. BGHS students who visited Field Lane Primary School to do art work and planting:

'Got a lot out of it, and were praised for their skills with the little children.'

For one of the pupils involved:

'I was happy that I could help the little kids, other people... you feel good.'

Pupils involved in the SNAG contributed to a presentation on FFLP activities at the regional seminar for Flagship Schools, and had talked about FFLP in school assemblies:

'I gained so much confidence from standing up in assembly – I've enough confidence to go and speak to the whole school.'

8.4.4 Enhanced attainment

The Assistant Head at BGHS was clear that involvement with FFLP had contributed to positive outcomes around increased engagement in school life and work, improved behaviour and attendance, and ultimately enhanced educational attainment:

'Involvement can have a transformational impact... it can be a real turning point.'

The school farm was an important asset in this regard, with staff using the chance to spend time with the animals as a reward for good behaviour. One pupil, who was given an Assistant Farm Manager role, became much more engaged and motivated as a result:

'She really settled down with the animals.'

Another pupil benefited so much from her involvement with the farm that she progressed from being an almost certain candidate for permanent exclusion to being chosen as the school's own Modern Apprentice due to start work on the farm in September 2011. BGHS is working alongside Leeds City College on the apprenticeship scheme, with the College providing the NVQ, technical certificate and key skills components.

Two pupils who had been largely disengaged from school undertook work experience in the BGHS kitchens. One of them, who had initially not been interested in cooking *'got really fired up'* and is now attending catering college.

Findings outlined in the FFLP Impact Report show that the Ofsted ratings of secondary schools involved with FFLP improved significantly:

'Secondary schools started with average attainment levels 3.3% below the national average and managed to close this gap to 0.6%.' ²⁷

Although other factors may well have played a role in bringing about such a change²⁸, evidence suggests that:

'The opportunities for experiential learning through the FFLP were particularly effective at helping engage or re-engage pupils with learning issues and challenges.' ²⁹

8.4.5 Improved school environment and community links

Pupils clearly valued the improvements to the dining area, and to the wider lunchtime experience:

'It used to be very stressful, a real rush not to be late for your next lesson. Now there's time to relax.'

Furthermore, FFLP has provided the school with a further opportunity to promote its community liaison activity. The community garden is maintained by the school, and has given retired people living opposite the school somewhere to visit, walk and hold events. Plans to extend the farm and increase the extent to which the local community are involved are well advanced; a coffee morning was held so that local people could come and discuss the ideas. Community members who tend allotment plots within the school grounds have helped with the school's own growing activities during the holidays, and have brought produce to the school kitchen to see if it could be used:

'After we got involved with the community allotments, it brought everyone together... it helped us get to know each other.'

Children in the feeder primary schools that have engaged in FFLP benefit from an eased transition when they move to BGHS. They may have visited BGHS on several occasions, and are therefore more used to the school environment; they are also likely to have interacted with BGHS pupils when they visited their primary school. Strong relationships have also been cemented between the staff involved, with these connections contributing to improved transition processes.

8.4.6 Wider impacts

The FFLP Impact Report provides evidence that some of the outcomes experienced by schoolchildren involved in FFLP activities have had a wider impact on their families:

'The partnership's strong focus on community participation has also led to healthy behaviours travelling home, with 45% of parents reporting eating more fruit and vegetables as a result of FFLP and 43% changing their food buying habits.' ³⁰

Pupils at BGHS confirmed that involvement in FFLP activities was having a wider impact on their families:

'Now my mum uses more salad, and we've cut down on fizzy drinks... I nagged her to do this.'

'My little brother is aware of the things we buy too.'

Kirklees Catering Service attends parents' evenings and puts on themed events in local schools in order to encourage parents/carers to get involved in healthy eating activities alongside their children. It sets up a stand, with information disseminated through tasters, cooking tips, handouts, recipes, games and tick charts.

²⁷ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.3

²⁸ The report makes it clear that the data show an association, but that no causal inference can be drawn

²⁹ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.6

³⁰ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.4

FFLP encourages schools to set up a cooking club involving staff, pupils, parents/carers and other family and community members; cooking clubs represent a key mechanism to embed healthy eating outcomes by bringing about behavioural change in families and local communities, and to extend the programme's reach to a wider audience. BGHS is working towards setting up a cooking club, in order to cement its commitment to improving well-being amongst its students, their families and the local community:

'It's about the school coming together – not just the kitchen staff and students, but everyone. The whole attitude to eating is changing, feeding back into pupil's homes and families.'

'The whole food culture is very much part of the school. Children talk about healthy eating, and so do the parents. Initial feedback is very positive... it's happening, although there's some way to go.'

Although the March 2009 Ofsted report for BGHS predates the school's involvement with FFLP, it pays testament to the ethos that encouraged the school to become a Flagship:

*'Their award winning work on horticultural and environmental projects is a direct result of the school's excellent enrichment provision which helps to promote community links.'*³¹

8.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the FFLP approach has proved successful, both at BGHS and more widely.

8.5.1 A holistic approach

FFLP adopts a holistic approach to healthy eating and sustainability, drawing together different approaches and linking these to school and community needs:

'There are some fantastic projects working with schools, especially around cooking... but there's nothing that brings everything together in the way that Food for Life does – that's what makes it unique.'

BGHS was strongly committed to healthy eating and sustainability before becoming involved in FFLP. However, FFLP enabled the school to consolidate its work and move forward in a way that would otherwise not have been possible:

'[Food for Life] came along at just the right time. It offered us a way to draw together a number of issues that we were concerned about for our students and the community they come from. It provided practical guidance on how to set and achieve goals, putting a structure in place that we could relate to and use. It also provided valuable contacts, so we could learn from other people's experience.'

'With Food for Life, students became directly involved – it really brought us together, opened up new doors, by bringing students into it.'

Findings from wider FFLP evaluation activity confirm the added value generated by the programme through this holistic approach. The main (quantitative) evaluation report states that:

*'The majority of studies have focused on individual components of food in school health promotion: meal reform; practical cooking skills; gardening; or developing links with farms. Few studies have explored the potential impact of combining these areas to help young people develop knowledge and skills related to food production and healthy eating'³². The qualitative impact evaluation found that the Healthy Schools Programme had helped pave the way for the FFLP; however interviewees felt that the FFLP enabled them to take the next step in implementing a more holistic, integrated and sophisticated programme of food education. It provided both a framework and a central focus for school development.'*³³

³¹ *Inspection Report: Batley Girls' High School, 4-5 March 2009* (Ofsted, 2009), p.5

³² *Food for Life Partnership Evaluation: Full Report* (University of the West of England and University of Cardiff, 2011), p.22

³³ *Qualitative Impact Evaluation of the Food for Life Partnership Programme* (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2011), p.25

8.5.2 A sustainable model

FFLP aims to embed an approach to food culture within schools that will prove sustainable in the future, without the need for ongoing support. It is a flexible programme, tailored to school needs, but beyond this seeking to build enduring relationships between likeminded schools and other partners, sharing resources, learning and experience to mutual benefit. FFLP is strongly focused on providing a legacy in terms of up-skilled teachers and catering staff, with the Cooking Bus training sessions and the growing support offered by Garden Organic proving particularly useful. Furthermore, in facilitating the establishment of SNAG at BGHS, and its subsequent work to draw up the Whole School Food Policy, the school is clear over the priorities it wants to pursue and the activities it needs to undertake to address these priorities.



For the future, the BGHS farm is about to be extended to increase the school's animal and food yield. During 2011/12, BGHS plans to set up a social enterprise with Howden Clough Tenants and Residents Association to deliver food grown on the farm to the local community. This will enable further curriculum links to be made, in such areas as business studies and land based studies.

Future sustainability is also enhanced by Kirklees Catering Service's commitment as a recipient of the Bronze Catering Mark, which makes it easier to make changes in school menus and encourages the interest of other schools in changing their food cultures.

8.5.3 Partnership working

Effective partnership working has evidently been an important factor in helping to secure the success of the FFLP programme in Kirklees:

'It's really about little steps – once one school comes [on board], the message goes elsewhere.'

BGHS has played a central role in building local partnerships: it has developed strong links with some of its feeder primary schools and hosted a number of FFLP activities, including the March 2011 awards event. More widely, it has been involved in other local initiatives with an environmental/sustainability theme, including a climate change conference and a sustainable schools celebration event. Kirklees Catering Service has also been important in cementing local FFLP partnerships, and in encouraging schools in the Borough to sign up to the programme.

8.5.4 Buy-in and commitment

For FFLP to maximise its potential, it demands significant commitment and time from the individual school leads, particularly so if that school is a Flagship. It is clear that FFLP would not have achieved the success it has had at BGHS without the buy-in it enjoyed from the Head Teacher, and without the energy of the Assistant Head for Extended Schools in driving activities forward.

A dependence on key individuals is perhaps inevitable, but also represents something of a challenge to the success of initiatives of this sort. This is confirmed by wider findings reported in the FFLP qualitative impact evaluation:

*'It is essential to have someone driving the programme forward in each school. But some FFLP Coordinators pointed out that there was a danger of the programme becoming too dependent on their personal input, commitment and championing.'*³⁴

8.6 Recommendations for the future

Big Lottery Fund support for FFLP under the National Well-being Programme will end in December 2011. FFLP is currently exploring options for the future, including the longer term potential to gain support from local commissioning bodies once new models of public health and well-being provision have been established.

³⁴ *ibid*, p.v

In the meantime, FFLP activities in BGHS are likely to continue developing, with Flagship status having helped the school to put enduring structures in place, and to establish itself at the centre of a sustainable food network in the Batley area.

The recommendations outlined below are intended as learning points for other similar initiatives focused on promoting local well-being. In particular, they focus on the success of FFLP in establishing itself as a sustainable model, and draw out some findings from the evaluations of the wider FFLP programme:

- ❑ the FFLP approach is a sustainable one, based upon a period of initial facilitation and support that seeks to build knowledge and skills, generate aspirations, and broker partnerships and networks with appropriate schools, farms and partner organisations. At Flagship Schools, one of the principal mechanisms through which the future sustainability of the model is encouraged is the SNAG, which takes responsibility for engaging representatives from the different communities involved in the ongoing development of FFLP activities. This approach provides transferable learning for other interventions that look to bring together a range of different interests to pursue common objectives and outcomes, and for which clarity of vision and strategic leadership will be required;
- ❑ it is inevitable that the success of initiatives like FFLP will be dependent on the skills, energy and commitment of particular individuals who are driving them forward. BGHS has benefited from the efforts of the Assistant Head for Extended Schools in leading FFLP and establishing strong links with a number of feeder primary schools. Although she is retiring in July 2011, other colleagues share her commitment to food sustainability, and it is likely that ongoing activity will continue with minimal disruption. More generally, to avoid problems of overdependence on particular individuals, it is valuable to ensure structures are in place to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and best practice. FFLP seeks to do so both internally within schools through the SNAG, and externally via its regional conferences and the resources available on its website;
- ❑ the main FFLP evaluation found that healthy eating messages had been taken home by pupils and had subsequently informed dietary behaviour at home. However, it was commented that no clear methodology was developed to shape or support productive communication across home/school boundaries³⁵. In moving the FFLP forward at BGHS, including plans to develop a cooking club to which pupils, parents/carers, family members and the local community will be invited, it could prove fruitful to think through how the in-school approach could be promoted and disseminated externally, helping to maximise the impact of FFLP for the local community;
- ❑ a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study found that for every £1 spent on a Food for Life school menu, more than £3 was generated in wider social, economic and environmental value.³⁶ In continuing its commitment to food sustainability, and seeking to address the remaining criteria for the FFLP Silver Award, BGHS will need to increase the proportion of its food that it sources from local suppliers. In doing so, it will contribute to the increased sustainability of local farms and other providers, as well as reducing the environmental damage caused by excessive food miles. If a coordinated approach was taken at local authority level, the impact would be scaled up and could prove of significant benefit to the local economy;
- ❑ one of the principal barriers to implementing some of the measures advocated by FFLP is concern over resources; this is particularly so in terms of sourcing more school food from the local area, and using a greater proportion of organic, farm assured and MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) certified produce. In comparison to bulk sourcing from large providers, such approaches tend to be more expensive, and raise concerns that the cost of school dinners may have to rise. However, the FFLP Impact Report highlights a five percentage point increase in the uptake of school dinners in FFLP schools over two years, and a twenty percentage point increase in free school meal take-up in secondary schools.³⁷ Increased take-up will help to make school dinners more cost effective, and could effectively outweigh any increased spend on ingredients.

³⁵ *Food for Life Partnership Evaluation: Full Report* (University of the West of England and University of Cardiff, 2011), p.147

³⁶ *The Benefits of Procuring School Meals through the Food for Life Partnership: an Economic Analysis* (new economics foundation, 2011), p.30

³⁷ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.3

8.7 How the project works

8.7.1 About the Food for Life Partnership portfolio

FFLP commenced delivery in 2007, and will run for five years through to December 2011. It benefits from £17 million in funding from the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Programme and is delivered to schools and communities throughout England. The portfolio brings together four food focused charities: the Soil Association, which acts as the lead organisation; Focus on Food Campaign; Health Education Trust; and Garden Organic.

The FFLP mission is:

'To reach out through schools to give communities access to quality local and organic food, and to the skills they need to cook and grow fresh food for themselves. We want all young people and their families to rediscover the pleasure of taking time out to enjoy good food that makes them feel healthy and connected to the changing seasons.'³⁸

There are a number of underlying programme goals:

- ☐ to promote healthier eating habits amongst pupils;
- ☐ to improve pupil awareness of food sustainability issues;
- ☐ to influence food habits at home and in the wider community;
- ☐ to improve pupil attainment and behaviour;
- ☐ to increase school meal take-up;
- ☐ to build the market for local and organic food producers.³⁹

The FFLP portfolio is contributing primarily to the Well-being Programme outcome that:

'Children, parents and the wider community eat more healthily.'⁴⁰

There are 3,800 schools enrolled on FFLP, of which 180 are Flagship Schools, 20 in each of the nine English regions; 150,000 people in the wider school community have benefited from FFLP activities, with 300,000 schoolchildren eating FFLP accredited meals every day.⁴¹

8.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

FFLP is a flexible programme and, as such, the amount of money expended in different school settings varies. Schools only receive substantive FFLP funding if they are successful in achieving Flagship status.

Although precise data on FFLP expenditure at BGHS were not available for this case study, some £1,250 was used for improvements to the dining hall, with other funding used to support farm visits by BGHS and its feeder schools, growing activities, and events hosted by the school. In total, Flagship Schools typically receive around £3,250 from FFLP, supplemented with contributions from the schools themselves and (potentially) support from other external sources.

Staffing

FFLP activity at BGHS has been led by the Assistant Head for Extended Schools. She has been supported at strategic level by the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head, and Transformation, who has been instrumental in prioritising the environmental and sustainability agenda at the school. In terms of delivery, the BGHS Farm Manager is responsible for the school's animals and produce, and undertakes externally facing work in visiting local primary schools to develop links and lead growing and similar activities.

³⁸ *Food for Life Partnership Evaluation: Full Report* (University of the West of England and University of Cardiff, 2011), p.24

³⁹ *ibid*, p.23

⁴⁰ *Well-being: an introduction to our new programme* (Big Lottery Fund, 2006), p.3

⁴¹ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.11

BGHS staff receive support from the FFLP Regional Coordinator (a Soil Association employee), particularly around network development and partnerships in relation to other local schools and the local community. More practically, personnel from the four FFLP partners support different aspects of FFLP delivery, as detailed in the 'activities' section of the case study report.

8.7.3 Project outputs

As with BGHS project expenditure, only limited data on output achievement was available for the case study. The visit of the Cooking Bus to BGHS in January 2011 involved 123 pupils and 40 adults, and the November 2010 'Apple Day' for primary schools benefited 100 pupils and 10 adults. The wormery training led by Garden Organic in June 2010 was delivered to 30 pupils and 9 adults. 23 BGHS pupils have passed their Level 1 NVQ in Horticulture.

9 FRESH 'N' FRUITY

9.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with the new economics foundation (nef) to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

Leeds Fresh 'n' Fruity is one of the constituent projects of the Altogether Better portfolio, the regional group of health and well-being projects in Yorkshire and the Humber. More information on Altogether Better can be found at Appendix 1.

Fresh 'n' Fruity commenced work in January 2008, with delivery finishing in July 2011. Project activity has been led and delivered locally by Healthy Living Network Leeds (HLNL), with Leeds City Council acting as strategic lead partner. Leeds City Council's role has included helping HLNL to develop the original project bid, acting as contract holder and a conduit for reporting on progress to Altogether Better, and supporting the project with aspects of citywide connectivity and sustainability.

Fresh 'n' Fruity works in deprived areas of Leeds to address issues of food inequality amongst local communities. As a local partnership project representing Leeds as part of a wider collaborative programme, Fresh 'n' Fruity builds on the recognised commitment of local partners to community empowerment approaches in the promotion of health and well-being.

9.2 Project need

Fresh 'n' Fruity is focused on addressing two key issues around food inequality in Leeds: inadequate access to fresh and affordable food in certain areas of the City; and a lack of the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to prepare and cook healthy meals.

Prior to setting up the project, a considerable amount of research had been undertaken by NHS Leeds and local universities into food access in the City. The research identified a number of food deserts – areas where fresh fruit and vegetables were difficult to obtain and expensive to purchase. One such area, Holbeck, is a deprived district of Leeds where the only local supermarket had closed, and other supermarkets were not interested in locating. The local shops stock little fresh produce thus Holbeck residents have to travel to the city centre or a supermarket some distance away. This is challenging for households without access to a car, particularly so for elderly or disabled people – bus services to the supermarket are poor, and transporting bags of shopping from supermarket to home is difficult for people with mobility problems.

In addition to addressing the issue of food deserts, Fresh 'n' Fruity sought to tackle a lack of knowledge around cooking and healthy eating. In doing so, the project's principal objective was to train Community Health Educators (CHEs) to work as:

'Motivators and engagers, promoting cooking skills, signposting to resources, and developing wider health skills and literacy among people living in communities where there is less resilience and engagement with statutory services.'⁴²

Alongside the CHEs, Fresh 'n' Fruity sought to recruit a larger pool of health activators, who were charged with disseminating healthy eating messages amongst people with whom they came into contact. Community development objectives were central to the project design – an empowerment model was adopted, aiming to enable the CHEs and activators to use the skills and knowledge they had gained to influence the food and health choices of their friends, families and wider communities. The Food Access Coordinator for Fresh 'n' Fruity characterised the approach as:

'Sowing seeds, showing it's possible, easy and enjoyable, and getting people to pass the messages on.'

⁴² End of Project Report: Fresh 'n' Fruity (Leeds City Council, 2011) [draft version], p.3

A further objective was to explore the potential to pursue a social enterprise route once the Altogether Better funding period had finished.

Fresh 'n' Fruity contributes to the objectives outlined in the Leeds Food Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan for 2006-10. Under its first pillar, choosing and accessing healthy food, the strategy has the principal aim:

'To improve people's ability to choose and obtain healthy food that meets the nutritional requirements that are right for their stage of life.'⁴³

Fresh 'n' Fruity has a particularly strong 'fit' with two of the individual objectives under this aim:

- ❑ to encourage healthy eating through improved knowledge and access to information about the balance of foods best for people's particular needs;
- ❑ to ensure that people in all parts of Leeds have access to healthy and affordable food.⁴⁴

More broadly, Fresh 'n' Fruity also contributes to wider strategic ambitions in Leeds. The health and well-being strand of the vision for Leeds, the Sustainable Community Strategy for the City, aims to reduce health inequalities and contribute to people living longer and having healthier lives.⁴⁵ The City Priority Plan seeks to ensure more people make healthy lifestyle choices.⁴⁶

Fresh 'n' Fruity is focused upon the Well-being Programme outcome that children, parents and the wider community eat more healthily. However, through its specific work with groups and individuals with mental health issues, and more generally through the role of cooking in building confidence and enhancing self-efficacy, it also contributes to the outcome of people and communities having improved mental well-being.⁴⁷

9.3 Activities

As outlined below, Fresh 'n' Fruity project activities cover a number of different areas.

9.3.1 Community Health Educators



Before Fresh 'n' Fruity commenced work, HLNL was already delivering a CHE training programme. The training approach was adapted for use by Fresh 'n' Fruity, although the CHE model adopted by the project was slightly different. The CHE approach to empowerment and well-being was originally developed in the 1980s, and is designed for people facing disadvantage and/or challenging circumstances, such as drug and alcohol dependency. This model is used extensively, and typically involves the delivery agency providing its CHEs with intensive support for an extended period after they have completed their training. In contrast,

CHEs involved with Fresh 'n' Fruity have tended to be less vulnerable and more 'work ready', able to commence delivery of project sessions with relatively minimal support once they have been trained.

The Fresh 'n' Fruity CHE training course is delivered over a fourteen week period, with classes taking place once a week; delivery is led by the HLNL Community Health Programme's Manager. The course comprises a set of five core modules:

- 1) What is health?
- 2) Power and powerlessness
- 3) Recognising and building on the strengths of communities
- 4) Achieving change for health
- 5) Developing skills for working with others

⁴³ *Leeds Food Matters – A Food Strategy for Leeds: 2006-2010* (The Healthy Leeds Partnership, 2006), p.16

⁴⁴ *ibid*, p.16

⁴⁵ *Leeds 2030 ... our vision to be the best city in the UK: Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030* (The Leeds Initiative, 2011), p.9

⁴⁶ *Leeds 2015 ... delivering our priorities: City Priority Plan 2011 to 2015* (The Leeds Initiative, 2011), p.3

⁴⁷ *Well-being: an introduction to our new programme* (Big Lottery Fund, 2006), p.3

Additional topic areas include content on: working with groups in the community; self-empowerment and community health development; developing skills in community education; and promotion and food access. The course is OCN (Open College Network) Level 2 accredited, with participants receiving an Introduction to Community Development and Health certificate.

The course is delivered free of charge to participants, but they are asked to commit to working on the project as a CHE once they have successfully completed the training. Retention rates are very high – only two of the 56 CHEs trained over the lifetime of the project did not move on to deliver Fresh 'n' Fruity sessions. This pays testament to the quality of the training received:

'It was wonderful, very exciting. The tutor was very motivated and very approachable.'

On completion of the course, the HLNL Food Access Support and Development Worker accompany newly qualified CHEs to their first project session; they also attend a session whilst undertaking the course to gain some work experience. Although further support from the project team is available if needed, the key mechanism to nurture course graduates is to team them up with more experienced CHEs who effectively act as mentors. Once properly established, CHEs work for the project on a sessional basis, and are paid an hourly rate for their services – involvement varies, depending on demand for sessions, their location, and the availability of other members of the CHE team, but can be as many as two or three sessions a week.

A typical CHE run course comprises five weeks of 'cook and eat' sessions, delivered at a range of venues including children's centres, schools, churches, hostels, agency premises and community centres. The first week focuses on key messages, such as five a day and the eatwell plate,⁴⁸ and introduces a simple recipe such as making healthy wraps, smoothies or fruit cups. A different recipe is covered in each of the subsequent weeks, with attendees asked what sort of food they are interested in – the aim is for ideas to come from the group, keeping them engaged, encouraging shared learning, and drawing on their different cultural approaches to food. Connections to healthy eating are made at every stage, with tips and techniques also disseminated through quizzes and games, food tasting, and sessions on labelling, ready meals and similar issues. In addition, CHEs are intended to act as a link to other professionals, signposting people to the services, networks or information they need, and acting as advocates if necessary.



Audiences for the Fresh 'n' Fruity sessions are diverse, including children and young people, parents and other family members, older people, and people with physical and mental health disabilities.

The Fresh 'n' Fruity CHEs are similarly diverse, coming from a range of different ethnic backgrounds:

'It helps when delivering sessions to have real diversity – you can build bonds, community cohesion really happens, and you can surmount barriers, cultural differences and understanding.'

The age of the CHEs varies considerably, but the large majority are female. Some have few or no qualifications, whereas others have degrees and other higher level qualifications:

'We've not gone out to recruit a different group, but the spectrum has moved towards more confident and able people... we're really looking for people who can work as CHEs almost straight away after they've finished training.'

CHEs have been recruited in various ways, including putting up posters and distributing fliers in community venues. Email communication and word of mouth have proved very useful in promoting the project, although such approaches have made it challenging to meet the original criteria for CHEs to be resident in four deprived postcode areas in Leeds. However, in the project contract, one of the tasks required of Fresh 'n' Fruity was to identify areas of need, indicating a degree of flexibility around these target areas. In practice, the project has adopted a somewhat fluid approach to its geographical targeting; activity has been delivered, and CHEs recruited from areas outside of the priority locations, either because they demonstrate significant disadvantage or to reflect demographic and/or socio-economic change that has occurred over the project's lifetime.

⁴⁸ See <http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/5ADAY/Pages/5ADAYhome.aspx> and <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eatwell-plate.aspx> (accessed 27 July 2011)

9.3.2 Health activators

Although health activators featured in the original Fresh 'n' Fruity bid to Altogether Better, the role was left relatively undefined, and the original project bid did not allocate a specific budget to cover project costs around activator recruitment and training. Most activators attend a one day course that combines key healthy eating messages with preparation of a couple of recipes. They are then given information to take away, and are encouraged to pass on the knowledge and skills they have gained to people they know, including family, friends and work colleagues.

Some of the Fresh 'n' Fruity activators have been staff from partner organisations in the City, such as workers in sheltered housing schemes and mental health charities. Some of these partners attended in order to up-skill for professional as well as personal purposes, whereas others were there simply to support their clients. In either case, they will have been in a strong position to fulfil the activator role by disseminating learning from the sessions to a wide audience.

Activators have also been recruited through the CHE led 'cook and eat' sessions.

9.3.3 Fruit and vegetable stalls



The principal means used by Fresh 'n' Fruity to address food access issues has been the fruit and vegetable stalls it has provided in various target locations, including sites outside schools and community centres, and at sheltered housing schemes. The Fresh 'n' Fruity Driver/Support Worker picks up produce from the wholesaler, and either sets up the stall or sells direct from the van; although the latter approach makes it more difficult for customers to browse what is on offer, it reduces the workload and time involved in unloading, setting-up and reloading.

The project also works with a number of partner organisations to provide them with fruit and vegetables to sell on. These include the Christchurch Armley Youth Project, which runs a food co-op manned by vulnerable young volunteers, who gain experience and valuable skills and knowledge through their involvement. In addition to supplying the produce, and taking any surplus away, Fresh 'n' Fruity helped Christchurch Armley to develop a grant application seeking support for the co-op, and provided advice on setting it up and getting it established. Project staff and CHEs have also delivered 'cook and eat' and other training sessions to young people involved with Christchurch Armley.

9.3.4 Events

Fresh 'n' Fruity has supported a range of different events, including community events and those put on by partner organisations. These typically involve setting up a stall and making fruit cups or healthy snacks for attendees, and promoting healthy eating messages alongside, where possible.

9.3.5 Health check volunteers

Some of the income derived from fruit and vegetable sales through the Fresh 'n' Fruity stall has been used by HLNL to recruit additional volunteers to help local people across the south of Leeds to undertake online health checks; some of these volunteers were participants in the 'cook and eat' sessions delivered by the CHEs. Adopting a flexible approach in using the income in this way has enabled the project to increase its reach, and thereby enhance the range of outcomes it is achieving.

9.4 Impact

As part of the case study research we spoke to: project staff; stakeholders from Altogether Better; Leeds City Council; NHS Leeds; partner organisations involved with Fresh 'n' Fruity; a range of beneficiary groups involved with the project, including CHEs and people attending the sessions they were running; and stall customers. The discussions highlighted the range of positive outcomes resulting from involvement with Fresh 'n' Fruity, as detailed in the following sub-sections.

9.4.1 Access to fresh fruit and vegetables

Consultation with users of the Fresh 'n' Fruity stall highlighted the role it has played in increasing access to fresh fruit and vegetables. Users of the stall at Cleveleys Court, a sheltered housing scheme in Holbeck, stressed how much they valued the convenience of the stall:

'I would have to go to Morrison's and you can't carry weights; it's too much for elderly people.'

'The access bus only comes once a week on a Tuesday afternoon... the fresh food wouldn't last until the weekend.'



One stall customer who was disabled commented that she had not been on a bus for four years; were it not for the stall, she would have to take taxis at considerable expense, or rely on other people to buy fresh produce for her.

Another stall user consulted for the case study commented that:

'I personally never bothered with fruit and veg much until the van was on the doorstep.'

Similar outcomes have been experienced by Mariners Resource Centre users with disabilities:

'Not every customer has the support they need to take them out and do shopping – they can be very restricted with their mobility. [The stall] is an absolute bonus... and they definitely eat more fruit and veg as a result.'

Confirming the qualitative evidence, the vast majority (97%) of respondents to a survey of stall customers carried out by the project in November 2010⁴⁹ said that the stall had made it easier for them to buy their fruit and vegetables. In terms of affordability, a similarly high proportion (90%) felt that stall prices were either 'excellent' or 'good'.

9.4.2 Healthy eating knowledge and practice

Findings from the wider national evaluation of the Well-Being Programme show that before becoming involved in Fresh 'n' Fruity, around four out of ten (41%) of the CHEs who responded to the initial survey questionnaire were eating fewer than five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, and more than eight out of ten (83%) did not enjoy putting effort and care into the food they ate.⁵⁰ Having been involved in project activities, analysis of further questionnaire data found that the CHEs reported 'very significant' improvement with regard to healthy eating in general, and the extent to which they enjoyed healthy food.⁵¹



Consultation undertaken for the case study confirmed that the CHE training course, and subsequent experience in delivering Fresh 'n' Fruity sessions, had expanded the understanding and knowledge of participants around healthy eating and nutrition:

'I learnt more about myself and my health issues. My eating habits have improved... [and] I don't get that bloated feeling when I eat any more.'

'My increased repertoire and knowledge around cooking, food hygiene and food safety side has been invaluable.'

At the Fresh 'n' Fruity stalls located outside schools, a lot of demand is led by schoolchildren pestering their parents for fruit. More than half (51%) of respondents to the November 2010 Fresh 'n' Fruity customer survey said that the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed by their children and other family members had increased since the stall had started operating in their locality.

⁴⁹ Fresh 'n' Fruity staff and CHEs surveyed 88 customers during the weeks commencing 1st and 8th November 2010. The survey was conducted at nine different stall sites

⁵⁰ Project report: Fresh 'n' Fruity (Centre for Local Economic Strategies/new economics foundation, 2011), p.2

⁵¹ *ibid*, p.4

Staff at partner organisations with whom Fresh 'n' Fruity has been involved have derived valuable learning. CHE run sessions at the Mariners Resource Centre have informed the content of the sessions run internally by Mariners staff; they now place more emphasis on healthy eating messages such as five a day. The Resource Centre Officer commented that one Mariners user had made significant changes to her eating habits following these sessions and, as a result, had managed to bring her diabetes under control.

