

# Living Well

Stoke on Trent



## **Foreword**

Living Well West Midlands was one of only a handful of successful regional bids to the Big Lottery Well-being fund. The portfolio, consisting of over 30 projects has been running for three years and has sought to address better mental well-being; increased levels of physical health and improved food and nutrition levels. In particular, Living Well West Midlands has aimed to improve levels of support within the community and increase the involvement of those communities in delivering projects and programmes.



One of the great values of the projects within the Living Well West Midlands Portfolio has been their focus on working with people in their own communities and environments to build health and well-being. Building this type of community resilience helps people to prevent health problems deteriorating to a point where they can become costly and time consuming to treat. Good health and wellbeing, including mental health, relies on a range of community based provision and support. Individuals, employers, Councils, the NHS and many other organisations all have a role to play in achieving good health and wellbeing.

A major outcome of the Living Well Stoke on Trent work has been to increase the capacity of local communities to engage in and deliver services and activities in their areas. As part of their work there have been opportunities for individuals to gain qualifications, knowledge and practical skills relating to activities such as walk leader, swimming instructor, food hygiene and planning and delivering cook and eat sessions. This important work has helped build the awareness and skills of people to a level where they can act as mentors to others with respect to health and wellbeing, in some cases enabling people to gain employment and in for others enabling them to go on to further education. The work has been strongly supported by the charity called Media Action Group for Mental Health which done a fantastic job helping to co-ordinate and deliver the programme of activities along with Changes 12 Steps to Mental Health and NHS Stoke on Trent.

As part of their work, Living Well Stoke on Trent has explored the questions of what motivates or triggers people to change to healthier behaviour and have used this information to ensure the activities provided have been relevant and accessible to people from all backgrounds and all ages.

So far over 2000 people have directly benefited from the work of Living Well Stoke on Trent and the impact will continue have a far wider effect as those trained become 'community champions' roll out their work in their communities.

By building the capacity of agencies and communities, Living Well Stoke on Trent has helped to secure a solid foundation in the community, creating a culture shift towards meeting the health challenges in the City. I am proud to have been involved with this project and all of the great people I have worked with have had a 'can do' and positive attitude which has made the project a huge success.

**Zena Lynch**

**Director, Living Well West Midlands**

## **Living Well West Midlands**

The **Living Well Stoke on Trent** project has been a partnership between NHS Stoke on Trent, Changes 12 Steps to Mental Health and Media Action Group for Mental Health. It is one of fourteen projects in a portfolio of work that form the West Midlands Living Well programme, funded by the BIG Lottery.

**Living Well West Midlands** was launched in February 2008 and was a £6.8million BIG Lottery funded initiative managed by the West Midlands Councils. **Living Well West Midlands** has focused on three key areas and showing through its projects how they are all intrinsically linked, particularly how physical activity and healthy eating can affect a person's mental wellbeing. Each of the projects across the fourteen regions has tackled one or more of these issues.

*Mental Wellbeing:* The ultimate outcome in this area has been to achieve improved levels of mental health and wellbeing in the region. It has also looked at increasing the knowledge and understanding people have about mental ill health and as a result aimed to reduce the levels of stigma attached to mental health issues. The programme has also looked to improve the support available within the community and in the workplace.

*Physical Activity:* For this strand of the programme the overall objective has been to increase the levels of participation in physical activity across the region in turn contributing to better health and well-being, increasing individuals' aspirations for an improved quality of life and transforming the way communities perceive their well-being.

*Food and Nutrition:* This aspect of the programmes has sought to facilitate a significant slowing down in the rate of obesity levels in the region through various schemes. Part of the programme has worked with employers to introduce more healthy foods into the workplace and increase consumers' awareness of healthy eating.

## **Living Well Stoke on Trent**

Living Well Stoke on Trent has focused on three key objectives: supporting communities, marketing health and improving health and well-being. The themes of healthy eating, physical activity and mental wellbeing have cut across the portfolio to ensure a 'holistic' approach to health and wellbeing.

