

Foreword

Living Well West Midlands has already benefited nearly 9,000 people in our region to date and as the portfolio moves into the second half of its three year programme the twenty nine projects will now be thinking about the future and their sustainability.

The Living Well portfolio provides really good examples of community based activity and partnership working. In particular the projects work with many hard to reach and socially, economically excluded groups. It is important to help sustain good models of practice and with respect to this, the role of commissioning, which is already progressing rapidly, will be particularly important for these projects.

It is therefore, of vital importance that we help strengthen the understanding of commissioning and its processes by providers, as we move into the future.

Dr Rashmi Shukla CBE
Regional Director of Public Health
Medical Director of the Strategic Health Authority

BIG Lottery Fund's Chairman sees Living Well West Midlands in action

The Chairman of the BIG Lottery Fund for the UK, Professor Sir Clive Booth, recently visited one of Living Well West Midlands projects as part of a visit to the region.

Sir Clive, along with England Chair, Sanjay Dighe, and general member, Rajay Naik, visited Coventry Body and Mind in action at the Salvation Army building, where classes for the project are held. Here, he met service users taking part in light activity and also talked to Project Workers and the Director of the Living Well West Midlands Portfolio. The visit formed part of a day long tour of Lottery funded projects in and around Coventry.

Sanjay Dighe, England Chair of the BIG Lottery Fund, said, "At Coventry Body and Mind I witnessed people who have mental health problems and concurrent obesity or unhealthy lifestyles working to improve their healthy eating, physical activity and emotional well-being levels. As I was involved in the decision making of this Well-being grant, it was good to see the end result and the good work that is happening."

Living Well West Midlands has already benefited thousands of people throughout



Left to Right: Sir Clive Booth (UK Chair), Sanjay Dighe (England Board Member) and John Taylor (Head of Region – West Midlands) see Coventry Body & Mind in action

the region and the portfolio is currently half way through its three year programme. As it heads into the second half of its planned activity the portfolio will be looking at ways to showcase its diverse range of projects to commissioners across the NHS and Local Authorities and support projects to secure their future by tackling sustainability.

Putting Wellbeing on the Menu

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.

This year's Annual Stoke on Trent conference focused on the important role that healthy eating plays in determining our lifestyles. The conference was organized by Media Action Group for Mental Health on behalf of the local partnership, and saw more than 200 delegates 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 ADAY 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.'

Feedback from participants included:

A young man with a youth group said "I have never tried fruit until the 5 a day smoothie session and now I am going to ask my mum to buy a blender."

An elderly couple saw an article about the conference in the local paper said " we have never been given the opportunity to attend anything like this... we have learned so much about portion sizes and the way that food can impact on children's behaviour and will be putting this information to practical use with the grandchildren."

The ladies from LASS a local support group, said "were going home via ASDA and we are going to pick up bags of frozen fruit and other suitable ingredients to try our own recipes out".



Toni Smith FSA, Zena Lynch, Director of Living Well West Midlands, Heather & Helen from *Scoffing* and Tom Briggs from *Blenda Venda* at the Britannia Stadium.

Sharing experiences with Wellbeing Portfolios throughout the UK

Living Well West Midlands recently hosted a gathering of the Wellbeing Fund Portfolio Leads at the WMRA offices in Birmingham.

Meeting for the fourth time, this group saw leads from other national and regional wellbeing portfolios come together to share experiences and exchange good practice.

During this meeting various matters were discussed including lessons learned so far, evaluations both locally and nationally and perhaps one of the most important issues, how are the portfolios tackling the issue of sustainability, particularly in the current economic climate, when budgets are being tightened.

"These meetings are of real value because all of these portfolios experience similar issues. By discussing them we can work together to share solutions rather than working in isolation to resolve them," said Zena Lynch, Director of Living Well West Midlands.

With two more meetings planned for the remainder of this year other areas for future discussion will include joint working around commissioning, key learning points from emerging evaluation data and influencing emerging policy such as the New Horizons work on Mental Wellbeing. If anyone would like details of the other Wellbeing Portfolios please contact us.

Getting Fit and Ready for Commissioning

Through consultation with projects from within the Living Well Portfolio, it has become apparent that the main challenges faced by projects moving forward into the future beyond 2010 are centred around commissioning.