For one CHE who was interested in food equality issues, the project had provided:

'A real education in learning about discrepancies – access to food and food deserts. It's been interesting to discover peoples lack of knowledge about food... an eye opener, how disengaged people are with food.'

For another, the training had given her useful knowledge that was directly relevant to her career aspirations:

'The CHE course gave me permission to go back into the field, refresh my knowledge and make me not feel like a fraud.'

Another CHE felt his cultural awareness had increased and, as a result of involvement with Fresh 'n' Fruity, he had developed a stronger understanding of the requirements of Muslim clients around Halal meat.

9.4.3 Learning new skills

In addition to 'hard' skills such as cooking, CHEs had developed skill sets in 'softer' areas such as communication, leadership and team working. One CHE, who was looking for employment as a community worker, felt such skills would stand him in good stead:

'I know how to get involved, how to look for problems, how to talk to people.'

9.4.4 Increased confidence and self-esteem

Some of the CHEs felt that Fresh 'n' Fruity had helped to bolster their confidence and self-esteem:

'When I started, I don't know how I got through the interview. Now I can stand up in front of a group of people – I never thought I would have the confidence to do that, [but] I look forward to it now.'

'It takes a lot of thought to deliver a session that works for everyone. The more I've done, the more confident I've become in leading groups.'

Such outcomes have been particularly evident amongst more vulnerable individuals (e.g. those who had an alcohol or drug addiction). However, some CHEs derived less benefit in this area, as they were already relatively confident when they started the training, and were more 'work ready' than other people undertaking the course.

Data from the national evaluation questionnaires show that, following their involvement with the project, there had been a 'very significant' improvement in the confidence of CHE respondents around eating healthily and, more specifically, cooking.⁵²

9.4.5 Employment and volunteering

The draft end of project report submitted to Altogether Better states that eight former CHEs have moved into employment;⁵³ involvement with Fresh 'n' Fruity is likely to have played a role in helping them do so, with several finding employment in related fields, including working as a food worker, employment at Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food establishment and a restaurant in the City, and setting up a catering business. The project has provided a considerable number of references for CHEs over the three years it has been running:

'[Involvement with the project] definitely gears people up to manage their own experiences, giving them a step up for the future, being part of a team.'

⁵² *ibid*, p.4

⁵³ *End of Project Report: Fresh 'n' Fruity* (Leeds City Council, 2011) [draft version], p.7

Many of the CHEs considered the OCN qualification they had gained through the training to be valuable in helping them to pursue future educational and employment aspirations:

'I'm now applying to do an MSc in Food Policy... it's good to have the qualification for this, and the experience and history of involvement with the project.'

'I have applied for a couple of other jobs in similar work, and couldn't have done so without the qualification.'

One CHE had not received a payslip for many years; becoming a paid member of the Fresh 'n' Fruity team helped to boost her aspirations, opening up doors around other volunteering opportunities and the possibility of part-time work:

*'This is the first proper job I've ever had; I got my first wage slip ever in March, it was very exciting. I don't think I'd be up to a part-time job yet but I don't feel overwhelmed by this.'*⁵⁴

'I volunteered to do healthy eating classes at the local high school. I wouldn't have done so without the CHEs course – it really helped my confidence.'

9.4.6 Social inclusion and relationships

Before becoming involved with Fresh 'n' Fruity, some of the CHEs had led a relatively solitary existence. The project brought them into contact with the wider community:

'I felt very isolated... I didn't have a community, but through Fresh 'n' Fruity I [could] drop into the office any time. I've felt very involved.'

'It's always interesting, meeting people you'd never normally meet in your normal daily life.'

In addition to providing a fruit and vegetable service to local people, the Fresh 'n' Fruity van also performs something of a community function; its visit formed a focal point for elderly residents at Cleveleys Court to get together socially:

'It provides a really good community focus – we come out each week and have a chat together.'

For one of the stakeholder consultees, the van was:

'A real community resource, like a nurturing role, the Big Society ideal... a fantastic example of how a good society should work.'

9.4.7 Wider impacts

The CHEs consulted for the case study appeared highly committed to their local communities and keen to do things that would bring wider benefit. A case story written by one CHE for the project to promote its work commented that:

*'I like the fact that Community Health Educators are getting across the message not only about food but about everything related to health, and I wanted to learn more and try [to] help people.'*⁵⁵

The health activator model is designed to disseminate the project's healthy eating messages to a wider audience. In practice, it has been challenging to track the extent to which people in receipt of the activator training have done so – contact details were often missing, people did not return questionnaires, and project staff had little capacity to follow-up trained activators to obtain feedback. Although workers from partner organisations who attended the activator training fell outside of the originally envisaged target group, it is likely that there will have been a wider impact from their involvement, given the professional opportunity they have to pass on learning to their clients.



⁵⁴ *Amazing Story: XXXX* (Leeds Fresh 'n' Fruity, 2011), p.2 [the CHE's name has been removed from the title, to preserve anonymity]

⁵⁵ *Fresh 'n' Fruity Additional Case Story 5* (Leeds Fresh 'n' Fruity, 2010), p.1

There have been similar challenges in capturing the impact of involvement with the project on attendees at the 'cook and eat' sessions led by the CHE team. However, wider evidence suggests that small shifts in behaviour can result, including changes to shopping habits, cooking and the content of school lunchboxes. One of the stakeholder consultees for the case study characterised such impacts as a ripple effect, and cited eating together as a family (something the CHEs try to encourage) as playing an important role in improving family relationships, health and well-being.

Comments from the CHEs confirmed the importance of small steps, but highlighted the challenges involved in bringing about sustained behavioural change:

'Some people take it on board, but others don't. But at least we raise awareness – they may not be ready to make the change, but at least they have the information.'

'In some of the tougher areas... it's felt like they've enjoyed the session and the different tastes, but that it would be difficult to take the experience home – habits are pretty embedded.'

9.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the Fresh 'n' Fruity project has proved successful.

9.5.1 Embracing diversity

In the words of the HLNL Community Health Programme's Manager, *'diversity works'*. The Fresh 'n' Fruity CHE team comprises many different nationalities, with the project benefiting from the diverse cultural experiences and traditions they bring to their work. Given the range of different black and minority ethnic groups resident in the areas of Leeds prioritised by the project, it has also been useful to target CHEs from particular ethnic backgrounds that are more likely to tap successfully into specific audiences for the project's 'cook and eat' sessions.

Beyond ethnic diversity, the range of the CHE team in terms of age and educational background has proved to be another strength. CHEs with different work/life experiences have supported each other and shared learning, enabling them to improve their delivery style and enhance the content of their sessions.

9.5.2 A flexible yet evidence based approach

Development of the Fresh 'n' Fruity project was based upon robust evidence that identified food deserts and related skills and knowledge deficits around healthy eating. Derived from delivery activity and liaison with partner organisations, the project has also used its 'on the ground' knowledge to identify further local areas experiencing significant food inequality, and areas where such issues are in a state of flux due to demographic change and the shifting nature of food supply and demand. In combination, this wider evidence base has informed a flexible approach to project delivery that, whilst remaining focused on the original four target postcode areas, has also sought to address need in other areas of Leeds.

9.5.3 Strong partnership working

Partner organisations with whom Fresh 'n' Fruity has worked paid testament to the effectiveness of the project's partnership working, and to the commitment of the staff team in shaping project services to meet and support their needs:

'Partnership working has been absolutely brilliant. [Fresh 'n' Fruity] staff and the CHEs have been very good at relating to and communicating with our customers – they have the abilities and confidence, and a very professional manner.'

Relations with Altogether Better have been good, despite some concerns held by the project over the bureaucracy involved in project monitoring and reporting. The Fresh 'n' Fruity Food Access Coordinator has been a committed contributor to the portfolio's Regional Learning Network events:

*'It was helpful to meet people from other [Altogether Better] projects to network, swap ideas and to talk about frustrations and triumphs in a supportive atmosphere.'*⁵⁶

⁵⁶ End of Project Report: Fresh 'n' Fruity (Leeds City Council, 2011) [draft version], p.15-16

However, due to delivery pressures, there was insufficient time to build strong links with individual projects within the portfolio:

*'We did value contact with other projects, but always felt this was something of a luxury and even at times a distraction from running the project.'*⁵⁷

Regular meetings were held between Fresh 'n' Fruity staff and representatives from Older and Active, an Altogether Better project that uses a similar CHE led approach to increase physical activity among older people in Leeds. However, it proved difficult to link the agenda of the two projects more closely together, with Fresh 'n' Fruity not being able to respond positively to opportunities, such as new sites that would value a stall, due to time, resource and logistical constraints.

At the strategic level, Fresh 'n' Fruity has close links with the Health and Well-being Team at Leeds City Council and the Health Improvement Team at NHS Leeds, and makes a valued contribution to the Leeds Food Workers Forum. However, if time had allowed, there might have been benefit in building stronger relationships with local health and well-being groups in the City, both to ensure that maximum value was added to other food related activity, and to explore options for the future, including the availability of mainstream support.

9.5.4 A quality training offer

Members of the CHE team consulted for the case study were unanimous in praising the quality of the training course:

'It was absolutely excellent... very professional, challenging and informative, and covering quite tricky moral issues. You had to think deeply.'

In itself, the CHE course has given participants a legacy of improved skills and knowledge. Beyond this, it helped to build their confidence to lead Fresh 'n' Fruity 'cook and eat' sessions; however the CHE course is expensive, costing some £600 per person. Given current funding and budget constraints, similar projects might consider how they could offer a lighter touch version of such training – less intensive, but remaining robust and practically orientated in covering the key areas necessary for successful delivery. This would, of course, necessitate a trade off; although expensive, the current course nevertheless represents good value for money, providing fourteen weeks of training, leading to an accredited OCN qualification, and contributing to many of the outcomes detailed previously, including enhanced skills, knowledge and confidence, and increased employability. In choosing to deliver a less resource intensive version, the comprehensive content of the current course would need to be trimmed, potentially having an impact on the effectiveness of the CHEs who graduate. Course accreditation might also be called into question should its content be reduced. Furthermore, current graduates can undertake CHE activity for a range of NHS projects without retraining, which might not prove possible if a shorter course was adopted.

9.6 Recommendations for the future

The case study findings point to a number of recommendations for the future, as outlined below. Given that Big Lottery Fund support for Fresh 'n' Fruity ends in July 2011, sustainability forms a key focus. More generally, the recommendations are presented as wider learning points to inform the delivery of similar initiatives focused on promoting healthy eating and well-being.

9.6.1 Sustainability

Over recent months, the Fresh 'n' Fruity team has considered a range of sustainability options, including exploring the potential to continue delivery under a social enterprise model; however project staff were clear over the challenges involved in doing so:

*'Selling a low value product to people with low mobility and low income, who may be difficult to persuade that they need or want the product, is not a good business model.'*⁵⁸

The emphasis of the project has been strongly geared towards social rather than entrepreneurial objectives, and although it has met community need, there is insufficient demand to sustain a self-supporting enterprise.

⁵⁷ *ibid*, p.15

⁵⁸ *ibid*, p.20

A social enterprise model might prove a feasible way to support the continued delivery of the 'cook and eat' sessions, although the fruit and vegetable stall element of the project, as delivered using the Fresh 'n' Fruity van, would not be viable. Some organisations already pay towards the sessions and others might be prepared to do the same; the Primary Care Trust (and Leeds City Council, when it takes over responsibility for public health in the City) is also likely to continue to commission delivery. There may be potential opportunities, in terms of private sector support, through some form of corporate social responsibility sponsorship, or possibly through Section 106 Agreements associated with new food retail developments.

It was originally hoped that the work of Fresh 'n' Fruity in supporting partner organisations to deliver their own fruit and vegetable stalls would help these organisations to develop sustainable enterprises that they would be able to take forward under their own steam. Although this is likely to happen at the Christchurch Armley Youth Project, where the stall run by young volunteers has gained significant momentum, other partners have insufficient capacity to continue stall delivery.

The strategic context in Leeds is currently less conducive to the food and healthy eating agenda than it has been in the past, with issues such as smoking and alcohol dependency now being prioritised. Nevertheless, once the Coalition Government's strategy in relation to food is properly articulated, and local authority responsibilities for public health become clearer, there may be greater support for projects such as Fresh 'n' Fruity at the local level.

The future sustainability of Fresh 'n' Fruity could have been supported by earlier action to bring together relevant partners to consider possible options. There might have been value in setting up some form of steering group to provide the project with strategic direction, bringing together key stakeholders such as Leeds City Council and NHS Leeds, alongside other organisations involved in delivering similar activity, such as Zest – Health for Life.

9.6.2 Project design and contractual arrangements

There were a number of teething problems early on in the project's implementation phase, largely resulting from the time lag between designing and submitting the Fresh 'n' Fruity bid, recruitment of the delivery team, and the start of 'on the ground' project activity. During this time, the lead bid writer left HLNL, requiring the new delivery team to interpret the original contract intention. It was supported in doing so by staff at Altogether Better and Leeds City Council, with elements of the delivery model subsequently redesigned. In particular, the activator role was reviewed, with a revised approach introduced. Other areas where clarification was introduced included how to use the income derived from the sale of fruit and vegetables on the stall, and interpretation of some of the output definitions and targets.

Inevitably, dialogue on these issues between HLNL, Altogether Better and Leeds City Council led to some delay in delivering aspects of the project. Some of the issues might have been anticipated at the project design stage by adopting a logic model approach to think through the shape of a project from first principles, leading out of the rationale for intervention, and the objectives and activities best placed to address this rationale. However, implementation of complex projects such as Fresh 'n' Fruity is rarely straightforward; in this case, the partners involved worked together to resolve the issues and not detract unduly from delivery.

9.6.3 A joined-up project

The original intention was for the CHEs to work closely alongside the Fresh 'n' Fruity stall, with CHE led sessions helping local people to learn how they could use fruit and vegetables from the stall to cook healthy recipes. In practice, it proved challenging to bring these two aspects together, mainly for logistical reasons: decisions over stall location were based upon local demand, with stalls needing to remain at the same site for an extended period to build a customer base; in contrast, the 'cook and eat' sessions were delivered at various different venues. As a result, the two strands were delivered in relative isolation from one another.

The joined-up approach that was originally envisaged is probably a utopian model. However, the project might have done more to get the CHEs involved with the stall, both in helping to set up and man it, and in generating demand through door-to-door and more targeted publicity activity. There might also have been more emphasis on the promotion of healthy eating messages through the stall, by providing leaflets, recipes and other information. However, as one stakeholder put it:

'[Stall customers] tend to rush in and out, and don't necessarily buy into the service as a health vehicle.'

Although extremely challenging to do, if the CHEs had managed to stimulate demand for the stall by doing more to change attitudes to healthy eating amongst community members, the project might have proved more sustainable in the longer term. Furthermore, if the early plan to purchase a specialist van for kitting out as a mobile shop had proved feasible (it was ruled out on cost grounds) it might have been easier and more efficient for the stall to travel to meet demand instigated through the CHE led sessions.

9.6.4 The CHE model

The CHE model adopted by Fresh 'n' Fruity differs from the approach taken more widely across the Altogether Better portfolio, in that Fresh 'n' Fruity CHEs are paid rather than acting in a voluntary capacity. HLNL was clear on the rationale that underpinned the decision to pay its CHEs: giving people a wage for their time demonstrates that they are valued, and makes the relationship between CHE and project a professional one; it also helps CHEs who are looking for work:

'We wanted it to be as close to a proper job as possible.'

The paid CHE model also reinforces Fresh 'n' Fruity's community development ethos, with money (in the form of CHE wages) being put back into local communities.

Given the cost of the project, and the current imperative to reduce budgets and generate efficiencies, such a model is unlikely to gain significant publicly funded support. If Fresh 'n' Fruity does find a way to sustain some of its activity, it should consider reverting to a volunteer CHE model; other options designed to retain CHE interest and commitment could be considered, such as opportunities to undergo further training or work experience, get involved in events or other aspects of project activity, or gain recognition and respect through some form of reward scheme. Although a voluntary model might make it more challenging to recruit CHEs, payment does not appear to have been a strong motivating factor amongst those CHEs consulted for the case study. Furthermore, other Altogether Better projects have enjoyed considerable success in recruiting and retaining volunteer Community Health Champions.

Once trained, individual CHEs enjoy relative autonomy over the content and focus of their 'cook and eat' sessions, provided that the sessions reflect the needs and interests of participants and cover the core areas required by the project. There is considerable merit in such an approach, which resulted in the delivery of many well planned sessions that suited the personal strengths of the CHE lead. However, there might be value in adopting a more explicitly structured approach, as is the case for the core NHS CHE project – as noted by one of the CHE consultees, and confirmed in a session observed for the case study, the quality of the CHEs varies, hence the sessions they deliver can lack consistency.

9.7 How the project works

9.7.1 About the Altogether Better well-being portfolio

The Altogether Better portfolio was founded on the belief that Community Health Champions have the potential to make a significant impact on health inequalities.⁵⁹ Its mission statement is:

*'Working together to build our region's capacity to empower communities to improve their health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.'*⁶⁰

In joining forces under the portfolio, local partners across the region wanted to move towards a more sustainable approach to community empowerment in health and well-being.

⁵⁹ In general, the model found across the portfolio uses Community Health Champions, rather than the Community Health Educators employed by Fresh 'n' Fruity

⁶⁰ *Voices from Experience: Empowering Communities to Improve their Health and Well-being* (Yorkshire and Humber Empowerment Partnership, 2010), p.1

In 2008, Altogether Better was awarded £6.8 million from the Big Lottery Fund's National Well-being Programme to run a five year programme in Yorkshire and the Humber. The portfolio comprises sixteen flagship projects, which are testing out different Community Health Champion approaches in a range of settings across the region. It is led by NHS Yorkshire and Humber, with every Primary Care Trust locality in the region having a project, and a mix of Primary Care Trust, local authority, voluntary and community organisations and regional bodies involved in delivery. A Regional Learning Network provides programme and project level support, aiming to capture and disseminate outcomes resulting from Altogether Better activities, to share learning and good practice, and to consider sustainability options and forward strategies. The Regional Advisory Forum seeks to raise the portfolio's profile, gain partnership support, and embed Community Health Champion approaches across the region and beyond.

At the time of writing, Altogether Better had already exceeded its target of recruiting 13,500 Community Health Champions in neighbourhoods experiencing particularly poor health outcomes. The Community Health Champions are tasked with providing peer-to-peer advice and support, and undertaking community and work place based activities in order to have a positive influence on the health of 90,000 individuals throughout the region. The majority of Community Health Champions are volunteers and work with local people to help them to eat more healthily, become more physically active, and improve their mental health and overall well-being.

More information on Altogether Better can be found at www.altogetherbetter.org.uk.

9.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

Fresh 'n' Fruity received £435,000 in funding from the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Programme (via Altogether Better) over its three year lifetime; the large majority of this funding is revenue, with only £5,000 in capital. In addition, some £33,000 has been sourced from fruit and vegetable stall sales, and £16,000 in income from charged for sessions and other miscellaneous sources.⁶¹ The bulk of project expenditure has been on salaries for the three HLNL staff involved, together with office costs and overheads. CHEs are paid £8 an hour, amounting to some £30,000 in total over the project's lifetime.

Staffing

There are three HLNL staff working on the project: the Food Access Coordinator, who acts as Project Manager; the Food Access Support and Development Worker, who supervises the CHEs once trained, sets up their sessions, and undertakes general project administration and coordination duties; and the Driver/Support Worker, who drives the Fresh 'n' Fruity van and sets-up and runs the stalls. Each of these staff members is employed for thirty hours on the project.

In addition, the HLNL Community Health Programme's Manager takes the lead in delivering the CHE training course. The original project budget included funding for a part-time administration role, but it was subsequently decided that the core staffing team would cover the role, and use the saved resources to support project delivery.

9.7.3 Project outputs

Table 1 shows the outputs delivered by Fresh 'n' Fruity over its three year lifetime. As shown, the project has achieved or surpassed all of its output targets.⁶² A total of 212 direct beneficiaries have benefited from the project, comprising the 56 CHEs recruited to the training course, and the pool of health activators recruited and trained. The project has benefited 4,462 indirect beneficiaries, including 1,118 people attending CHE led sessions (predominantly 'cook and eat'), 400 regular customers of the fruit and vegetable stall, and 2,944 people attending events in which Fresh 'n' Fruity was involved.⁶³ In addition, given the role that activators are asked to undertake in passing on healthy eating messages to their families, friends and colleagues, a considerable number of other people are likely to have been influenced by the project.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *End of Project Report: Fresh 'n' Fruity* (Leeds City Council, 2011) [draft version], p.6

⁶² Data from *End of Project Report: Fresh 'n' Fruity* (Leeds City Council, 2011) [draft version], p.5-6

⁶³ Note that the final measure relating to people attending events was not included in the target number of indirect beneficiaries outlined in the January 2010 Contract Addendum. See *Project/Contract Addendum: Fresh 'n' Fruity* (Leeds City Council, 2010), p.3

⁶⁴ The draft End of Project Report estimates that, in total, Fresh 'n' Fruity may have influenced around 5,500 people. This number includes the total number of direct and indirect beneficiaries as shown in the table, alongside an estimate for the number of people influenced by the health activators, based upon five people per activator. See *End of Project Report: Fresh 'n' Fruity* (Leeds City Council, 2011) [draft version], p.6

Table 1: Fresh 'n' Fruity output delivery, 2008-11

Output measure	Achieved outputs	Target ⁶⁵	Percentage achieved
Direct beneficiaries			
Number of CHEs recruited	56	51	110%
Number of health activators recruited and trained	156	150	104%
Total number of direct beneficiaries	212	201	105%
Indirect beneficiaries			
Number of people attending project sessions ⁶⁶	1,118	650	172%
Number of regular fruit and vegetable stall customers	400	400	100%
Number of people attending events in which Fresh 'n' Fruity was involved	2,944	–	–
Total number of indirect beneficiaries	4,462	1,050	425%
Other output measures			
Number of CHEs graduating with OCN Level 2 and becoming active CHEs	54	48	113%
Number of cook and eat-type sessions delivered	235	–	–
Number of regular fruit and vegetable stalls in target postcodes	10	9	111%

⁶⁵ Targets as detailed in *Project/Contract Addendum: Fresh 'n' Fruity* (Leeds City Council, 2010), p.10. No targets are detailed for two measures: the number of people attending events in which Fresh 'n' Fruity was involved, and the number of cook and eat-type sessions delivered

⁶⁶ Mainly cook and eat sessions, led by the CHE team

10 GET WALKING KEEP WALKING

10.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Wellbeing Evaluation. In 2008, CLES was commissioned, alongside nef, to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Website](#).



The Get Walking Keep Walking (GWKW) project, delivered by The Ramblers across England was part of the Active Travel Consortium led by Sustrans and funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Well-Being programme.

The GWKW project used a combination of outreach work and providing guided walks, resources and online tools to encourage people to take up walking. The project aimed to encourage people who were previously inactive or insufficiently active to go walking independently and to make walking a part of their everyday lives. GWKW also tried to challenge the perception that walking is something which only takes place in the open space in the countryside, rather than in towns and cities. GWKW was comprised of six sub-projects; five of which were delivered in Birmingham, East London, Manchester, Sheffield, and South London while the sixth project provided Get Walking Packs to inactive people across the rest of England.

10.2 Project need

The project was set up to address several key issues:

- ❑ **people in poor health are unlikely to engage in physical activity** – the project targeted people who were already experiencing poor health to encourage them to improve their health by taking up walking. Recognising that people in poor health were unlikely to engage in health intervention projects, GWKW focused on reaching out to these people who are likely to benefit the most from taking up walking;
- ❑ **people do not have the knowledge or confidence to go walking** – one of the Ramblers aims is to make walking easier and more accessible for more people. Many people are unaware of how easy it can be to take up walking. The project aimed to promote the ease and enjoyment of walking, increasing people's confidence to go out for a walk;
- ❑ **low levels of physical activity and fewer people walking** – data shows that fewer people walk than in the past, more people are overweight and obese, and there are increasing numbers of people experiencing ill health due to inactivity. The project aimed to use walking to enhance people's physical and mental wellbeing and improve environmental sustainability, social cohesion and inclusion;
- ❑ **people perceive walking as an activity only possible in the countryside** – people living in towns and cities are less likely to go walking because they consider it as an activity which is only enjoyable in the countryside. The project aimed to promote urban areas as being 'walk friendly' and encourage people to enjoy walking in their local area with people from their community.

10.3 Activities

GWKW consisted of a range of activities to allow participants to gradually increase their level of walking using structured plans. These plans included Get Walking Packs, twelve week programmes, taster events, a schools programme and My Get Walking.

GWKW activities were aimed at a diverse range of people from a large number of differing ethnicities. The project targeted people who would traditionally be unlikely to go out walking. This included younger people, older people, the inactive, people with mental health problems, health conditions, disabilities, and those from BME communities.



10.3.1 Project resource packs

The Get Walking Packs contained a variety of items, including a log book, a twelve week plan to develop regular independent walking, information on walking, and a pedometer. The packs were distributed locally through special community events and each element of the pack was designed to encourage people to walk more often and/or further. People could also become involved with GWKW through the local programmes in Birmingham, East London, Manchester, Sheffield and South London.

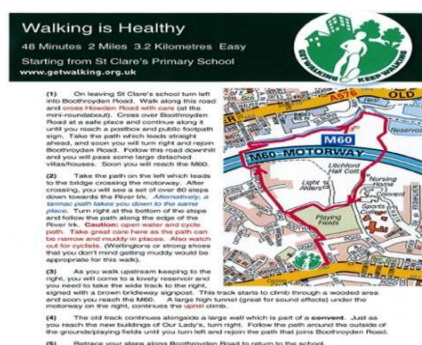
10.3.2 Local walking programmes

In each area, GWKW staff established short introductory walking programmes of up to twelve weeks in length. Some of the schemes targeted a specific group (e.g. members of existing community groups and people who use particular services, such as mental health services) whilst others were open to members of the general public.

10.3.3 Taster events

When it was impractical to run a full programme, local GWKW staff organised taster events. Taster events involved a one-off led walk and were tied to a specific event, such as a local fun day. GWKW also engaged with schools to run sessions and led walks designed to encourage children to enjoy walking.

10.3.4 Volunteering



Volunteers played an important role in delivering GWKW. Local GWKW projects had staff accredited by Natural England to train people as volunteer walk leaders who helped to run walking sessions and motivated participants. The volunteers also developed short, accessible walking routes which were uploaded onto the GWKW website and the volunteers helped to promote the project in their local area.

10.3.5 Project websites

To promote the project and provide resources to help people to go walking independently, the project had its own website. The website provided information and guidance on independent walking, as well as information on local projects. A routes website was also developed to host walking routes developed by staff and volunteers.

10.4 Impact

To develop this case study, we used reviewed a detailed evaluation of the GWKW project which CLES had previously conducted. This involved a quantitative survey measuring the impact of the project on participants' walking, physical activity and behaviour change and the impact of the project on the project volunteers. We also consulted national project staff and key stakeholders, held interviews with local project partners, staff and beneficiaries, and conducted a number of biographical interviews with participants and volunteers.



Using the interviews and survey data, we have identified a number of key outcomes from the project concerning improved mental well-being, increased physical activity, greater social well-being, and feelings of satisfaction from volunteering.

GWKW was found to have the greatest benefits for those living in deprived areas, volunteers and people from BME communities who reported substantial gains in social and mental wellbeing up to a year after taking part in the project.

GWKW was also most effective for those who were least active at the start of their involvement with the project. Almost one quarter of inactive beneficiaries became active after participating in GWKW, and one in three moved into the 'insufficiently active' category.

10.4.1 Enjoying being more physically active

Most of the GWKW participants did little physical exercise before joining the project but after the project, 53% of the least active people were doing at least an hour and half of physical exercise per week. The project was effective in changing people's attitude to walking and exercise in general. Participants described how their habits had changed, for example, walking instead of using the bus or a car and taking up other physical activities, such as Tai Chi, swimming and dancing. The project had a ripple effect whereby participants encouraged their friends and family to join them when they go walking:

'I didn't used to like PE lessons, but I really enjoy the rambling.'

'Before I started walking with GWKW, it wasn't something that I imagined myself doing, but it's definitely built up my motivation and stamina.'

'This has made me feel even more motivated to do some exercise regularly and I've encouraged lots of other people to sign up to the walks.'

10.4.2 Recovering from ill-health

It was clear that taking part in the GWKW project helped participants to recover from mental and physical ill-health. Walking is a gentle exercise and so can be done by people who have low levels of fitness or mobility limitations. Participants described feeling fitter and healthier after joining the project. Some participants found the project helped them to lose weight and think about their diet more. For participants who had a physical illness, the project gave them an alternative to the gym and a sociable way of gradually building up their strength:

'Walking keeps me fit and feeling healthy. It's better than taking pills. I get very stiff if I sit around too much, so GWKW has helped me to manage my arthritis.'

'I've joined an exercise class, thought a lot more about my diet and lost two and a half stone since joining GWKW's twelve week programme.'

One of the project's target groups was people with mental health needs. Participating in the project was found to decrease symptoms of depression and help them to improve their mental health in a number of ways. The survey found that 88% of beneficiaries reported increases in mental wellbeing as a result of walking more frequently as walking was found to reduce anxiety, improve sleep patterns and give beneficiaries a sense of structure and purpose. Beneficiaries reported feeling more positive and motivated to take up more physical exercise and improve their diet which in turn improves mental health:

'There have been loads of benefits for them really, including helping them relax and de-stress, getting fresh air, getting to know one another better, and it helps them to sleep better.'

'Getting out and about with the group has helped me to feel better and improved the quality of my sleep.'

10.4.3 Greater self-confidence and self-esteem

The GWKW project aimed to give people the confidence to go out walking independently. We found that many beneficiaries described feeling more confident after being involved in the project. For many beneficiaries, it was the first time they'd taken part in a group activity for a long time but, after a few weeks, participants were enjoying chatting to other participants and the walk leader. The regularity of the walks, an increasing familiarity with the walk environment, and feeling that walking was something positive to do, all contributed towards increasing levels of confidence:

'It was more challenging for me to walk outside than to use the gym, it made me stronger mentally and physically and gave me back the confidence I had lost to go outside on my own.'

'This is the first time I've volunteered for anything and, whilst I felt a bit apprehensive, I am keen to lead walks for the other people at the centre. Walking has built my confidence'

10.4.4 Meeting new people and making new friends



The project was found to have a direct impact on social well-being by helping people to meet new people, make friends and engage with people in their community who they might not usually ever talk to. 51% of participants reported an increase in social wellbeing as the project provided an easy way to meet likeminded people. The project was particularly successful at reducing social isolation for new mums and carers who struggled to find opportunities to get out and spend time with others:

'Since having my baby I have spent a lot of time in the house as a carer and I felt that it was time to get out and about a bit more and meet other new mums.'