The project has raised awareness, increased knowledge and challenged perceptions about mental health within the local community. It has also highlighted the benefits of healthy eating and regular physical activity, which has had the added benefit of building people's confidence. The annual conference and community awareness events have acted as the platform for debate and enabled the project to reach a wider audience.

Key activities have included physical wellness workshops that look at practical wellness tools and how to achieve healthy eating and physical activity goals; offering local people the opportunity to become a 'Community Health Champion' and be trained to lead health walks, and deliver 'Cook & Eat' programmes. Participants have also had the opportunity to become the "face" of Living Well and champion future Stoke-on-Trent healthy lifestyle campaigns.

## **Conferences and Events**

The Media Action Group for Mental Health has run a significant programme of conferences and awareness raising events over the three years of the project. The annual conference has acted as a launch point for the theme of the year and through its content has highlighted the links between the three themes and provided a forum for discussion around pertinent issues. Other events throughout the year have included the Sanity Fair street festival and a large autumn community event as well as a range of smaller events targeted at specific audience groups.

The conferences and community awareness events have allowed Living Well Stoke on Trent to reach wide audiences of both the public and local public sector professionals and have acted as a catalyst for the other elements of the project to market their activities. Over the three years MAGMH have organised or attended 22 separate events and have welcomed over 2,800 participants.

## **Physical Wellness Workshops**

Changes 12 Steps to Mental Health delivered Physical Wellness Workshops programmes throughout the City as part of the Living Well Stoke on Trent initiative. The 5 half-day sessions of each programme have promoted the main health and wellbeing messages regarding positive self-image, healthy eating, physical activity, and relaxation, with the aim of encouraging participants to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Over the three years of the project the workshops have run 18 times and have promoted wellbeing messages to around 180 participants.

The Physical Wellness Workshops programmes have enabled participants to gain knowledge of other local opportunities for improving physical and mental wellbeing, as well as helping them to develop the confidence to take advantage of these. Some have gone on to promote health within their communities, for example through leading healthy walks and delivering 'Cook and Eat' sessions.

## **Volunteer Community Health Champions**

A major outcome of the Volunteer Community Health Champions scheme was to increase the number of individuals and local communities proactively engaged in delivering services and activities in their area. It has worked to increase individual and community capacity and capability for involvement by offering opportunities for individuals to gain qualifications, knowledge and practical skills to improve their health and the health of their local community by offering the chance to become a Volunteer Community Health Champion.

The Volunteer Community Health Champions scheme opportunity trained and supported over 20 local people over the three years to go on to deliver community physical activity and practical cook and eat sessions to their local community.

## **Year One: Activities around the theme 'Mental Wellbeing'**

### **Conference - Healthy Thinking: A Positive Approach to Wellbeing**

The Healthy Thinking conference, held at the Hope Community Centre in Hanley in May 2008, was the official launch of the Living Well Stoke project. Following a regional launch of the lottery-funded programme in Birmingham in February, the conference was designed to inform people about the Living Well project and its aims, to showcase some of the mental health services already available that can benefit their long-term health and to provide people with a platform for learning more about their mental wellbeing. 100 delegates attended the conference organised by Media Action Group for Mental Health.



The main objective was to highlight the importance of healthy thinking in determining our lifestyles and to highlight a range of practical techniques that can be used to improve our own wellbeing and help us to make positive changes to our lives. Zena Lynch and Paul Winterbottom, Programme Directors from the West Midlands Living Well Programme, opened the conference with an outline of the Portfolio and the Big Lottery outcomes. This was followed by a range of interactive presentations illustrating the power of the mind overcoming physical ill health (John Hegarty), tools to increase positive self perception, emotional resilience and motivation (Kate Edwards and Emma Brown). Practical workshops enabled delegates an opportunity to apply some of these techniques and to share learning. Feedback showed workshops were a big hit and the day ended with a call to action for more partners and communities to become involved in Living Well Stoke on Trent.

### **Community Awareness Events**

Community awareness events have formed an integral part of the outcomes for the Living Well Stoke on Trent project and are a main focus for the activities of Media Action Group for Mental Health. Following the success of the first conference earlier in the year, the group's co-ordinated two community awareness events to help carry the messages of healthy thinking out to as wide an audience as possible.

