

# Health & Wellbeing Team

## Ambassadors Befrienders & Champions



## Our Impact Report for 2015/16

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

# Who we are and what we do

Our 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 providing 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 focuses 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 who focus on motivating and supporting people to access learning too. 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 we have  
done this year

The Health & Wellbeing Team have  
enrolled a RECORD

605

new clients

Ambassadors have enrolled **305**  
clients for health improvement &  
**196** for learning opportunities

Befrienders have enrolled **104**  
clients for improving mental health  
& increasing activities

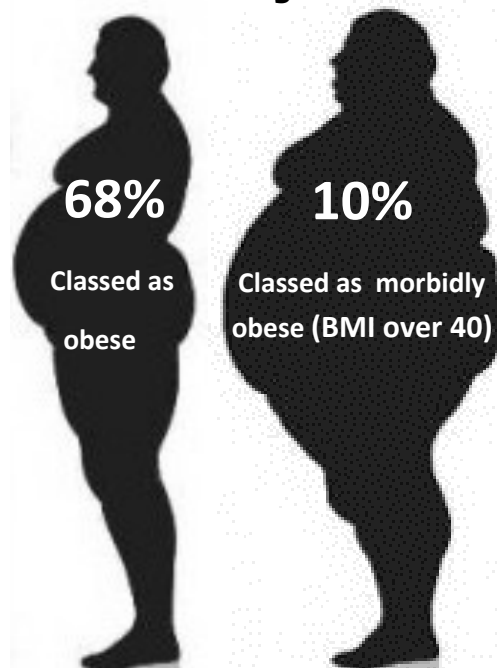
Champions are helping with several  
activities across the town

## Ethnicity 32%

of Health Ambassador 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



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. **9 % of new H A clients have  
type 2 diabetes.**

## Age

**51%** of  
clients are 50+

**17%** of  
clients are 65+



Over half of our Health Ambassador  
clients are aged 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

**63%**

To date, over half the goals set  
with clients on the first meeting  
have been achieved - with more  
success predicted during the 6  
week programme. **An average  
of 16 % improvement in Mental  
Wellbeing has been recorded.**

**55+**

events  
attended this  
year + weekly  
health checks

**Events  
950+**

people have  
engaged with  
the team at  
events

**500+**

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. These include:

- Senior Wellbeing Day (pictured)
- Diabetes Awareness Day
- Alcohol Awareness at Honda
- Pinehurst Fun Day





# What impact are we having?



## CASE STUDIES

**Jim** was referred to **Health Ambassador**, Grace, by his Community Navigator. He was very depressed and wanted to reduce his weight, control his diabetes and eventually quit smoking. The first meeting was together with the Navigator in Jim's home to ensure a gentle start on our programme as he was not very comfortable around meeting new people. Following some gentle exercise at home, Jim felt confident to meet in town and walk with Grace too. She issued Jim with a free pedometer on session 2 which inspired him to increase his steps by, for example, getting off the bus a stop earlier. He was soon walking over 6,000 steps each day.

When it came to weight, Grace started planning goals with him around his diet—aiming to improve his recorded BMI during the 6 week programme. A Food and Activity Diary was started and this helped Jim focus on such things as portion size, healthy food swaps and increasing fruit and vegetables. Soon, Jim started losing weight and felt really motivated to do more. Through Grace's contacts, he enrolled onto SBC's Living with Diabetes programme.

Today, Jim is a much more confident person; he has lost 1 stone 7lbs, so far. Through referral to the Stop Smoking service he has reduced from 45 to 17 cigarettes per day. Jim is now walking regularly with a Befriender and is still attending the Diabetes programme. He says : ***Grace has helped me in more ways than I thought possible, especially with the way I think about what I eat and the importance of exercise.***



The average junk food decrease per client



Average increase in moderate exercise per client

**102%**

Average increase in vigorous exercise per client

## Wellbeing Befrienders

Health Ambassador, Charlie, is currently studying towards her mandatory City & Guilds Level 3 Health Trainer Award at Swindon College. As part of her training, she has also been working in one of our Befriender roles. Charlie says this has been invaluable in learning to support people facing many health inequalities.

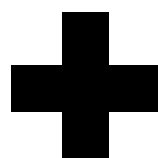
One of Charlie's clients, 50 year old **Pam**, came to us through a Community Navigator; she was registered at her GP with long term anxiety. Pam wanted to reconnect to her community but needed the support of a befriender for confidence.

Initially, Charlie went walking with Pam to gain her trust, before accompanying her. Together, they visited supportive organisations, including TWIGS. Today, Pam is much happier, has new friends and says she feels much less isolated.



