

## Living Well delivers local innovative approaches

Challenging the health inequalities gap is a key priority for the Living Well West Midlands portfolio and in particular it creates new roles for volunteers, charities, local authorities and the NHS.

The West Midlands Leaders Board has made a number of commitments to the people and businesses of the West Midlands around improving the economic position and showing a local government leadership role in forging new and innovative solutions.

The Living Well portfolio works in a number of ways to address these commitments:

- In particular, several Living Well projects are working to address the issue of workplace wellbeing and some are addressing the issue of skills and aspirations (often through volunteering, or intervention in schools);

- Partnership working with local government and local community organisations is a central component of Living Well – including the development of networks within the West Midlands;
- Many Living Well projects deliver innovative services of the type that might be commissioned by a local authority (or perhaps joint-commissioning with Primary Care Trusts), and / or that can provide authorities with information about the levels of need for particular types of services (that might inform a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for example).

The case studies on the following page illustrate some of these links with practical examples from Living Well.



*Farm to Fork in Wolverhampton links curriculum to outdoor visit to local farm*



*Shropshire Outdoors works with partners to improve accessibility to the countryside*

## Thematic Partnerships

As this note shows, Living Well comprises a set of varied local projects - some of which are related by subject matter or beneficiary 'type'.

The programme's structures have been used to make links between projects – bringing the workplace wellbeing projects together for example – and to facilitate the exchange of learning. These structures have also been used to provide support to projects on specific topics.

For example, the final year has seen a focus on sustainability and workshops have been provided to examine commissioning, bid writing and economic analysis. Providing support at regional level has been more cost and time efficient than doing so in each local authority area.



*Shropshire Outdoors supports adults with learning difficulties in improving their skills*

## Wellness Works – Worcestershire

This project works with employers across Worcestershire and aims to improve their awareness and practice around emotional wellbeing in the workplace.

Despite the recession (many firms concentrating on remaining in operation and treating 'wellbeing' as a lesser concern) the project has succeeded in engaging private sector employers – partly by setting out the business benefits in terms of productivity gains.

The approach has been training-led – e.g. using Health and Employment Law workshops, as a less direct route to talking about stress and well-being in workplace – and has been backed by business support.



One of the lessons here has been to join the two elements of the project up and to concentrate on working with fewer employers in a more intensive way.

## Action for Wellbeing – Warwickshire

This project provides a range of services to improve people's wellbeing in the county - including exercise classes, walking groups and healthy eating courses for parents and children. One of the main elements of the approach has been to try and reduce duplication of services.

The project has therefore targeted particular deprived neighbourhoods and set out to provide services within a broad framework. Providing services in this way has entailed working closely with other agencies – such as schools, Children's Centres and the Primary Care Trust - at local level to discover relevant gaps in services, before establishing schemes to fill these gaps.



## DOVE Mentoring – Staffordshire

The DOVE project works to improve the mental health of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) adults in Staffordshire.

A wide range of services are provided – such as health events, keep-fit sessions and free legal advice (provided in-kind by a local firm) to young black men with mental health problems. One of the main elements of the service is a mentoring service, where beneficiaries are matched with a volunteer mentor.

In addition to the individual-level benefits, the project has also shown commissioners that there is high demand for a culturally-specific and community-based mental health service.



*Workmate in Dudley supports adults with disabilities into the workplace*



*Feeling Good! In Walsall puts mental wellbeing within the South Asian community on the school agenda*



## Women in Motion – Telford & Wrekin

This project aims to get more females physically active, as well as having a focus on providing people with work-related skills. A central part of the project's approach is to recruit volunteers, train and support them to run exercise classes in their area.

These volunteers are recruited from deprived communities, trained by a local college and County Sports Partnership and, to date, 60 have been recruited.

One volunteer noted the following benefits to her: *"I first came in order to improve my general fitness and health after having my baby. I really enjoyed the activities and decided to volunteer with the project where I was supported to get two Level 2 qualifications. At the time I was working in a dead-end job in order to make ends meet, but volunteering made me realise that I would like to pursue a career as a personal trainer."*

The project has received recognition of its work through a number of awards, such as the County Sports 'Energise' Award and BBC Regional Sports Award.

GHK

We would like to acknowledge GHK Limited for their contribution to content of this document.

## Background

The West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) coordinated a successful bid to the BIG Lottery Wellbeing Fund and £6.8 million of BIG Lottery funding was secured. The Living Well Portfolio was established in November 2007 and launched in February 2008. It comprises a series of projects run across the 14 upper tier Local Authority areas in the West Midlands region.