#### **Sanity Fair - June 2008**

Sanity Fair is an annual street festival organised by Media Action Group for Mental Health to promote emotional wellbeing and raise awareness of mental health. It promotes and explores the positive aspects of mental health as well as showcasing the work going on in local organisations and services. Sanity Fair also seeks to promote simple and effective ways of maintaining positive mental wellbeing for everyone.

Over the three years of the Living Well project Sanity Fair has become a major fixture on the calendar as a way of promoting the project to a wide a varied audience. It takes place on a city centre street on a busy Saturday each June, and it is an ideal promotional opportunity for all the project partners' events. As part of this promotion the overall theme of the event has followed the themes of the Living Well project.

In 2008, the theme for Sanity Fair was 'Ways to Mental Wellbeing'. Held on Saturday 14th June included 50 individual information points occupied by 28 organisations of which 20 were mental health services or organisations. Each organisation followed the year's theme of Healthy Thinking in their activities and the main entertainment on the stage, a samba parade and stiltwalkers helped to inject an element of fun and draw in the public to the event.

### Healthy Thinking: A Positive Approach

Held at Cobridge community centre on 3rd October 2008, this event featured an interesting mix of workshops and market place of information which were aimed at the passing general public. Project partner Changes 12 Steps to Mental Health attended the event both as exhibitors in the marketplace and as workshop facilitators.



Workshops at the event were informal and interactive, with facilitators introducing a simple technique which the attendees could use immediately, and hopefully take away with them some information and ideas which would benefit their mental wellbeing. They focused on self-image, life coaching and practical application of stress-relieving techniques that could be used at home by participants. The workshops were thoroughly enjoyed by those who took part. The information marketplace and the bringing together of a wide range of agencies and organisations was very successful and could be replicated at future events, both those aimed at the general public and at the service professionals themselves.

### Physical Wellness Workshops

During the first year of the Living Well Stoke on Trent project, project partners Changes 12 Steps to Mental Health facilitated 5 series of Physical Wellness Workshops which took place across different areas of the City. The first of these was held in June at the Observatory mental health support 'clubhouse' in Hanley, followed by Bentilee Neighbourhood Centre and Blurton Community Centre in August. The final two series of the first year took place in September at the Hope Centre in Hanley, and at Whitfield Valley Centre, Fegg Hayes, in October.

### Volunteer Community Health Champions

Members of the public were signposted towards the Volunteer Community Health Champions scheme. The scheme included Walk Leader Training days - a six hour course which lead to a nationally recognised qualification and 'Cook & Eat' training - a six week programme of practical sessions covering healthy eating messages, budgeting and understanding labels, which then allowed the participants the opportunity to go on to deliver healthy eating sessions within their own community.

**Community Health Champions Project**  
**Case Study**  
**Dawn - Volunteer Walk Leader**



Dawn first came across the Living Well project when she spotted a leaflet advertising one of the project's community awareness events on a routine doctor's visit. The event, entitled "Healthy Thinking: A Positive Approach", was organised by Living Well Stoke on Trent partner organisation Media Action Group for Mental Health. It appealed to Dawn, who was new to the Stoke on Trent area and was looking for a new focus for her energies.

Dawn attended the event at Cobridge Community Centre on 3rd October 2008, and while there was introduced to Yasar Riaz, leader of the Volunteer Community Health Champions project. Yasar explained all about the Volunteer Walk Leader training scheme. "I was already a walker, but it's nice to share it with someone," says Dawn, "the training really appealed to me."

The Walk Leader training took place at Port Vale football ground. 8 people took part in the day, which taught the "do's and don'ts", advised on how to encourage walkers and gave information on the health benefits of walking. There was also a practice walk and time to complete the necessary paperwork that ensures participants are covered by all the necessary insurances to lead walks within their community.

On returning to her own community in Blurton, Dawn quickly made links with her local Community Development Worker who is working alongside Dawn to launch community walks in their local area.

"I'm getting lots of support from the Community Development Worker and Yasar", says Dawn, who intends to start advertising walks after Christmas and is planning routes and links with other walk leaders for extra support.