**+ 28%**

Increase in self reported General Health scores



**+ 16%**

Average Increase in Mental Wellbeing as recorded by using the WEMWBS tool



**Terri** was introduced to **Health Ambassador**, Kimberley, through a pilot of our new triage system starting in 2016/17. Terri was on a Lift Psychology course on managing long term pain, associated with a neurological condition, when she enquired to the Community Health & Wellbeing team for some exercise with the aim of improving her mobility.

Terri started working with Kimberley with chair based exercises that she felt able to do; she was given the support, information and confidence that she needed to start moving again. In particular, the hand exercises using foam balls were good for Terri, resulting in the control over her hands improving dramatically.

As the sessions progressed, Terri felt ready to start short walks and agreed goals with Kimberley; initially, she aimed to get to the end of her drive and back. Terri was thrilled when she not only achieved this goal but went on to walk even further with Kimberley. Today, Terri is able to walk triple this distance and can walk the length of her road and back; this means so much for her both physically and mentally.

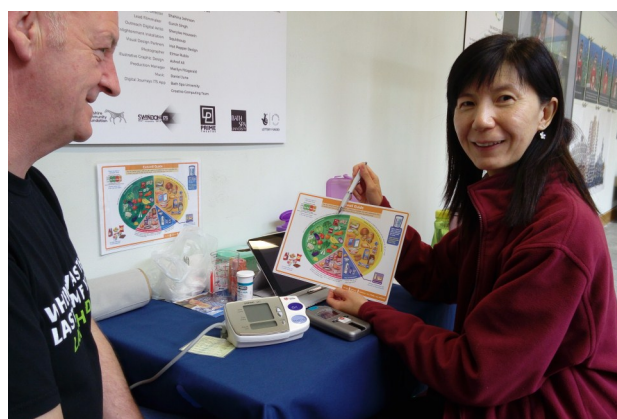
Terri says: ***Kimberley listened to me and encouraged me to do what I could do safely. She has been kind, flexible and receptive and I'm so grateful as I am so much more confident. It was just what I needed to enable me to be more independent and less reliant on others.***



## Volunteer Champions

**Charmain** was one of our valued volunteer Champions. She learned of our project during her health check in a local library. As a dietician, who trained and worked in the US and Hong Kong, she wanted to volunteer and add value to our team.

After a while, an opportunity arose for Charmain to train to deliver health checks in the community and become a casual paid Befriender. She was thrilled to be able to add new skills and work in different community settings.



We now regularly draw on Charmain's expertise by asking her to talk to groups on healthy eating, too. Charmain says: ***I really enjoy seeing people respond so positively to my talks and say they are inspired to make healthy changes***

## Our priorities for this year

- To work alongside Community Navigators, based in GP surgeries across Swindon, to ensure clients receive extra support to change behaviour
- To embed the Health Checks and Stop Smoking service into the Community Health & Wellbeing Hub
- To focus our work on those facing the highest level of health inequality; helping to break down barriers
- To be an integral part of the Community Health & Wellbeing Hub (triage service)
- To offer ongoing training for the team to ensure our high standard of service is maintained when working with often very vulnerable people

**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

An important part of supporting some clients to improve their health and wellbeing has been to promote 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.

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

## Case Study 1

Over 60% of clients interested in learning are out of work. Stephen was referred by the Job Club at North Swindon Library. He had lost his job and was facing financial difficulties as his rent was due. He was coping quite well with the situation, however he was anxious about not finding work and having a steady income.

Learning Ambassador, Mark was able to offer him some advice regarding contacting his landlord to ensure they were aware of the situation as well as giving him contacts within the Council as he was worried about paying his Council Tax.

Stephen has lived with dyslexia throughout his life. This hampered his attempts to apply for jobs as reading and filling in forms was a great challenge. After further meetings, the idea of PLUSS was raised and the work scheme they provide. After contacting them and the Job Centre we arranged a meeting to go and visit, which Stephen and Mark did together.

Stephen then met his Job Advisor and was soon signed up with PLUSS, attending courses and at last received support with his dyslexia. Just a few weeks later, thanks to his great attitude, effort and the help he got from PLUSS he was back in work on a placement at Enterprise. It was great to see Stephen do so well; much of his success is due to the actions he took himself and his determination to succeed.

## Case Study 2

Kirjal met with one of the Learning Befrienders at a local school. She was new to the country and wanted some help finding a job or opportunities to volunteer.

After discussions and offering advice regarding getting a job in the UK, Sarika, a Befriender accompanied Kirjal to the Citizen's Advice Bureau with a view to volunteering.

Thanks to Sarika's support, advice and help Kirjal obtained a voluntary post and whilst supporting others in difficult situations more importantly was on the path to employment.

Kirjal is now in full time employment and thankful for all the support she received.

*I am grateful that I met Sarika, she helped me in all manner to find a job as well as volunteering,* says Kirjal

# 44

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

**57 %** of Learning Ambassador clients describe themselves as coming from a black, minority or ethnic community

# 196

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