10.4.5 Satisfaction through volunteering

Some of the greatest benefits were experienced by the project's volunteers. Volunteers described gaining great satisfaction and enjoyment from sharing their enthusiasm for walking with others and through raising the participants' self-confidence and self-esteem. The majority of the volunteers felt that the project was very worthwhile and gained satisfaction from seeing beneficiaries' health improve:

'I love chatting to anyone, it comes easily to me. It's great to see them come out of themselves a bit more, they start to get more involved after about the third week.'

'It's provided enormous enjoyment, an opportunity to walk and have their company, teach the young children about their surroundings and how people look at things in a different way. It's very refreshing.'

A number of volunteers were retired or unemployed and so being involved in the project gave them a sense of purpose, new skills and a positive way to use their spare time. Volunteers described growing in self-confidence as a result of learning to lead walks and encourage others:

'My involvement has put a smile back on my face and given me a sense of worth again, I'm only sorry that it is coming to an end.'

'I'm unemployed so I often have too much spare time. The walking helps me to keep positive as I've been looking for work for a while.'

Some of the GWKW volunteers were drawn from existing local organisations whose aim is to improve the lives of vulnerable groups. The training in leading walks, which was provided to these volunteers, meant that they can use walking as another way of supporting the people they work with.

10.5 Why the project works

The research identified a number of factors important to the project's success.

10.5.1 Targeted, local outreach



The project was very successful at engaging with people who would usually not be interested in walking. GWKW managed to target individuals from deprived communities and BME groups effectively by connecting with local community groups. The project dedicated resources to employing two members of staff and several volunteers specially to reach out people who would otherwise be unlikely to participate. The additional time and expertise of the staff members and volunteers meant that particularly inactive people with more complex support needs were encouraged to join the project.

10.5.2 Skilled, enthusiastic project staff

The GWKW project benefited greatly from having a committed, enthusiastic and skilled staff team who were keen to promote and support others to walk. Several members of the local programme teams had experience and qualifications in community development which was crucial in supporting people with complex needs.

10.5.3 Committed volunteers

The staff team was supported by many volunteers who played a vital role in supporting and contributing towards the delivery of the project. The volunteers acted as route developers, walk leaders and community champions. Involving and training volunteers provided support for the project participants and also created significant benefits for the volunteers themselves.

10.5.4 Complementing the work of local partners

The local programme staff were successful in liaising with local partners and stakeholders in each of the programme areas. This meant that staff were well informed about existing provision at the start of delivery, and were able to dovetail and add value to ongoing provision where it existed. Importantly, GWKW also added value by training volunteers from local community and voluntary sector organisations in leading group walks so that these organisations can use walking to benefit their members too.



10.5.5 Walking in a group

The project had a noticeable impact on the social well-being of the beneficiaries. For many participants, walking in a group was important for maintaining and sustaining their interest in walking. Being able to meet new people while out walking increased social interaction and created an opportunity to forge new friendships. Walking with others also contributed to participants' commitment to the group and to walking.

10.5.6 Providing good quality materials and resources

The Get Walking Packs provided useful practical information to encourage people to walk, including: a pedometer; log book; and walking routes. The 'Trail Tales' packs were also greatly appreciated by schools and the routes website was popular. Taking time to ensure that resources such as these were appropriate and well thought through provided a valuable bank of information which encouraged and supported project beneficiaries.

10.6 Key lessons and recommendations

There are a number of recommendations which GWKW and other similar projects may wish to consider going forwards:

- ❑ the Ramblers have been successful in winning the contract to deliver the government funded Walking for Health programme in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support. An important factor helping The Ramblers to win the contract was that they actively lobbied the government to share the findings of their GWKW project evaluation. They promoted the project's outcomes in various formats, such as full reports as well as summary and headline reports and focused on engaging strategically with national level stakeholders;
- ❑ at the end of the GWKW project, there was a dedicated pool of both historic and new volunteers. The Ramblers worked to link GWKW volunteers with existing local Ramblers groups to encourage them to remain involved in walking and volunteering for The Ramblers. Having a trained pool of volunteers demonstrated the added value of GWKW and meant that volunteers were available to assist the delivery of the Walking for Health contract;
- ❑ local GWKW project staff were proactive in working with relevant partners and stakeholders, and added significant value to the local sustainable travel landscape. However, they did not always have the time or resources to participate strategically in local steering groups. Where this did occur, significant value was added to partnership activity. Other similar projects should consider how their local coordinators can have a strong strategic voice in the championing of local activities;
- ❑ there has been a degree of disconnect between what happens when a participant ends their time with the twelve week walking programme. In order for the benefits of walking to be maintained over the long term, it is important that these individuals are not 'lost' and that people are encouraged to volunteer or to join other walking groups. Improved signposting onto other walks (if and where they exist) or to other groups which require volunteer leaders, would assist in maintaining organised walks for groups and engaging volunteers;
- ❑ the quality of the Get Walking Pack, 'Trail Tales' and the GWKW website, has supported the beneficiaries' participation in the project; these resources were well designed and of practical use in terms of supporting individuals to start walking. Likewise, linking in with the curriculum was a key strength of 'Trail Tales'. Continuing to develop the website, routes, training and accreditation scheme was important for sustaining the project's outcomes.

10.7 How the project works

10.7.1 About the Active Travel Consortium

The Active Travel Consortium, branding as Travel Actively, was supported by £20 million of funding from the Big Lottery Fund through its Well-Being Programme. The portfolio consists of 50 projects which aim to help people all over England to change their travel habits and improve their health by giving them the practical support they need to walk and cycle as part of their everyday lives. The consortium is a partnership of leading walking, cycling and health organisations and its lead partner is Sustrans.

The Consortium's activities were run in communities, schools, business parks and universities. The projects targeted specific groups, including Black and Minority Ethnic groups, people with disabilities, people with mental health problems, elderly people the young people. Long-term sustainability and behaviour change were key goals of each project.

10.7.2 Project inputs

GWKW has received funding from a number of sources, amounting to £4,759,831 in total. The main funder is the Big Lottery Fund, which accounts for 73% (3,464,102) of funding. The Ramblers Holiday Charitable Trust has provided 18% (£880,000) of total funding, with the remaining in-kind funding amounting to 9% or £415,729.

The funding was spread across the four years as shown below:

Table 2: Get Walking Keep Walking funding for period 2008-11

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Costs of GWKW	£1,169,084	£1,169,084	£1,169,084	£1,252,577

Figures provided by the Ramblers show that a total of £1.88 million funding has been allocated to employee costs; this includes the cost of employees within the central office and local programme staff. It also includes a total of £144,000 paid to agency and sessional staff employed to assist GWKW with tasks, such as inputting data onto the GWKW Management Information System (MIS). The following profile of spend on employees was supplied by the Ramblers:

Table 3: Get Walking Keep Walking profile of spend on employees for period 2008-11

	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Salary costs	£479,951	£479,951	£479,951	£479,429	£1,919,281

10.7.3 Project outputs

GWKW engaged with over 87,500 people, exceeding its original target. The recruitment, training and retention of volunteers was a key strength of the project; 910 volunteers were recruited and over the course of the programme, volunteers gave 28,994 hours of their time.

The GWKW Pack was one of the main ways in which beneficiaries engaged with the programme. 73,138 packs were distributed by GWKW; 35,367 through face-to-face distribution and 37,771 through online registration.

During late 2010, the Ramblers developed a unique walking routes website to streamline the process of route development for volunteers and staff members. 1700 short walking routes were developed and made available on the website.

11 GROWING EAST MIDDLESBROUGH

11.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Wellbeing Evaluation. In 2008, CLES was commissioned, alongside nef, to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Website](#).

The Growing East Middlesbrough (GEM) project, delivered by Middlesbrough Environment City Trust is part of the Local Food Programme led by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts and funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme.



The Growing East Middlesbrough project is a three year community food growing project which began in 2009. The project primarily consisted of creating community allotment sites, providing 'taster' allotment plots for first-time growers, teaching horticultural skills to community members, and running a certified course in horticulture. The project linked with local community groups and Middlesbrough town initiatives to promote community food growing, healthy eating and social cohesion in east Middlesbrough.

11.2 Project need

The project has been delivered in an area of Middlesbrough which has high numbers of residents experiencing multiple deprivations. The project aimed to address some aspects of the deprivation experienced by individuals in the community. The project included a range of people but aimed to specifically target families, women (who are under-represented in allotment use) and other under-represented communities, including asylum seekers and refugees and black and minority ethnic communities.

Growing East Middlesbrough aimed to address the following key issues:

- ❑ **obesity and poor nutrition** – by encouraging and supporting people to grow their own fruit and vegetables, the project aimed to increase people's consumption of healthy food;
- ❑ **poor physical health** – the project aimed to increase people's physical health by encouraging them to spend time outdoors, doing physical work to maintain their allotment;
- ❑ **poor mental health** – by working closely with MIND, the project aimed to use horticulture as a means for helping people with mental health issues to improve their mental well-being;
- ❑ **social exclusion** – the project involved people from different marginalised communities and brought people together to work on a community allotment in order to improve social inclusion;
- ❑ **worklessness** – project participants could follow an accredited horticulture course to give them new skills and experience with which to look for employment.

11.3 Activities

The project's primary activities involve:

- ❑ setting up food growing sites in schools and community venues;
- ❑ providing horticultural advice and assistance to community groups;
- ❑ providing taster plots for individuals, families and community groups and creating additional standard allotment plots;
- ❑ providing an accredited training course in horticulture and a mentoring scheme to support trainees.

11.3.1 Building growing sites

An important initial activity was the creation of 16 growing sites in schools and community venues in East Middlesbrough. To set-up the sites, the project provided advice on structures for allotments and raised beds, how to improve the soil condition, and which vegetables would be suitable to plant and when. Once the community groups and schools had designed their new growing area, the project officer offered practical support in digging and building allotment plots and raised beds. If necessary, the project officer signposted the groups to a known contractor who could provide assistance with heavy manual work.

11.3.2 Mentoring scheme

To provide on-going advice and support to the project participants, five mentors were recruited to the project. The mentors assisted the new allotment tenants and growing clubs with advice and encouragement. The mentors were people who were already experienced in horticulture but they also received informal training from the project officer. The support they offered was largely disseminated by word of mouth and in the Town Farm Allotments Newsletter.



11.3.3 Accredited course in horticulture

To increase community members' horticultural skills, GEM also offered an accredited Open College Network (OCN) course in horticulture. 66 people undertook an OCN unit and five people also completed level two of the course. The Project Officer is an OCN verifier and assessor with a vast knowledge of horticulture and so could also provide informal and bespoke training to those who needed it.

11.3.4 Offering taster plots

To encourage new and inexperienced growers to try growing their own food, GEM provided 20 smaller 'taster' plots. Many of the 42 people who took up a taster plot have moved onto a full-sized Council plot or started growing vegetables at home. The plot holders could remain on their taster plot if they felt that the plot was an appropriate size for them.

11.3.5 Involving community groups

Community groups as well as individuals could use the taster plots. In total, 12 community groups, including care centres, children centres, homeless hostels, Multicultural East Middlesbrough, Roseberry Park Mental Health Hospital and Middlesbrough and Stockton MIND benefited from the project. For example, some groups planted a community orchard and an edible forest garden with the support of the project officer. Middlesbrough and Stockton MIND leases a community plot which they use to deliver an Ecominds project. The Ecominds project enables people with mental health issues to improve their physical and mental health through spending time outdoors and growing fruit and vegetables.

Once a year, Middlesbrough holds a 'town meal' where a number of local organisations come together to prepare meals in a public place and offer them free of charge to the community. GEM participants offered fresh produce which they had grown for the annual town meal.

11.4 Impact

Around 3000 people have been involved in the Growing East Middlesbrough project and the benefits they experienced are varied. To identify how the project participants and their communities have benefited from the project, we spoke to the GEM project officer as well as two project mentors and a number of project participants and partners. We also reviewed project documentation, including monitoring data, reports and press releases. From the interviews and documents, we identified several key outcomes from the project connected to improved mental well-being, increased physical activity, healthy eating, and employment and skills.

The key outcomes which we identified are discussed below.

11.4.1 Eating more healthily

According to interviews with people who took up growing their own produce, they get a lot of enjoyment from being able to eat the fresh fruit and vegetables they have grown. Some of the participants share their produce with their friends and families whose diet is also improved as a result:

'Having a taster plot has made a difference to our lives. It gets us out of the house. We eat our own veg and the surplus we give to our neighbours and family.'

'My mum and dad think the project is good because they don't have jobs and it's cheaper to grow your own food.'

At two of the local junior schools, where the project helped to build growing patches, the project officer has worked with pupils from the different year groups to engage the majority of the pupils in growing activities. A teacher from one of the schools completed a course in horticulture as part of the GEM project and then began a growing club with the school pupils. The pupils have learnt how to grow fruit and vegetables and the growing club harvests and cooks vegetables for other pupils to eat:

'The best thing is eating the vegetables, discovering new tastes.'

'We've tried things we'd never eaten before like alpine strawberries and radishes.'

11.4.2 Feeling included and less isolated

Plot holders described how having a taster plot and following the horticulture course helped them to meet new people and spend more time with others rather than alone at home. This was especially important for elderly people who took up a plot. The survey findings reflect these comments showing a significant improvement in the quality of beneficiaries' social relations. The allotment site holds barbecues and has picnic tables, which encourages people to make friends and using back alleyways for growing plants encouraged neighbours to socialise while they garden:

'It's easy to get involved with the site and feel part of it.'

'There's a really good community spirit, everyone helping each other out.'

'I've made loads of new friends, friends of all ages.'

11.4.3 Greater self-confidence and happiness

People from different groups reported feeling more confident and better about themselves after joining the project. This was also seen in the survey findings which showed a very significant improvement in beneficiaries feeling of life satisfaction. The project mentors described how volunteering helps to improve their mental health through being able to share their knowledge and help others:

'Being part of the project helps me feel relaxed and less stressed and having people to look after helps as well.'

'The fresh air and freedom, birdsong and peace; it's very therapeutic.'

A project officer from Middlesbrough and Stockton MIND who worked with the GEM project to teach people with mental health needs about horticulture described very positive results for the project participants, including improved confidence and self-esteem and having a sense of accomplishment. The project was found to particularly appeal to men. Monitoring by MIND found that over 95% of their service users who took part in allotment activities had better mental health six months after joining the project:

'Being a part of such a variety of individuals and experience has helped me to gain a wider appreciation of myself. In a way I have learnt that tending what I grow in the soil, helps me as a person to grow as well.'

Pupils who took part in a school growing club also benefited from increased self-esteem. One teacher described how pupils grow in confidence and enthusiasm through learning to grow their own vegetables:

'There's a link to academic learning but it's much more about the pupils' personal development.'

11.4.4 New skills and increased employability

Completing an accredited course in horticulture was found to be popular with project participants and 11 of the 45 level 1 trainees carried on to complete level two units with the project as well. Ten of these people have continued to use the knowledge they gained to maintain their allotments and two people gained employment as a direct result of their new qualifications.

Attendees on the course varied in age, background and ability; ranging from Council employees, local residents, and local community group members and social care group members. Some people attended the course in order to gain new skills to help them to seek employment and others were just interested in learning to grow food generally:

'I'm a lot better at literacy and numeracy and now I've got my own bookshelf at home. The project has made a huge difference to my life, this is my future now.'

11.4.5 More physically active



People who took up a new plot as part of the project reported feeling fitter and healthier from spending time outdoors and being more active. This is reflected in the results of the survey which found significant improvements in beneficiaries' enjoyment of physical activity and level of physical activity. The project built special raised beds so that people with mobility difficulties could still participate and all participants could work as much or little as they liked. Older people found that despite health problems, they were physically capable of maintaining a vegetable plot and that this helped to keep them active:

'With all the work I've done. I've lost loads of weight. I feel like a new person.'

'We are both disabled but having a plot gets us out of the house, we can't do a lot of exercise but this much we can do.'

11.4.6 Sustainability

The project appears to be relatively successful at enabling the outcomes of the project to continue beyond the project's own lifecycle. The project was funded until October 2012 and then received additional funding for one year to support it while an alternative funding arrangement is found.

The training and advice given to schools and community groups by the GEM project officer mean that many of these groups continue to their own grow vegetables independently. Likewise, some of the people who have completed the training course share their knowledge and skills with others to support food growing initiatives in other parts of Middlesbrough. Many of the people who have taken on a new plot continue to enjoy growing food and a community of growers has been developed who help each other with their plots.

In order to sustain the project outcomes beyond the project's funding, an allotment community management committee has been created, lead by one of the project mentors, which will manage the central Town Farm Community Allotment site. Unfortunately, the city council will no longer provide the site free of charge so plot holders will have to pay rent for their plot which may prevent some people from continuing to use it. The project officer is negotiating with the council to receive a reduced rate for the site. It is envisaged that the other growing sites will also be adopted by community groups which use them.

The existing trained mentors will continue their role and receive support from Middlesbrough Environment City. The training programme will not be able to continue unless additional funding is found from other grant funds. The training facilities on the main allotment site will still be available for use and the project officer is seeking to create an arrangement whereby schools and community groups manage these facilities.

11.5 Why the project works

The research identified a number of factors important to the project's success:

11.5.1 A flexible approach to meet different needs

The project worked with a variety of different community groups and individuals to provide a range of ways in which people could become involved in growing their own food. Having a flexible approach to the way in which people engaged in the project meant that people with different needs could take part. The mentors provided support to groups and individuals to help them to enjoy learning about horticulture. The taster plots allowed people who lacked the time or physical capacity to have a full-sized plot to have a go at growing vegetables. The fact that people were allowed to remain on their taster plot instead of taking a full-sized plot meant that more people could continue to grow vegetables after receiving horticulture training.

11.5.2 An enthusiastic project team with excellent social skills

Working with a range of community groups required a strong project team who could inspire people to enjoy growing food and who could interact well with people from different backgrounds and with different needs. Partners commented that the project officer and mentors were naturally suited to their role, with genuine enthusiasm for the project and an open, welcoming attitude which put everyone at ease. Their combination of horticultural expertise, enthusiasm for helping others and ability to work with all social groups, including older people, people with mental health issues, young people and primary school children enabled the project to be a success:

'The project officer and mentor are absolutely fantastic; very accepting and relaxed attitude.'

11.5.3 Enabling local groups to manage their own growing sites

A key factor to the success of the project is that the training and support enabled local groups to develop their own sites which they can maintain themselves after the GEM project ends. This enabled horticultural skills and knowledge to be shared across the community and people from many different backgrounds to benefit. The project model of providing training and support has enabled the benefits of community growing to continue beyond the lifetime of the project, allowed the small project team to reach a large number of people and enabled project activities to take place across east Middlesbrough, regenerating a range of disused community spaces.

11.5.4 Genuine partnership working with community groups

Community groups and schools who partnered with the GEM project described working with the project as a very positive experience. Partners felt that they were well supported and trained and that the project team were personally committed to their work and always had time to give advice and help. Specifically regarding the partnership between the project and MIND, the MIND project officer found that the complementary skills of the GEM project staff and the MIND project staff was a very effective combination whereby MIND provided mental health support and GEM provided horticultural knowledge and assistance. Unlike other partnerships, the MIND project officer found that there was true knowledge sharing and collaboration between the organisations and no sense of competition:

'Working with GEM was one of the most positive working experiences I've had in the past few years, it really stood out for the level of sharing and collaboration.'

11.5.5 Bringing abandoned land back into community use

The project was able to work in a variety of different places and so reach a large section of the community by finding disused community spaces which could become community allotments. Rather than being limited to Council owned land, community growing patches were established in schools, in people's alleyways, in workplaces and on land around tower blocks. This had the added advantage of transforming community areas from being unattractive and unsafe waste land into productive allotments which benefit local people. One project supporter described how seeing fly tips and other wasteland turned into allotments gave people a sense of pride in their area and encouraged them to take better care of their own patches of land:

'The Growing East Middlesbrough Project has enabled partnership working between Middlesbrough Environment City, Middlesbrough Council and Erimus Housing to transform a problem area of land into a thriving community allotment. The community allotment now serves as a standard of excellence for the benefit of the community.'

11.6 Key lessons and recommendations

There are a number of recommendations which Growing East Middlesbrough and other similar projects may wish to consider going forwards:

- ❑ a key challenge which the project encountered was reaching out to local residents with poor diets, who are obese, who lack work skills or who have poor social skills. It was far easier to attract people who were already interested in growing food than to attract people who could benefit most from the project. This was found to be a problem for other similar projects too. One possible way of engaging with these residents would be to work closely in partnership with the NHS and social services who could refer patients and service users to the project. Social workers could also support their clients through the project, in a similar way to which MIND supported its service users to participate in the project. Sharing tools is also important for reducing costs for new plot holders, as is ensuring the availability of taster plots;
- ❑ more time should be given to advertising the project and project officers should use social media tools to promote different activities to a wider audience. In particular, the project should target more local workplaces to encourage employers to start a workplace growing patch for the benefit of their employees. Creating links with local employers could eventually create opportunities for other project participants to seek employment or work experience with the employers;
- ❑ the OCN course in horticulture appears to be the only locally available horticulture course. The project could explore ways of promoting the course more widely to local businesses, work programme contractors, and education institutes. The project could also discuss opportunities for working with Middlesbrough College and Askham Bryan College to deliver joint course or food growing projects. Generally, the project should seek ways to promote itself as a recognised training provider to the wider community;
- ❑ a further challenge to the project's success is finding areas of land which can be used for allotments free of charge. Unfortunately, the City Council has decided to begin charging rent for the central allotment site which will prevent people on low-incomes from being able to rent a plot. When using Council owned land, community growing projects should try to negotiate an agreement with the Council to ensure that when the land has been made into allotments, the Council will not change the lease rate for a certain period of time;
- ❑ the project does not necessarily require high levels of funding to continue delivering benefits to the community since many community groups have been trained in how to manage allotment plots. However, in order to be able to train more groups and individuals and to maintain the facilities on the allotment site, the project could explore new funding models, including forming a partnership with other community groups who can contribute to funding on-going activities, seeking commissioning from the area's clinical commissioning group or charging private sector employers to deliver horticulture training and advice. The project's experience in developing a new model should be shared with other similar groups so that others can learn from the project's experience;

11.7 How the project works

11.7.1 About the Local Food Programme portfolio

The Local Food Programme is funded by the Big Lottery Fund through the Changing Spaces Programme. The programme consists of several hundred food-related projects in England which aim to make locally grown food accessible and affordable to local communities. The Local Food Programme is managed by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

The Growing East Middlesbrough project has four key objectives:

- 1) increase the number of people growing food for their own consumption in East Middlesbrough;
- 2) increase the number of sites used for growing in East Middlesbrough, including at community buildings and existing allotment sites;
- 3) increase the growing skills and knowledge of community members through the provision of accredited training and a mentoring scheme;
- 4) increase the uptake of allotment plots through the provision of smaller taster plots and support for new allotment holders.

11.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

In total, the project has received £98,879 from the Big Lottery Fund via the Local Food Programme over four years. The funding was broken down as £18,301 in the first year and £25,860 in the second year, £25,727 in the third year and £28,991 in the fourth year. The majority of the funding paid for the staff salaries, with the remainder used to support project volunteers and cover overhead costs. The project also received £30,000 in funding over the first three years from the Healthy Towns initiative.

Staffing

The project was managed by a project manager from Middlesbrough Environment City but a project officer was employed to deliver the project activities. The project officer was supported by five volunteer project mentors.

11.7.3 Project outputs

- ☐ 16 new growing sites in schools and community venues.
- ☐ 5 new mentors.
- ☐ 42 people took up a taster plot.
- ☐ 24 new allotment holders.
- ☐ Accredited OCN horticulture training provided to 66 participants.
- ☐ In excess of 3000 individuals involved.

12 GROWING FOOD FOR LIFE

12.1 Introduction and background



This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Wellbeing Evaluation. In 2008, CLES was commissioned, alongside nef, to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Website](#).

Growing Food for Life was part of the Target Well-being portfolio which was led by the Groundwork Federation and funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Well-Being programme. The Target Well-being portfolio was split into ten local programmes, one of which was in Preston where

the Growing Food for Life project was delivered by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust between January 2008 and December 2011.

The project was designed to organise healthy eating and food growing activities for community groups and individuals. The activities were intended to encourage and increase food growing in the community and the take up of physical exercise as well as improve people's knowledge of food cooking and preparation skills.

The project ran alongside the long running Productive Landscapes in Preston project that was designed to bring together activities in Preston to help to improve the local landscapes for people and wildlife.

12.2 Project need

The project was set up to address several key issues which were identified within the Central Lancashire Lifestyle Survey and the Central Lancashire NHS Community Food Growing Feasibility Study. The issues which the project aimed to address were:

- ❑ the commonest causes of mortality in Central Lancashire are circulatory disease, cancers, respiratory disease and digestive disease – reducing deaths from coronary heart disease (CHD) and cancers are clearly a key local health priority and research highlights how health inequalities are related to social, environment and community 'capital'. Therefore, the project aimed to improve social, environmental and community factors which influence public health;
- ❑ many people in Preston do not have a balanced, healthy diet – having a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables is important for good health but in areas of high deprivation, people often do not eat healthily. The project aimed to improve people's knowledge and skills of cooking and healthy eating in order to improve their diet and overall health;
- ❑ low levels of physical activity among Preston residents – physical inactivity can lead to ill-health and research showed high levels of physical inactivity among the Preston population. The project aimed to encourage people to increase the amount of regular physical exercise they do.

12.3 Activities

Growing Food for Life delivered a range of community engagement activities focused upon growing and cooking fresh fruit and vegetables within an urban environment. The project sought to engage residents within close proximity to a number of key growing sites, such as Deepdale Allotments and sites managed by the Wildlife Trust in Preston, but the project also held activities in community venues, such as local schools, community centres and hostels.

12.3.1 Food growing on community allotments

Growing Food for Life delivered food growing activities on ten allotment sites in Preston. Local residents had the opportunity to engage in food growing at weekly drop in sessions on an allotment and to volunteer to maintain the allotments. The allotment activities were community led, with the Wildlife Trust playing an advisory role, offering their advice on what would grow well. All the food grown by the project was either taken home by the volunteers or given to a local box scheme, allowing residents to buy fresh locally grown food. Residents were also offered mini plots so they could have a go at growing food before applying for a full sized allotment of their own.

12.3.2 Creating new community growing sites

A key project activity was developing growing sites in community spaces. The project worked in partnership with the Preston Community Food Growing Partnership to develop a total of seventeen sites within local communities; these included schools, a local library and a Mosque.

12.3.3 Cooking and growing courses

Growing Food for Life delivered six week cooking and growing course to teach community members how to grow food and prepare healthy meals with their own fresh produce. Most of the sessions were delivered at local schools and, in some cases, the project provided resources for schools to continue growing food in the future. One school visited as part of this case study was planting garlic and had future plans to grow potatoes and fruit trees later on in the year.

12.3.4 Training for partners

Growing Food for Life adopted a 'train the trainer' approach to share the team's skills with the wider community. For example, the project trained Preston City Council's Neighbourhood Management Teams in food growing and involved them in one off events, such as tree grafting activity at Fishwick Recreation Ground.

12.3.5 Food growing events

Over fifty food growing events and activities were delivered by the Growing Food for Life project. These included: presence at community events, such as the Preston Mala, and organising bespoke sessions, such as tree grafting of heritage varieties of apples from Lancashire.

12.3.6 End of project celebration

At the end of the project an event was held to celebrate the project's outcomes and capture the reflections of those involved. Twenty five volunteers and their families attended the event which involved preparing and cooking a communal meal using crops that were grown by the project and its beneficiaries. The event provided beneficiaries with the opportunity to share their experiences and the benefits gained from the projects.

12.4 Impact

To develop this case study, we spoke to a range of the project's beneficiaries, volunteers, staff and stakeholders and we reviewed the project's own documentation and monitoring data. Through this we identified a number of positive outcomes generated by the project which are linked to healthier diets, improved mental health and increased community cohesion.

12.4.1 More food grown by the community

The case study found that the project activities resulted in an increase in food growing within Preston in a range of locations, such as allotments, the grounds of schools and community centres, and within alleyways and yards. The project focused upon food that would grow in the space available in local neighbourhoods and, as a result, one local gardening club is now making the best use of their spare space by growing lettuce up the side of a garage. One project beneficiary commented:

'We've been shown how to grow potatoes in tyres and how to take a bit of the food and allow it to keep on growing.'

Local residents were encouraged to take care of eighteen mini plots and some of these residents have progressed to take on a full plot at the allotments. The mini plots acted as a way for people to try their hand at running an allotment and growing their own food. Many people underestimate the amount of work involved in doing this and so owning a mini plot and being given growing advice by the Wildlife Trust provided a useful stepping stone to maintain a full sized allotment.

12.4.2 New skills and knowledge for growing food

A wide range of groups from the local community gained new knowledge and skills in growing food. Residents and children learnt about growing a variety of vegetables, such as red cabbage, leeks, sprouts, carrots, and garlic and herbs. Children learned by engaging in sessions that are fun and relevant to young people:

'The kids were taught about herb growing and how you can get the colour and smell out of them by rubbing your hands together. They tried to grow things that provide colour, taste or smell to ensure the children have something that will interest them.'

Beneficiaries reported an increased enthusiasm for growing and eating healthy food:

'You're out in the fresh air and getting exercise but it's also had a knock on effect and improved my eating. You're growing fresh stuff all the time which we take home and eat. We grew tomatoes earlier in the year; we grew loads of them to take home and eat.'

Parents also noticed changes in their children, as one parent commented that as a result of being involved in the project, her children had gone from being frightened of mud and worms to enjoying getting their hands dirty by digging and planting food.

Teaching residents about growing food has also increased knowledge about food sourcing and sustainability issues. These issues are particularly important in urban and more deprived areas where access to fresh fruit and vegetables is more limited and can be unaffordable for families:

'Local people have been taught that you don't just get carrots in the local shop and they can be grown in your back garden in Preston.'

12.4.3 Making new friends

Growing Food for Life has provided particular social benefits by providing opportunities for social interaction and a group of friends with a common interest. This was particularly the case for a group of beneficiaries who had been referred to the project by the NHS as they were suffering from mental health problems. The support and guidance provided by Growing Food for Life enabled the group to grow fresh vegetables and provided them with a positive outdoor activity. Although support was provided once a week by the project, the group reported how they regularly attended the allotment throughout the week to tend to the vegetables and meet up with other group members:

'It's great because it gets me out of the house; I come down here and there is always someone I know.'

The friendships formed within the group now extend beyond growing fresh food as group members organise group bike rides and trips and attended the Growing Food for Life celebratory event.