Dawn feels leading the walks will be a positive step for her and will help to reduce the isolation she feels from being new to the area. She also feels that the project has given her an opportunity to do something new and to put something back into the community.

Dawn's next step was to take part in the second strand of the Community Health Champions project with 'Cook and Eat' session training. This six week course enabled Dawn to acquire the skills to deliver the key messages of healthy eating by holding 'Cook and Eat' sessions in her local community. She says that she is hoping for lots of simple and accessible ideas.

Dawn feels that by taking part in the project she has undergone a process of personal development, and has gained qualifications as a result. Looking back, she is very pleased that she decided to attend the 'Positive Thinking' day, as the event has shown her lots of strands of local support and activity.

## Year 2: Activities around the theme 'Healthy Eating'

### Conference - A Recipe for Wellbeing: Nutrition for Health and Happiness

'A Recipe for Wellbeing: Nutrition for Health and Happiness' was the second annual Living Well Stoke on Trent conference, held at the Britannia Stadium on 14 May 2009.

It focused on the important role that healthy eating plays in determining our lifestyles. The conference was organised by Media Action Group for Mental Health on behalf of the local partnership, and saw more than 200 delegates attend including health care professionals, voluntary sector workers right through to members of the general public. The conference examined some



of the barriers that prevent us from making fundamental yet simple changes to our lives and enabled people to take away, practical, accessible information to improve their well-being. A range of high-profile speakers included Toni Smith, Regional Co-ordinator for the Food Standards Agency, who discussed the Agency's strategic priorities and how the FSA can help us choose a healthy diet; nutritional therapist, Martina Watts, who explained the links between diet, mental health and behaviour.

There was a range of interactive workshops including Women and Theatre, the award-winning theatre company, who performed *Scoffing*, an original and exciting play about mental health, obesity, body image and self-confidence. Other workshops included a relaxation session, 5 a day healthy eating and smoothie making. Siu-Ann Pang, Senior Health Improvement Specialist for Obesity at NHS Stoke on Trent and lead for the Living Well Stoke on Trent project, concluded, 'This conference was a success because it generated a momentum for action and inspired participant's to reflect on their food choices and to get motivated in taking steps to improve their health and well-being.'

### Community Awareness Events

#### Sanity Fair

For 2009, in keeping with the healthy eating theme, the annual street festival was rechristened **Sanity Fare: A Recipe for Wellbeing**. Held on 19<sup>th</sup> June, **Sanity Fare: A Recipe for Wellbeing** comprised 40 individual stalls occupied by 23 different organisations. The stallholders took on board the theme of health eating and its impact on mental wellbeing in a number of different ways, from costumes including fruit covered hats, fresh fruit being given away as tasters or tombola prizes, to information points offering food from



around the world. The entertainment for this year also took on a food theme with a professional chef, Mark Earnden (*Expochef*) doing live cookery demonstrations from a marquee on the street, and Blendavenda, a cycle-powered smoothie maker creating tasty fruit drinks, amongst others.

## **A Recipe for Wellbeing: Making a Meal of It!**

The final community event for the second year of the project was held in the Albert Ballroom of Longton Town Hall in Stoke-on-Trent in October 2009. The day highlighted the healthy eating messages of the Living Well Stoke on Trent project and provided a very practical demonstration that feeding a family fresh healthy food can be just as quick, easy and cheap as using ready meals and take-aways. The recipes demonstrated followed a basic brief in that they were inexpensive, easy, tasty, and required the minimum of equipment. The main cookery demonstrations were led by Mark Earnden from *Expochef*. They were staged in an interactive way with members of the audience cooking alongside the chef to create the recipe at the same time as him to demonstrate that the recipes could be cooked by anyone no matter what their skill level.



The audience members involved in this part of the event were from a wide variety of backgrounds, and included a large group of pupils from a local special school. For the first session teachers and students cooked alongside the chef. In subsequent sessions, there was a mixture of volunteers both young and old, some newcomers to cooking, and some more experienced cooks. Audience members were also invited to come and taste unusual ingredients and the audience as a whole were invited to try new tastes in their cookery at home. An information marketplace of local and national organisations covering a range of food, health and mental health related subjects was on-hand to provide the audience with points of interest.

