

## Annual Conference Newsletter Special

### Foreword

Living Well West Midlands has seen 29 bespoke projects begin delivering successful health interventions to people throughout our region this year.

Crucially projects are delivering in a wide variety of settings throughout the region and maximising the impact they have on our population. For example, projects are reaching into workplaces to encourage employers and employees to think about health and well-being issues and how this will impact upon improved productivity and reduced sickness.

As Chair of the Regional Health Partnership I am proud to be associated with the Living Well portfolio and to have chaired the first Living Well West Midlands Annual Conference. Through the successful delivery of this initiative we are helping the region to deliver its objectives of improving mental well-being, diet and increased levels of physical activity; helping to close the health inequalities gap as outlined in our Health and Well Being Strategy, launched in January this year.

Councillor Steve Eling  
Chair of the Regional Health Partnership

## First Annual Conference Goes for Gold

'Am I the best version of me that I possibly can be at this moment?'  
Steve Williams MBE

Living Well West Midlands celebrated its first year achievements at its Annual Conference in Birmingham on Monday 17 November. Double Olympic Gold Medallist Steve Williams MBE made a lasting impression on delegates when he delivered the keynote speech of the day. He was joined by other speakers, Dr Rashmi Shukla CBE, Regional Director of Public Health/Medical Director, Olwen Dutton, Chief Executive of West Midlands Regional Assembly and West Midlands Local Government Association, Vince Mayne, West Midlands Chair of the 2012 Health Activity Legacy Group and Nic Marks, Founder of the Centre for Well-being, New Economics Foundation, who provided valuable insight into the wider policy context in which the Living Well projects are operating.

Regional leaders from across the health sector including PCT's, local authorities and representatives from all of the 29 projects in the portfolio gathered at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens where they discussed and contributed their views on the key areas of healthy eating, physical activity and mental well-being. A cross-section of projects also gave presentations to the conference examining their individual journeys so far.



Living Well West Midlands Annual Conference  
Ketnote Speakers at Botanical Gardens,  
Birmingham

There were fantastic networking opportunities throughout the day including the chance to forge stronger links with regional and national organisations and in particular to discuss the links with the London 2012 agenda.

The Conference provided a platform for delegates to feed in to some of the critical issues facing projects into the future, including discussing the process of mainstreaming projects and examining the lessons emerging from project evaluation. Read on to find out more about the outcomes can be found on the next page.

# Conference Calls for Shared Solutions

The first Annual Conference of Living Well West Midlands was attended by more than 170 delegates from across the region.



During the day delegates had the opportunity to provide their thoughts and feedback on what will be needed to support work in the three key areas of the portfolio – physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being – and what the delegates believed would be the key priorities to be addressed as we move into the future.

Consultation by commissioning bodies before projects and programmes were devised and launched was an area that many delegates felt was important. Indeed, ensuring commissioners know about community ill health prevention initiatives' and how to bring them into mainstream delivery was vital to ensure future sustainability. It was recognised that services should be available at the point of need and that a robust evidence base be in place to support the need for projects or programmes. Many delegates also believed that PCTs in particular would need to be more flexible when working with the local community sector.

Another priority identified as vital for taking projects forward beyond the three years of this portfolio, and indeed for any new

projects in the future, would be the need to establish multi-sectorial partnerships. Telford & Wrekin's project, Women In Motion, explained during their presentation just how important partnerships had become to the success of their project so far and how establishing these partnerships at the beginning would play an important role in securing sustainability.

"The theme that seemed evident from the feedback we received from delegates, during both the round table discussions and the workshops, was that there is a need for shared solutions and that groups be it, PCTs, Local Authorities, third sector voluntary organisations and even the government, need to be working together to find the solutions to the problems we face going into the future," said Paul Winterbottom, Director of Living Well West Midlands.

This Conference provided a great opportunity to bring people who are involved in decision making together with those who deliver projects on the ground to discuss the issues facing us in the coming years.



# Dr Rashmi Shukla CBE looks at public health policy into the future

Dr Rashmi Shukla CBE, Regional Director of Public Health - Medical Director of the Strategic Health Authority, opened the first Annual Conference by addressing "High Quality Care for All" and World Class Commissioning.



Dr Rashmi Shukla CBE opens First Annual Conference

Dr Shukla discussed the need to tackle health inequalities in the region and narrow the health gap between disadvantaged groups, communities and the rest of the regions population and on improving health overall.

Dr Shukla explained how Local Strategic Partnerships would be central to tackling health inequalities as we move into the future and how they would allow the various partners to work together to reshape services and narrow the health gap locally. Dr Shukla then went on to discuss the concept of World Class Commissioning and how this was already progressing rapidly. This concept would provide a framework to enhance the role of Primary Care Trusts as strategic commissioners. She stressed how PCTs cannot work in isolation and the importance of working alongside GPs and other primary care clinicians.