12.4.4 A greater sense of community pride

Beneficiaries from Growing Food for Life talked of their pride in the local area as a result of the support provided by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. The project supported local community groups and allotments to contribute to Preston's Britain in Bloom bid and beneficiaries spoke of their pride at being recognised by the Royal Horticultural Society for the quality of the allotments and gardens within their neighbourhood. Growing Food for Life contributed to the development of the Deepdale Allotment site which was awarded a Level 4 (outstanding) and the allotment developed by a project group at the Catherine Beckett Centre also achieved a Level 4 award.

12.4.5 Increased community cohesion

The project was successful at engaging residents from a diverse range of backgrounds. For instance, residents from a shelter for young offenders were involved in looking after the allotment at their local community centre and one community organisation reported how residents from the local white and Asian communities came together at food growing and cooking events run by Growing Food for Life. Groups involved in the project also reported how the police had engaged with the community centre's Growing Food for Life activity. This was considered to be particularly valuable as it broke down barriers between young residents and the police in an area that suffers from high levels of minor crime and anti social behaviour.

12.4.6 More space for wildlife in Preston

Feedback from local residents and community organisations highlighted how the work of Growing Food for Life attracted wildlife to and around the sites where gardening activity has taken place. For example, the community garden at the Catherine Beckett Centre attracted squirrels, foxes and hedgehogs and placing mud in the bird tables attracted swallows, three sets of which nested in the area. Attracting wildlife to the garden of the community centre provided benefits to local children by acting as a basis for project based activity, focusing upon the lives of the foxes, squirrels and swallows found in the garden.

12.5 Why the project works

The case study identified a number of factors which were important to the project's success.

12.5.1 Skilled and knowledgeable project staff

Project partners and beneficiaries praised the skills and enthusiasm of the Wildlife Trust's team and their role in making the project a success. The staff team added value to the project through their knowledge of food and sustainability issues, and the time they put into supporting local groups. A number of examples were provided where project workers supported community groups, both as part of the project and in their own time; this included keeping on top of weeding at the allotment site or sourcing materials, such as heritage varieties of apples from specialist growers in Cumbria.

The team was also successful in engaging with a number of volunteers who supported the project's delivery. The presence of a regular volunteering team meant that the allotments were well maintained and that the Wildlife Trust staff to support those that were new to the project and needed more intensive support.

12.5.2 Making food growing relevant to diverse groups

Growing Food for Life was particularly successful at encouraging a wide range of Preston residents to get involved with food growing and cooking activity. This included school children, young offenders, community groups, residents with health problems, and conservation groups. A key factor behind this success was the diverse range of locations from which Growing Food for life was delivered and the type of activities provided. For instance, introductory food growing sessions were provided for school children, whilst grafting sessions of heritage apple varieties were organised for a local conservation group.

The project engaged with community groups and schools by bringing growing to their local area and showing them what they could grow at their schools or in the alleyways behind their houses. Enabling groups to grow what they wanted to grow in their own spaces meant the project was successful in engaging a diverse range of Preston residents.

12.5.3 A diverse range of partners

Growing Food for Life operated with a strong and successful focus on partnership working, on both a strategic and delivery level. On a delivery basis, the project worked closely with local schools and community centres, and had a longstanding relationship with Preston City Council's Neighbourhoods Team, which led to a wide range of activities being coordinated and delivered across Preston. On a more strategic level, the Lancashire Wildlife Trust added significant value to the project by linking Growing Food for Life with a wide range of partners across Preston.

The Wildlife Trust led on the Productive Landscapes in Preston project which helps to bring together delivery to support local wildlife and habitats; this link has led to Growing Food for Life being closely aligned with Preston's Britain in Bloom entry and the Preston Guild celebrations. Links were also made to wider activity, such as the Preston Employment Partnership, ensuring some beneficiaries were able to use the project as a way of improving their health, well-being and employment prospects.

12.5.4 Focusing on sustainability

Growing Food for Life achieved success by committing to and focusing upon sustainability. The development and use of volunteers was central to this focus, which has been continued through the Big Lottery's Supporting Change grant that will be used to support the development of community food growing volunteers, delivered in conjunction with the Central Lancashire Health Champions Programme. The way in which the project activities were delivered also promoted sustainability; this includes the focus upon teaching residents how to grow food in urban environments and by providing the opportunity to run a mini plot. The use of mini plots was a manageable way for residents to try out owning an allotment on a small scale; this approach had led to allotment sites being more sustainable, preparing residents for owning a full sized plot whilst deterring others by making them realise the time involved in managing a full sized plot.

12.6 Key lessons and recommendations

Looking at similar successful community projects, the research has identified various ways in which Growing Food for Life could increase its effectiveness. Other projects with similar aims and delivering similar activities may wish to consider the following key lessons:

- ❑ the main project aim was to improve the health of Preston residents through increasing their physical exercise and encouraging them to eat more healthily. However, it is often difficult to engage with the people who would benefit most from these lifestyle changes. To target people who do very little physical activities or have poor diets, the project could work with local GPs and community health workers to reach out to these people. GPs and health workers could refer service users to the project to help them to improve their own health and lifestyle;
- ❑ the project was found to be especially beneficial for people with mental health needs. The project could work closely with organisations supporting people with mental health difficulties to enable more people to benefit from the project. Developing activities and support specifically for this group, combining the horticultural expertise of the project staff with the mental health expertise of health workers could be very effective for improving the mental health of participants;
- ❑ the project focused primarily on growing food in the community but this did not necessarily mean people eat more healthily as a result. To encourage participants to enjoy eating fresh fruit and vegetables, the project could deliver workshops on cooking and preparing fresh vegetables as well as workshops for growing food. The project could organise a town meal where all the groups involved contribute their fresh produce and cook food together to promote local food growing, healthy eating and community cohesion;
- ❑ it was found that the project volunteers were important for the delivery of the project and increased the capacity of the staff team to support people with intensive needs. Volunteering has been found to have additional benefits for the volunteers themselves and so the project could work to build up the number of volunteers, provide them with good training and support and encourage them to continue their work independently after the project ends;
- ❑ volunteering can also be important for providing unemployed people with new skills and knowledge which can help them to find paid employment. Similar projects to Growing Food for Life have provided an accredited course in horticulture which has helped volunteers to secure paid work in gardening and conservation. The project could work with local colleges to provide such a course;

- ❑ Growing Food for Life engaged mainly with community organisations but the project could expand its work to also engage with local employers. The project team could help local employers to create their own growing sites where their employees can grow vegetables which could then be shared among all the staff members. Providing such services to private sector organisations could possibly be used to provide funding for the project too.

12.7 How the project works

12.7.1 About the Target Well-being portfolio

Target Well-being aims to help people across the North West live healthier and happier lives. The portfolio focuses on increasing physical activity, encouraging healthy eating and improving mental well-being.

Target Well-being is made up of over 90 projects, delivered by 67 local organisations, benefiting over 55,000 people. The portfolio benefited from £8.9 million of funding from the Big Lottery Fund to support 10 local programmes, each of which are made up of a number of projects; two pan-regional programmes; and a learning network entitled the Regional Support Network. The 10 local programmes funded by Target Well-being are:

- ❑ Burnley;
- ❑ Ellesmere Port;
- ❑ Halton;
- ❑ Knowsley;
- ❑ Liverpool;
- ❑ Manchester;
- ❑ Oldham;
- ❑ Pendle;
- ❑ Preston;
- ❑ St Helens.

The ten local areas were identified through a detailed health data analysis, led by the North West Public Health Observatory. The portfolio has adopted a model whereby a diverse range of projects are funded that focus on the particular needs of each local area. As well as the ten local programmes, the two pan-regional programmes are designed to tackle health inequalities at a more strategic level. They focused on issues of disadvantage that can best be influenced by a pan-regional approach and are: activity targeted at the prisons environment; and a series of interventions within older people's care settings.

12.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

Lancashire Wildlife Trust received a total of £91,986 revenue funding which was used to: fund staff time; organise, facilitate and buy materials for the growing sessions at sites such as the Deepdale Allotments; run six week cooking sessions with local schools; and train individuals in cooking and growing skills from local partner agencies. The project has since received £10,000 'Supporting Change' funding from the Big Lottery to provide a focus upon its future sustainability. Sustainability is being sought by training 20 people to support the development of community food growing volunteers.

Staffing

Growing Food for Life is supported by three part time project coordinators, each of which was employed on a part time basis. The project has also had success in engaging with a group of volunteers that attend and support the growing sessions on a regular basis.

12.7.3 Project outputs

Growing Food for Life engaged with a total of 1,769 beneficiaries, providing 4,162 visits to Growing Food for Life based activity. The number of growing sessions significantly exceeded the project's target (274 against a target of 150).

13 HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

13.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008, alongside the new economics foundation (nef), to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

The Healthy Beginnings project is one of 27 projects within the North West Healthy Living Networks portfolio. The project received funding in 2007 and began delivery in 2008. The aim of the project is to improve the health and well-being of parents, children and their families in South Sefton.

A steering group was formed in 2007 to establish the project comprised of midwives, health visitors and those in the local leisure industry. The group discussed what was already available locally and identified key gaps in provision which the project would be able to address.

The project is primarily based from the May Logan Centre (a Healthy Living Centre), which is jointly run by Liverpool Housing Trust and the local NHS Trust. The centre has many facilities, including a ball pool, healthy eating café, crèche and meeting rooms. The centre also offers health screening and outreach clinics for both Alder Hey and Liverpool Women's Hospital which are run from the centre. Family planning clinics are also run, as are smoking cessation services and counselling sessions for people suffering from domestic violence or drug and alcohol problems. The centre is based in Bootle, which is a particularly deprived part of South Sefton.

The key organisations and partners involved with delivery include:

- ☐ NHS Sefton Health Improvement Service;
- ☐ Liverpool Women's Hospital, providing Midwives and Sure Start Midwives;
- ☐ Mersey Care, Postnatal Depression Service;
- ☐ May Logan Centre Nursery Nurses;
- ☐ May Logan Centre Food and Health Workers.

A full-time Project Manager is also based at the centre who coordinates activities and liaises between these partners.

13.2 Project need

The project was established in order to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women and new parents/carers and their children. This was to be achieved by developing and promoting a programme of physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being focused activities. More specifically, this has included aims around:

- ☐ increasing knowledge and awareness of 'five a day' and of the importance of reducing fats, salts and sugars;
- ☐ increasing individual levels of physical activity;
- ☐ reducing isolation and increasing mental well-being through improving coping skills and strategies.

13.3 Activities

The project has delivered a plethora of activities designed to improve participant's attitudes to eating more healthily and improve their physical and mental health. Overlap exists between the types of benefits and impacts which different activities can bring. This section of the case study outlines the types of activities which have been delivered by the project within the areas of: healthy eating; physical activity; and mental health.

13.3.1 Healthy eating



Several types of activity have been delivered within this strand, both from the May Logan Centre itself and from community venues. Sessions have been designed to plug a gap in local provision and include:

- ❑ healthy eating for pregnancy (delivered to antenatal parent education classes in Bootle);
- ❑ infant weaning courses and finger food sessions;
- ❑ 'fussy eaters' mealtime cheaters courses;
- ❑ family cookery sessions;
- ❑ weight management sessions.

13.3.2 Physical activity

Fitness sessions have focused on pregnant women and have predominantly included aquanatal and antenatal classes:

- ❑ **aquanatal classes** – aquanatal classes have been run from the start of the project and are delivered from a sports centre local to the May Logan Centre. In addition to self-referrals from members of the public, midwives and health visitors also refer women onto classes;
- ❑ **antenatal yoga** – the antenatal yoga classes are held in the May Logan Centre and receive referrals from the three midwives who make up the community midwifery team. Again, users of the centre can also refer themselves onto the course. Classes are delivered by a qualified instructor and have been running since the project started in 2007.



In addition to the long running classes outlined above, fun and fitness sessions have been delivered in partnership with Sefton Adult Education.

13.3.3 Mental health

'Your time' is delivered by a health and well-being therapist; the aim of the course is to engage mums who are suffering from mild to moderate postnatal depression and involve them in a three or four week relaxation course.

The client group is particularly hard to engage as they find attending activities difficult due to their depression and lack of motivation. Referrals come from health visitors, midwives and self-referrals. Outreach activities are delivered from local family centres and community groups. At the first session, each participant completes a questionnaire which relates to how they are feeling, coping and integrating socially within their community.

The types of activities which are delivered is dependent on what the group is keen to learn about, but usually covers areas such as:

- ☐ positive thinking;
- ☐ relaxation techniques;
- ☐ food and mood;
- ☐ aromatherapy;
- ☐ reflexology;
- ☐ reiki;
- ☐ cupping;
- ☐ Bach flower remedies.

Importantly, the sessions seek to uncover what skills and qualities the participants had before they became parents' and areas they may wish to pursue in the future.

13.4 Impact

We spoke to a range of beneficiaries, volunteers, staff and stakeholders as part of this evaluation, and they highlighted that the Healthy Beginnings project was generating a wide range of positive outcomes, particularly those linked to increasing levels of health and well-being. These are explored in more detail below.

13.4.1 Increasing physical activity and associated benefits, pre and postnatal

In terms of increasing levels of physical activity, the two main activities which Healthy Beginnings has supported have been through antenatal yoga and aquanatal classes. Obesity during pregnancy can cause diabetes and hypertension; health conditions which can be seriously detrimental to both mothers and their babies:

'Exercising has the impact of providing an enjoyable exercise for mums, enabling them to remain positive, and can also help them to have a positive attitude towards labour.'

The physiological changes in a woman's body during pregnancy are often perceived to inhibit exercise. Exercising in water however greatly reduces the possibility of injury as the water takes the strain. The antenatal yoga classes allow women to exercise safely and can assist with medical conditions associated with pregnancy, such as leg cramps, backache and heartburn. Participating in exercise during pregnancy is also known to reduce the need for medical intervention during labour.

Mental well-being can also be improved as women are doing something positive for both themselves and their babies. Midwives who refer women onto classes have reported very positive outcomes for those undertaking antenatal yoga, commenting:

'The yoga enables women to develop a higher sense of mental awareness and focus, it gives them more confidence in their bodies prior to labour and the opportunity to practice positions they may find beneficial during labour.'

13.4.2 Increasing confidence and self-esteem

Evidence exists that participating in any of the activities which the project supports can have a positive impact on increasing confidence and self-esteem. During pregnancy, women are encouraged to take time out, eat healthily and undertake exercise in order to maximise the benefits of looking after themselves and their babies. This can however be difficult if time, money or poor mental health act as inhibitors on positive activity occurring.

Healthy Beginnings has sought to remove as many of these barriers as possible for their target group through providing crèche facilities (women may have older children which could prevent them from participating in activities):

'Just an hour a week which has been dedicated to me has been so beneficial. The fact that there has been a crèche here has been great too, for that hour you know that your baby is being well looked after.'

Making activities free and providing 'your time' specifically targets those with, or at risk of, postnatal depression. Undertaking activities such as yoga or aquanatal can also increase confidence, as women know that they are taking positive steps to make themselves and their babies healthier.

In addition to improving mental health 'your time' specifically focused on increasing levels of self-confidence and self-esteem, enabling women to think about their skills outside of being mothers. As one person commented:

'It's easy to forget yourself when you are a new mum. In the group, we talked about ourselves as mums for a little while, but then we talked about who we were as people. What we did before we had our children and what we might want to do in the future.'

'I've gone back to work and am looking for a volunteering opportunity so that I can help people in a similar situation to myself.'

13.4.3 Impacting positively on mental health

'Your time' is the main activity within the Healthy Beginnings project which has had the most impact on participant's mental health, primarily because this is its main focus. In addition to covering many complementary therapies and relaxation techniques, sessions also included the importance of positive thinking:

'We were taught about the power of positive thinking and how to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.'

One individual found the sessions even more beneficial than counselling, which she had been undertaking for many months prior to attending the 'your time' course:

'I was going for private counselling for a long time and was off work. I didn't really find that beneficial as it was just me talking through stuff without coming to any conclusions. The 'your time' sessions really helped me though, as I was able to focus on the positive things in my life, I have started running again and stopped smoking.'

Improving postnatal mental health is crucial for women, but also for their families for whom the knock on effects can be significant:

'I think it affects your child when you are down; they want to be loving with you but you can't show it back.'

'It's definitely helped me; I didn't want my partner to do anything because I didn't feel like doing anything. I go to the gym now, and it's good to do different activities separately, it gives us something to talk about.'

13.4.4 Improving knowledge around healthy eating and cooking

Improving cooking skills and healthy eating knowledge has been a key part of the project for new parents. Activities have been delivered from a variety of community venues as well as the May Logan Centre itself.

Feedback from project beneficiaries indicates that mums sometimes knew that the food they were giving their children was unhealthy, but did not know how to change their habits. Commenting that they had thought it easier to provide food of poor quality, these attitudes changed once they realised how simple it could be to prepare nutritious food:

'You feel like a bad mum if you are giving your child rubbish food. I've definitely changed my habits now.'

Connections between food, mood and mental health have also been made by project beneficiaries:

'I've learnt that certain foods give you energy, I hadn't realised that stodgy foods don't necessarily give you energy.'

The project has also shown flexibility, in that courses have been developed in response to identified needs (e.g. a 'fussy eaters' course was introduced for parents of toddlers who had difficulty encouraging their child to try different foods). Whilst provision was available for the stages of breastfeeding and weaning, a course concerning food and slightly older children was found to be lacking.

13.4.5 Increasing the opportunity for social interaction and forging peer support

Aquanatal, pregnancy yoga and the 'time out' classes can all be seen to have had a significant positive impact on mums, in terms of socialising with other mums to be or new mums. Many project beneficiaries can be socially isolated, particularly if they are not working during pregnancy.

As one midwife closely involved with the project commented:

'Many friendships are forged through these classes and therefore peer support continues after the baby arrives. These friendships prove to be invaluable, particularly through the first months of pregnancy. This reduction in isolation has a proven record in reducing the incidence of postnatal depression.'

Where familial support may be lacking, or may need to be supplemented, peer support can play a vital role in the early months of becoming a new mother, an intense period of time, which can be eased by having peers who are going through the same experience. All Healthy Beginnings activities are designed to increase the opportunities for interaction and create informal environments where friendships can be forged.

13.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the Healthy Beginnings project has proved successful.

13.5.1 Cooperation of key stakeholders

Sefton NHS, local midwives and health visitors have been involved with the project since its inception, and have provided input into the types of need and appropriate activity required in the local area. This has created a project which is serving an identified gap in provision, meaning take up of services has been high.

The ongoing support of partners, such as midwives and health visitors, has also provided project activities with a steady stream of referrals. A rolling programme of activities available for pre and postnatal women has also been important from the perspective of these partners. The project has provided a readily available and reliable source of activities and support, from which their clients can benefit.

13.5.2 Accessible and appropriate provision

In part, due to the input of stakeholders, project activities have been appropriate and filled a gap in local need. Although outreach is an important element of the project, the ability to offer provision from the May Logan Centre has also been a distinct advantage. The centre is a spacious and welcoming building, and the fact that so many facilities and services are available serves to reinforce the healthy living message.

In terms of other potentially appropriate provision for pregnant women in the local area, antenatal yoga classes are offered at the local hospital and at a couple of community centres in more affluent areas. There is however a charge for these classes and they are some distance away, which would not be feasible for many of the women the project serves (e.g. the class at the hospital is two bus journeys away from the Healthy Living Centre and costs £6 per session).

13.5.3 Dedication and continuity of staff

The project has benefited from a well thought through project plan and a Project Manager who has been employed since the start of funding; this has brought a continuity of approach and given direction to the project which has been beneficial.

To a large extent, the success of the project is down to the staff team who run project sessions. Dedication has been shown by the delivery team in providing activities:

'I think the yoga has been so successful in no small part to the role that the yoga teacher has played. She is extremely welcoming to the mums, consistent in her delivery of classes, and well respected within the midwife community referral team.'

Providing project activities alone is not sufficient for a project to be successful. Having instructors who are engaging and personable (particularly when dealing with sensitive subjects such as mental health) is crucial in making project participants feel welcome and able to take full advantage of the activities on offer.

13.5.4 Flexible provision

Healthy Beginnings has shown inventiveness, in terms of changing direction and stimulating uptake when necessary (e.g. at one point, attendees at the yoga classes were coming along for a couple of weeks, not attending for another couple of weeks, and then returning to classes). The Project Manager felt that participants were not respecting the free of charge classes by only attending sporadically. To combat this, attendance cards were introduced. These were stamped upon every visit and a gift given to participants once they had attended for a certain number of sessions, this proved successful in raising the continuity of attendance.

'Fussy eaters' courses were also developed in response to a need for specific tuition, designed to encourage toddlers to eat a wide variety of foods. Conversely, where individual sessions or activities have been unsuccessful, they have not been run again.

13.6 Recommendations for the future

The project has already started planning for its long term future and has begun to implement some of the suggestions listed below:

- ☐ to continue to liaise with Sefton NHS in order that the Health Service understands the types of activities which Healthy Beginnings offers and the benefits that these activities bring;
- ☐ to match NHS outcomes to Healthy Beginning outcomes, in order to strengthen the case for future funding;
- ☐ develop succinct literature about the project, outlining the key strengths and positive outcomes which activities bring, and distribute these to local GP services.

13.7 How the project works

13.7.1 About the North West Healthy Living Network Portfolio

During 2007-2012, the Big Lottery Fund has invested £7.2 million of funding to support 27 projects across the North West, aiming to improve the health and well-being of 50,000 people. Projects are delivered by a range of healthy living initiatives, with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council acting as the Accountable Body.

13.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

The project has received £220,000 of funding over five years and is currently in the process of securing an additional £12,000 from the portfolio to target 100 beneficiaries as part of an 'E-Fit' weight management programme.

Project spend is divided between salaries, project materials and resources (e.g. associated with cooking or food knowledge sessions), and the salaries for mobile crèche workers.

Staffing

The project benefits from a full-time Project Manager who is based at the May Logan Centre. Two part-time Food and Health Workers are also employed by the project and sessional workers are employed to deliver yoga, aquanatal and 'your time' activities. Three community midwives and health visitors work closely with the project and provide referrals for pregnant women onto activities.

13.7.3 Project outputs

The predominant output has been to engage with 2,219 beneficiaries over the project's lifetime. The project is on track to meet this target, having engaged with 1,696 beneficiaries to date.

14 LET'S GET COOKING

14.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008, alongside the new economics foundation (nef), to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

The Let's Get Cooking project at Crawley Green Infant School in Luton is part of the School Food Trust's portfolio of over 5,000 Let's Get Cooking Clubs.

Let's Get Cooking is run from the family room at Crawley Green Infant School in Luton. Crawley Green is in Beaconsfield in the East of Luton and draws its pupils from an ethnically diverse area. The school has over 200 pupils, has been rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted, and is part of both the Eco Schools and Healthy Living Schools Initiatives.

14.2 Project need

The project is set up to address four key issues:

- 1) **Improve cookery skills and increase nutritional knowledge** – Let's Get Cooking primarily aims to equip adults and children with the skills and knowledge to make healthier choices when cooking and eating. Through teaching people how to cook with basic, affordable and healthy ingredients, the ultimate goal is that families can improve their diets and become healthier.
- 2) **Improve familial relationships** – activities are designed to increase positive social interaction and to create an informal environment in which focused activity can occur. Parents and children are on a level playing field as they are both learning new skills at the same time, which can help to improve family relationships and interaction:

'I got involved with the club because I wanted to spend some quality time with my son doing a joint activity. I think it's good for him because the club is on his 'patch' if you like. He gets to be proud of his school in showing it to me and I can come into his world a bit more.'

- 3) **Address issues of low self-confidence** – through helping people to acquire new skills and knowledge, the project aims to build the confidence of both the parent and child. This developing confidence can then be taken into different areas of life:

'I do feel more confident cooking with my daughter now; she's been taught how to use a knife safely by the club. I would never let her in the kitchen before, which was a shame as I spend a lot of time there preparing meals for the family. She helps me to prepare vegetables now.'

- 4) **Access to support** – the Let's Get Cooking team view the course as a way to connect with families who are experiencing social isolation. The courses provide a way of reaching those parents that members of the family liaison team have identified as requiring additional support:

'The club has given us a way to engage with parents who can benefit from our support, but who wouldn't normally come to school activities. We know of parents' who were really reluctant to come onto school premises because of their own negative experiences of school, one mum would barely make eye contact. Once they started to come to the club, we had the opportunity to chat to them informally and to let them know that we can support them, if they need it.'

14.3 Activities

The project is jointly run by the school's Family Support Worker, Assistant to the Family Support Worker, and a Teaching Assistant. The role of the Family Support Worker is to act as a link between parents and the school, and provides advice and support to families on a range of issues. The role also entails organising fun activities and learning opportunities for children and adults. The project's primary aim is to engage families in cookery activities, including developing basic cooking, improving nutritional knowledge, and encouraging families to eat more healthily.

Courses run for one hour a week, over a seven week period during term time. Activities on the courses are specifically designed to be flexible but can include topics such as reading a recipe, chopping, baking, kitchen hygiene and nutrition. Courses culminate in the making of a three course family meal, with everyone on the course sitting down to share the meal.

Cookery courses take place in the family room, a modern annex to the infant school, which has its own entrance and kitchen area. In addition to the Let's Get Cooking courses, the room also provides family learning sessions, stay and play activities, a games library, and a Saturday morning play zone for fathers, grandfathers, male carers and their children.



The project team took an early decision not to target specific parents, but to make courses available to all interested parties, through sending letters out inviting parents to participate in courses.

In addition to the courses, the Let's Get Cooking project team has hosted one off events for the entire school, which have been themed but with the promotion of eating healthily at their heart. Events have included a 'wake up and shake up' breakfast club, Christmas bazaar, a taste of Asia day, a muffin and cookie sale, super summer Sunday, and pack up a picnic.

14.4 Impact

As part of this study, we spoke to the Let's Get Cooking team at Crawley Green, the school's head teacher, and a number of parents and children who have participated in courses and themed days. The discussions identified a range of positive outcomes achieved by the project linked to eating more healthily, creating stronger family relations, increasing confidence and self-esteem, acting as a bridge between school and family, and increasing awareness of different cultures. These are discussed in more detail in the sections below.

14.4.1 Improved diet and understanding of eating more healthily

Project participants noted that taking the course had impacted on their knowledge of healthy foods and increased their understanding of easy to cook and affordable recipes:

'We do try new stuff at home, trying more healthy things, and we've done the fruit kebabs quite a few times.'

One family who used to buy takeaways every Saturday are now eating healthy pizzas they were shown how to make at the club, thereby eating more healthily, doing an activity as a family and saving money.

Evidence was also found of instances where children who had formally been restricting themselves to a diet of one particular food type, had been inspired to try new foods. The fact that children had been willing to try something new was seen as significant by their parents:

'I just can't get him to try anything new at home and I know it's not good for him to keep eating the same thing all the time. He's just started becoming more adventurous with food; it's not as scary anymore. I think when they see other kids doing it; they want to try it themselves.'

Importantly, the Let's Get Cooking team has shown themselves to be flexible and enthusiastic in responding to the specific requirements of parents and children who have undertaken courses. They have worked hard to accommodate dietary requirements through developing specific courses and recipes; in one case, cooking only vegan recipes and preparing gluten free meals.

14.4.2 Building stronger family relations

Several parents noted that they had been drawn to the course as a means of spending quality time with their child:

'As a family, it's given us the opportunity to have quality one-on-one time outside of the home.'

Others found that learning to cook together had given them the understanding about how cookery could be a fun, sociable activity which they could all do together in the home. Parents who had been reluctant to involve their children in the kitchen were now keen that they be involved and help out at home.

The project participants had all tried at least one of the recipes they had learnt at home, bringing the benefits of eating healthily to the wider family. Other family members have also benefited from the children feeling more enthusiastic about showing off their new skills:

'The kids have tried some of the recipes they made at the club with their grandmother. They used to bake together from time to time anyway, but it has given them healthier recipes to try together and they do it more often.'

The community days and one off events which have been run by the Let's Get Cooking team have also had a positive impact on families. For those parents who would not normally have been able to come into school because of work commitments, the breakfast club provided the opportunity to come to school with their children and share a healthy breakfast together.

14.4.3 Increasing confidence and self-esteem

A key outcome of Let's Get Cooking has been the increase in levels of self-confidence of both children and their families. For those who do not have an established background in cooking, the club has proved crucial in providing education about food, which has in turn increased levels of self-confidence.

One skill which has been consistently taught on each course has been the correct use of knives. This has been taught to both children and parents alike, with both parties benefiting from learning the skill correctly. This has been important in helping adults to prepare food correctly and efficiently, but also in terms of instilling confidence in parents in the ability of their child to be safe in the kitchen:

'I feel more focused and confident when cooking with my daughter now.'

In one case, the course had provided an opportunity for one mum to show her son that the kitchen was not necessarily solely for women and also potentially raised his aspirations towards a career path:

'I think it's been good for my son, he doesn't think about the kitchen as somewhere that is primarily the domain of women anymore. He takes more interest when he sees male chefs on TV shows now.'

14.4.4 A bridge between school and families

Both the courses and one off events have served to promote the school to parents and help them feel more engaged with the life of the school:

'The school becomes more than just a school, it becomes a focal point and you definitely feel more welcome.'

This is particularly important in terms of providing an opportunity for parents to feel that they could approach family workers, teachers or teaching assistants with any problems or concerns they may have.

Some parents can feel intimidated by the school environment which makes them reluctant to get involved or raise any issues they may have in relation to their children. Courses and events provide a 'soft' opportunity for reluctant parents to get to know staff, which in turn encourages them to seek help or advice if needed:

'I'm a working mum and because I can't do drop-offs and pick-ups, I don't always feel part of the school. I think the club has been particularly important in helping me to feel more connected to the school.'

14.4.5 Increasing awareness of different cultures

Although not a direct aim of the project, one interesting outcome has been the promotion of different cultures. This has occurred through both the recipes from different parts of the world which have been produced and cooked in the sessions, and through one off events like the 'Taste of Asia Day':

'I think it opens up a lot for the kids, cross-culturally speaking; the Taste of Asia Day was fantastic.'

Increasing the awareness and acceptability of different cultures through food is particularly important in a school which has children from diverse backgrounds. This in turn opens up opportunities for the children to experiment more with different foods which they may not necessarily eat at home.

Additionally, families of differing ethnicities who have taken courses together have started to engage with one another more, which helps to bridge any cultural divides.

14.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the Let's Get Cooking project has proved successful.

14.5.1 Enthusiasm and commitment of the Let's Get Cooking team

Much of the success of the project is down to the enthusiasm and commitment of the Let's Get Cooking team, who have brought energy to the delivery of activities which has been passed onto families. If this was not in place, families may have come to events and courses anyway, but would not have the motivation to remain involved over the long term, which many of them now are. As one parent commented:

'I would say 90% of the success of the project is down to the team who run it. They have been given the tools but have the enthusiasm to involve families and make it work.'