The event proved a great success with 180 people through the doors over the course of the day. The lessons learned in the creation of this event were then taken forward and used in a similar event staged by the local PCT as part of the Healthy City World Health Day organised by Stoke-on-Trent City Council in April 2010.

## **Target Audience Events**

These events were special sessions run either as part of an existing meeting or as a specific event especially for the invited audience. They differed from the community awareness events as they comprised an activity as well as information about the Living Well Stoke on Trent programme as a whole. The target audience events have proved a useful tool in opening up the project to a wider audience, and also provided us with a way of marketing other parts of the programme.

Organisations involved such as The Stroke Association and The Beth Johnson Foundation Mid-Life Health Project were very enthusiastic and provided excellent feedback about the event. The theme of the second year of the programme, Healthy Eating, was found to be the most conducive to this type of event and this was helped by the fact that the Physical Wellness Workshops healthy eating session was both adaptable and enjoyable. The healthy eating session was delivered to both members of the Stroke Association in March 2009 and the Beth Johnson Foundation Mid-Life Health Project in June 2009 as the mix of practical smoothie making and the 'fat quiz' and 'sugar games' made for a good mix of learning and entertainment and always sparked a lively discussion from the participants. As each organisation included members from across the City as a whole, these sessions were an excellent way of meeting a diverse audience from a wide range of our geographical target areas.

The biggest target audience event was run in partnership with the North Staffs Pensioners' Convention as a full-day event specifically for an older audience. **A Recipe for Wellbeing: Health and Nutrition for Older People** was held in September 2009 at Bentilee Neighbourhood Centre. It included a small number of speakers and a diverse range of information points to cover a diverse variety of health topics pertinent to older people, including heart disease, arthritis and osteoporosis and nutrition for aging. The main speaker was a nutritionist with a special interest in older people, Sylvie Jackson. Other speakers from local projects, Lee Hand from the Beth Johnson Foundation Mid-Life Health Project and Jill Davies from the Cancer Screening project, completed the line up. Two informal workshops were also included focusing on relaxation techniques and gentle chair based-exercises.



### **Physical Wellness Workshops & Volunteer Community Health Champions**

The second year of the project saw 6 well attended programmes of Physical Wellness Workshops held in various locations around the city. These included sessions at community centres in Cobridge, Abbey Hulton, Trent Vale, Meir, Tunstall and Hanley. The Volunteer Community Health Champions scheme continued to expand upon the previous years successes.

#### **Physical Wellness Workshops Case Study - Janet**

Janet saw a flyer advertising the workshops being held at the Hope Centre in Hanley and she was keen to attend the 5-week course. It's location in the city centre, as opposed to another location in Stoke-on-Trent, meant Janet was able to take part.

'I am quite interested in food and the benefits of a healthy diet, and this short course proved ideal,' says Janet. She believes that food has been messed about with too much, and was keen to learn of the different ways of achieving '5 a day' portions of fruit and vegetables. The session on healthy eating was therefore particularly valuable. She found the food myths and sugar quiz really interesting and informative. They got Janet thinking about food and eating - she now buys more vegetables and makes more soups, particularly at weekends. The sugar content of biscuits proved 'a bit of an eye-opener,' as did the sugar contents of certain foods in general.



Janet has gone on to apply what she learnt from the workshops as much as possible, although she recognises that it isn't always possible to adhere 100% to the best examples all of the time. Making soups with vegetables and adding bananas to porridge are both examples of practical lessons learnt. If there was anything that could be added to the sessions, it would be a few really simple, inexpensive recipes, for both her husband, a vegetarian, and herself, who eats meat.

## **Physical Wellness Workshops** **Case Study - Keith**

Keith was told about the workshops at a regular Changes 12 steps meeting and was immediately attracted to the idea: "I was looking for a holistic approach and thought if it helps me manage just one of my problems then it would be worth it." The idea of covering a wide range of both physical and emotional subjects in one programme appealed and Keith's enthusiasm seems to have been rewarded.