Dr Shukla finished her keynote speech explaining how Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, which came into force in April 2008, would establish the current and future health and well-being needs of our region, leading to improved outcomes and reductions in health inequalities.

## Olwen Dutton addresses the importance of workplace well-being

In the second speech, Olwen Dutton, set out to highlight the impact of well-being in the workplace and the effect it has on the economy.

The Chief Executive of West Midlands Regional Assembly and West Midlands Local Government Association explained how employers, government and health professionals are now becoming more active in the promotion of health and well-being, particularly when issues such as stress, depression and back pain are costing employers millions of pounds every year. Today's new challenges call for cultural change in the workplace rather than legislative action. 'When you identify root problems encountered in the workplace, it becomes easier to tackle them more effectively'

Worklessness is progressively damaging, leading to more sickness, mental illness, disability, increased use of medication, higher hospital admission rates and

shorter life expectancy. There is strong evidence that returning back to work has the capacity to improve health, to the same extent that being out of work can damage health. Olwen concluded

that the workplace is where the majority of people spend most time of their time so employee health and well-being should be a high priority for employers.



Olwen Dutton discussed A Healthy Workplace

# Nic Marks discusses Five Ways to Well-being

The third speaker of the morning was Nic Marks, founder of the Centre for Well-being at the New Economics Foundation (nef).

Nic theorised that mental well-being is a dynamic state in which the individual is able to develop their potential to work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others and contribute to their community.

Nic went on to summarise the main findings of the Foresight Report which found that small increases in well-being produce a decrease in mental health problems. Early intervention was said to be crucial for reducing many of the mental ill-health problems that are costing the economy billions of pounds each year.

Nic also outlined Five Ways to Well-being – the mental equivalent to 5-a-day.

Connect with people around you; be active; take notice and be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling;



Nic explains Five Ways to well-being

keep learning new things and give back to others. Nic concluded that the economy is losing out to mental ill-health

and the focus should be on recovery and how people function to overcome it.

## Vincent Mayne asks, how can we harness the power of 2012?

Following a brief coffee break Vincent Mayne, Chair of the West Midlands 2012 Health Activity Legacy Group, resumed the Conference.



Vincent Mayne looks ahead to 2012

He spoke about the lessons we can learn from the Beijing Olympics as well as previous Olympic Games and explained that the 2012 Games should provide an opportunity to encourage more people to be active and to do things to benefit their health.

Vincent raised the question 'how can we harness 2012 to deliver a physical activity legacy'. He explained the regional plan is to get 2 million people more active by 2012 and to embrace the spirit of the Games to inspire and motivate communities and organisations in the West Midlands to commit to a future of increasingly active, healthier lifestyles and environments.

Vincent explained that the legacy of 2012 are health and physical activity and that it is about the social benefits not just economic ones; it is about culture as well as sport and most importantly, how we need to believe in 2012 as a vehicle to transform the lives of people in all areas.

# Double Olympic Gold Medallist inspires audience

Watching the Beijing Olympic final of the coxless four rowing team as they beat Australia in the closing stages and hearing the anticipation and excitement building in the commentators voice set the scene for the Keynote speech of the Annual Conference.



Steve Williams at the Annual Conference

Double Olympic Gold Medal Rower, Steve Williams MBE spoke about his feelings as the team GB won at Beijing and how the Olympics Games can not only capture the imagination of many but how it can also provide inspiration for people of all ages and encourage them to take part in physical activity.

Steve went on to describe waiting on the start line for the Olympic final you are left with your own thoughts – excitement, anticipation and of course anxiety and self-doubt. It is then Steve explains, that you must ask yourself, 'Am I the best version of me that I possibly can be at this moment'.

To get to this point it takes four years of training not just physically, you must look after your body in terms of diet and nutrition and of course most importantly mental preparation. Steve took the

audience through his demanding physical regime, which sees him train seven days a week with only one day off each month. An early start sees him on the water by 7.30am where he'll cover over 20km. After lunch he will carry on with two hours of weight training and a further 3 hours on the rowing machine.

The question everyone asked was, how does a person stick to such a rigorous routine? Steve loves what he does and that he always remembers to connect to the fun he had when he first started the sport. He went on to say that as well as the physical preparation it is also important to mentally prepare. He said 'a happy rower makes a fast rower' and emphasised the importance mental strength has on an athlete's ability to achieve. He explained that if you set yourself a clear goal for what you want to achieve and have other targets along the



way, which you can measure, this inspires and motivates you to keep going and this is true of whether you are going for gold at the Olympics or you have your own goal you are working towards.

Steve also works with a nutritionist to make sure he eats five meals a day including, two breakfasts as it is important you receive the right energy at the right time of day. Hydration is also important as any level of dehydration can affect your performance by 5% - that is 15-20 valuable seconds to a rower. It not only has physiological effects on the body but it also affects your mental concentration.