The team are approachable and non-judgemental of parents and act as a gateway to the school, which serves to make the school a more hospitable and accommodating environment.

14.5.2 Support from the School Food Trust

The School Food Trust has remained a constant source of support and inspiration for the Let's Get Cooking team. The training which the team originally undertook was regarded as 'excellent' by the team. This instilled a level of self confidence in their ability to act as tutors in the classroom, whilst maintaining a level of informality necessary to make the classes a relaxed experience.

The team have had the opportunity to update their skills through the School Food Trust over the lifetime of the project, and have found the website invaluable as a source of recipes and inspiration for events from other clubs from around the country.

The team were also pleased that they had had the opportunity to make a presentation about the work they had been doing through the club at an East of England Big Lottery Well-being Conference. This made them feel part of the wider Well-being Programme and that the work they were doing was being recognised outside of the school.

14.5.3 Easy to engage with

Specific parents have not been targeted by the project; this has been a conscious decision in order that as many parents and children as possible can benefit from activities. Letters and leaflets have been sent to the parents in order to promote the courses. In addition to this, the Family Support Worker has used the course as a lever to specifically engage with parents they feel may require more support.

The clubs have provided an informal mechanism and opportunity to engage with parents which would not otherwise exist. Relationships of trust and respect have been built between the families and the support staff, even in cases where individuals may have been reluctant to engage at all. This relationship makes it more likely that families may seek advice or support if needed in the future.

The environment of the family room is clean, spacious and modern which serves to make it a more welcoming and pleasant environment for both parents and children.

14.5.4 Fit with the wider school ethos

The Let's Get Cooking Club and related events are not viewed as an 'add on' to the work of the school; they are very much integrated into the ethos of the wider school. The head teacher is very supportive of activities, recognising the importance of providing experiences for the children outside of the classroom:

'Part of it is about creating positive memories for the children and particularly teaching them skills which they can take forwards.'

The wider ethos of the school is very focused on educating children about their environment, where food comes from, and why it is important to eat healthily (e.g. the school has a vegetable patch adjoining the playground, a wind turbine and its own chickens). The school also has Healthy School Status and is an Eco School. The children are recipients of one fresh piece of fruit a day and a new kitchen has just been built next to the reception class in order that additional cookery lessons can be held.

14.6 Recommendations for the future

There are a number of recommendations which the project may wish to consider going forwards:

- ☐ the approach of the project team to working with families is working well and should be sustained into the future;
- ☐ there would be benefit from forging partnerships in the future to help sustain the project (e.g. through working with local supermarkets or local healthcare providers);
- ☐ increase work with teachers at the school, in order that they become ambassadors for the project to parents;
- ☐ increase the level of partnership working with the neighbouring primary school, sharing resources if viable;
- ☐ parents would like the opportunity to attend more than one course. If resources would allow in the future, invite parents to attend for a second time thereby reinforcing the skills they have learnt.

14.7 How the project works

14.7.1 About the School Food Trust portfolio

Let's Get Cooking is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and led by the School Food Trust in partnership with the Prince's Trust, Business in the Community and Magic Outcomes. The British Nutrition Foundation and the Royal Society for Public Health are also involved in an advisory capacity.

Let's Get Cooking is a national network of cooking clubs for children, families and their communities across England. During its first five years, Let's Get Cooking has used £20 million from the Big Lottery Fund to set up the first 5,000 clubs.

Let's Get Cooking have three key targets:

- 1) by the end of the five year programme, 1,106,300 children, family members and members of the local community will increase their food preparation or cooking skills as a result of Let's Get Cooking;
- 2) 70% of participants who learn a new healthy eating skill through Let's Get Cooking will replicate that skill at home;
- 3) 50% of children, young people and families who participate in Let's Get Cooking will increase their intake of nutritionally healthy food.

14.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

The project has received £2,500 from the Big Lottery Fund. The funding was broken down as £1,000 in the first year, £1,000 in the second year and £500 in its final year. The school does not provide funding for the project, but does contribute in terms of staff time and the use of the family room and school facilities as appropriate.

Staffing

The Let's Get Cooking team is led by the school's Family Support Worker, supported by the Family Support Worker's Assistant and a Teaching Assistant.

14.7.3 Project outputs

To date, Let's Get Cooking has 90 members and engaged with a further 300 people through community events.

15 MEND FYLDE COAST

15.1 Introduction

This report details the findings of case study research undertaken by CLES Consulting on the MEND programme delivered by Fylde Coast YMCA. The Fylde Coast Programme has received funding under the 'England on the MEND: Fitter, happier, healthier' portfolio of the Big Lottery Fund's National Well-being Programme, and targets overweight and obese children in the local area.

The research was undertaken during September and October 2010, and involved consultation with: the YMCA Programme Manager; project partners from North Lancashire Primary Care Trust and Wyre Borough Council; and representatives of the wider MEND organisation. A discussion group was held with children and parents/carers who had participated in MEND activities in Fylde Coast, and a desk review of relevant documentation and data was undertaken. Evidence from the case study research has fed into the wider findings of the National Well-being Programme Evaluation.

15.2 Background and rationale

MEND (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition... Do it!) is a treatment and prevention programme for overweight and obese children and their families; the principal target group is 7-13 year olds, the age range for the Fylde Coast Programme, although MEND programmes also exist for other age groups. The MEND model seeks to address the three principal elements identified as crucial in addressing overweight and obesity incidence: behavioural aspects; physical activity; and healthy diet.

MEND was devised at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children and the University College London Institute of Child Health in 2004. It builds upon extensive research, peer review and clinical trial, and is now delivered in more than 350 different locations across the United Kingdom and overseas. The Big Lottery funded Fylde Coast Programme commenced delivery in January 2008, initially for two years, but attracted North Lancashire Primary Care Trust funding to continue delivering through to 2013; a contract extension has also enabled Big Lottery funding to support two courses during 2010/11.

There is a clear rationale for intervention to address overweight and obesity issues amongst children. Data from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) show that around three out of ten (29.0%) Year 6 pupils in the North Lancashire Primary Care Trust area were overweight or obese in 2008/09.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the NCMP report concluded that:

'A strong positive relationship exists between deprivation and obesity prevalence for children in Reception and Year 6.'⁶⁸

This adds weight to the YMCA's aim to target more deprived areas within the Fylde Coast area, such as Fleetwood.

More specifically, following the three elements of the MEND programme, there is a rationale around the poor dietary habits of many children, the physical health issues that can result from insufficient exercise and activity, and related mental health concerns (obese children being more likely to suffer from low self-esteem, loneliness and depression, often as a result of stigmatisation by their peers). There is a large body of evidence supporting the link between childhood obesity and increased adult incidence of chronic diseases, and conditions such as heart and liver disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), and some cancers.⁶⁹ It is clear that upfront investment in tackling obesity can generate significant cost savings in the longer term.

⁶⁷ *National Child Measurement Programme Dataset, 2008/09* (The Health and Social Care Information Centre, Lifestyle Statistics, Department of Health Cross-Government Obesity Unit, 2009). Year 6 pupils are aged 10-11, around the mid-point of the target age range for the MEND 7-13 programmes delivered by Fylde Coast YMCA. The data for the North Lancashire PCT area are slightly below the average for England as a whole (32.6%)

⁶⁸ *National Child Measurement Programme: England, 2008/09 School Year* (The NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care/Lifestyle Statistics, 2009), p.7

⁶⁹ See, for example, *Health Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England* (Cross-Government Obesity Unit, Department of Health and Department of Children, Schools and Families, 2008), p.2

A 2007 government report estimated that the annual direct cost to the NHS of obese and overweight individuals (across all age groups) was some £4.2 billion, and that the cost to the wider economy could rise to a massive £50 billion a year if left unchecked.⁷⁰ The 2006 *'Tackling Childhood Obesity'* report found that obesity reduces life expectancy by an average of nine years.⁷¹

Finally, there is also a rationale for family based intervention rather than a narrower focus on individual children, given the role that parents/carers take in shaping the dietary and physical behaviours of their children, and the genetic component underlying the recurrence of being overweight and obese across different generations within the family.

15.3 Project design and delivery

This section of the report outlines the key objectives pursued by Fylde Coast YMCA in delivering the MEND programme, the main inputs and activities, and the target beneficiaries.

15.3.1 Objectives

The Stage 1 application form submitted by MEND Central to the Big Lottery in 2006 (when originally bidding for funding for the portfolio) states that the aim of the programme is to equip children and their families to make necessary life changes that will lead to sustained improvements in (their) diets, fitness levels and overall health.⁷² Emphasis is placed on the provision of practical, fun learning, in order to engage participants and encourage them to complete the course. A central aim is to encourage self-efficacy – building the ability and confidence of participants to take control, change their behaviour, and achieve the goals they set themselves. The approach is more than just a diet, and rapid weight loss is not encouraged; rather, MEND takes a holistic approach by providing education around nutrition and diet, encouraging increased physical activity, and involving the whole family so that new ways of behaving and thinking become embedded. As stated in the application form:

'By following the MEND principles, participants will lose weight naturally and thereby build a foundation for healthy living – for life.'⁷³

An underlying objective is to build capacity amongst local delivery partners around the obesity agenda, by offering training opportunities to accompany the MEND programme itself.

There is clear 'fit' between the MEND approach and wider government strategy focused on addressing obesity, including the vision expressed in *'Healthy weight, healthy lives'* for obese and overweight individuals to *'be able to access services that are tailored to help them achieve and sustain a healthy weight'*⁷⁴ and the Public Service Agreement target to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels by 2020.⁷⁵ In addition, the programme contributes to all three of the Big Lottery's Well-being Programme objectives, most particularly children, parents and the wider community eating more healthily and people being more physically active, but also (more indirectly) people and communities having improved mental well-being.⁷⁶

The Fylde Coast MEND programme also contributes to objectives at the local level. The NHS North Lancashire Strategic Plan identifies obesity as a key lifestyle issue underpinning its child health priority, and has the goal to halt the rate of increase in obesity amongst children under-11 years by 2013⁷⁷. It identifies family intervention programmes that take a whole lifestyle approach as a crucial vehicle towards achieving this ambition.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ *Foresight – Tackling Obesities: Future Choices – Project Report, 2nd Edition* (Government Office for Science, 2007), p.40

⁷¹ *Tackling Childhood Obesity – First Steps* (Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, prepared jointly by the Audit Commission, the Healthcare Commission and the National Audit Office, 2006), p.26

⁷² *The Well-being Programme: Application Form for Stage One* (MEND Central Limited, 2006), p.5

⁷³ *ibid*, p.5

⁷⁴ *Health Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-Government Strategy for England* (Cross-Government Obesity Unit, Department of Health and Department of Children, Schools and Families, 2008), p.13

⁷⁵ *PSA Delivery Agreement 12: Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People* (HM Treasury, 2008), p.5

⁷⁶ *Well-being: an Introduction to our New Programme* (Big Lottery Fund, 2006), p.3

⁷⁷ *Supporting a Healthier, Better Life – NHS North Lancashire Strategic Plan 2008-2013* (NHS North Lancashire, 2008), p.40

⁷⁸ *ibid*, p.139

Under Wyre Borough Council's Living Healthily Corporate Priority, one of the key aims is to help people enjoy healthier lifestyles and increase participation in physical exercise⁷⁹. The project will contribute to this objective, and to the Local Area Agreement LAA target on obesity levels amongst Year 6 primary schoolchildren.⁸⁰

15.3.2 Inputs

Funding from the Big Lottery Well-being Programme through the MEND Central portfolio paid for the delivery of MEND programmes by Fylde Coast YMCA between 2008 and 2010. However, North Lancashire Primary Care Trust paid the salary costs of the YMCA Programme Manager and is funding the bulk of project delivery during the 2010-13 period; no funding is provided by other local partners.

Although the original contract between Fylde Coast YMCA and MEND Central under the Big Lottery portfolio was not available for the case study research, the contract value for the 2008-10 period was approximately £22,000. The value of the contract extension for the two additional courses to be delivered with Big Lottery funding in 2010/11 is around £2,700.

The Big Lottery Programmes enjoy free MEND kits as part of the funding agreement, which contain everything needed to deliver the programme, including instructor materials and participant packs. MEND Central also provides free evaluation reports, which are drawn from beneficiary data uploaded by the YMCA Programme Manager onto the MEND Online Management and Monitoring System (OMMS). The most significant expenditure of Big Lottery resources is the cost of instructors, who are engaged at hourly rates. The YMCA also pays for room hire at venues other than its Poulton-le-Fylde centre.

The Programme Manager's role is full-time and is currently undertaken by two YMCA staff who job share; alongside project management and monitoring duties, promotional and marketing activity represents a substantial element of the role, plus direct delivery of some project activity. There are no other permanent members of staff, but the YMCA employs around 15 freelance instructors to deliver the Big Lottery and Primary Care Trust programmes. Each programme requires four hours of instructor time a week, with one person taking the theory session, and another leading the exercise session. Although partners such as North Lancashire Primary Care Trust and Wyre Borough Council have a strategic interest in helping to steer the project, they have little involvement in its day-to-day operation.

MEND Central provides four days of training to new Programme Managers and instructors, covering the background to the course, its aims and delivery approaches. Programme Managers also undertake a further day's training on administrative and management duties related to the project, including use of the OMMS. In terms of ongoing development, Programme Managers also benefit from quarterly regional meetings that bring together leads from across the region to share ideas, developments and resources, and best practice conferences, which are held twice a year and bring together leads from across the country.

15.3.3 Activities

Each MEND 7-13 programme is delivered over a ten week period, with two sessions per week, each of which is two hours in duration. Every session comprises an hour of theory undertaken by all participants (children alongside parents/carers) that focuses on nutrition and diet. This is followed by an hour of exercise for the children, during which the parents/carers undertake a MEND session:

- ❑ **nutrition and diet sessions** – activities undertaken include label reading, fats and sugars sessions, food tasting and supermarket tours. In order to keep participants engaged, games, quizzes and visual demonstrations are used where possible. Participants are given handouts detailing MEND friendly options and recipes;



⁷⁹ Wyre Corporate Plan 2007-10 (Wyre Borough Council, 2007), p.30

⁸⁰ National Indicator (NI) 56. See *National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: Handbook of Definitions* (Communities and Local Government, 2007), p.17-18

- ❑ **exercise sessions** – the emphasis is on fun, inclusive and non-competitive exercise, both land and (if a swimming pool is available at the venue) water-based. Games include cat and mouse, skipping, and use of hula-hoops, space-hoppers and bean bags. Given that some participants may have had a relatively negative experience of sport, sessions are designed to build confidence and encourage team working, and are graduated so that they start at basic intensity and build up slowly. Where possible, a healthy eating message is incorporated;
- ❑ **MEND sessions** – these sessions look to support and embed behavioural change, with discussions focused on positive role modelling, parenting strategies, the role of internal and external triggers in conditioning children's dietary and physical behaviours, setting goals and rewarding children.

Once participants have completed the programme, there is a celebratory graduation event. Other events are staged on an ad-hoc basis, with some of the Fylde Coast participants enjoying an outward bound trip to the Lake District. As a follow-on to the formal course, Fylde Coast YMCA encourages MEND graduates to join its family fit programme, an exercise class for the whole family that takes place once a week and is open to both the graduates and other participants. Graduates are also signposted to other appropriate physical activity programmes and clubs, including YMCA provision and opportunities at school and community venues.

Alongside the MEND programme, MEND Central offers local partners the opportunity to attend a one day obesity awareness training session. These have taken place once or twice a year in the Fylde Coast, with relevant professionals invited to attend and gain an overview of the key issues involved in childhood obesity management and treatment. These sessions are delivered by MEND trained personnel, and are appropriate to anyone who might refer people onto the MEND programme, including local GPs, Primary Care Trust staff, school nurses, and youth leaders.

15.3.4 Target beneficiaries

Although participants on the MEND 7-13 Programme need to be within the target age range, local programmes enjoy some autonomy in defining their inclusion criteria. In the case of the Fylde Coast Programmes, the approach is relatively flexible, with MEND advertised as being appropriate for children 'over their ideal weight'. In general, body mass index (BMI) should be above the 91st centile, although the YMCA does go below this in order to fill the courses.⁸¹ Where possible, programmes are targeted towards people living in deprived areas, such as Fleetwood, although the geographical remit also covers considerably more affluent areas. The Primary Care Trust funded an extension of the project through to 2013 and has targets for the proportion of participants from deprived wards, and from lone parent households.

In addition to the referred child, the beneficiary group includes immediate family members; children are expected to attend the course with a parent or carer, with participation by other siblings encouraged. Secondary beneficiaries include other (non-participating) family members and the extended family in which behavioural change might result if messages are communicated, and household shopping and eating habits change. Similarly, the wider beneficiary group might also include peers at school and other members of the local community.

15.4 Performance

This section of the report considers the outputs and outcomes flowing out of the Fylde Coast YMCA's MEND courses, and the impact that programme activities might have on wider well-being. Issues of equality and diversity are discussed, as are the additionality of the support provided and the future sustainability of programme outcomes.

⁸¹ Body mass index (BMI) is calculated by dividing an individual's weight (in kilograms) by their height (in metres) squared. The generally agreed definition for overweight children is a BMI greater than or equal to the 85th centile, but below the 95th, and for obese children greater than or equal to the 95th centile (see *National Child Measurement Programme: England, 2008/09 School Year*, p.11). Decisions over the admissions criteria set for local MEND programmes in part depend on funding arrangements and local priorities or targets, but also on demand. If the course is run as a prevention programme the qualifying point might be lower (probably the 91st centile), but if it is run as a treatment programme it is likely to be higher (probably the 98th centile). See <http://www.mendprogramme.org/mendservices/referachild> (accessed December 2010)

15.4.1 Outputs

Although substantive data on outputs at the programme level were not available for the Fylde Coast (MEND Central aggregates these along with the outputs from other Big Lottery supported programmes across the country, for reporting to the Big Lottery), eighteen courses were delivered between January 2008 and the end of 2009/10. The aim is to attract a maximum of twelve families to sign up to the course, of which ten or so normally turn up at the start, and an average of seven or eight complete all ten sessions. There are no defined output targets for the Big Lottery funded programme, although the Primary Care Trust contract for the 2010-13 period outlines requirements for the annual number of programmes delivered and families participating, and for completion rates and involvement in follow-on programmes.

In assessing programme performance, the main focus is on the outcomes achieved. These are discussed below, in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

15.4.2 Outcomes

The principal measure of success for MEND programmes is a reduction in BMI and waist circumference. Across all of its programmes, MEND Central has identified an average reduction of one unit of BMI over the ten week course lifetime. A sample Fylde Coast course report that was provided for the case study research showed a 1.2 unit average reduction and a corresponding 7.0cm reduction in waist circumference. Other indicators detailed in the report include an increase in the time spent engaged in physical activity each week (up an average 7.8 hours), a reduction in the time spent in sedentary activity (down an average 1.7 hours), and a significantly better recovery heart rate following a three minute step test.



Based upon completion by parents/carers of a pre and post course 'strengths and difficulties questionnaire' (SDQ), MEND produces an SDQ score designed to give an indication of the state of mental health; a significant decrease in the SDQ score was demonstrated by the Fylde Coast project, pointing to improved perceptions of the mental health of their children by the parents/carers involved. A nutrition score is also calculated, and shows a significant increase, indicative of substantially improved eating habits and nutritional intake amongst participants.

Aggregate data from a number of Fylde Coast courses are quoted in a recent YMCA newsletter. Although the period to which the data refers is not given, the newsletter details an average reduction in BMI of 0.6 units, and in waist circumference of 3cm.⁸² It is important to place this in context – the course is only ten weeks long, and does not aim to bring about rapid weight loss; rather, the intention is to achieve *'progress in the right direction.'*⁸³

The importance of such outcomes should not be underestimated in terms of both physical and mental health. The children involved will be healthier and fitter, and are therefore likely to be more confident with enhanced self-esteem. This is borne out in the findings from the beneficiary discussion group held for the case study, both for the children involved and for their parents/carers:

*'I felt proud... more confident.'*⁸⁴

*'I lost two stone from the inspiration of MEND ... it makes a difference, gives you confidence.'*⁸⁵

For some participants, interacting with other children and parents who had experienced difficulties in managing their weight had helped to keep them motivated as they progressed through the course:

*'Knowing that you're not alone, that other people have the same problem.'*⁸⁶

*'Talking to other adults going through similar things was really useful.'*⁸⁷

⁸² 'Y' Active Newsletter Issue 1 – Spring/Summer 2010 (Fylde Coast YMCA, 2010), p.6

⁸³ Project partner

⁸⁴ Child beneficiary

⁸⁵ Parent/carer beneficiary

⁸⁶ Child beneficiary

⁸⁷ Parent/carer beneficiary

The theory sessions had clearly helped to increase the knowledge and awareness of participants around diet and nutrition:

*'It helped knowing how much sugar was in things.'*⁸⁸

*'[The fruit tasting] was quite good – we got the chance to taste stuff.'*⁸⁹

*'It made it easy to read a label... I'm more aware of the different e-numbers in your food.'*⁹⁰

This increased knowledge had led to behavioural change for many participants, contributing to healthier diets, lifestyles and attitudes:

*'Jack was a large child, but he now reads packets and doesn't eat much between [meals].'*⁹¹

*'I don't buy junk food any more, and they don't ask for it.'*⁹²

*'I learnt not to reward your child with sweets.'*⁹³

15.4.3 Impact on wider conditions

The holistic focus of MEND brings with it both physical and mental health benefits, and thereby contributes to increased well-being in its broadest sense. For many of the children involved, one of the impacts is likely to be improved educational attainment at school.

As explored above, for some of the parents and carers involved in the case study discussion group, involvement with MEND had led to significantly changed household behaviour in terms of shopping and eating habits, and attitudes to physical exercise. Although the evidence is anecdotal, such impacts are likely to spread beyond just the immediate beneficiary group; behavioural change of this sort will impact upon wider family groups, including other children and adults resident in the home, and potentially friends and family members who pay occasional visits. The YMCA Programme Manager reported feedback from parents/carers who had participated in MEND courses that:

'The kids shout at them about what they should be eating and doing.'

Evangelising of this sort, if conducted with peers at school and within the wider community, is likely to have some impact on the behaviour of those who hear it.

According to the YMCA Programme Manager, many children completing the course go on to join clubs inside and outside of school (some focused on physical activity but others had a different remit), indicative of their increased confidence and motivation. This was also demonstrated in their general ability to interact and communicate with others. Along these lines, some participants had made new and lasting friendships:

*'I still keep in touch with [Mark], and go swimming with him on a Thursday.'*⁹⁴

The opportunity to spend time together on the course can be positive for family members:

*'It was something we could do as a family, which was really nice.'*⁹⁵

This is particularly so when setting shared goals and targets, a process that can help to strengthen bonds and give a real focus to the efforts of participants to sustain new behaviours into the future.

15.4.4 Equality and diversity

In 2008, when commencing delivery of MEND programmes in the Fylde Coast area, the YMCA focused its efforts on engaging families in deprived localities such as Fleetwood. As the programme developed, its geographical remit expanded to cover other areas within Fylde and Wyre, some of which (such as Kirkham and St. Annes) are relatively deprived, but others (such as Poulton-le-Fylde) more affluent.

⁸⁸ Parent/carer beneficiary

⁸⁹ Child beneficiary

⁹⁰ Parent/carer beneficiary

⁹¹ Parent/carer beneficiary

⁹² Parent/carer beneficiary

⁹³ Parent/carer beneficiary

⁹⁴ Child beneficiary (note that the friend's name has been changed to respect confidentiality)

⁹⁵ Parent/carer beneficiary

As discussed below, the challenge of ensuring take-up of courses is maximised has led to some dilution of the original aim to benefit disadvantaged communities, although Primary Care Trust funding for the 2010-13 period comes alongside the requirement for half of all families to come from deprived wards.

MEND is delivered to participants at no cost to themselves, addressing any potential financial barrier to participation. Delivery in local community settings also helps to avoid travel cost and time for participants.

The Fylde Coast is not characterised by high ethnic diversity, with the majority of programme beneficiaries being of White origin.

15.4.5 Additionality

When considering additionality, we are looking to assess the overall difference an intervention has made, over and above what would have happened if it had not taken place. As discussed above, it is clear that a range of significant outcomes have emerged from the MEND programmes delivered by Fylde Coast YMCA, with the programmes making an important contribution to the wider well-being of participating families. Although there will be many other factors which impact on aspects of individual well-being, consultees were unanimous in reporting that comparable provision was not available locally, and that participants would not have experienced the benefits they had enjoyed without the work of the YMCA. The only other similar programmes available in the Fylde Coast area focus on general physical activity and exercise, and lack the holistic, behavioural and family focus of MEND.

The Big Lottery supported programme was central to demonstrating the value of MEND programmes to local partners, an important element of its added value. Although North Lancashire Primary Care Trust provided some financial support for the 2008-10 period, the programmes funded by the Big Lottery helped to convince the Primary Care Trust of the value in extending the programme to 2013, and expanding its geographical coverage into the Lancaster and Morecambe area. For the Primary Care Trust, MEND came with a strong ethos and highly professional brand, and stood up to scrutiny thanks to both its origins in academic research and the peer review and clinical trials to which it had been subjected. Other national programmes are available, such as the Carnegie Weight Management (CWM) programme and WATCH IT community programme for obese children, but the Primary Care Trust decided against the former on the basis of cost, and the latter due to its relatively limited commercial orientation. More individual, localised solutions have been adopted in other places, but they do not have the same level of robustness, and often prove to be less cost effective than programmes such as MEND that can generate cost efficiencies due to the scale of its national operation.

15.4.6 Sustainability

MEND has a strong focus on sustainability, placing considerable emphasis on ensuring the outcomes achieved continue beyond the duration of the programmes themselves. The aim to increase knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyle options, and to embed behavioural change around eating and physical activity, is important in ensuring that the legacy from involvement in programme activities is an enduring one; potentially, MEND could lead to a lifelong impact on both the individuals involved and its wider participant group, including parents/carers and siblings.

Measures introduced to bolster sustainability in the short to medium term include follow-on exercise sessions, a regular feature of exit strategies from MEND programmes. In the Fylde Coast, the YMCA delivers 'family fit' sessions, a ten week course open both to MEND graduates and others interested in participating. MEND graduates are also encouraged to remain engaged with the programme through: a celebratory award ceremony held on completion of the course; other follow-on events; ongoing measurement six and twelve months later; and MEND newsletters.



Through MEND Central, graduates and their families are given access to the MEND World website, designed to: continue to motivate participants through the provision of information and advice around healthy eating and exercise; postings on events being held and other local opportunities; and the chance to communicate with MEND peers. MEND programmes are not delivered in isolation, with Fylde Coast participants signposted towards other appropriate activity sessions on offer both in the YMCA run leisure centres and elsewhere:

*'It's not complicated to continue – they make it quite simple.'*⁹⁶

A further aspect of the legacy from programme activities is increased capacity amongst local providers. The Fylde Coast programmes have helped to build local capacity, both amongst YMCA staff and freelance instructors involved directly in delivering MEND activities, who have benefited from MEND Central's training programme, and amongst local partners who have participated in the obesity awareness training sessions that have been held. Although the YMCA's partnership working with local partners was already strong, and hence MEND's legacy in this area is more limited, delivery of programme activities has *'added another positive.'*⁹⁷

In terms of the sustainability of MEND provision in the Fylde Coast, ongoing Primary Care Trust funding has ensured that the YMCA can continue delivery of programme activities through to 2013.

15.5 Processes

This section of the report focuses on some of the processes surrounding the YMCA's delivery of MEND programmes in the Fylde Coast: the effectiveness of partnership working and the delivery approach; publicity and promotion; and monitoring and evaluation.

15.5.1 Partnership working and the delivery approach

Fylde Coast YMCA has a well developed relationship with North Lancashire Primary Care Trust and Wyre Borough Council, particularly the Sports Development Team, the principal partners involved with the MEND programme. Project partners interviewed for the case study placed considerable emphasis on the values they felt the YMCA shared with their organisations, particularly around engaging individuals and communities to the wider benefit of the local area:

*'[The YMCA] is a great community organisation, with a strong team base.'*⁹⁸

The support mechanism offered by the MEND Regional Team was welcomed by the YMCA Programme Manager, with the regular meetings held with other programme leads from across the North West valued for the opportunity they provide to share ideas and good practice, and gain updates on wider developments. There is no direct contact between the YMCA and the Big Lottery, with the Regional Team and MEND Central acting as a conduit for progress reporting and other purposes.

As discussed below, programme recruitment might benefit from the YMCA developing closer, more direct links with local providers involved in the obesity agenda, rather than working through the Primary Care Trust lead. Although some links are well established, stronger dialogue with school nurses and school sport coordinators might pay dividends in terms of increased referrals into the programme.

15.5.2 Publicity and promotion

MEND Central provides considerable support and advice to local programmes with regard to publicity and promotion, including providing a range of generic marketing materials such as leaflets, health handouts for use in schools, a GP pack, and presentations for meetings, assemblies and sessions with parents. Local teams develop their own recruitment strategy, drawing on the support of the MEND Regional Team and best practice from experience elsewhere, and tailoring this strategy to the local area and the main delivery partners involved.

⁹⁶ Parent/carer beneficiary

⁹⁷ Project partner

⁹⁸ Project partner

Fylde Coast YMCA produces some 10,000 leaflets a term to promote MEND programme activities across its wider geographical area, including Lancaster and Morecambe. This is a vast amount, given that only twelve participants are required per course, and takes up a significant proportion of the programme's financial resources and staff time:

*'It's a scattergun approach for everybody; a better way of engaging the right people is needed.'*⁹⁹

In addition to leaflet distribution, the Programme Manager has developed links with some local GPs, and with school representatives, including nurses, learning mentors and school sport coordinators. Earlier this year, the programme piloted sending targeted letters introducing the MEND programme to children in Fleetwood schools who were identified as overweight or obese through the NCMP, but this did not work well and would require some revision if a similar approach is pursued in the future. MEND stands have also been manned in local supermarkets, with the aim of generating interest amongst people as they shop for food.

Currently, the main route into the programme is self-referrals from parents/carers who have seen the publicity material distributed in schools and other venues, or heard about MEND through posters and other publicity, including coverage in the local media and radio. A relatively small proportion of referrals come from GPs and school nurses. The strength of MEND branding helps to 'sell' the programme, with branded kit and other merchandise encouraging interest and confidence amongst local partners, and building a sense of ownership and pride amongst participants.

15.5.3 Monitoring and evaluation

The OMMS provides an effective way for local MEND staff to record the progress of participants on their programmes, and for this progress to be reported at an aggregate level by course and delivery location. Programme Managers input individual data on reductions in BMI and waist circumference, alongside other data emanating from the various pre and post programme questionnaires completed by participants, with MEND Central producing individual and course reports as required by delivery staff. Fylde Coast YMCA disseminates these reports to its principal local partners, and uses evidence from them to promote the benefits of involvement with MEND.