Living Well West Midlands recently held a one-day workshop open to projects, third sector organisations, NHS and local authority staff to discuss and support understanding of World Class Commissioning and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.

Sarah Crawley, Director of the Institute of Entrepreneurs, took the delegates through the role of World Class Commissioning from the third sector's point of view. She discussed the opportunities, the challenges and the specific points of commissioning that reflects and sets out some of the roles the third sector can play in the process.

Following on was a brief presentation on Social Enterprises, led by Dave Lane from the Institute of Entrepreneurs who outlined what some of the key aspects of social enterprises are. He explained the value of social enterprises with sustainability at their core, as they are dependent on a certain level of income being reinvested back into the project/business.

The final presentation highlighted the West Midlands Regional Development Centre's free database toolkit that can be utilised to help support organisations and projects to provide the evidence base that commissioners look for by evidencing effectiveness and results. Paul Dodd, from NHS West Midlands Regional Development Centre, took delegates through the tools and explained how it had been developed and how it could be used.

Chris Hammond from the Department of Health also went on to discuss the importance of guidelines for commissioners on the minimum requirements for organisations tendering to deliver services. Work has begun on the development of baseline standards to help commissioners ensure that organisations' internal structures are secure. The Third Sector Baseline Entry Standards (TSBES) is still in the development stages and a report on this will be available soon.

After the presentations delegates had the opportunity to attend two out of the four workshops held. Here's a round up of the four workshops and what they discussed:

World Class Commissioning – What is expected (Led by Sarah Crawley)

This explored in more depth the issues that are faced by the third sector when involved in commissioning. It explained the difference between commissioning and procurement. One of the main issues highlighted was that the sector needed to work on its visibility with commissioners through marketing and profile raising.

Social Enterprise – structures for organisations to take forward (Led by Dave Lane)

This workshop went into more detail about social enterprises and the different kinds of legal structure that organisations could look at. It particularly went into detail about the Community Interest Company (CIC) which was a new 'off the peg' limited company structure specifically designed for social enterprises with secure 'asset lock' and focus on community benefit.

Gathering Evidence for Commissioners (Led by Chris Hammond and Fraser Battye, GHK)

This workshop discussed the different kinds of evidence and information that would be important for commissioning, particularly those with economic values including Social Return on Investment and Spend to Save. There was discussion around the value of kitemarks and standards and how important that would be to individuals in relation to personalised budgets.

Partnership, consortia and mergers – pitfalls and issues (Led by Paul Dodd and Elaine Russell)

This workshop looked at some of the advantages and disadvantages of partnerships and consortia, a topical issue given the recent funding cutbacks at local authority level. In light of commissioning, it was also discussed whether consortia provides a way of creating more opportunities. It was suggested that partnerships and consortia could share risks and give a louder and more effective voice in commissioning. However, it was also decided that consortia should evolve and not be forced together to ensure longevity. It was also highlighted how important it is to make sure the correct checks are made of other organisations you might be considering working with and not to assume that a large organisation is financially savvy or has the right structures in place.

Paul Dodd, from the NHS West Midlands Regional Development Centre said, "We are keen to develop the capacity around the community and voluntary sector provision of community based health services. Understanding commissioners' needs and expectations is important. This event was a good opportunity to look at some of the many issues arising including baseline entry standards, quality standards, evidence gathering, partnership and consortia issues. We hope to build from this base and more workshops/training events are being arranged throughout the coming year to support providers and commissioners in relation to the third sector."

If you want a simple explanation about the database toolkit and what it does please visit:

<http://www.its-services.org.uk/wmrhc/mental-health/commissioning/third-sector/third-sector-resources/activity-and-outcomes-database/>

