

Getting Started

Foreword

Living Well is one of 14 multi-million pound projects supported by the Big Lottery Fund through our Well-being programme.

Each of these ground-breaking initiatives highlights the relationship between physical activity, a healthy diet and mental well-being.

I have been personally impressed by the partnership approach, which is at the heart of Living Well, with people and organisations from across the West Midlands working together to tackle health inequalities. Activities will take place across the whole region, urban and rural, delivered by voluntary and community organisations, health bodies and local authorities.

These partnerships will be crucial to ensure the long-term impact and sustainability of this Lottery investment for years to come.

This £6.8 million grant is an excellent example of Lottery funding making a real difference to communities.

John Taylor
Head of West Midlands Region
Big Lottery Fund

Living Well Launches in West Midlands

Sally Gunnell, OBE was amongst a line up of true super heroes stepping up to support the launch of the Living Well in the West Midlands portfolio in Birmingham earlier this year.



Sally Gunnell and Superheroes celebrate launch

Living Well is a £6.8 million BIG Lottery funded initiative managed by the West Midlands Regional Assembly. It aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people in the region in three key areas: physical activity, mental health and healthy eating. There are currently 33 projects across the region, using interesting and innovative approaches - from "green gyms" to wellbeing workshops and martial arts classes.

Councillor Steve Eling, Chair of the Regional Health Partnership, said, "We hope to make people more aware of the link between the importance of healthy eating, physical activity and good mental health. Our projects will encourage people to take part in exercise and healthy eating that can help improve their physical and mental well being no matter what the age."

Being-well in Sandwell

Being-well is a very ambitious project tackling all three strands of the Living Well Portfolio. Managed by the West Bromwich YMCA, Being-well encompasses a wide range of evidenced-based innovative services that will be delivered at three facilities within Sandwell.



Carl Chinn and Sally Gunnell at the WBYMCA

A healthy eating café has been established with an educational outreach remit and food interest group that is directly linked to Sandwell's food policy team.

It was this café that saw the introduction of the Bright Light Therapy - one of its greatest successes so far. Bright Light therapy offsets low light induced

depression and Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and was very well received by participants in April. Interest has been so great that they will be reintroducing the service in July.

Being-well is addressing physical activity through Tai Chi and Hatha Yoga, particularly aimed at older people, and with Streetwise fitness routines including dance mat and sportswall programmes.

A variety of methods and techniques are being used to improve mental well-being in the area including group-delivered training in professional deep relaxation and awareness enhancing techniques as well as a course of aromatherapy therapeutic massages for individuals to reduce trait anxiety and improve awareness.

Wellbeing for Life Gets Older People Moving

Wellbeing for Life is aimed at the 50+ age group and it's delivering a preventative programme to provide physical and mental stimulation to improve the general well being of older people enabling them to live a more active life with less falls and accidents.

Managed by Age Concern Wolverhampton, the programme was launched at Grove School, Wolverhampton, on 5th February this year. Already over 1000 beneficiaries have taken part in more than 100 events ran across the city in various community venues. Fully qualified tutors carry out the physical activity programmes, which mainly consist of extend exercises and mature moves.

Diane Addis, Project Development Co-ordinator said 'The project is proving to be hugely successful. We are expecting to

increase the number of beneficiaries taking part in sustained exercise even further over the coming months. To do this we are now looking for volunteers, who we will train, to deliver exercise and healthy living sessions'.

For more information contact Diane Addis on 01902 572071.

Living Well Wolverhampton is also delivering two other programmes, Nutrition Training and Farm to Fork.



At the launch of Wellbeing for Life in Wolverhampton

Stoke Stages Successful Healthy Thinking Conference

Stoke-on-Trent Living Well project held its first successful Healthy Thinking conference in May 2008 at the Hope Centre. 100 delegates attended the conference organised by Media Action Group for Mental Health, one of Stoke Living Well's key partners.

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 activities.



Delegates captivated by interactive presentations in Stoke

Positive Start For Coventry Body & Mind

Coventry Body and Mind held its official launch in May this year at the Salvation Army in the City Centre. BAFTA winning and world-renowned writer and martial artist Geoff Thompson attended the event alongside members of the project and its beneficiaries.

Body and Mind is a twelve-week programme, delivering advice and activities on health and well-being. It aims to improve a person's knowledge of dietary issues, encourage healthier choices, increase levels of physical activity and promote a better understanding of a person's mental health and well-being.

Body and Mind has been active since January and has already seen over 60 people access the programme. Projects developments have included the formation of a group called "The Next Step". This group gives ongoing support to individuals who have completed the course, from both peers and staff, to encourage continued improvements to lifestyle.

The first volunteers for the service have also been appointed including a service user who recently completed the twelve-week course.

In the Spotlight

Living Well in the West Midlands will be holding its annual conference this year on Monday 17th November 2008 in Birmingham.



Birmingham to host annual conference

Although, the location and full line up is yet to be confirmed speakers approached include Liam Byrne MP, Minister for the region and Dr Rashmi Shukla, Regional Director of Public Health/Medical Director.

The conference will focus on emerging case studies from the first year of the Portfolio and concentrate on the themes of mental well being, particularly on workplace health, physical activity as well as food and nutrition. There will be

a chance to evaluate achievements so far and opportunities to discuss how the portfolio moves forward into its second year. The conference will also examine the sustainability of projects for the future.

Anyone interested in attending the conference should forward details to Virginie Labourier at v.labourier@wmra.gov.uk.

Further information will be distributed nearer the time.

Top Tip for Living Well

For this issue we bring you a healthy recipe prepared for the WBYMCA café, the day nurseries and out of school clubs.

Banana Cake
(Typically serves up to 6)

Ingredients:

450g mashed ripe bananas
50g dried dates
100ml sunflower oil
100g raisins
57g rolled oat flakes
150g whole-wheat flour

Method

Mix all the ingredients together – the consistency should be soft and moist. Spoon into a greased 450g loaf tin and bake for 50-60 minutes at 180°C or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Enjoy!

Forthcoming Events

- Stoke on Trent – Living Well Physical Wellness Workshop
13th June 2008 – 11th July 2008
The Observatory, Hanley Stoke
- Action for Well Being in Warwickshire
Official Launch – July 2008
- Feeling Good Health Awareness Day
28th July 2008 10am - 2pm
Surestart Palfrey Childrens Centre, Walsall
- Living Well in West Midlands Annual Conference
17th November 2008
Birmingham

The Living Well West Midlands team would like to thank everyone, from Communication Leads, Project Managers to the volunteers on the ground, for helping to deliver this portfolio. It is thanks to all the hardwork and dedication of the many people involved across the region that we have been able to make Living Well in the West Midlands happen.

Finally, if anyone is interested in appearing in future issues then please contact Suzi Mewes at Ignition PR on suzi@ignitionpr.co.uk or 01788 546644.

Living Well West Midlands

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