

Health & Wellbeing Team



Our Impact Report for 2014/15

Helping to improve the health
and wellbeing of the residents
of Swindon

Who we are and what we do

Our Community Health and Wellbeing Team has been set up with the aim of reducing health inequalities in communities across Swindon. The team consists of Ambassadors, Befrienders and Champions, all of whom are recruited because of their interest and desire to help others. The team is diverse in its makeup, giving us a huge amount of insight and connection to the different cultures and communities in Swindon. Many of the team

have personal experience of achieving behaviour change to improve their own health and wellbeing and this provides an added empathy with clients. Team members work a range of hours and are available at times that meet the needs of individual clients.

The team focus on two strands of work; both of which can have significant and lasting impact on the wellbeing of individuals and the communities in which they live. We have Health Ambassadors who specialise in health improvement and Learning Ambassadors who focus on motivating and supporting people to access learning. Befrienders and volunteer Champions tend to cut across both areas of work and are in place to offer support and encouragement to people who wish to access local opportunities.

We operate a model which enables progression and allows individuals to move from being a volunteer Champion to a Befriender and then an Ambassador if desired. We have many examples of where a client who has worked with an Ambassador has worked their way through this model, attaining paid employment.

Ambassadors

Ambassadors are trained in a nationally recognised health related qualification and undergo on-the-job training and development. Ambassadors are not medically trained and therefore do not offer medical advice. Their role is to motivate people to take steps towards improving their physical and emotional health and wellbeing. They will spend time with their client building rapport and gaining trust, offering one-to-one sessions to address attitude and behaviour towards health and wellbeing. They can offer sensible and practical advice around:

- healthier food choices
- diet and exercise
- stopping smoking
- reducing alcohol intake
- access to learning
- access to community activity

Befrienders

Befrienders are people who can motivate, encourage and promote access to opportunities and services that are available to help improve health and wellbeing; whether this is through learning, skill development, physical activity or healthy eating. They will work with individuals and groups to encourage participation and remove barriers. Befrienders will also link to providers and partners.

Champions

Champions are people who feel positive about health, wellbeing and lifelong learning and can share their enthusiasm and experiences to promote the benefits. We have a pool of enthusiastic volunteers who can be drawn upon as necessary.



What have we done this year?

The Health Ambassadors have enrolled

206

new clients on the 6 session programme

GENDER



67 %

Female



33 %

Male

Most of the clients we work with are female, which is the same as the rest of the South West.

ETHNICITY

43%

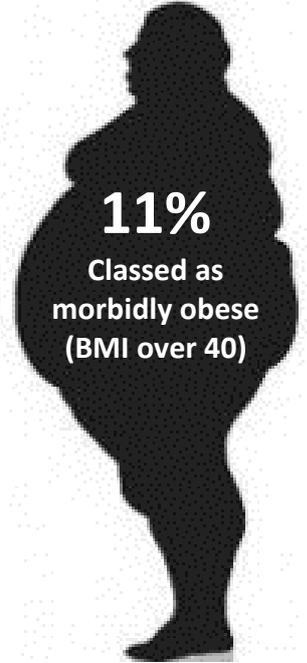
of clients describe themselves as coming from a black, minority or ethnic community

A large proportion of our clients are from BME communities which is important to us because they generally experience higher health inequality.

OBESITY



68%
Classed as obese



11%
Classed as morbidly obese (BMI over 40)

Due to the health risks related with the condition, people classed as obese are one of our main target groups. We work with these clients to help them increase exercise and improve their diet in order to lose weight.

AGE

50 % of clients are 50+

15 % of clients are 65+



Half of our clients are over 50. This is an important target group for us because we want to help people age well and stay independent for longer, which being healthy will help achieve.

GOALS ACHIEVED

69% 

Have achieved their goals

The majority of our clients achieved the goals set during their first meeting with the Health Ambassador.

EVENTS

35+

events attended this year

800+

people have engaged with the team at events

400+

people have been referred to other services

We have attended a large range of events this year to promote the service, give advice and refer people to other services should they need it. We have endeavoured to get to events that have audiences who may not otherwise have known about us, or engaged with other services. We have also partnered with other organisations to help deliver joined up services. Examples include:

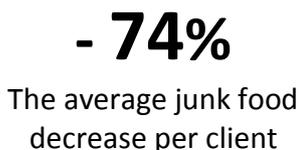
- Goan community event
- Alcohol awareness at Honda
- International Womens Day event
- Health checks across the borough



What impact are we having?



CASE STUDIES



Average increase in moderate exercise per client



Average increase in vigorous exercise per client

Nigel

Nigel first came to see a Health Ambassador in 2012 with both physical and mental health problems. He has since lost a lot of weight, started exercising and his mental health has improved. This is what he had to say about the changes he has experienced.

"Reflecting back today I couldn't see how I have changed, but by going through a check with my Health Ambassador I could see that from when I had my yearly check at the end of 2013 I have since lost a further 1 stone and 11lbs. I now eat fruit instead of refined sugars. My fruit and veg are now at least 4 a day, prior to this in 2012 it was under 2 portions a day. I now take less medication for sleeping at night. I have longer spells of feeling calm and relaxed and have more energy. I'm more realistic than previously regarding my confidence. I haven't reached where I aspire to be but I am getting there. I would very much like to raise some money for a Mental Health charity in the foreseeable future. During this time I completed a cycle ride from Swindon to Bristol. I'm getting my life back on track!"