Although the reports produced through OMMS are impressive, emphasis is placed on the quantitative expression of outcomes, with less information provided around qualitative benefits such as the extent to which behavioural change has been embedded. The YMCA Programme Manager collects qualitative feedback from participants, including asking them to identify the changes they are planning to make in their lives as a result of their involvement, but this is not routinely reported to project partners.

15.6 Conclusions

This section of the report outlines the key lessons emerging from the case study findings detailed above, and identifies some opportunities for the future. In addition to a specific focus on the MEND programmes delivered by Fylde Coast YMCA, the discussion seeks to draw out lessons of relevance to the delivery of other MEND programmes and similar well-being provision in other local contexts.

15.6.1 Key lessons



motivation, and more robust mental health.

The MEND programme is an impressive package that has demonstrated the significant role it can play in addressing overweight and obesity issues amongst children and their families. In addition to reductions in BMI and weight circumference, participants in the Fylde Coast programme have experienced a range of positive outcomes including: increased knowledge and understanding of healthier living options (diet, nutrition and exercise); a greater interest in physical activity, improved fitness and the adoption of less sedentary lifestyles; and parallel benefits in terms of increased confidence, self-esteem and

⁹⁹ Project partner

In addressing the well-being of participants in a holistic way, MEND Fylde Coast is meeting its stated objectives, making a significant contribution to wider strategic ambitions at both local and national levels; and pursuing a rounded approach to addressing the rationale that underpins programme delivery.

Sustainability and value for money

One of the most impressive aspects of MEND is its emphasis on sustainability. In order to address overweight and obesity issues successfully, it is vital to avoid the 'revolving door' trajectory, commonly seen amongst traditional approaches that fail to embed behavioural change and allow the beneficiary to slip back into habitual patterns. Given that programme impact should endure into the longer term, initial expense on interventions like MEND represents good value for money, with a significant return on investment resulting over time.¹⁰⁰ Although the initial development of programmes such as MEND is very expensive, with a significant amount of research involved, its wider roll-out across the country results in a relatively cost effective intervention at the local level.

Structure versus flexibility

The MEND programme characterises itself as a 'solution in a box',¹⁰¹ providing delivery partners with all the lesson plans, materials and equipment necessary to run the course. As such, local partners who may not be specialist in the obesity agenda are able to deliver a programme with relatively minimal prior experience, and are supported in doing so by the MEND regional and national infrastructure. There are significant benefits from encouraging programme staff to adhere to the standard structure delineated by MEND Central, not least the confidence that ensues from knowing that the product being delivered is robust and consistent regardless of delivery context. However, consultees who had participated in the Fylde Coast programme felt that the one hour theory slot held at the start of each week's session was overly long, and commented that they had struggled to remain engaged with it for the whole period:

*'Too many words, and not enough play.'*¹⁰²

There might be value in local staff enjoying a little more flexibility in delivering MEND programmes, so they can tailor the approach if necessary to suit particular beneficiary groups and delivery settings; helping to retain the interest and commitment of those involved.

The importance of the individual

Besides the strength of the programme content, one of the other principal factors behind the successful delivery of MEND is the personality, skills, experience and empathy of the instructor(s). Many of the children participating in the programme were initially apprehensive about doing so, and the positive way in which programme staff related to them was a key element in encouraging them to take part and remain committed over the ten week duration of the course. Consultees for the case study commented on how they had been able to talk to their instructor about a range of different issues, including wider problems at school.

Recruitment and retention

One of the principal challenges experienced by Fylde Coast YMCA in delivering MEND has been recruiting families onto the programme. One barrier is the level of commitment required by participants, with forty hours of contact time spread over a ten week period. Attending project activities twice a week is onerous for many families, and there might be value in rethinking whether the programme could be delivered in a once a week format, perhaps over a longer time span.

The principal vehicle used by the YMCA to publicise MEND programmes has been leafleting, which has proved relatively ineffective given the numbers of leaflets distributed and the cost and time involved in doing so.



¹⁰⁰ The Stage 1 application form submitted by MEND to BIG states that a reduction of one unit of BMI for a child, sustained throughout its lifetime, will produce an estimated £7,500 in potential future health savings (this is the discounted monetary value relating to increased life expectancy, as calculated by Department of Health economists). (*The Well-being Programme: Application Form for Stage One*, MEND Central Limited, 2006, p.12)

¹⁰¹ *The Well-being Programme: Application Form for Stage One* (MEND Central Limited, 2006), p.29

¹⁰² Child beneficiary

Although there are sensitivities concerning the need to distribute programme information in a non-discriminatory way, a more targeted referral mechanism would be beneficial, drawing on closer relationships and information sharing between the YMCA and school nurses (particularly in schools in deprived areas where obesity is recognised to be particularly prevalent). Building partnerships of this sort takes time, as trust and confidence need to be established, but could prove a more effective use of the Programme Manager's resources, with school nurses largely filling MEND courses without the need for extensive leafleting:

*'We know where the overweight and obese children are, and the school nurse who deals with them.'*¹⁰³

The challenge of recruiting and (subsequently) retaining participants is particularly acute when considering hard to reach groups, such as residents in deprived areas. The Fylde Coast project has, in general, attracted families who are relatively motivated and happy to attend programme activities twice a week, rather than those from poorer social backgrounds who can feel more disempowered and less inclined to believe that such interventions can help them. Reaching these groups is often most successful if some form of local 'champion' is used – someone who has already successfully secured the buy-in of residents, and who they are more likely to trust than project staff or other partners who may be viewed as 'outsiders'.

Reporting and dissemination

As part of efforts to build stronger relationships with local partners, particularly those personnel directly involved in working with overweight and obese children, there would be benefit in Fylde Coast YMCA disseminating more qualitative evidence on the difference that involvement with MEND has made to participants, especially in terms of softer outcomes around confidence, motivation and self-esteem. Although the MEND questionnaires undertaken both pre and post involvement with the course capture much of this information, it is not collated and reported in as consistent a manner as the quantitative outcome data around change in BMI and waist circumference, and other related indicators. Some MEND programmes develop mini case studies of the experience of some of their participants, with MEND Central providing templates for doing so on the OMMS – this would be an ideal vehicle through which to highlight the rounded benefits that have resulted from MEND activities in the Fylde Coast, and to engage potential referral partners in the programme.

15.6.2 Opportunities for the future

Public health policy

The recent Public Health White Paper indicates the Coalition Government's commitment to implementing preventative measures where possible, and to tackle health inequalities through the new health premium.¹⁰⁴ The document also details the importance of local leadership and delivery in driving health improvement and promoting well-being. This policy direction represents something of an opportunity for MEND, although the availability of sufficient resources to fund appropriate interventions remains a concern in the current economic and funding climate, despite the Government's commitment to ring fence money for public health. The creation of local health and well-being boards, based in local authorities, might provide a useful forum through which MEND and other partners could contribute to more joined-up delivery approaches, and to the development of more rationalised care pathways for obesity and other public health issues.

Early years intervention

MEND is also available for other age groups, including 2-4 and 5-7 year olds, a programme for 13 year olds and over, and an emerging MEND maternity programme. Given that eating and lifestyle habits are established from an early age, and may be deeply embedded by the time a child is 7, there is real value to be gained from undertaking educative activity from a very early age, particularly with parents. Although the current austere financial climate makes it unlikely that funding could be found for early years intervention of this sort, MEND Central, and local delivery partners such as Fylde Coast YMCA, should continue to make the case for it, and seek to demonstrate the return on investment that can result from such approaches, in terms of future health benefits and related cost savings.

¹⁰³ Project partner

¹⁰⁴ *Healthy Lives, Healthy People: Our Strategy for Public Health in England* (HM Government, 2010)

16 MIND IN GATESHEAD COMMUNITY CAFÉ

16.1 Introduction

This report details the findings of case study research undertaken by CLES Consulting on the community café established and run by Mind in Gateshead. The project is funded under the North East portfolio of the Big Lottery Fund's Well-being Programme, New Leaf New Life, and offers volunteering opportunities for local people with mental health issues.

The research was undertaken during October and November 2009, and involved consultation with the Mind Project Manager, the portfolio lead, and five volunteers currently working at the café. A desk review of key data and documentation relating to the project was also undertaken. Evidence from the case study research has fed into the wider findings of the National Well-being Programme Evaluation.

16.2 Background and rationale

The idea for the community café came from Mind staff who saw the potential to set up a social enterprise café when they moved into new premises in Bensham, Gateshead. Although advice was sought from voluntary and community sector organisations that had established similar projects, Mind largely developed the project in isolation; little support was solicited from the North East Strategic Health Authority (SHA), the New Leaf New Life portfolio holder, and no other delivery partners were directly involved.

The project is funded from April 2008 to March 2010, one of nine two year projects within the New Leaf New Life portfolio.

The North East has amongst the worst health and well-being outcomes of any of the English regions, with high levels of multiple deprivation and worklessness. The Stage 1 New Leaf New Life portfolio application to the Big Lottery¹⁰⁵ describes the prevalence of mental health issues amongst the region's population, with some 295,000 people experiencing depression and anxiety, and severe mental illness (such as schizophrenia and manic depression) affecting around 1% of the adult population (21,000 people). Although project documentation does not outline similar local level data for Gateshead, given the challenging socio-economic conditions in much of the City and the association of such conditions with mental health needs, there is a clear rationale for interventions focused on addressing mental health issues in the area.

The rationale for the community café project focuses around two groups: the need to help individuals to cope with their mental health issues to avoid them becoming socially excluded; and the need to reach out to the local community in order to raise awareness of mental health issues and reduce the stigma that can be associated with people with mental health issues.

16.3 Project design and delivery

16.3.1 Objectives

The project objectives are clearly focused on addressing the underlying rationale and benefiting the two groups identified above. The café aims to benefit volunteers with mental health issues who work there by helping them to become less socially excluded, building their confidence, self-esteem and aspirations, and providing them with formal and on the job training in order to increase their skill sets and experience. For some of the volunteers, this will contribute to re-entry into paid employment; for others who are more distant from the labour market, it will help them to meet and communicate with new people, and enhance their overall well-being.

In terms of the wider community, characterised by relatively high levels of deprivation and poverty, the project aims to provide healthy food options for local people. In addition to doing so, the café's location within Mind's Well-being Centre in Bensham will contribute to the organisation's wider ambitions to combat the stigma of mental ill health, encouraging people to enter the premises of a mental health organisation, and to learn more about mental health issues through the literature that is available to café users.

¹⁰⁵ *The Well-being programme: application form for stage one*, North East Strategic Health Authority (2006)

One of the principal objectives underpinning the New Leaf New Life portfolio is to foster the role of third sector providers within the field of mental health delivery; the community café project clearly fits with this emphasis. Although the café did not achieve sufficient scale to become a social enterprise, funding under the portfolio provided Mind with the opportunity to pilot a method of service delivery in which it had no prior experience, allowing the organisation to explore new ways of addressing the needs of its client group. The portfolio aims to encourage community based projects that involve service users in delivering project activity, and that contribute to changing wider perspectives on mental health by tackling stigma, both key objectives behind the café project.

The focus of the project also chimes clearly with two of the three objectives of the Big Lottery Well-being Programme: people and communities having improved mental well-being; and children, parents and wider community eating more healthily. There is also strong fit with the wider policy direction of central government on mental health, as expressed in the recent *'New Horizons'* consultation paper¹⁰⁶. The paper invites commentary on: how best the vision it outlines for 2020 might be achieved; how to equip people to help their own mental health and ensure that people with mental health problems get high quality support; and how to encourage society to treat people with mental health problems with respect and not treat them differently simply because of their problems.

16.3.2 Inputs

The project originally intended to apply for around £80,000 in funding from New Leaf New Life, but as the overall portfolio resources turned out to be lower than first anticipated¹⁰⁷, Mind applied for £50,000, broken down into £25,000 for each year of the project's lifetime. There is no match funding, although some income is generated in the form of takings from the café and there is a value to the time committed by the volunteer workforce.

The bulk of project expenditure is on staffing costs, with further resources going on food and management. The large majority of the Big Lottery grant is for revenue expenditure; capital expenditure of £1,250 (2.5% of the total grant) funded the purchase of extra kitchen equipment to complement the stock in the existing kitchen. At the time of undertaking the case study research, with some five months delivery remaining, around 80% of the total project budget had been spent, demonstrating that the project is financially on track.

Mind in Gateshead is the sole organisation involved in delivering the project; other than the SHA, which manages the wider portfolio, no other partners have been involved. There are three Mind staff working on the project on a part-time basis: the Project Manager is funded to spend seven hours per week on the project; a support worker for six hours; and a receptionist/administrator for five hours.

16.3.3 Activities



The café provides light bite healthy food options to the local community in Bensham, an area with relatively high levels of deprivation and poverty. Although the original intention was to open the café as a full-time social enterprise, with a Mind member of staff acting as a dedicated coordinator, this was not possible within the available funding. Instead, the café opens to the public twice a week, for Monday lunch and Friday breakfast, and also occasionally provides catering for some of the groups using Mind services in the Well-being Centre.

The volunteers are involved in a range of activity, with the particular tasks undertaken by individuals dependent upon personal choice, skills and experience, and the nature of their mental health condition. Some volunteers just work in the kitchen, preparing food or washing dishes, with others undertaking more customer facing roles, such as serving and clearing tables. Over time, the roles undertaken by volunteers often develop – some who had previously only been happy to work in the kitchen gained sufficient experience and confidence to want to liaise directly with café customers.

¹⁰⁶ *New Horizons: Towards a Shared Vision for Mental Health – Consultation* (Department of Health, 2009)

¹⁰⁷ The Stage 2 portfolio bid to BIG was significantly scaled back in comparison to the original bid at Stage 1

All of the volunteers have undertaken a Level 1 Food Safety training course. Three volunteers undertook the Level 2 course – although only one of them passed at the first instance, the others are planning to re-sit the course shortly.

Customers using the café are exposed to information about Mind and facts about mental health issues, provided on placemats, menus and wall posters. This information helps to raise awareness, promote good mental health, and reduce stigma.

16.3.4 Target beneficiaries

Reflecting the dual nature of the rationale and project objectives, there are two beneficiary groups: the volunteers working in the café; and the café's customers, comprising members of the local community.

All of the volunteers have had some involvement with mental health services or support services, and were either already known to Mind, or referred to the organisation by Gateshead Council or other organisations delivering mental health provision.

16.4 Performance

16.4.1 Outputs

The principal beneficiary group for the project is the volunteers working at the café. The target over the two year time span for the project was to involve 12 volunteers with mental health issues; at the time of writing (November 2009), 11 volunteers had worked at the café (92% of target), with the project on track to meet or exceed this target by the time its Big Lottery funding period finishes in March 2010.

There was some initial confusion between the project/portfolio and Big Lottery over how to count the number of customers using the café, the project's secondary beneficiary group. The Big Lottery asks its funded interventions only to count beneficiaries once, with its output definition capturing new beneficiaries but excluding repeat beneficiaries. However, in addition to attracting new customers, the café's focus was to encourage customers to return on regular occasions; indeed, an important mark of a café's success is the extent to which customers, once they have eaten there for the first time, make return visits. For this reason, Mind successfully argued that it should be allowed to count all of its customers, regardless of whether they had previously visited the café.

The agreed target for the number of people visiting the café over the lifetime of the project is 3,120, based upon 15 people visiting the café for each session it is open. In practice, it has been a considerable challenge to attract people into the café, with the project achieving a total of 817 customers by October 2009¹⁰⁸; this is a little over a quarter of the overall target, with less than six months of project delivery to go. Instead of local residents, the customer base has largely comprised Mind staff, people using the services available in the Well-being Centre, and staff from neighbouring voluntary organisations. There are a number of reasons why the local community has not visited the café in large numbers, with the location of Mind's premises within which the café is situated a particular issue:

- ❑ the Well-being Centre is on a relatively quiet residential road, with little potential to entice in passing trade due to low levels of footfall;
- ❑ the building is set back from the road, not having an entrance off the pavement, and requiring café customers to go through the main entrance to the building rather than a specific entrance into the café area;
- ❑ the café is only open for two sessions a week, limiting awareness amongst the local community, and not providing the opportunity for people to pop in when they feel like it. If more resources had been available, and the café had been able to open on a daily basis, greater critical mass might have led to increased demand;
- ❑ in addition, it is possible that the stigma associated with issues around mental health is deterring potential customers from coming through the door – project staff commented that there may be a perception that only people with some form of mental health condition visit the Well-being Centre.

¹⁰⁸ The total of 817 customers includes people making return visits. To date, 136 different individual customers have visited the café

The portfolio holder has a flexible attitude to the project's difficulty in attracting people into the café, understanding the explanatory factors behind the failure to meet the set target. Nevertheless, the project shortfall has had an impact on the aggregate number of beneficiaries achieved by the portfolio as a whole, with pressure for this gap to be made up by other projects within the portfolio.

16.4.2 Outcomes

The project has generated significant personal outcomes for the volunteers working in the café. Some of the volunteers previously led very solitary existences, and working at the café has been important in reducing their social isolation; it provides a safe environment in which they can gradually build relationships and communication skills, both with fellow volunteers, Mind staff and café customers. According to Mind staff, one of the volunteers:

'Wouldn't speak to anyone at all when he arrived, but now he chats away to the customers without any difficulty.'

For another of the volunteers, the very fact that they are *'doing something meaningful'* is valuable:

'My confidence has increased massively – I now have a reason to get up in the morning.'

Further evidence of the impact of the project on the confidence and assertiveness of the volunteers is detailed in the narrative reports that are prepared quarterly as part of the reporting process to the portfolio holder. One of the reports presents a case study of a volunteer who when he first came to the café needed to attend with his support worker as he did not have the confidence to be there on his own; however, when he had settled in, he was happy to travel to the café on his own and did not require any support once there.

Although she does not have significant mental health issues, another volunteer has developed to the extent that she can take lead responsibility for the café when the Mind Project Manager is away, a sign of the way in which both confidence and skill sets are developed through the project. In addition to 'soft' skills such as team working, communication and interpersonal skills, the volunteers also develop food preparation and safety skills, gaining relevant qualifications.

Although the project is focused upon individual development and personally defined goals, rather than an end goal of moving volunteers into employment, one of the people who previously volunteered in the café is now employed as a Community Nutritionist; it is highly likely that the skills and experience gained at the café were significant factors behind his securing this position. For other volunteers, particularly those following Personal Development Plans (PDPs), there is the opportunity to work with Mind staff to develop practical skills with which to increase their employment chances, including help with CV preparation, completing application forms, and undertaking interviews. More broadly, working in the café helps volunteers to develop employability skills; these benefits include the ability to follow instructions, take responsibility for particular tasks, turn up on time, and demonstrate commitment over a sustained period. Linked to this, involvement with the café has an impact on the aspirations of the volunteers; although few may be directly looking to enter employment, for some, their experience of working in the café has led to thoughts in that direction:

'The volunteering helps you to get a foot in the door.'

'Working here has made me realise that I have a lot to offer and has definitely given my self-confidence a well needed boost... voluntary work within the café [has] given me a purpose again.'

Three café volunteers have moved on to volunteer for Mind in a different capacity: two help out with reception and administrative duties; and another is helping to develop a new Mind in Gateshead newsletter.

For two of the volunteers who have been involved with the project since April 2008, the stress involved in working in a demanding café environment proved too much, and they decided not to continue volunteering. This decision was related to their particular mental health conditions; although at first sight it is somewhat disappointing, they have continued to be engaged with other services delivered by Mind in Gateshead – this is a real positive, given that the baseline position for many of the volunteers is one of considerable disengagement, both from service providers and wider society. Importantly, working at the café is not intended to provide volunteers with a 'cure' – rather, the project aims to help them to manage their individual mental health needs, and through this to improve their overall well-being.

16.4.3 Impact on wider conditions

The project aims to generate wider impacts in terms of the difference it makes to the broader well-being of both volunteers and café customers. With regard to the former, a number of volunteers have taken the opportunity to get involved in other groups run by Mind at the Well-being Centre, including its Healthy Living Group. Some of the volunteers consulted for the study commented that, as a general result of working in the café, they tended to eat more healthily, and had become more interested in their diet and physical well-being – they had learnt more about food, and how to cook new recipes. The difficulties in attracting customers into the café, and the restricted opening hours, have limited the extent to which the project has been successful in influencing wider well-being amongst the local community through the provision of a healthy eating alternative to other food outlets in the area.

16.4.4 Equality and diversity

Bensham, and the wider Gateshead area, is a predominantly white area, and the backgrounds of the café volunteers reflect this. With the exception of one of the volunteers, all have some form of mental health disability, and are claiming Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, or similar benefits. There is a relatively even balance between male and female volunteers.

16.4.5 Additionality and sustainability

There are only limited volunteering opportunities available for mental health service users in the local area and, if the project had not gone ahead, it is likely that the majority of the café volunteers would not have found it easy to source alternative provision. Although there was another café in Gateshead that offered work related training for people with mental health needs, it lost its funding earlier this year.

The project is funded under the New Leaf New Life portfolio until March 2010; at the time of writing, Mind staff were actively exploring alternative sources of funding under which the café might continue to be resourced. Mind worked alongside Gateshead Citizens Advice Bureau in the development of a bid to the Ecominds Fund, to secure support for the development of a new building; this was to include a rooftop café to be run by the Mind team and volunteers. Unfortunately, this bid was unsuccessful, although there are other possible sources of funding that are currently being investigated.

As evidenced by the difficulty in bringing in customers, the café does not constitute a sustainable enterprise in its current location. It will remain reliant on ongoing revenue funding unless it can source sufficient investment to secure a city centre location, and to support full-time opening. In the right place, with a sufficient number of volunteers, it could attract much more custom, providing a steady income stream to cover costs. However, this would require significant financial support at a time when funding streams are coming under ever greater pressure.

If funding is sourced for the café to continue in operation, its sustainability will be enhanced if a number of volunteers develop sufficient experience, skills and confidence to take responsibility for running the café without the need for supervision by Mind staff, thereby reducing the need for significant ongoing revenue support. One volunteer has already reached this position, although she does not have significant mental health needs. There may be a case for encouraging volunteers with less severe needs to come forward, as they may be more likely to be in a position to undertake a café management role in the short to medium term.

It is important to consider the extent to which the outcomes experienced by individual volunteers are sustainable over the longer term. Even if the café closes in 2010 when the current Big Lottery funding comes to an end, there will be an enduring legacy for many of the volunteers involved – the benefits they have derived from the café in terms of enhanced self-esteem and confidence, and the ability to communicate, build relationships and bear responsibility, will make a significant contribution to their longer term well-being.

The project will also leave an important legacy for Mind in Gateshead, both for individual staff members and the organisation as a whole. Although the original ambition to establish the café as a social enterprise has not materialised, the experience of setting it up has given those involved the confidence to do something similar in the future, perhaps with a different focus that might better suit the building and location in which Mind is based.

16.5 Processes

16.5.1 Partnership working and the delivery approach

Mind in Gateshead developed and implemented the project without significant input from partner organisations, although the Project Manager met with other organisations that were running similar projects, or had experience in setting up a social enterprise, in order to find out more about what was involved and to identify best practice.

The relationship between Mind and the portfolio holder has been a good one, although the extent of interaction has been limited, focused around the application process and ongoing monitoring and progress reporting. There has perhaps been something of a missed opportunity in terms of the inability of the Mind Project Manager to take up all of the networking and training opportunities on offer under the portfolio, simply because she only has very limited weekly hours to devote to the project, and is therefore under considerable time pressure. The SHA stages a number of regular events of value to the project in terms of sharing learning and best practice, and potentially for exploring the ideas of partners over how the café might be put on a more sustainable footing for the medium to longer term.

16.5.2 Publicity, promotion and engagement

The project budget includes a small pot for marketing and publicity, used to promote demand both from people interested in volunteering in the café and from customers. In terms of the former, the project has sought to encourage people to volunteer by distributing publicity flyers to GP surgeries and mainstream and voluntary sector providers of mental health services. Amongst the current volunteers, a number were already coming to the Mind premises to attend groups or receive services, and heard about the café from staff. For others, they were referred to the project by their support worker or by mainstream service providers.



Mind has put considerable effort into publicising the café within the local community, in order to increase the number of customers. Local houses, businesses and schools have been leafleted, and offers put on in the summer holidays such as 'buy one get one free' and a free piece of fruit and soft drink with every meal. One of the volunteers has good IT skills and has been centrally involved in developing marketing initiatives for the café, including the production of an A-board and banner that are put up outside the Mind building when the café is open. The project was also publicised to a number of voluntary groups in Gateshead, to persuade staff and service users to visit, or for providers to consider using it as a venue for meeting their clients. However, despite these initiatives, there has been little impact on customer demand, with the factors previously discussed proving to be significant barriers that the project could do little about.

16.5.3 Monitoring and evaluation

The project submits monthly monitoring returns to the portfolio team at the SHA. Project outputs for both its beneficiary groups are reported, in terms of the number of volunteers and café customers. Headline expenditure against budget is also detailed, as is planned expenditure for the forthcoming month. The Project Manager also produces quarterly narrative reports that provide a more qualitative reflection on the outcomes flowing out of the project. A final evaluation is planned for late 2009/early 2010, towards the end of the Big Lottery funding period.

The outcomes enjoyed by volunteers working in the café are captured through both self-assessment progress trackers that are completed by the volunteers themselves, and an observational assessment progress tracker completed by Mind staff. These are focused around five broad areas:

- 1) **communication and interpersonal skills** – with colleagues, customers and other Mind colleagues;

- 2) **self-confidence** – the ability of volunteers to work independently and use their own initiative in the café; their willingness to take on more responsibilities, and their nervousness with certain tasks;
- 3) **assertiveness** – the ability of volunteers to assert themselves with others; their ability to make their own choices, and their ability to ask for help;
- 4) **personal** – the extent to which volunteers take care of their appearance and are reliable, attending regularly and turning up on time, or telephoning if they are going to be late;
- 5) **practical** – the degree to which volunteers carry out tasks that are set by others; their ability to find information for themselves, and the extent to which they are well organised.

In addition, one of the Mind Support Workers encourages volunteers to discuss their progress on a one-to-one basis, completing and following PDPs if they are keen to do so. PDPs are used to help individuals identify their short, medium and long term goals, breaking the developmental path down into small, manageable steps, and attaching milestones to them so that progress can be assessed. The focus is on three central questions – Where am I now? Where do I want to be? How can I get there? Volunteers working in the café who had decided to follow a PDP evidently saw it as a valuable tool:

'It's useful – I like to know what I'm doing, what I'm aiming for and what I'm trying to achieve.'

16.6 Conclusions

16.6.1 Key lessons

The outcomes experienced by volunteers at the community café are significant; indeed, in terms of the distance travelled by many of them, the experience has the potential to be life changing over the medium to longer term. The project has therefore clearly met its primary objective to enhance the overall well-being of its volunteers, helping to reduce their isolation from the wider community, and increasing their confidence, self-esteem and aspirations. Due to the difficulties in building demand for café services amongst the local community, there has been less success in achieving the secondary project objective, to improve the eating habits of local people, and to disseminate information about mental health, helping to reduce the stigma associated with the issue.

If greater funding had been available to the project, this would have enabled the café to operate more regular hours, contributing to efforts to draw customers in. However, the location of the Well-being Centre is a considerable drawback in terms of attracting passing trade, and unless there had been sufficient funding to support opening a café in an appropriate city centre venue, it is unlikely that enough demand would have been generated for the café to become more sustainable. There are, however, benefits in having the café within the main Mind building – volunteers are more likely to be encouraged to participate in the various mental health services on offer and, conversely, participants in some of the groups that are run are more likely to volunteer to work in the café. Furthermore, those customers that do come to the café are able to access information on mental health issues, and gain an insight into Mind's wider activities and client base. This is important in terms of the objective of the project and wider portfolio to increase mental health awareness and address stigmatisation.

The limited funding available also impacted upon the extent to which the Mind Project Manager could take advantage of the opportunities available under the portfolio, such as training and networking events. This was disadvantageous to the project in terms of reducing the chance to share learning and best practice, but also of detriment to the wider programme – considerable added value results if individual projects contribute upwards to the programme level, making the programme more than the sum of its constituent parts. For the future, if ways can be found to surmount capacity issues that prevent project personnel from attending portfolio events, they should be considered – this might involve providing additional resources to fund the attendance of project representatives at appropriate events. The dividends that might flow from closer interaction between projects could include the increased effectiveness of current project and programme delivery, and enhanced future sustainability and legacy.

There are some 15-20 mental health projects under the New Leaf New Life portfolio, generally of a relatively small scale and similar to the community café. There is considerable value in supporting projects of this sort, not least in order to pilot new and potentially innovative methods of delivery. However, notwithstanding the significant outcomes that have been achieved by the café project, the allocation of greater resources to a smaller number of projects can help to maximise the outcomes that result, and consequently the effectiveness with which overall programme objectives are achieved.

16.6.2 Opportunities for the future

The key question with regard to the future for the project is how to sustain it after completion of the New Leaf New Life funding period in March 2010. Mind is actively seeking further funding, although to date has not been successful in doing so. However, unless significant funding is sourced, to support moving the café to a more viable location, it will always be challenging to attract sufficient numbers of customers to generate a steady income stream and provide the venture with a more sustainable footing for the future. Sustainability might be enhanced if more volunteers with the aptitude to take on a management role can be found and trained so that they have the necessary skills and experience. It is probably unrealistic for volunteers with significant mental health needs to be able to do so, so there is a rationale for widening the scope of the project to encourage volunteers without mental health needs to consider working in the café. Although the focus should remain on Mind's core client group, attracting in a broader range of volunteers would also contribute to the project and portfolio ambitions to encourage interaction between mental health service users and the wider community, and to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.

Setting up a project like the community café is not a simple undertaking, and Mind in Gateshead has taken the right approach in starting relatively small in order to test out the approach and identify learning along the way. Capacity has been developed, and the building blocks are now in place for future initiatives, either around expanding the café project itself, or perhaps developing a social enterprise with a different focus but a similar method of delivery. There are considerable risks involved in undertaking such ventures, so the decision to do so would need to be based upon a careful analysis of the demand for the goods and services on offer, and confidence that its focus was something that volunteers with mental health issues would be both interested and capable of getting involved in. Given the experience of establishing and running the café, if Mind can hit upon a suitable concept for development, they could stand a good chance of securing the necessary support and resources to make it a reality.

In the event that the café is scaled up in the future, there might be potential to generate additional custom by offering catering for office lunches and other functions. There is clear demand for such services, particularly from more socially responsible businesses that are keen to support social enterprises and similar types of organisation, and this could provide an additional source of income to support wider project activities.

It is important that volunteers are encouraged to move on to other opportunities when both they and Mind staff feel they are ready to do so. It may not be in an individual's best interest to remain working at the café if they could enjoy the opportunity to develop further in a different environment – this might be formal employment, but could equally be volunteering in a different setting.