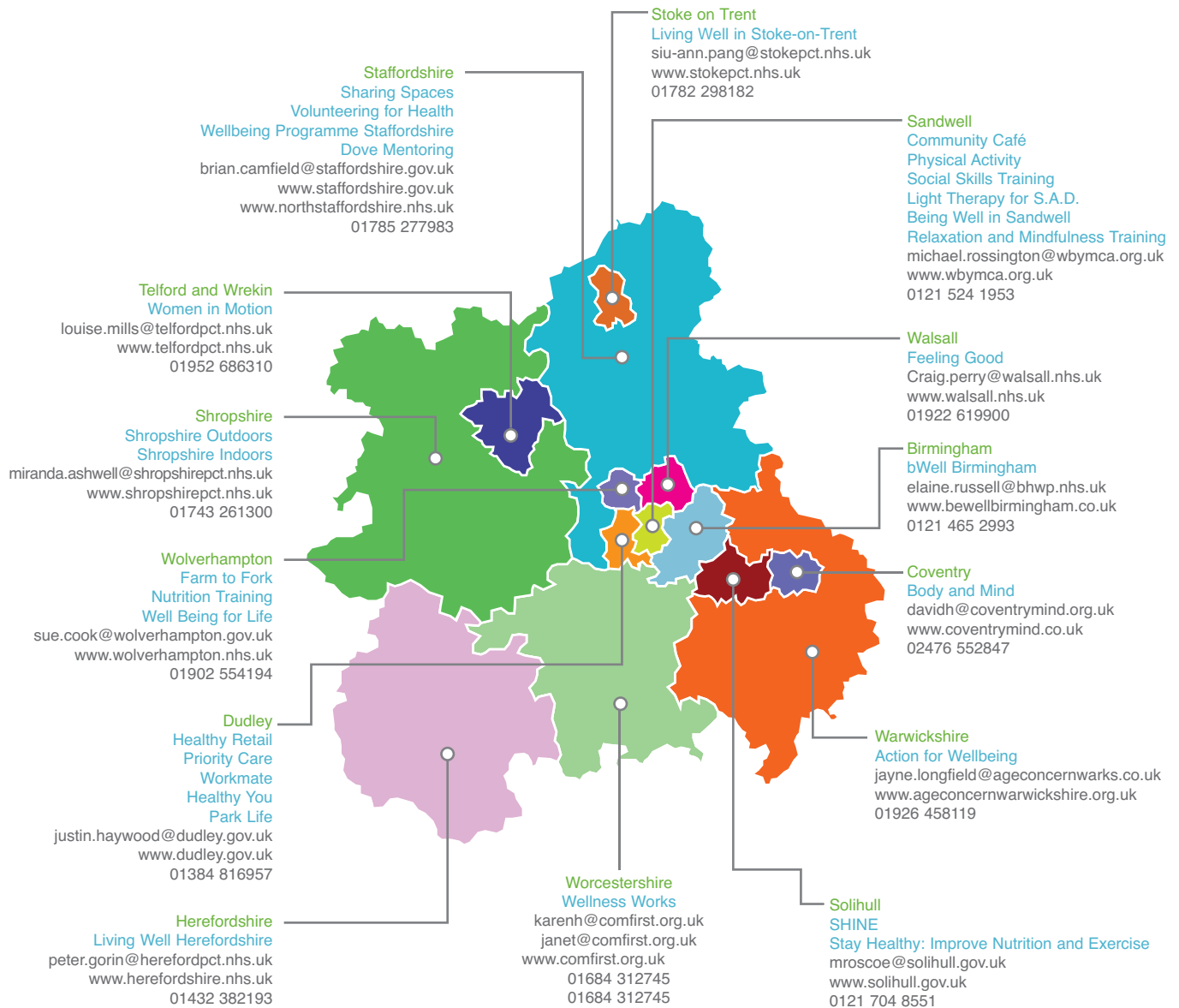
The database direct link is:

<http://www.its-services.org.uk/wmrhc/mental-health/commissioning/third-sector/third-sector-resources/activity-and-outcomes-database/activity-and-outcomes-downloads/>

When you click on the link you can also access all the set up guidance and FAQs from the blue panel on the left of the page. You can also access all the set up guidance and FAQs from the blue panel on the left of the page.

Getting in touch

Living Well West Midlands has 29 projects across the region. Listed below are the names of the projects and the contact details for the 14 Regional Communication Leads.



Dates for your Diary

Mental Well-being & Commissioning

Living Well West Midlands Annual Conference

22 October 2009, The Centennial Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham

Living Well West Midlands will be hosting its second Annual Conference in October this year. The theme of this year's conference will be mental well-being and commissioning. The conference will include a number of guest speakers as well as workshops for delegates.

Further details will be posted on the Living Well West Midlands website:
www.livingwellwestmidlands.org

Living Well West Midlands

For More Information

Telephone

0121 245 0196

Email

e.smith@wmra.gov.uk

Website

www.livingwellwestmidlands.org