

Blackburn with Darwen's integrated Wellbeing Service: making what we have work better

The Wellbeing Service has created a single point of access for all referrals from either professionals (health and wider) or individuals who may require some support or intervention on a wide range of health issues, as well as picking up the wider determinants of health.

"We wanted to make referrals into healthy lifestyle schemes easy for everyone. We built on existing resources to deliver a more integrated service that puts behaviour change and person-centred approaches at its heart."

Alison Abbott, Wellbeing Service Manager,
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council



What we did and why

NICE guidance about behaviour change recommends that programmes should be based upon sound knowledge of community needs and to build on existing skills and resources.

In early 2013 the Council, in partnership with the CCG, commenced discussions around how the organisations could take a more systematic approach to self-care and long term condition (LTC) management and deliver a more integrated service to the public – a new 'Wellbeing' Service – rather than a range of individual service offerings.

The aims were:

- To create a simple and clear access point to support citizens to make healthier lifestyle choices rather than the multiple, traditional, single issue services that cause confusion for both referrers and patients alike
- To reduce health inequalities by helping people to make the changes they want in their lifestyle to improve their health and wellbeing by offering practical advice and supported signposting into appropriate services

Outcomes and impact

By remodelling existing resource we were able to create a wellbeing hub where all referrals are channelled through to our hub advisors. These advisers have the necessary skills to offer brief advice and use motivational interviewing to assess the person's readiness to change and initiate a process of shared decision making.

Health Trainers also play an important face to face role, providing information, support and guidance to individuals wanting to make changes towards a healthier lifestyle. Behaviour change and motivational interviewing are their speciality.

By working in this way we have:

- Identified and engaged with individuals from priority communities or groups as determined by local health evidence
- Supported training and development of health champions and volunteers
- Offered advice and support around healthy lifestyles and the wider determinants of health to people
- Provided supported signposting into partner agencies such as Age UK, Shelter, and Lancashire Mind, in order to provide a truly holistic approach to improving health and wellbeing

What we learnt

The Wellbeing Service performs against targets set by Public Health. These targets include reaching a predefined volume of brief interventions and more in-depth contact with the public with some target population groups identified within that. Subsequently the targets are then focused around the quality of outcomes with individuals, how working with the service has improved their wellbeing and maintaining change.

- By creating a single point of access for our healthy lifestyle services we have increased incoming contacts by 400%
- We have delivered almost 2000 one-to-one interventions with over half of all clients living within the top 20% most deprived wards
- The service is now achieving almost three times the volume of brief interventions and double the volume of face to face engagements with the public and recording more detailed and relevant outcomes in the process

Alison Abbott said: "We know that focusing on the whole person, including the wider determinants of health, is making a difference to peoples' lives because they tell us so; 76% report improvements in their mental health too."

Contact: Alison Abbott
Wellbeing Service Manager
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
Email: alison.abbott@blackburn.gov.uk
Telephone: 01254 587245

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