The Department of Health is committed to moving social care towards an individual budgets model in which people can exercise independence and choice over the care and support they receive. Individuals are given more control over the finance available to them, enabling them to exercise greater control over their care options, with the intention that their needs are met more effectively. The onset of individual budgets represents a potential opportunity to Mind, and to projects such as the community café, as service users may well prefer to assess such provision in preference to more mainstream alternatives.

17 PENWITH PATHWAYS TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

17.1 Introduction and background



This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with the new economics foundation (nef) to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen case studies that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#). Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being is one of the portfolio of projects within the South West Healthy Living Alliance (SWHLA).

The Pathways to Health and Well-being project aims to work in partnership with GPs, health professionals and VCS organisations/groups to support people to improve their health and well-being in a holistic and proactive way. Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being is part of the Cornwall Healthy Living Centre (CHLC) and is a multi-partnership project. Penwith Community Development Trust (PCDT) is the lead organisation and Accountable Body for CHLC.

17.2 Project need

The project is set up to address four key issues:

- 1) To reduce the number of people presenting at GPs with non-medical conditions and to help people take more control of their health and well-being. Local GPs expressed concern about the high number of people coming to them who *'didn't really need medication'* such as people presenting with problems such as mild depression, isolation and addiction. The Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being team felt there was a need to direct these people towards appropriate support and advice which, in many cases, was not a GP. Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being aims to provide lifestyle advice and guidance to people to help them take more responsibility for their health, to better manage long term chronic conditions, provide alternatives to medication and GP visits, and view health and well-being in a holistic way. Stakeholders commented:

'A little support in one area can lead to people starting to address other things. Perhaps they might start to think 'oh, I ought to lose some weight' or 'oh I should pay more attention to how I cook'. It is a long term strategy though, and no one is thinking that one cooking lesson will turn a person's life around.'

- 2) To make it easy for members of the public, service providers and VCS bodies find out what is on offer in terms of healthy living activities and services, and signpost people to it, thereby acting as a conduit of information and facilitating access. One local GP commented that:

*'All communities have a myriad of initiatives and activities that might have potential health benefits, ranging from weight management classes, Green and Blue Gyms, walking groups, badminton clubs and allotment associations, to knitting groups, play reading groups, carer support groups and voluntary employment, but keeping track of what is available is simply not possible for a busy GP. So when Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being was set up, the idea of having a well-being facilitator was developed. The aim was to have a single portal referral for lifestyle interventions.'*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ GP involved in the Well-being Facilitator project

By overcoming this, Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being is acting as a broker between communities and service providers, whether that is the local council, NHS or VCS organisations.

- 3) To ensure that people living in rural and sparsely populated areas can still access and make use of healthy lifestyle services. The projects are aimed at people living in rural Cornwall so there is no benefit to having a physical headquarters or one central building. Instead, they use a network approach with lots of online activity, including the well-being database.
- 4) To improve the skills, confidence and self-esteem of people living in deprived areas of West Cornwall. By helping people to learn new skills, providing a counselling service and reducing social isolation, Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being aims to help people to feel better about themselves, feel more confident and valued, and more able to contribute to their local community. Project staff commented that:

'This is best done by teaching people a new skill and how to interact with people.'

'We want to address the cycle of deprivation... kids whose parents are poor, who have no aspirations. Our projects are about helping people to take the little steps, build their confidence, address isolation and point people to other sources of support.'

17.3 Activities

Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being works in collaboration with other key partner organisations: Cornwall Council; Penwith Volunteer Bureau; Volunteer Cornwall; Stennack Surgery; and Bodriggy Health Centre to deliver the following activities:

- ❑ GPs and other health professionals to refer patients to the well-being facilitator who provide advice, support and guidance on activities, lifestyle and behaviour which may assist the person to live a healthier, fuller and more rewarding life. For the most part, the relevant lifestyle and well-being activities are either organised or delivered by local VCS organisations;
- ❑ the well-being database/website is installed in GP surgeries to enable patients and members of the public to search for activities and information they need to improve their health and well-being in a more holistic and proactive way;
- ❑ volunteers are recruited as mentors, befrienders and buddies to provide a network of support for individuals in order to promote positive lifestyles; and also to improve confidence and self-esteem for individuals through volunteering;
- ❑ well-being activities such as: lifestyle advice; mentoring/coaching; life skills activities; confidence and self-esteem training; and physical activity/exercise (e.g. yoga and healthy eating/cooking advice are all provided by the project);
- ❑ a free counselling service is provided at the Penwith Centre in Penzance, Camborne Library, Helston Children's Centre and St. Elvan's Children's Centre in Porthleven for local people, especially those who are unemployed and disadvantaged or live in deprived communities;
- ❑ a summer programme of sports taster sessions for people with mental health problems is delivered in partnership with the NHS and other community organisations called 'We can get/keep active'.

17.4 Impact

We spoke to a range of beneficiaries, volunteers, staff and stakeholders as part of this evaluation and they highlighted that the Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being project was generating a very wide range of positive outcomes, including those linked to healthy food and diet, mental well-being and physical activity. These are all explored in more detail in the following sub-sections.

17.4.1 A better understanding of the importance of healthy food and diet

At the Healthy Living Centre based in Redruth Volunteer Centre, volunteers are promoting healthy living and well-being. They have used their window display to raise awareness of the issues, highlighting certain health themed days/weeks that are taking place nationwide. There is also a range of literature available that covers a wide range of topics to enable the public to make informed healthy lifestyle choices.

Currently, anybody who comes into the volunteer centres will be offered some fruit to tie in with the five a day campaign:

'We hope that this is just the first of many campaigns which hopefully get our message across whilst keeping things light, therefore making people realise that improving their health can be simple and enjoyable.'

'There will be entertaining and informative campaigns including the 'smoothie bike'. By pedalling the bike and getting exercise, the blender kicks into action and you can reward yourself with a delicious fruit drink!'

Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being volunteers have received training in healthy eating and diet, and are on hand to provide advice and guidance to people and signpost them to further support. This element of the project aims to provide information and help to the general public, as a means to help prevent future health problems occurring:

'When I started I was sent on all the healthy living courses and activities (e.g. diet, exercise, stress management) so now when people ring up or come in for information I can tell them what it's all about... and a little of how it helped me. I learnt a lot on the courses; especially the healthy diet/cooking one.'

'Volunteering did two things: it gave me something to do; and the courses reminded me about the importance of eating healthy and looking after yourself... I'm careful what I eat now. The volunteer office always has fruit in, so when you snack it's on that.'

17.4.2 Facilitating well-being

Another core element of the Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being project is the well-being facilitator. The facilitators work with GPs at Stennack Surgery and Bodriggy Health Centre to signpost patients to well-being activities to benefit their health. Projects include Green Gym type projects and walking and cycling schemes run by the Primary Care Trust and community groups, such as the choir or tennis club.

Support is offered to establish contact with the organisations, and the well-being facilitator follows up patients by telephone a few weeks after to further encourage participation in activities if required.

Comments from those who have been referred included:

'I attended the Steeple Woodlands project, I'm enjoying meeting new people and working outdoors as part of a team.'

'I have gained confidence and [am] living life to the full, it was very helpful.'

An aspect of the well-being facilitator's role is to encourage patients to take an active part in their own health and well-being, so that they are not simply passive receivers of a service, but are engaged in actively making choices about their own health.

One stakeholder also mentioned that the wide ranging benefits of the scheme to the individual and society as a whole should make it attractive to commissioners:

'We would like to see a well-being facilitator become part of the standard portfolio of services within primary care.'

17.4.3 Accessible and alternative exercise options

Beneficiaries of Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being, which is part of the South West well-being portfolio, also noticed improvements in their physical health and exercise habits. The project has just started a community yoga programme; one of the beneficiaries who regularly attend the yoga sessions told us she might like to do something like that for a little while:

'The leaflet I picked up was the prompt to do it... it was really straight forward finding out more and, in any case, the information was on the leaflet.'

She also spoke about the appeal of yoga over other forms of exercise:

'I had done yoga before, but this appealed because it was drop in. Before it was cheaper if you paid for a block of ten lessons but then you'd end up missing some or whatever. I have just had chemotherapy and so any exercise has to be gentle and the drop in meant if it wasn't good or I struggled, there was no commitment to continue... Plus the class is only one hour which is long enough for me.'

'You can just come along... it's not intimidating and easy for beginners. If you have health issues/injury you just let the teacher know.'

'It's also a good way to end to the week... it's good to stretch out and it puts you in a good frame of mind.'

Beneficiaries also reported that they always sleep well after the yoga and there are regulars as well as new people at the classes each time.

17.4.4 Reduced stress and anxiety, and feeling more positive about the future

Alongside the well-being facilitator, Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being also offers a free counselling scheme. As part of our research, we spoke to one of the volunteer counsellors who had been involved since the start of the service. She was keen to emphasise the effectiveness of the scheme and how accessible it was to people looking for counselling. She felt this was in part due to how well managed it was and the great supervision of the volunteer counsellors:

'We feel that counselling has been of great value for the clients... who are often under privileged and vulnerable and do not have close family or friends who they can share their inner thoughts with. Clients have acknowledged that receiving counselling has been a positive experience which has benefited their psychological and physical health.'

For reasons of confidentiality, we were not able to speak to any recipients of the counselling service, although we were able to access testimonials from clients:

'I started the counselling sessions with an open mind and no expectations but what I have gained from them has changed my life for the better, my future now seems so much more important than problems from my past.'

'The counselling has improved my health and well-being, confidence and self-esteem, reduced stress and anxiety, and I feel more positive.'

'I found the sessions invaluable, most definitely a very positive experience for me which has really changed my thoughts of the past and my future.'

'The most helpful thing about the counselling I received was being able to talk and for someone to listen without judging me; to trust my counsellor enough to talk about things I've never been able to in the past.'

When we interviewed one of the volunteer counsellors, she also commented further on the impact of the service on beneficiaries:

'I am continually in awe of the way that I have seen clients change their way of being in a positive direction from even a small number of counselling sessions and the power that a loving and nurturing therapeutic relationship has. It may be individuals that come for counselling but the positive changes have a ripple effect on those around them, including relationships with their children, parents, partners and work colleagues.'

17.4.5 Greater self esteem and confidence

On a similar theme, the Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being project also runs a volunteer befriending scheme. The scheme works by recruiting local people to provide support and companionship for individuals and to actively promote a positive lifestyle. It also helps to improve the confidence and self-esteem of individuals through volunteering.

17.4.6 Positive social interaction

The befriending project that forms part of Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being is also crucial to the overall success of the project, as it promotes the benefits of positive social interaction and provides opportunities for volunteers as well as matching up those in need with a buddy. As part of the research, we spoke to both volunteers and beneficiaries. Rose has been visiting Bill almost every week for two years; she got involved through the Penwith Volunteer Bureau having initially thought she might use her computer skills to help at beginner IT classes, but was asked if she was interested in the Penwith Pals scheme.

Rose and Bill commented:

'We hit it off straight away and we can talk about anything, politics, the lot.'

Rose helps Bill to do some of the things he used to like doing but would otherwise struggle to do, such as the crossword, talking to someone and just getting out of the house:

'Most weeks we'll do the crossword together as Bill would struggle to read it if he was alone. Sometimes I use the internet on my phone when we get stuck. We drink tea and we chat.'

'Everyone needs a daily challenge and talking can be a beautiful challenge.'

Rose also feels that:

'Volunteering is something good to do when you have the time; it's a good way to meet other volunteers and hear about their experiences.'

17.4.7 Feeling motivated and energised

Volunteers involved with the Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being project also reported increases in overall well-being and life satisfaction. In particular, they suggested they have more motivation and energy after becoming a volunteer:

'I volunteer three days a week at the volunteer office at a centre for disabled children, a local library and at a local history society. Often I am the only volunteer and people find it really interesting, they ask lots of questions about how, why and what I volunteer for.'

'When I'm volunteering I feel cheerful and healthy, it's good to get out of the house.'

'I feel very lucky that it was so easy for me to find volunteering opportunities... the routine is motivating, when you have a volunteer role you've got to get up, get out... because they rely on you. It keeps you healthy.'

17.4.8 Supporting big society and community cohesion

A significant knock-on benefit of Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being is that it raises the profile of lifestyle and health in the community and, by encouraging greater participation in social activities, contributes to community cohesion. It also supports voluntary and community sector organisations, helping them to recruit and retain members and volunteers.

17.4.9 Helping people to stay active in retirement

Volunteers with the Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being project noted that becoming a volunteer had helped to keep them active and raised their awareness of activities or projects they could join. One volunteer spoke about her volunteering as a way to stay motivated, meet people and gain new skills:

'Getting involved has been great because when I retired there was a big risk of becoming a couch potato, not bothering with cooking or exercise.'

'It's easy to become de-motivated in retirement but volunteering in the office is good because you are in a lively environment and there's always conversations going on... I've benefited because being in the office I've had to get used to using computers, I had been a bit wary but was helped and encouraged... and now I even have broadband at home.'

17.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being project has proved successful.

17.5.1 Flexible projects

The project is flexible and can adapt to meeting new or emerging needs, and can shape or roll out services as circumstances change; this is because the project is delivered in partnership with several different organisations, works with other VCS bodies and utilises volunteers in many instances. This allows staff and partners to develop the projects in response to need and success (e.g. the well-being facilitator role has recently been extended to Bodriggy Health Centre after being trialled at Stennack).

17.5.2 Easy to engage with

Activities such as yoga, healthy eating advice or the buddy programme are all very easy to engage with and allow beneficiaries the chance to drop in and out of these activities as it suits them. They are also held in central locations that are easy to get to by car or public transport – crucial in a rural and sometimes sparsely populated area such as West Cornwall. Finally, the activities are also often free or low cost, removing as many barriers as possible.

17.5.3 A single point of contact and information

As the evidence for the role of lifestyle factors for health and illness grows year on year, it is increasingly important to promote lifestyle measures within primary care. A healthy diet and plenty of exercise are known to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, stroke, dementia and certain cancers. Exercise can help depression and positive social contact is associated with better psychological health. Simple contact with nature can reduce stress levels and improve mental health. [There is also a short video about this which can be viewed here.](#)

Indeed, GPs see numerous people for whom lifestyle intervention might be beneficial: the overweight; hypertensive; depressed; socially isolated; de-motivated; addicted... Against this background, there is a myriad of initiatives and activities that might have potential health benefits. Some initiatives are sponsored by the NHS or local authority; others are commercial enterprises or entirely voluntary. However, many are supported by time limited funding or come and go. Keeping track of what is available and how to access it is simply not possible for a busy GP.

The key to the well-being facilitator is the single point of contact for referral, advice and support for lifestyle interventions. This not only simplifies the system but means only one person has to collate the information around the opportunities. It also means that the role is no longer left to GPs who are too busy to do this well. The well-being facilitator has the time to talk to people, work out what they would like to do or what might help with their symptoms, and deal with any necessary follow up.

17.5.4 The role of volunteers

Volunteers are crucial to the success of the Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being project, in that they deliver a number of services and offer support to beneficiaries, ranging from free counselling and healthy eating advice to the befriending service, bringing a whole range of outcomes to beneficiaries. However, volunteering also brings benefits for these volunteers in terms of their own personal and social well-being. This mutually supportive relationship is key to the success of Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being.

17.5.5 Supporting both volunteers and beneficiaries

The well-being facilitator collates a database of all health and well-being initiatives, and any community activities that might have health and well-being benefits, and matches these to patients referred by GPs. With the support of a well-being facilitator, patients are encouraged to try activities to improve their health and well-being, ranging from training and volunteering, to sailing and swimming.

Since it started, the well-being facilitator has helped to refer people to services and support with regard to weight management and smoking; therefore helping to improve health directly. However, he has also referred people to projects with less of a direct link but which have nonetheless helped to improve their physical fitness and change their exercise habits. The well-being facilitator at Stennack Surgery commented that:

'Sometimes referrals are very specific but other times not. Sometimes it is straight forward, such as weight management, but other times a bit less tangible and it's a case of meeting up and having a consultation. Perhaps the GP hasn't identified these issues due to a lack of time or perhaps the patient hasn't really thought about what might help. I refer to a broad range of services and activities. I look at the underlying causes to the health problems that have caused them to seek a doctor's appointment in the first place (e.g. social isolation) as well as more standard things such as weight management groups. I try to look for things like the walking project, Mobilise, which starts from Stennack and offers people a chance to be active and talk to people too.'

The counselling scheme is very supportive, both for the clients that use the scheme and the volunteer counsellors who are mentored and supervised:

'The scheme has offered the volunteers great supervision, much more than we would have received on other schemes and has been very well managed by Dilys and the team.'

'The staff at the children's centre have been a pleasure to work with and over the last year strong links have been built between staff and the counsellors... There is no waiting list so clients can be seen quickly which helps to support clients through crises in a responsive and efficient way.'

Project staff also believe that once a person has been supported in one way they are more likely to be open to others:

'We find that in the groups those who have been helped pass on advice to the others.'

'It's support by word of mouth.'

17.5.6 Understanding the needs of the communities it works with

The project staff at Penwith Community Development Trust understands the needs of their communities and have worked with partners to help refine them. As a result, they have projects that are designed to tackle social isolation, increase confidence, improve the physical health of beneficiaries, increase motivation, and help support people to access other activities and services that exist in the locality. As far as possible, the services and project are all accessible by public transport and there is no headquarters for the projects; instead it is a multi-site, with most information and advice being accessed virtually. Finally, the projects work to strengthen the VCS in the area, realising that these links and services are most likely to be sustained moving forwards.

17.6 Recommendations for the future

- ☐ Increase referrals to the well-being facilitators, so that all GPs at Stennack Surgery refer patients.
- ☐ Allow the well-being facilitators to work with patients from other GP surgeries in the area and extend the scheme across other parts of Cornwall.
- ☐ Recruit more volunteers to support people to access services and activities as recommended by the well-being facilitators.
- ☐ Make more organisations aware of the well-being database and update as appropriate – a development role.

- ❑ Continue to offer counselling at various centres around West Cornwall, including the valuable supervision and mentoring for volunteer counsellors.
- ❑ Have more volunteer socials, especially for those who predominately work alone (e.g. befrienders).
- ❑ Make befrienders aware of the database of activities so that they can help promote it to the people they work with.

17.7 How the project works

17.7.1 About the South West well-being portfolio

Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being is one of the portfolio of projects within the South West Healthy Living Alliance (SWHLA) funded by the Big Lottery Fund. Ten healthy living centres and fifteen projects across the South West were brought together by the portfolio, with the aim of supporting the healthy living and well-being of individuals and communities by providing locally accessible, people focused and holistic approaches to tackling health inequalities, particularly for those people most in need. Westbank Healthy Living Centre is the lead organisation for well-being in the South West portfolio. The focus of this regional project is to: improve mental well-being; improve healthy eating; and increase physical activity.

17.7.2 Project inputs

Costs

The project has received £335,698 from the Big Lottery Fund; the Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Primary Care Trust also provides £20,000 annually as match funding to the project.

Table 4: Breakdown of funding in respect of Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being

Analysis of costs to 30/09/10	%
Salaries, national insurance and pension	65.2
Rent	2.6
General running expenses	4.6
Producing information	3.3
Training for staff and volunteers	0.3
Travel for staff and volunteers	2.1
Consultancy and advice/evaluation	0.6
Organisation overheads – line management	9.3
Organisation overheads – accommodation	0.1
Activity costs	8.4
Evaluation	3.5
Total	100.0

Staffing

Almost all the staff that work for Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being are part-time. The Project Manager is the Head of Health and Well-being at PCDT; the two well-being facilitators each work twelve hours a week; and there is also ten hours a week given in kind from Cornwall Council to manage the database. Other staff are employed on a sessional basis, such as supervisors for the volunteer counsellors, yoga teachers and other therapists; in addition, a range of other partner organisations give their time to the project, in particular staff at the volunteer bureau.

17.7.3 Project outputs

The beneficiary targets for the project are 885 direct beneficiaries and 345 indirect beneficiaries. Staff and stakeholders are confident that the project is in line to meet its beneficiary targets by the end of the project.

Thus far, the total number of volunteers recruited is 1,276. In addition, the well-being facilitator at Stennack Surgery, despite only working twelve hours a week, has already had 130 referrals. A total of 83 referrals were made by the GPs at Stennack Surgery to the well-being facilitator during the period November 2009 and July 2010. The well-being facilitator has seen 69 clients and 14 were on the waiting list.

Table 5: Outputs in respect of Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being

Health problem	No. and % of clients who have a health problem
Social isolation	60 (35.9%)
Depression/anxiety	46 (27.5%)
Obesity/heart disease/diabetes	19 (11.4%)
Unemployed/de-motivated	16 (9.6%)
Substance misuse	10 (6%)
Smoking	1 (0.6%)
Other health problems	15 (9%)
Total¹¹⁰	167

The database is installed and available on public access computers at seven GPs and the internet. The website has a range of projects, activities and services listed under twelve primary topic areas:

- 1) health support;
- 2) emotional support;
- 3) community health;
- 4) housing;
- 5) welfare;
- 6) minority groups;
- 7) families/children;
- 8) young people;
- 9) older people;
- 10) support for men/women;
- 11) sex/sexuality;
- 12) drugs/alcohol.

Overall, the website has generated 20,332 hits and has been accessed by between 731 and 935 unique users each month.

Table 6: Number of website hits generated in respect of Penwith Pathways to Health and Well-being (2010)

Month	Unique visitors	No. of visits	Pages viewed	No. of hits
January	910	1,438	4,262	6,891
February	796	1,258	4,451	7,238
March	935	1,514	5,928	8,558
April	823	1,244	3,202	5,484
May	975	1,552	4,747	7,499
June	731	1,140	6,760	9,255
July	776	1,241	6,343	14,861
August	882	1,431	7,367	20,332

¹¹⁰ Total number for presenting health issues is greater than number of total referrals as many clients have more than one presenting health issue

Large numbers of users or hits worldwide are not important to the site; what matters is that 'local' people use it for signposting to projects that can help them. These local people might be members of the public, surgery patients/clients, doctors or other professionals, or representatives of the voluntary and community sector.

18 POOLE QUAY FOYER

18.1 Introduction

This report details the findings of case study research undertaken by the national evaluators of the Poole Quay Foyer Healthy Transitions project. The project is part of a wider programme developed and funded by the Foyer Federation. The overall portfolio aims to foster a holistic approach to addressing well-being within all Foyers, and to improve the personal and social well-being of Foyer residents (e.g. increasing their consumption of healthy, well budgeted food, improving their level of physical activity and fitness, and addressing their emotional well-being).

Poole Quay Foyer

The Quay Foyer is a UK registered charity operating in Poole, Dorset. They provide accommodation, personal support and access to activities, training and employment opportunities for disadvantaged, socially excluded young people aged 16-25. The Quay Foyer opened in October 1999 and will be celebrating their tenth birthday this year.

The Foyer Federation

The Foyer Federation's mission is to turn young people's experiences of disadvantage into solutions that support this transition to adult independence. The Foyer Federation develops and encourages new approaches to supporting young people at risk, including developing transformational programmes and campaigns that fill gaps in community services, and inspire policy and decision makers to make a more effective investment in young people. The direct experience of vulnerable young people and those working with them helps inform our understanding of the barriers facing young people and develop new approaches to overcome them. The organisation's ambition is to become the organisation best known for leadership and excellence in developing services for vulnerable young people as they make the transition from adolescence to independent adulthood.

The Healthy Transitions project

The Healthy Transitions project is a three year programme, developed and funded by the Foyer Federation using well-being fund monies from the Big Lottery Fund. The programme was developed by the Foyer Federation so that all Foyers across England could participate in the programme and, as such, the Foyer Federation could develop and pilot new ways to embed a holistic approach to fostering a positive sense of well-being amongst Foyer residents.

Although the broad structure of the programme was developed by the Foyer Federation, there was scope in the design for individual Foyers to input into how the programme would operate in their particular context, and shape the nature of the activities that took place.

18.2 Background and rationale

At programme level, the Foyer Federation's Healthy Transitions project aims to embed a focus on holistic health into the way that disadvantaged young people are supported in accommodation based settings.

At the individual Foyer level, the intention is to assist young people to achieve positive life and personal transitions, including healthy eating, physical activity and emotional well-being (mental health). Achieving these types of outcomes will ensure that, by the age of 25, young people are connected into healthy support networks, cultures and lifestyles. Healthy Transitions has been developed in response to evidence that most young people living in Foyers experience significant barriers to health and well-being, including:

- ☐ a history of poor health, specifically malnourishment, high incidence of smoking, alcohol and drug use, and lack of physical activity;
- ☐ difficulties in accessing support either because it is only available in a crisis or because past negative experiences get in the way;
- ☐ inability to access services that are appropriate to or fully meet their needs.

This is supported by evidence collected and collated by the Foyer Federation (e.g. research in the *Working Together* report published in 2001 and the evaluation of *Strong Minded* in 2005, confirm that disadvantaged young people are more likely to have poorer health than those from more secure and better off families). Such problems may have led to homelessness in the first place, be the result of homelessness, or be a barrier to future progression, but the circle is self-perpetuating and it is often the task of Foyers to break it by addressing health issues within local situations and resources. To care for both the present and future health of young people making life transitions, Foyer recognises that they need to find ways not only to help young people manage health issues, but also to promote positive well-being and healthy living.

The Healthy Transitions project run by Poole Quay Foyer has been developed with all three of these issues in mind. In particular, the staff team at the Quay Foyer are experienced at working with vulnerable and excluded young people who present multiple physical and mental health issues and have, in the past, had negative experiences. Staff are also able to work with the young people to overcome barriers related to chaotic lifestyles and previous negative experiences, and the ability to form partnerships and create links with service providers to help residents access the support and services they need. The Healthy Transitions project provides resources for this type of support to be offered as a matter of course, over and above the current activity levels (e.g. for all Foyers to explore well-being systematically and in a holistic manner through life coaching and activities to support life coaching).

Although the programme has been developed centrally by the Foyer Federation to support and embed a holistic focus on health and well-being into supported accommodation settings, it has been designed in such a way that each individual Foyer that signs up to the programme, can pick a specialist pathway and develop activities that suit their settings and residents. There are three pathways to choose from – physical activity, healthy eating or mental health. All three are then complemented by the life coaching, which looks at the goals and aspirations of young people with regards to these three areas. The programme in Poole runs from November 2007 to August 2010.

As has been described, the Foyer Federation is supporting the vast majority of its member Foyers to participate in the programme at some point throughout the three years. The first year of the programme focused on healthy eating, the second year on fitness and physical health, and the third year on emotional well-being. Health experts were appointed with specialist knowledge of these three areas to act as Health Ambassadors. They have worked with young people across England, including a young person representing the views of LGBT youth, to design and implement new and innovative initiatives with Foyers in their specific specialist area.

18.3 Project design and delivery

18.3.1 Objectives

The Healthy Transition project in Poole is following the healthy eating pathway and, as such, has the following principle aims and objectives:

- ☐ to increase residents' awareness of nutrition;
- ☐ to provide young people with basic cooking skills, health and safety information for kitchens, food hygiene information, and knowledge about food choices;
- ☐ to provide residents and other vulnerable young people with the ability to put this knowledge into action when designing and cooking meals;
- ☐ to enable young people to budget for healthy meals and understand how to make their money go further;
- ☐ to widen young people's choice of food, including regular portions of fruit and vegetables.

The programme also aims to embed life coaching within the Foyer and ensure that all residents are offered the opportunity to set healthy living goals and develop a well-being action plan which will address lifestyle, social and environmental determinants of ill health, and reduced levels of well-being. The objectives set by the Quay Foyer are well developed in order to address the initial rationale as set out in the Foyer Federation's bid to the Big Lottery Fund, and in their research and practice.

There is a clear link back to the original rationale from these objectives (e.g. the project objectives will help to improve Foyer residents' understanding of healthy eating and their ability to buy, prepare and cook healthy meals for themselves and their friends). The Healthy Transitions project also encourages residents to be more active and proactive in living a healthy lifestyle (e.g. encouraging them to take up sport or stop smoking), encouraging a more supportive and holistic approach to emotional well-being through the life coaching, and a holistic approach to well-being.

The objectives also link clearly back to the Big Lottery Fund's ambitions for the programme:

- ☐ people enjoying improved mental well-being;
- ☐ people being more physically active;
- ☐ people eating more healthily.

Similarly, the project level objectives also link with the wider Foyer Federation strategic objective, which is for Foyers to address health and well-being improvement in a more focused and structured way, bringing together all three strands. The Foyer Federation also wish to assess the impact of these various different concepts, approaches and interventions used to promote health and well-being in the Foyers. This is set out below and is taken from the Foyer Federation's bid to the Big Lottery Fund.

'Young people's transition to independence is marked by the process of constructing an adult identity through the way they eat, think, feel, act, and respond to the outside world, while at the same time overcoming significant negative behavioural habits from the past that often leave them lacking the confidence, support, self-awareness and understanding to make a step change in their lives. Healthy Transitions focuses on supporting this process by developing holistic approaches to health as the key determinant in building an individual's focus and level of application to achieve successful outcomes.'

18.3.2 Inputs

Poole Quay Foyer received £8,375 worth of funding from the Big Lottery Fund in Year 1, and £3,652 in Year 2. The funding has supported the Foyer to employ additional staff, although the majority of this funding has come from the Foyer's host housing association, Raglan. The majority of the funding has been used to support activities with residents, including cooking lessons and taster days.

18.3.3 Activities

In Year 1, residents benefited from the cooking skills course that included nutritional advice and meal plans. During these cooking skills classes, individuals learnt about nutritional foods and how to cook popular and healthy foods. In Years 1 and 2, residents also took part in life coaching and taster sessions; Year 2 is just coming to an end.



Poole Quay Foyer has been the preliminary delivery agent for all activities, with three members of staff taking primary responsibility for the cooking course and taster sessions; other Foyer staff have also participated in the taster sessions. The Foyer staff also delivered cooking sessions in partnership with the Leaving Care Team at Poole Borough Council for young people moving on from local authority care.



As well as the cooking sessions and the life coaching, the Healthy Transitions funding also provided for six taster sessions. The six taster sessions that have taken place over the last two years have been tennis, ice skating, a picnic on Brown Sea Island, a trip to the beach, Go Ape (an outdoor assault course) and a trip to Monkey World. The taster sessions are all designed to promote well-being by focusing on one or more of the three strands – healthy eating, physical exercise or emotional well-being (e.g. the trip to Go Ape was designed to help increase physical exercise and build the young people's confidence). Each taster session is then linked back at a later date to the life coaching and the individual's goals.