The 5 weeks of workshops were held in a relaxed informal manner, and Keith felt he learned more due to the interactive enjoyable nature of the sessions. "Yasar and Graham (the course leaders) had a light touch" comments Keith, "and the guest tutors also kept the mood light. The tutors made it fun despite the serious messages"

The first two weeks of the course focus on emotional wellbeing and self esteem. Keith openly admits that, as a result of his depression, he has very low self esteem, and felt that his issues ran too deep to be truly helped by the sessions. However, he adds; "You always get something out - it's never a waste of time"

The second session, which covers self-image, was also a struggle for Keith. He felt the interactive nature was helpful but the session was still tricky for him.

"It did feel like we were just being overly nice to each other, and just getting embarrassed in the process - we just don't take complements well". The third session covers healthy eating, and this was the session that Keith was most looking forward to - and seems to be the one to have had the biggest impact.

Keith admits; "I can't cook well. I can follow the instructions on the box but I needed encouragement to move away from the box." He felt the healthy eating session was, "beautifully put across. There was no finger wagging or preaching just advice and encouragement."

The encouragement appears to have worked. Keith reports that he has discovered a love of greens, especially spinach, watercress and rocket, and he has moved on to regularly cooking fresh fish and vegetables as a healthy dinner, which he thoroughly enjoys.

The physical activity session worried Keith. He didn't feel he would be able to participate due to his medical problems. But, he was pleasantly surprised by the gentle chair exercises. "I enjoyed it because I could do it and didn't feel pressured to overstretch myself". As a result he is planning to join a gentle exercise group as soon as his health allows.

The final session covers relaxation. This was something that Keith had done before on a number of occasions, but he admits "For the first time, I got it! This time the visualisation worked, and I do it even now" Overall Keith was really pleased with the workshops; "I got a lot out of it and felt benefits from each session".

## **Year 3: Activities around the theme 'Physical Activity'**

### **Conference - Get Moving: Active Ways to Wellbeing**

The **Get Moving: Active Ways to Wellbeing** conference, held at the Britannia Stadium in Stoke-on-Trent on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2010, was the third and final in the series of annual conferences. Following the success of the first two conferences that took place in May 2008 and May 2009, the final event was planned following the same format of a mix of speakers and interactive workshops. The programme



consisted of a range of presentations and workshops, informing people about the Living Well Stoke on Trent portfolio, providing attendees with the opportunity to learn about improving their health through physical activity, and showcasing some of the local projects in the area. Interactive workshops enabled the organisers to put into practice the messages about the benefits of physical activity. Delegates had the opportunity to try out t'ai-chi or belly dancing classes, and everyone took part in a Bhangra 'energiser session' at the very start of the conference in the main room of the venue.

The conference highlighted the importance of physical activity in all aspects of our daily lives. For example, physical activity can improve mood and energy levels and also reduce the chances of becoming affected by some serious illnesses. It focused on communicating that physical activity includes far more than simply playing sport and visiting the gym, and aimed to increase public understanding of the scope and possibilities of the activities available. The conference also acted as a platform for debate on how we regard physical activity and how it affects us, with special focus on the opportunities and projects running in Stoke-on-Trent. Speakers included Professor Ken Fox from Bristol University, who highlighted the importance of physical activity to mental health, and Siu-Ann Pang, from NHS Stoke on Trent, whose presentation focused on local actions to increase physical activity levels in Stoke-on-Trent.

### **Sanity Fair: Active Ways to Wellbeing**

Sanity Fair on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2010 continued the final year's theme of physical activity. There were 44 individual stalls occupied by 25 different organisations. The entertainment also took on a physical theme including a dance-packed samba parade, belly dance workshops and chair-based exercise sessions. There was also chance to join in a bike ride around the city or a health walk to a local park in nearby Northwood



Sanity Fair was a great way to promote Living Well at a major event attracting a wide range of people. By taking place at a weekend they were able to get information to attendees who would normally not be able to attend a daytime midweek event, which opened the Living Well portfolio to a much wider audience.