Steve concluded that physical preparation is important but it is also what's going on behind the scenes, the self doubt versus self belief and that's the difference between winning silver or winning gold.

# A Taste of the Living Well Portfolio



Women in Motion team meet Steve Williams

## Women In Motion in Telford & Wrekin

Sarah Hughes, Health Promotion Specialist - Physical Activity and Inclusion, gave a summary of the project, its aims and how it has progressed so far. The project targets women in deprived areas to encourage them to take part in, as well as train to lead, physical activity classes. Sarah explained that childcare and financial barriers often prevent women in Telford and Wrekin from taking part in physical activities, which can lead to health issues. The project has developed solutions to these barriers through its key partnerships that it has been able to get the project really underway.

The presentation ended with Jude Bailey, Community Activator for the project, telling her story of how receiving a leaflet through the door from her local PCT changed her life. It encouraged her to train, teach in her own community, become a co-ordinator for community aerobics and how now she has gone on to become a Community Activator for the Women in Motion project and will be encouraging the next generation of women into activity.



Brian Camfield addresses Annual Conference

## Staffordshire tackles Mental Well-being across all projects

Brian Camfield, County Manager, Healthier Communities, began the presentation from the Staffordshire region by explaining how he had become involved with the original bid to BIG Lottery and followed it right through to now delivering four projects in his region: Mentoring into the Mainstream, Volunteering for Health, Sharing Spaces and Well-being Workshops.

Brian went on to explain how there is a cohesion between all of the projects which they are running and then introduced Mark Lowndes, who spoke about how he overcame obstacles in his own life and how he has used his experiences to go on and help others as the Programme Lead for the Well-being Workshops in Staffordshire.

Brian went on to discuss the lessons learned so far including how we must expect processes to evolve before and after grant approval and also that we should encourage synergies to be found. He finished by looking ahead at how the projects will look to build links as they move to become sustainable and continue to benefit the community after the initial funding runs out. He concluded that we should expect positive outcomes!



Steve Williams finds out more about Wellness Works

## Wellness Works in Worcestershire

Karen Humphreys and Amanda Wright from Community First, who lead on the delivery of the Wellness Works project in Worcestershire, opened their presentation with humour to draw attention to the fact that mental ill-health is still seen as a taboo subject, often making people uncomfortable. Karen explained that this project is aiming to reduce the stigma associated with mental ill-health by working with employers as well as employees to help achieve the best possible working environments.

Amanda Wright went on to explain that 60% of Line Managers underestimate the stress and anxiety experienced by their staff in the workplace. This project aims to help people 'thrive at work, not just survive.' Wellness Works listens and responds to each individual organisation. They are looking at how to influence employers for the long haul and not just offering a quick solution. Amanda also suggested that we need to come up with ways to reach out to those communities that think negatively of people with mental ill-health, rather than just preaching to the converted.

# Workshops in Action



David Elliott discusses Food Matters

## Food Matters led by David Elliott

This workshop gave delegates the opportunity to learn about the latest developments relating to health and well-being in food policy as well as share their views. Three key points were raised during the workshop. Firstly, delegates were encouraged to sign up and support the Change 4 Life campaign. Secondly, those who promote food and nutrition should ensure that they provide consistent messages so as not to confuse and discourage people. The third key point explained that social marketing could be used to articulate messages to those who are less likely to change their lifestyle. Finally, delegates discussed other national programmes to which they could align their projects too.

## The Route to 2012 – Inspiring our Communities led by Suzanne Gardener & Steve Williams MBE

This workshop identified the way in which the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games can be used to encourage communities to get active and healthy. Many important points were raised during the discussions including the need for role models to influence people to take part in activities. Delegates agreed that people should engage in fun sports that they enjoy, as this will help encourage them to stay motivated and enthusiastic. Taster sessions would also be useful to make sports more accessible. As well as making use of the Change 4 life campaign, it was proposed that we need to co-ordinate marketing to set out clear and concise messages to the public.



Delegates share their views on Route to 2012



Delegates evaluate the Five Ways to Well-being

## Five Ways to Well-being led by Nic Marks & Kate O'Hara (CSIP)

The New Economic Foundation (NEF) was commissioned to create between four and six simple things people could do for themselves to promote their mental health and well-being. From this came the Five Ways to Well-being. This workshop focused on how to make best use of the findings from the Foresight Report and it looked at how the Five Ways can be used through practice. The delegates agreed there is room for further work in this area and opinion on the benefits of the Five Ways to Well-being was mixed. Another avenue that could be explored would be to encourage an organisation that might be working on one of the five ways to then include the other four to increase health and well-being.