The nature of the beneficiary group also meant that the taster sessions enabled the young people to do something they would otherwise not be able to do because of money or, in some cases, to undertake an activity they would not think to do either because they were not aware of its accessibility or because they would not think to undertake an activity like that. In short, all the sessions were designed to help widen the young people's horizons, improve their confidence and awareness of activities available on their doorstep, and therefore enhance residents' emotional well-being. The taster sessions are quite structured in order to get the young people working together, trying new activities and experiences (e.g. the trip to Brownsea Island, enjoying a day out together, the natural sculpture/art challenge, and a scavenger hunt).



All residents were able to access the cooking sessions, although for reasons of safety and equipment, individual cooking sessions were limited to two, and priority was given to those who were willing to attend all six sessions. However, the times and dates for these six sessions were very flexible and did not necessarily follow week from week. Instead they were very flexible and designed to fit with the lifestyles of those residents involved. For the taster sessions, these were also open to residents, their friends and some family members on a first come first served basis. However, where possible, the sessions were designed to include all those who had expressed an interest in the session.

The portfolio has supported the programme in Poole Quay Foyer, albeit from a distance. That said there have been Healthy Transitions network meetings which both staff and a small number of residents have been able to attend; staff and residents found these both enjoyable and informative.

18.4 Performance

18.4.1 Outputs

In Year 1, 41 residents benefited from the cooking skills course that included nutritional advice and meal plans. During these cooking skills classes, individuals would learn about nutritional foods and how to cook popular and healthy foods. At the end of the course, participants would plan a one week nutritional food shop for £20, where the tutor would accompany them on a shopping trip, helping them to learn how to read food labels.

In Year 2, 23 people took part in life coaching; slightly below target, owing to Foyer staff being slightly over ambitious as to the number of people they could life coach, partially due to a slower than anticipated turn around of residents in the Foyer. In terms of the cooking, the sessions were limited to two people at a time due to space and equipment; however staff had hoped to find a larger commercial kitchen in which to operate in order to work with more than two people at a time.

18.4.2 Outcomes

A wide range of positive outcomes were identified by residents of Poole Quay Foyer. It was made clear that these were positive outcomes experienced as a result of participating in the Healthy Transitions project. The outcomes included:

- ☐ increased confidence;
- ☐ the opportunity to meet new people and socialise with other residents;
- ☐ develop new friendships.

'The activities mean I spend less time alone and I'm more involved in what's going on.'

'They have provided me with opportunities to talk to my key worker in an informal setting – we talk about things other than the Foyer.'

All but one of the residents we spoke to (15) said they had a better understanding of what is meant by well-being as a result of being engaged with the Healthy Transitions project. They also felt they had a better understanding of the importance of well-being, in particular the connections between healthy eating, physical activity and emotional well-being. Many reported that they now realised that well-being is about all of these elements and that a negative behaviour with regard to one will affect all three.

A number of residents also reported feeling more comfortable about looking after themselves in terms of healthy eating, exercise, being independent and budgeting (e.g. many of the young people have learnt more about healthy food and have been more adventurous in their choices):

'I used to live off takeaways and ready meals.'

'The cooking sessions have helped me to eat better.'

'The shopping trip was really helpful.'

Others said they have learnt how to buy healthy but cheap food and are better at budgeting as a result of the cooking session, with some saying that the focus on healthy eating had helped them to lose weight and address eating disorders that they had suffered from in the past; several also reported passing their food hygiene course:

'In the past I just wouldn't eat for a few days because I'd used all my money at the start of the week.'

'I am healthier; I have lost four stone in a year... I know what I should and shouldn't be eating.'

The Healthy Transitions project in Poole has also had an impact on the physical health and fitness of the residents. Several residents said they were now fitter, with many more tuned into the benefits of exercise and more likely to exercise for fun with their friends (e.g. by playing volleyball on the beach as they had done in one of the taster sessions). Others said they now walk a lot more than before, realising that this is a cheap and easy form of exercise:

'I walk everywhere, which makes me feel good because I'm saving money, getting fit and losing weight. The walk to college is about fifty minutes each way, and I go every day, I love it because I see different things like the park and it's had a big impact on my health. It's rare I don't walk, only if it's really, really wet.'

Several residents (mainly men) had gained their Level 1 FA football coaching qualification and now play regularly for the Foyer team. One resident has now gone onto start the Level 2 FA coaching course at Bournemouth Athletic Football Club. There is also a women's football team and a disability team that practice and play regularly. As such, these residents felt they had learnt more skills and, importantly, were able to pass these skills onto other young people wishing to play football.

For several of the residents we spoke to an additional benefit of exercising and eating more healthily was that they had lost weight or become more toned. In some cases, this led to them feeling more confident and positive about their body, which in turn impacted on their mental or emotional well-being.

Overall, many of the residents reported feeling more positive about life and enjoying the opportunities to socialise with other residents and to get out of the Foyer, rather than sitting in their room all day. Residents also said that the taster days were a chance for them to talk to staff and other people they would not otherwise meet. The residents who had attended a taster session particularly enjoyed the opportunity to do something different, something that they would not otherwise be able to do, but also the opportunity to socialise with different people and different members of staff. For some, the opportunity to talk to their key worker in an informal atmosphere was particularly useful.

Finally, for a few residents, the taster sessions provided them with a better understanding of the types of activities that were available to them at little or no cost, and how to go about doing them (e.g. prior to participating in the project, some residents would not have thought to go to the beach or have a picnic in the park, despite these being activities that can be undertaken without having to travel far or cost too much money).

18.4.3 Impact on wider conditions

The support offered Foyer residents the chance to focus on improving their personal and social well-being, by improving their dietary habits and learning about healthy eating and budgeting. This would not be available to anywhere near the same extent if the Healthy Transitions project did not exist. Although the Foyer would still exist, staff would not have the time or resources to support residents in the same way. In particular, the budgeting exercise would not be possible and the taster sessions would not have taken place. These are two key elements of the programme and areas in which the residents feel they have benefited greatly.

The nature of the project means that direct impacts on the wider community are not very strong; however staff have noticed that the residents are generally less bored and frustrated with their lives, which improves behaviour and decreases the likelihood of damage being done to property and the surrounding area. That said this was not a particularly large problem in the past.

In terms of indirect impact on the wider communities, the Healthy Transitions project is helping young people with the transition to independence and to address issues with regard to their well-being that could make this transition more difficult or less successful. As such, it is supporting young people to become healthy, positive members of the community and therefore able to play a valuable role within their local communities. Evidence of this is clear, with residents undertaking training to support their peers and families to live more healthily and to participate in sport and exercise.

The Healthy Transitions project also coaches young residents to develop their confidence and enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations. By living a healthier and more positive lifestyle, the young people will be able to contribute more to their communities, such as returning to education, securing employment or undertaking volunteering.

18.4.4 Equality, diversity and engagement

The project works with almost all residents to some extent, and continues to support ex-residents as well as friends and family of residents. The staff are very experienced in working with and engaging its target group. In this respect, there was no need to focus activities on a particular individual or group; however staff did involve the residents in the development of activities and in selecting the type and nature of the taster sessions to ensure participation.

18.4.5 Additionality and sustainability

All of those asked said they would not have benefited in the same way if they had not had the extra support from the Foyer. As regards the taster sessions, all said they would not have been able to go or participate in them without the Foyer for administrative and financial support. In terms of the cooking skills, all said they would not have benefited to the same extent, although some would have had one or two cooking skills lessons if it was identified as a priority for them in terms of life skills.

They would not have been very extensive and would not have included the budget shop and supermarket lesson, which all those who participated in said they enjoyed and learnt from. In terms of the life coaching, the residents felt this provided them with an opportunity to think more clearly about what they wanted to achieve in the shorter and longer term and how they might go about doing so. They felt the support provided by staff on this was invaluable, in particular the fact that it was an opportunity to look more holistically at the issues related to well-being and to think about the connections between the strands. In addition, residents said they appreciated the opportunity to talk to someone else other than their key worker about these types of issues.

As regards the taster sessions, residents felt they would have been very unlikely to have been able to organise or afford these activities and experiences without the support of the Healthy Transitions project. Of those who did make the most of the town's free assets, such as the beach, they would not have benefited in the same way because of the wider group activities and challenges that were organised as part of the taster sessions. Poole Quay Foyer staff also made it clear that without the additional Healthy Transitions monies, they would have been unable to run the taster sessions. With this in mind, it was clear that the project generated added value (e.g. benefits over and above what would have happened in any case) for the residents taking part, whether they be health related, social, aspirational or emotional.

In some cases, gains made as a result of the Healthy Transitions project have been complemented by other gains made through Foyer activity, such as My Guide or support to return to education. In these instances, it is not possible to say exactly what element of degree can be attributed to the Healthy Transitions project; however this should not detract from the very positive impact of Healthy Transitions on the lifestyles and ambitions of the residents.

The approach taken by Foyer staff mean the outcomes experienced by the residents are likely to be sustainable, as they are about assisting young people to make changes to their lifestyles by providing them with the skills, information and support to do so. Although the aims of the project are supported by the Foyer's host housing association, Raglan, they are unable to support it financially to any significant level. As such, project staff have developed a funding proposal to the Big Lottery Fund for the Reaching Communities Fund that looks to support the project after the end of the Well-being Programme funding.

18.5 Processes

Foyer staff felt their relationship with the Foyer Federation had been strong, and that the project had benefited as a result; that said they appreciated that the relationship was generally light touch, but they knew the staff at the Foyer Federation were there if they needed support or advice. The staff and some residents attended conferences and workshops related to the Healthy Transitions project, where they were able to share experiences and ideas with other Foyers; it was also an opportunity for residents from other Foyers to meet.

18.5.1 Publicity, promotion and engagement

Because the project was only open to residents, ex-residents who still use the Foyer services, and family or friends of residents, there was little need to publicise or promote the project to get people to participate. Instead, all new residents were compelled to find out about the programme and the initial life coaching as part of their induction; this has helped encourage them to participate more widely in the programme. In addition, the taster sessions were developed in collaboration with residents who provided ideas and, in some cases, helped to organise the sessions.

In terms of wider engagement, the Poole Quay Foyer remains quite self contained, although staff have delivered cooking skills classes in collaboration with the leaving care team. In addition, the Poole Quay Foyer continues to work very closely with a range of other partners, such as Connexions and the Quay Advice Centre; however this is not really linked to the delivery of Healthy Transitions.

18.5.2 Monitoring and evaluation

The Foyer Federation require each Foyer to record the details of each beneficiary that they work with, in terms of brief demographics and contact information, although for most residents this information is already held and therefore it is easy for the staff to complete.

In addition, staff send copies of the life coaching goals each quarter to the Foyer Federation which are then counted and recorded in terms of the broad areas of focus – healthy eating, physical exercise or emotional well-being. This element is undertaken by the Federation on behalf of the Poole Quay Foyer, so that the Foyer can concentrate on project delivery.

For all taster sessions, there is also a full attendance list which is kept after the event, and feedback forms which are used to assess the success of a particular type of activity or event. If needed, these can be used to provide information to the Foyer Federation. The staff at Quay Foyer were particularly positive about the monitoring and evaluation processes that have been developed by the Foyer Federation; they felt it captured what the project was trying to do, yet was light touch and easy for them to do.

18.6 Conclusions

18.6.1 Key lessons

One of the key strengths of this project is its flexibility; it works well for the client group Foyer works with, many of whom often have chaotic lifestyles. It is also a very inclusive project, as each element can be tailored to support and suit individual resident's needs (e.g. the type of cooking and healthy eating information that is covered in the lesson can also be shaped to suit individual's needs, likes, dislikes and interests, as can the meals that are cooked in the lessons and the life coaching and support that is offered to residents to help them achieve their life goals). It is also a very inclusive programme, with any resident able to get involved. The Healthy Transitions project is also very creative in the way that it develops taster sessions and complimentary activities that fit well with the healthy eating activity and the life coaching that also take place.

18.6.2 Opportunities for the future

The main element (healthy eating lessons) of the project has now finished, although these are starting again on a smaller scale with different funding. However, if the project was to run the sessions again, they should continue to look for a different kitchen facility, enabling them to run larger sessions with more people. This would mean it would be possible for each person to have more than six lessons and for more cooking related activities to take place after the lessons have finished, such as 'ready steady cook' type competitions, which have proved popular in the past and are relatively easy to organise.

Residents commented that it would be useful if future taster events could be scheduled for the evening and the weekend, to enable those who attend work or college to participate. Although this might prove more difficult in terms of staffing, it should be considered.

The Foyer has also submitted a full bid to the Big Lottery Fund for the Reaching Communities Fund, which draws on their experience of delivering this project and other activities, and tries to embed this holistic approach into all Foyer activities. This is a particularly positive move and suggests that well-being activities will be sustained into the future, if not through the Big Lottery Fund then through other funding.

19 ROADSHOW

19.1 Introduction and background

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund National Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008, alongside the new economics foundation (nef), to undertake the evaluation. This case study is one of nineteen that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

The research was undertaken in September 2011 and involved consultation with: the roadshow Project Manager, Sally Reichardt; Emma Goodwin, who managed the individual roadshows; Kaye Adamson, a key partner from Southampton NHS Primary Care Trust; and a number of beneficiaries who partook the Liverpool roadshow. A desk review of key data and documentation relating to the project was also undertaken.

The roadshows were delivered at locations across the UK by Mind as part of the wider Time to Change initiative. Time to Change is an anti-stigma campaign run by the leading mental health charities, Mind and Rethink Mental Illness. These two charities decided to work together, combining their knowledge, skills and expertise in the biggest attempt yet in England to end the discrimination that surrounds mental health. The first phase ran from 2007 to 2011 and was funded by Big Lottery and Comic Relief. It is the first project in this country which aims to change behaviours rather than just attitudes. The Time to Change roadshows ran throughout 2011 and was an important part of communicating the message and impacting on behavioural change, interfacing directly with members of the public.

Both the roadshows and the wider Time to Change programme are important and based on a solid rationale. One in three people will suffer from mental health problems at some point in their life, and often a stigma is attached to this which leads to discrimination. Encouraging people – including those without mental health problems – to discuss the issues, is important in changing attitudes and behaviours.

The Stigma Shout Survey undertaken at the beginning of the programme in 2007 outlined carer and service user experiences of stigma and discrimination.¹¹¹ It highlighted a number of key challenges that people with mental health problems face, including:

- ☐ preventing people seeking help;
- ☐ delaying treatment;
- ☐ impairing recovery;
- ☐ isolating people;
- ☐ excluding people from day-to-day activities;
- ☐ stopping people getting jobs.

For service users, nearly seven in ten (69%) have been treated differently (in a negative way) due to their mental health problems. A similar proportion (71%) have been stopped doing the things they want to do because of discrimination; importantly the fear of stigma and discrimination stops nearly three quarters (73%) doing what they want to do. Service users also report similar areas of their life that are being damaged. These include:

- ☐ employment;
- ☐ building new and retaining existing relationships;
- ☐ joining groups and taking part in activities across the community;
- ☐ confidence to undertake daily routines;
- ☐ talking openly about mental health issues because of the fear of being judged.

These findings from the research were applied to all of the Time to Change activities, including the roadshows. Unlike other Big Lottery funded activities, the roadshows were not measured in terms of specific impacts on health and well-being, and not focused within one particular locality, but rather were part of a wider awareness raising campaign. The effects from the roadshows were therefore more likely to be indirect.

¹¹¹ Time to Change (2007): Stigma Shout <http://time-to-change.org.uk/files/Stigma%20Shout.pdf>

The numerous issues connected to mental health problems clearly required a multi-faceted approach, with advertising, direct marketing, publicity material, and merchandise all being important. The roadshows were a key component of taking the message directly to the public, instigating social contact and changing behaviours.

19.2 Project need

The project aims and objectives were clearly focused upon addressing the underlying rationale, and changing behaviours and attitudes towards mental health, as outlined above. The overarching aims of the project were to:

- ❑ get people talking about mental health in high streets and at events across England;
- ❑ create a community focus for national activity, and an opportunity to work with partners and supporters and get them involved in delivering Time to Change in 2011.

The roadshows were key in taking the 'It's time to talk' campaign of Time to Change to the public and encouraging social contact. Social contact is about creating opportunities for people with and without mental health problems to interact on an equal footing. The objectives of the roadshows were to provide an outlet to breakdown barriers, open opportunities for discussion, and improve knowledge and understanding. This approach was designed to encourage people in sharing their personal experiences and being more aware of the broader mental health and well-being agenda.

The focus of the project links clearly with one the three objectives of the Big Lottery Fund's Well-being Programme – people and communities have improved mental well-being.

19.3 Activities

The roadshows were rolled out to town and city centres across England to get people talking about mental health. The roadshows were designed to create a focal point using a stand that brings 'It's time to talk, it's time to change' to life and takes it to locations across England where large numbers of the target audience would be talking. The set was a specially designed bright and inviting living room. Time to Change staff and staff from local organisations were in attendance for each roadshow, and around thirty Time to Change volunteers were utilised to get the public talking about mental health.



Although Time to Change covered the costs of the roadshows with a significant amount of staff time, local partners were also essential to the success of the events. Time to Change worked with these partners to: support the recruitment of volunteers; tie in the roadshow with existing Time to Change work in the area; tap into local networks tackling discrimination; help promote the roadshow; and deliver the event on the day. The roadshows were fully aligned with, and supported by, all other 'It's time to talk' activity, including advertising, PR and social media.

The activities for the roadshows were standard across the country; they utilised volunteers to speak to members of the public about mental health issues and discrimination. These incorporated three shifts of ten volunteers at a time who were involved in training sessions in the days before the roadshow and received briefings as to what was required. The number of conversations throughout the day was recorded for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation.

The design of the roadshow set allowed for different ways to begin conversations with members of the public. These activities were designed to then lead onto more detailed discussions around mental health. These included:

- ❑ **offering a cup of tea** – this ‘tea and chat’ approach involved members of the public being offered a cup of tea and invited to sit down and chat. Volunteers were given advice on conversation starters to aid the discussions;
- ❑ **doing a scratch card together** – the Time to Change ‘What would you do?’ scratch cards were created especially for the roadshows. Each card had a common scenario which may occur and three possible answers, the correct response being under the scratch panel. These again were used to encourage people to come onto the stand to start conversations;
- ❑ **interacting with a film on laptops** – the aim was to encourage people to view an interactive advert on the laptops and, similar to the scratch cards, pick a response to the scenario by clicking the option on screen. It was important that people did not just watch, but actively engaged with the film. The films were shown on a continuous loop on big screens for passersby throughout the day.

Information leaflets were also developed for the roadshows and passed onto members of the public by staff and volunteers, should they need further information for themselves or someone they know. There was also space provided for information on local services, as the aim was to make sure that there was adequate signposting for people who are in need of mental health services or have friends/family who need some help.

19.4 Impact

After asking all the volunteers to rate their experience on the roadshow stand, the average rating (5 being brilliant and 1 being poor) was 4.7. Many of those who volunteered came away having had some very positive, personal conversations and experiences.

The training provided to volunteers on face-to-face social contact also proved very successful, with approximately half of the volunteers attending the face-to-face session which scored 4.5 (5 being brilliant and 1 being poor), with the training videos scoring 4.3. This helped to make people aware of their roles and become part of what Time to Change was doing.

In terms of outcomes, it is difficult to measure impacts that link directly to improved health and well-being. This is because the roadshows were one off events designed as just one element of improving attitudes towards mental health, and to encourage people to open up through social contact. However there was a range of feedback provided from the roadshows; CLES Consulting attended the Liverpool roadshow where consultation with volunteers and beneficiaries was undertaken to gauge their experiences and the impact it may have on them.

In terms of the volunteers, the feedback was particularly positive; volunteers included carers and people who have experienced and/or are currently experiencing mental health issues. A summary of the responses is outlined below.

19.4.1 Why they volunteered for the roadshow

- ❑ Personal reasons, which often included close relatives suffering from mental health issues.
- ❑ Would like to help reduce the stigma of mental health based on past experiences.
- ❑ Wanting to give something back following help they or relatives had received for their problems.
- ❑ Being passionate about people and wanting to talk about mental health as a result.
- ❑ They were directly approached or work for local partners (in this case Merseycare).

19.4.2 How volunteering for the roadshow may have made a difference to the way they think about mental health issues

- ❑ It has helped them think about their own problems in a new light through talking to a range of people.
- ❑ A number of respondents felt it would not make much of a difference as they were already heavily involved in the area anyway.

19.4.3 How they feel the public might benefit from what they have learnt

- ☐ More people will know who to contact with regards to local services; too often it is their GP which is not always the best option.
- ☐ More people may be able to admit that they have a common problem that can be alleviated.
- ☐ It may work in making mental health issues more prominent in people's minds and therefore reduce stigma.
- ☐ It will get people to take stock and reflect on the issues and how to deal with them.
- ☐ Many of the beneficiaries will be those with some personal attachment to mental health so it will not increase awareness too much; many of those who are not interested may simply walk past the stand.

19.4.4 How the volunteers personally benefited from the roadshow

- ☐ Many of the respondents commented that they are feeling better about themselves.
- ☐ Developing confidence and self esteem, feeling reassured that they are able to speak out on the subject.
- ☐ Feeling that the levels of anxiety about the whole subject have been lessened as a result of this activity.
- ☐ Like the beneficiaries, a number commented that they now know where to find support where they were not as aware before.
- ☐ There was a feel good factor emerging from the roadshow and an understanding that often it is ignorance rather than prejudice that is the bigger issue, which is an important distinction.

Below is a selection of quotes from the volunteers across all of the roadshows:

'There was something quite empowering about 'coming out' in a positive way about my problems.'

'There was an overwhelming feeling that I had helped to breakdown at least one barrier.'

'Feeling part of making a difference on something I'm passionate about.'

'The amount of people who were happy to talk about mental health and how it affected them or someone they knew was encouraging. The fact that the stall and merchandise was so professional and accessible helped as well.'

'I really enjoyed engaging with people who I found far more open than I expected and got them information they knew nothing about, such as local services. Hearing how different people felt made me realise that I'm not alone in feeling this.'

'Sharing experiences and feeling like I have really made a difference has really been a shot in the arm for me.'

The feedback from the targeted beneficiaries (i.e. members of the public) was similar in many respects, and was again very positive.

19.4.5 Before today, did they know much about Time to Change or mental health?

- ☐ A number had experiences of mental health issues, either personally or through family or friends, and had not previously heard of the campaign.
- ☐ Some of the respondents were carers and had links with Time to Change.
- ☐ Some of the beneficiaries had heard about it on the radio and seen it advertised on the television.

19.4.6 What they had done or been provided with at the roadshow

- ☐ Provided with information and packs for further support.
- ☐ Joined local support organisations such as Merseycare.
- ☐ Been able to speak about a range of important issues around mental health.
- ☐ Being informed about mental health and what it all means – some confessed to ignorance beforehand and now have more knowledge.
- ☐ Being able to open up and speak of their own experiences, which was important for some who often feel isolated.

19.4.7 Has visiting the roadshow made them feel any different about mental health issues?

- ☐ A number already had personal experiences so therefore it did not make them think differently.
- ☐ Some of the respondents now feel that in the future they will be more aware about the complexity of the issues.
- ☐ It has shown that stigma is a real problem and people need an outlet – there should not be a stigma attached and people should be able to talk about the issues.
- ☐ It has made some understand that they should not ignore people as it is an illness that is not their fault.

19.4.8 How they might benefit themselves from the roadshow

- ☐ They now know where to get support and know that they can talk to people about issues.
- ☐ Increasing confidence and self esteem.
- ☐ Leaving with a tangible experience and being able to personally relate what has been learnt.
- ☐ In other forums, many would have been reluctant to talk so candidly and to be able to do so in an accessible format, has really helped.
- ☐ Some noted that they will be going away and reading up further on the subject.
- ☐ Feeling happier in bringing the subject of mental health up around others and will not shy away from people with mental health issues.

Below is a selection of quotes from the beneficiaries across all of the roadshows:

'I'm really glad that now I know where I can go to get help.'

'I didn't realise before coming here today that mental health problems were so common and how complex it all is. It has definitely opened my eyes to the problems.'

'I used to be frightened to talk about my problems but coming here today showed that there is no need to be that way.'

'This has given me a really good understanding of the issues around mental health. I never realised it affected so many people and how many different conditions there are.'

'Being able to share my experiences with someone else is really important to me... like a release.'

In summary, the impacts, whilst difficult to measure for a series of one off events, do point towards being particularly positive; this applies to both the volunteers and the members of the public. Awareness raising was one of the key elements of the roadshow, and the consultation highlighted that it had achieved its aims in this regard; however a number of respondents did note that many of the visitors to the stands were people with experience in mental health issues and therefore it is open to question as to how many people were being informed of issues that they did not already know about.

Despite this, those involved reported an increase in self esteem and confidence, and now know where to go for support. Those who previously had limited knowledge reported a shift in their attitudes. Across all of these measures the roadshows appear to have served their purpose. Whether the outcomes are sustainable in the medium and long term is another question, but it could be argued that the roadshows were not designed for this, rather one part of a wider campaign to raise awareness and encourage social contact.



19.4.9 Wider impacts of the roadshows

Any wider impacts of the roadshows are difficult to measure, as they were a campaigning tool to raise the levels of social contact and enhance general awareness of mental health issues; they were not a direct service delivery vehicle. However, in addition to raising the levels of conversation around mental health, the roadshows are perceived to have enhanced levels of empowerment. The wider Time to Change evaluation has shown that once someone has had a conversation, 40% report that they are more positive mentally afterwards. At the local level, the secondary impacts have been noticeable. One Primary Care Trust commented that they provide other types of awareness activity, and since the roadshow (which had over 800 visitors) there has been an increase in the number of people taking up their services. They therefore attribute some impact from the roadshows, but it is also important to note that some of this increased take up could also be from other local campaigns.

19.5 Why the project works

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the Time to Change project has proved successful.

19.5.1 Strong partnership working

The partnership working across all aspects of the project has been progressive and effective in a number of ways. The roadshows have been mutually beneficial to all sides, which have meant that all involved have taken away something of value from it (e.g. the aims of the roadshows have closely complemented those of local Primary Care Trusts who have partnered Mind):

'We (NHS) have been running a mental health stigma project across Hampshire for the last eighteen months and we saw the roadshows as a good opportunity to amplify our messages, providing an enhanced profile.'

Without effective partnership working between the project management team and the local stakeholders such as Primary Care Trusts, the roadshows would simply not have been possible. At the local level, there were also progressive working relationships in place, particularly important in securing the numbers of volunteers needed for the events (e.g. there was deep collaboration between local Mind offices, voluntary sector organisations, Primary Care Trusts and, in some cases, further and higher education institutions – a number of students from the Psychiatry Department at Southampton University supported one of the events). At each roadshow there was a mix of health professionals and volunteers who have had personal experiences around mental health problems, meaning there was often a good combination of people at each roadshow to cater for the beneficiaries.

Despite the above, there are some opportunities to strengthen relationships for future projects (e.g. one comment indicated that, in terms of logistics, there was a lack of linkages between what Mind required for the roadshow and delivery requirements, in terms of local administration). It was not always clear to local partners from an early stage what was needed and lines of communication could have been more open and clear. These are only minor issues however and despite these, overall the roadshows ran as smoothly as they could possibly have done.

In terms of the strategic relationships with the Big Lottery, the Project Manager has not had too much contact, due to the self sufficiency and expertise of Mind and partners requiring minimal support. The Big Lottery has been proactive in providing the links to other projects and has been supportive of the roadshows.

19.5.2 Good publicity, promotion and engagement

On the whole, the roadshows have been promoted and publicised effectively from the outset, with a smooth incorporation into the wider Time to Change campaign. This included assimilation into the wider multimedia marketing work, and utilising local partners to help drive publicity. It is important not to underestimate the work of the partners in successfully promoting the roadshows. In particular, local Primary Care Trusts spent considerable time and resource 'selling' the concept to other local groups to ensure that volunteers could be accessed; it was the volunteers after all that were central in ensuring the roadshows were as successful as they have been.

19.5.3 Not just information provision but helping empower people

In conclusion, these roadshows achieved something that was quite unique. Through peer-to-peer learning, the project management team achieved buy-in at a number of levels. The roadshows were not just designed to provide information to be taken away, but actively encouraged conversation that helped empower people and, where necessary, refer beneficiaries to a service which could help them further. In short, it was the drive and enthusiasm of the partners at all levels, from the project manager downwards, which led to the success of this project. Utilising the strengths and local knowledge of partners resulted in the recruitment of volunteers needed to engage with the public and encourage social contact. This all highlights the importance of achieving buy-in at a number of levels. There is much to be learnt from the success of the roadshows which can be used to develop best practice for the future, showcasing how diverse methods of communication can engage target audiences.

19.5.4 Scale and connectedness

One of the most important impacts of these roadshows has been to put forward clear messages around mental health into the public domain right across the country; without these events and their wide geographical coverage, this would have been so much more difficult to achieve. It is also important to understand that the roadshows were one part of a wider Time to Change campaign, albeit a key element of its success over 2011, but they should not be viewed in isolation when assessing their effectiveness; rather how they have complemented and connected with a range of associated activities and campaigns.

19.6 How the project works

19.6.1 About the Time to Change roadshows

Time to Change is an attempt to end the stigma and discrimination that faces people with mental health problems. It is a campaign to change attitudes and behaviour too. One in four people will experience mental health problems in their life and, as a result, are likely to face stigma and discrimination in future. The roadshows, rolled out over 2011, were part of the wider Time to Change campaign aimed at increasing levels of social contact and reducing levels of stigma.

The objectives were to:

- ☐ deliver a programme of 20 roadshows across England between May and October 2011;
- ☐ through the roadshows, deliver 20,000 social contacts via face-to-face conversations with volunteers at events (aiming for 125 contacts per hour, with 30 volunteers at each event).

19.6.2 Project inputs

Costs

There were a number of costs involved which are outlined in Table 5; an additional cost via a separate budget line was £18,189 for an Events Officer.

Table 7: Breakdown of funding in respect of Time to Change

Area of expenditure	Amount
Production of stand	£42,556
Site allowance	£30,000
Event staff	£12,561
Volunteer and TTC staff expenses	£15,000
Volunteer briefing	£5,000
Materials (design and print, tea etc)	£19,283
Insurance, health and safety costs etc	£3,666
Project management fee (17.5%)	£18,912
Total	£146,979

Staffing

The project benefited from a full-time Project Manager who is based at Mind. One Event Manager was also responsible for the management of each of the roadshows, with various technical support staff. The roadshows were also staffed by local partners (Primary Care Trusts) and locally recruited volunteers.

19.6.3 Project outputs

By the end of September 2012, the roadshows had visited twenty different locations, engaging approximately 20,000 people in meaningful conversations about mental health. The aim was to target 1,000 people per roadshow and this target was met, representing around 8% of the total target for social contact of the wider Time to Change project (250,000 people). Time to Change had a huge response to their volunteer call-out (over 900 people registered to be involved), resulting in a team of over 600 volunteers, most with direct experience of mental health problems; approximately 50% of these volunteers received face-to-face social contact training prior to the roadshows.