## **Get Moving: Family Fun 'Try A Sport' Day**

The final community awareness event of Living Well Stoke on Trent took place in August 2010 at Northwood Stadium, home to Stoke Athletic Club. Entitled **Get Moving: Family Fun 'Try A Sport' Day**, it featured a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor activities, aimed at people of all ages throughout the City of Stoke-on-Trent. The day encouraged local residents to try a new activity, improve their wellbeing and have some fun in the process. On offer were a diverse range of games and workshops including trampolining, volleyball and street dance.

This day was planned as a way to encourage local residents to try something new and to exercise in a fun and relaxed environment. The activities were a diverse range of both more orthodox sports such as table-tennis and badminton as well as fun activities including inflatable obstacle courses and drumming workshops. There was also a range of less intensive activities such as dance and t'ai-chi available to generate as wide an appeal as possible for people of all ages as the event took place during the school summer holidays.



MAGMH worked in partnership with a wide variety of other organisations to make sure that as many of the activities as possible could be accessed after the event by those who had enjoyed taking part. Interested parties could continue their involvement by joining with local groups around the city after the event was over. These included Premier League 4 Sport; the Stoke-on-Trent World of Dance scheme, The Potteries Orienteering Club and the local 'Streetgames' team run by the City Council.

The day proved to be very popular and reached an audience of 860 people that exceeded the expectations of the organisers. As one visitor summed up, *"I booked today off work to come with the kids and I'm so glad I did as we have done everything at least once. I didn't realise there was so much available. As a result of today the kids are starting badminton classes after school and we are going to do more walking. It has been great."*

## **Physical Wellness Workshops & Volunteer Community Health Champions**

In the final year of the project, 8 series of Physical Wellness Workshops took place at various locations across Stoke-on-Trent. These consisted of 2 men-only programmes at the Britannia Stadium, home to Stoke City Football Club, as well as general programmes at Burslem, Normacot, Blurton, Cobridge and Bentilee.

Several of the popular 'Cook & Eat' sessions, including specialist Asian cooking programmes took place during the year and were well received by all who attended and took part.

## **Physical Wellness Workshops Case Study** **For Men Only - Britannia Stadium Stoke-on-Trent**

The first men-only series of Physical Wellness Workshops were held at the Britannia Stadium, home of Stoke City Football Club, during January-February 2010. Open to all men in Stoke-on-Trent, the workshops consisted of five sessions covering health and wellbeing, self image, healthy eating, physical activity, and relaxation. A free tour of the Britannia Stadium was included for participants who completed the course.



'In earlier mixed sessions,' explains Graham Bailey, Project Lead for the Workshops, the vast majority of people who attended, about 75%, were women. A few men did come along, but as the course progressed, they tended to drop out. To an extent, we were aware that some men may feel more comfortable talking about their wellbeing with other men also, that men who work find it very difficult to access the courses during the day.'

Most attendees were in the 35 to 54 age range, with the youngest in their early-mid 20s, and the oldest in his 60s. Graham made a few adaptations to the course, altering a few of his PowerPoint images in the 'Self-Image' session to make them more suitable for a male audience. Some of the quotes were also changed to make them more relevant, as were some of the foods featured in the 'Sugar Quiz'. Otherwise, the content and delivery was kept pretty much the same.

Members of the public heard about the course through a number of pieces in the local press and radio, posters and flyers, and other local health projects. The choice of venue was made to attract footballer fans, not necessarily just Stoke City supporters, and was seen as more appealing for men in general. 8 out of 12 attendees went on the tour of the stadium on completion of the course.

The feedback from the participants was very positive, with one attendee saying, 'It has given us lots of useful information and has been very enjoyable.' A strong bond developed between most of the men, creating a real sense of momentum to continue meeting up on a regular basis - hitherto not a feature of the other (mixed) workshops. Another participant says, 'Everyone in the group was very involved. This helped me to relax and participate.'

Three or four of the men have gone on to take advantage of the 'Match day walk', part of the local 'Closer to home, circular walks' scheme, where they meet at a local hotel fairly near to the football stadium and go to the match together. Five have attended a gentle exercise session run by the Workers' Educational Association, while a majority is currently organizing their own walk around local beauty spot, Rudyard Lake.