## Evaluating the Living Well portfolio led by Fraser Battye, GHK Consulting

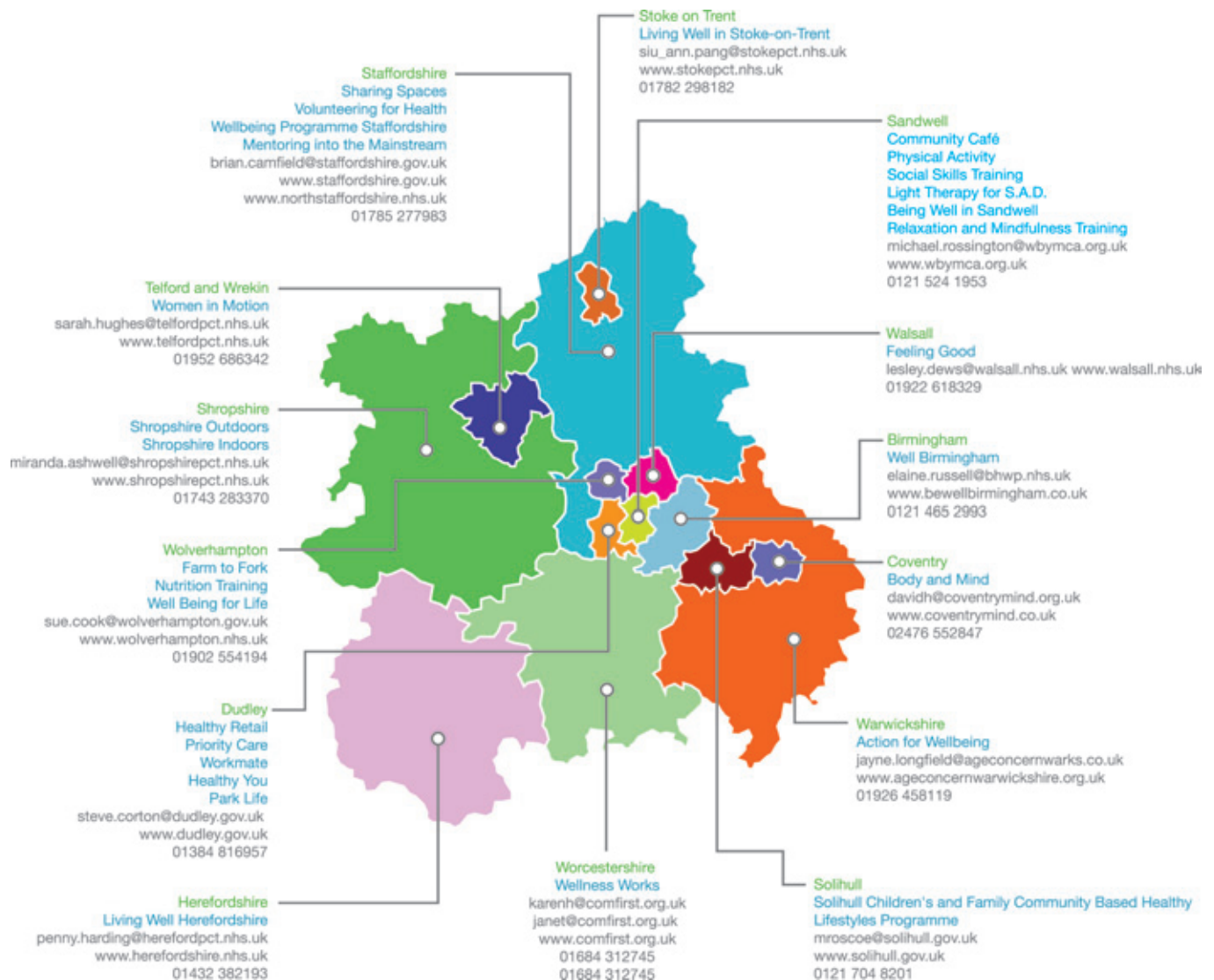
This workshop was led by GHK Consulting Ltd, who undertake the monitoring and evaluation of projects in the Living Well West Midlands Portfolio. The workshop discussed the challenges of measuring changes in 'well-being' at individual, project and regional level as well as the approaches and tools GHK has used in addressing these issues. Fraser discussed how outcomes within this area are often intangible but stated that qualitative data would create a sound platform for measuring improvement in this area.



Workshop explores evaluation and monitoring approaches

# 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.



## BIG Lottery need your help

Over the next few months Big Lottery Fund will be asking you to help shape their funding policies. The consultation will guide how Big awards funds to the projects that help make the biggest impact with your Lottery pound. It will determine new funding priorities and how it will fund projects between 2009-2015. 'BIG thinking', the UK-wide consultation will begin on 17 November 2008, this will run until the end of February 2009. If you would like to contribute to the consultation please visit <http://www.big-thinking.org.uk/>

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