Projects vary tremendously in nature, scale, target groups, activities and funding; they are led by organisations from the public sector, voluntary sector and social enterprise. In terms of focus, there is a strong emphasis on mental wellbeing. The projects are as follows:

Area	Project(s)	Summary Description
Birmingham	<b>bWell</b> mandy.winwood@bhwp.nhs.uk 0121 465 2993	A range of services build around two themes: Communities and Employers. Communities is largely delivered by the third sector and a range of target groups are covered, e.g. survivors of sexual violence. Employers includes training, consultancy and the promotion of the Mindful Employer charter.
Coventry	<b>Body and Mind</b> davidh@coventrymind.org.uk 02476 552847	Delivered by a voluntary sector organisation with close relationships with statutory services, this project offers a one-to-one and group-based sessions as part of a holistic mental and physical health programme.
Dudley	<b>Healthy Retail</b> justin.haywood@dudley.gov.uk 01384 816957	This project is taking a social marketing approach to increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables in a deprived neighbourhood, focusing on a school. Activities include the provision of cook-and-taste style sessions, food vouchers and a mobile food stall.
	<b>Priority Care</b> justin.haywood@dudley.gov.uk 01384 816957	Delivered by a housing association and providing older people who have been referred by their GP / associated professionals with a 'friendly neighbour' to provide a range of social support services.
	<b>Workmate</b> justin.haywood@dudley.gov.uk 01384 816957	Working with employers to promote and support the employment of adults with learning disabilities.
	<b>Healthy You!</b> justin.haywood@dudley.gov.uk 01384 816957	Supporting a group of black and minority ethnic adults with learning disabilities, and carers to access mainstream leisure services.
	<b>Park Life</b> justin.haywood@dudley.gov.uk 01384 816957	Providing an officer to support volunteers to lead a variety of different walks in parks.
Herefordshire	<b>Living Well Herefordshire</b> clare.wichbold@herefordpct.nhs.uk 01432 382193	Range of services targeting young people and their families, including counselling, physical activity and woodland-based sessions. Delivered largely by the voluntary sector.
Sandwell	<b>Being-well in Sandwell</b> michael.rossington@wbymca.org.uk 0121 524 1953	Projects offer a wide range of interventions (e.g. light therapy, yoga) and address each of the three Living Well themes. Delivered by the YMCA to their existing client group and others (e.g. working with nurseries to make their food healthier).
Shropshire	<b>Shropshire Outdoors</b> miranda.ashwell@shropshirepct.nhs.uk 01743 261300	Green-gym activities to improve the wellbeing of adults with learning disabilities and / or mental health conditions; also to improve the support offered to this group by mainstream countryside services. Delivered by the County Council in partnership with local voluntary groups.
	<b>Shropshire Indoors</b> miranda.ashwell@shropshirepct.nhs.uk 01743 261300	Providing a range of physical activities in community-based settings, including sheltered housing. Delivered by a voluntary organisation.
Solihull	<b>SHINE</b> rcartwright@solihull.gov.uk 0121 704 8201	Targeting obese children and their families in Solihull and based around a structured programme of weekly healthy eating / physical activity sessions. Run as a partnership between statutory and voluntary organisations.
Staffordshire	<b>DOVE Mentoring</b> brian.camfield@staffordshire.gov.uk 01785 277983	Supporting volunteers to mentor black and minority ethnic adults with mental health problems. Delivered by a voluntary organisation.
	<b>Wellbeing Programme Staffordshire</b> brian.camfield@staffordshire.gov.uk 01785 277983	Providing a structured series of workshops for people to improve their own mental wellbeing, and that of their organisation.
	<b>Volunteering 4 Health</b> brian.camfield@staffordshire.gov.uk 01785 277983	Supporting people referred from health services and supporting them through volunteering opportunities.
	<b>Sharing Spaces</b> brian.camfield@staffordshire.gov.uk 01785 277983	Providing funding, guidance and materials to support the improvement of school grounds.
Stoke-on-Trent	<b>Living Well in Stoke-on-Trent</b> siu-ann.pang@stokepct.nhs.uk 01782 298182	Delivered as a partnership between statutory and voluntary organisations, activities include healthy eating workshops and large-scale community events to raise awareness of mental health issues.
Telford and Wrekin	<b>Women in Motion</b> mel.parker@telfordpct.nhs.uk 01952 686310	Recruiting and supporting volunteers to deliver physical activity classes in local communities.
Walsall	<b>Feeling Good!</b> craig.perry@walsall.nhs.uk 01922 619900	A range of services, including schools-based counselling sessions, physical activity and creative arts sessions. Some focus on South Asian communities.
Warwickshire	<b>Action for Wellbeing</b> jayne.longfield@ageconcernwarks.co.uk 01926 458119	Led by a voluntary organisation and delivering a wide range of services, including physical activity sessions (e.g. line dancing) and community development work.
Wolverhampton	<b>Wellbeing for Life</b> sue.cook@wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 554194	Recruiting and supporting volunteers to deliver physical activity sessions to older people.
	<b>Nutrition Training</b> sue.cook@wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 554194	Providing training for schools and professionals (e.g. health professionals / leisure services) to promote better nutritional intake amongst users of these services.
	<b>Farm to Fork</b> sue.cook@wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 554194	Working with local schools to deliver workshops to improve knowledge of food / healthy eating and developing growing areas.
Worcestershire	<b>Wellness Works</b> karenh@comfirst.org.uk 01684 312745	Working with employers to assess and improve organisational wellbeing, using human resources as a 'hook'. Delivered by a voluntary organisation, but working in close partnership with the private sector.