As Graham concludes, 'We are very pleased at the feedback from the men-only sessions. If we were to run them again, we would perhaps promote them a little differently. From experience, we'd target sports programmes on the radio, and the drivetime slots as well other sports venues across the city.'

## Case Study Asian 'Cook & Eat' Sessions Equality House, Hanley

This five-week course was attended by a group of 6 ladies, all of whom were already reasonably confident home cooks eager to learn new ways to cook for their families.

Before the course started the facilitator, Shamshad Akhtar, researched how Asian women cooked at home, and ensured that each session focused on cooking healthy meals from scratch, and included the national '5 a day' recommendations if at all possible.

Shamshad states “the ladies don’t want to learn how to cook a curry - they already know this!” And so, the course covered a wide range of recipes including vegetarian lasagne with no salt or fat but with added lentils and spices such as ginger, garlic and chilli for flavour. All the ladies agreed that the dish was really tasty and that the lack of fat and salt wasn’t noticeable.



There was lots of emphasis on encouraging the children to be involved in cooking and using healthy recipes that are appealing to children - such as pizza. As one lady told us “I’ve wanted to make this (pizza) for ages and now I have the confidence to try it at home”.

All attendees were encouraged to be involved in every stage during the preparation and encouraged to ask questions during the making of a particular dish. Ingredients were explained and alternatives suggested as were possible adaptations and alternative uses for the recipes - for example, a pizza base topping could also be used as a pasta sauce. Attendees were also been encouraged to cascade the information taken away from the sessions by telling their children about the tips picked up.

The sessions concluded with the participants sitting down to eat and enjoy the food that they had cooked, and if time allowed, the group took the opportunity to fit in a healthy walk around the local park.

## **'Cook & Eat' Session Recipe** **Low fat vegetarian pizza**

### Ingredients:

Mixed vegetables - carrots, spinach, courgettes and 1 chopped onion, or any preferred veg.

1 Tin Tomatoes Chopped

1 cup of self-raising flour and 1 cup of Brown Bread flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

50g-100g of low fat strong cheese grated

1 teaspoon of mixed spices

1 teaspoon oregano

1 teaspoon of olive oil

### Method:

Preheat oven to 180°C Gas Mark 4

Add all chopped vegetables to a lidded saucepan, add one cup of water, cover and cook on the hob on a low heat for 3-4 minutes until tender.

Put both the brown and self-raising flour into a bowl and add a cup of water, mixed spices and the baking powder. Knead together into a soft dough.

Divide dough into 3 or 4 small balls and flatten out either with hands or a rolling pin.

Lightly brush a baking tray with oil, put the bases onto the tray and part-bake in the oven for 3-4 minutes until they start to rise.

Put the cooked vegetables into a liquidiser and blend until a smooth consistency is achieved. If the sauce is too thin return to the pan and reduce sauce over a medium heat until thickened.

Remove pizza bases from the oven, spoon the thickened vegetable sauce over the bases and cover with grated cheese and sprinkle with oregano.

Put the pizzas back into the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes until cheese is melted and golden.

## **Conclusion**

The Living Well Stoke on Trent project has clearly demonstrated the benefits of partnership working across three key cross-cutting themes over a sustained period of time.

Mental wellbeing, healthy eating and physical wellbeing all play a vital role in determining the health and wellbeing of the individual and of local communities as a whole. Over a period of three years, the project has worked across the diverse localities of the City of Stoke-on-Trent to improve people's knowledge and understanding of mental wellbeing; raised awareness among the local population that increased levels of participation in physical activity contribute to better overall health and wellbeing and widened access to opportunities for healthier nutrition. It has also led to improved levels of support within the community and increased the involvement of those communities in delivering projects and programmes.

Over 2,000 people have been reached by the different aspects of the portfolio, which is a testament to the relevance and accessibility of the different activities for people from all backgrounds and all ages. By building the capacity of agencies and communities through consistent engagement with the local population, Living Well Stoke on Trent has helped to secure a solid foundation in the community for its key themes, thereby ensuring that the lasting legacy of the project will be felt for many years to come across the City of Stoke-on-Trent.