Dawn

Dawn first met her Health Ambassador at a Chronic Pain Support Group and she was suffering with constant pain and low mood. After a discussion it became apparent that she was very stressed and was sleeping poorly, which was probably part of the cause of her symptoms. Between them they worked out a series of goals for Dawn to work towards that including changes to her diet, increase in exercise, extra activities and adjusting her sleep pattern. She was also referred to a course at LIFT Psychology on how to manage stress and anxiety. During the sessions she started to feel a lot happier and do more exercise as her energy levels increased. By the end of the 6 weeks she had achieved all her goals and is now a lot more active, experiences less pain and stress, and has noticed improved relationships with friends and family.

Dawn has achieved:

100%
Exercise increase

56% to 84%
Wellbeing score increase

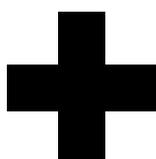
106%
Fruit and veg increase

100%
Water intake increase

60%
General Health increase



+ 30%
Increase in self reported general health scores



+ 37%
Increase in self reported wellbeing scores after working with a Health Ambassador



Joan — Wellbeing Befriender Client

Joan first met with one of the Health Ambassadors who linked her with a Health Befriender who has supported her to live a more independent life.

"I am house bound and unable to do much as I have rheumatoid arthritis and I am on my own as my husband is in a home with dementia. Due to my arthritis I am unable to do my weekly shopping or just go out into the community.

When I met my Wellbeing Befriender I found her very understanding and easy to get on with we sat and talked for an hour about things that she could help me with. We focused on learning how to use my Ipad and how do some online shopping, as I was worried about going out in the cold weather and not being able to get anything, especially my groceries. She showed me a simple way to shop online, going through it slowly and then giving me a chance to try myself. I tried it myself last week and was able to do it on my own, I was very happy. I was very keen to be working with her as she is young so she would know how to use an Ipad; also she is great company to have. I look forward to seeing her each week.

I spoke to her about going out as I am stuck at home all day and she agreed with me about going to a garden centre and then seeing about going to meetings to meet new people. I will be sad when I stop seeing the Wellbeing Befriender because she has been great and has given me much more confidence to do things."



Nagen—Volunteer Champion

Nagen has been in the UK for 6 months now and is looking to live and work here permanently. He qualified as a doctor in Nepal in 2008 and worked in very different hospitals all around Nepal. Nagen was looking for a chance to bring his skills to this country and especially in helping people from more vulnerable communities.

Initially, we were able to offer Volunteer Champion Nagen some training in conducting Health Checks aimed at 40 – 74 year olds. We are now pleased to offer him a casual Befriending contract and he will aim to not only support the community nurse but also set up his own health checks in the future. Nagen can speak four languages and is excellent in English. Our initial aim will be for Nagen to offer health checks to the Nepalese community across the town. Already a local doctor has kindly offered the opportunity for Nagen to shadow him in the future to gain experience of work in a UK surgery. The 'sky's the limit' as we support Nagen in his bid to make a real difference in this country.



Our priorities for this year

- To further increase the numbers in our team to meet the continuing demand for our service
- To support more people from priority neighbourhoods as identified through the new Community Moves project
- To support Community Navigators based in GP surgeries across Swindon by providing Befrienders to link their clients to activities and agencies
- To expand our Adult Community Learning project through referrals from the Community Moves project
- To assist more with health checks and to conduct some ourselves – aimed at 40 – 74 year olds
- To achieve the Matrix accreditation for the work we do

To find out more about the teams, projects or evaluations please contact us:

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Improved health and wellbeing through access to learning

In 2014, the team expanded to include a focus on adult community learning. The role of the Learning Ambassador is to provide and signpost to learning designed to help people of different ages and backgrounds acquire a new skill, re-connect with learning, pursue an interest, prepare for progression to formal courses and/or learn how to support their children more effectively. It supports wider Government policies on localism, social justice, stronger families, digital inclusion and social mobility. We operate with the ABC model with Ambassadors, Befrienders and Champions offering differing levels of support for a client based on their needs.

This year we have made some excellent links and offered guidance to people across the town. The team attend a number of regular drop-ins and community events, providing a visible presence for anyone seeking help.

Due to this new approach referrals have increased dramatically and the team is having a real impact on the lives of Swindon residents.

Case Study 1

Client 1 was referred to explore learning opportunities from colleagues on the Health Ambassador team. After an initial meeting to discuss what he would like to achieve, the Learning Ambassador investigated and discussed possible courses and activities across a variety of providers. It became clear that **Learning for Life** would be the ideal provider and setting for him to develop his functional English and Maths skills. He was also able to take advantage of the additional activities they offer to look after the well-being of their clients, such as the **Overcoming Stress and Anxiety, with Creative Arts** course. The Learning Ambassador accompanied them to interviews and sessions to offer support, guidance and give him confidence in this new environment.

Client 1 and the Learning Ambassador kept in close contact throughout the first few weeks of the course; they were consistently looking at the next steps of learning with a view to helping develop his ability to use the new skills he was developing with his employment prospects.

Case Study 2

Client 2 arrived in Swindon a year or so ago from Iran, via Aberdeen. She was referred to the team by a Job Club in North Swindon library. She has an employment history in data analysis and although well qualified, is desperate to improve her English, both to be ready to help her two young children with their school work and be able to feel more confident when applying for jobs or volunteering opportunities.

The Learning Ambassador has been able to put her in touch with a local provider who is running a 'Keeping Up With Your Children English' course in Gorse Hill. This will help her achieve her goals, helping her children with their schoolwork and enhance her own confidence.

She is delighted to be living in this country, she appreciates what is available to her and is very keen to help others, so is also working with the Learning Ambassador to explore possible volunteering opportunities where she can use her language skills in English, Persian and Kurdish to help others who may find life bewildering in a new country.

44

Agencies linked with the team including children's centres, venues, schools and providers

480

Contacts with clients made since September 2014

110

Significant one-to-one engagements, enrolments and exploration of courses across the town

