



# 2019-2020 HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROJECT END OF YEAR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2019 - 31ST MARCH 2020



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# OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Studies show that people with a learning disability face many health inequalities and have poorer health than the general population. A significant number of people with a learning disability are unable to recognise when they are poorly or identify symptoms. There are also numerous barriers which people face when accessing health services, such as fear, anxieties and communication difficulties.

At LD:NorthEast we aim to help people who have a learning disability, to have the same quality and access to health services and health related activities as everyone else.

The Health and Wellbeing Project assists in providing positive interrelations between health services and people with a learning disability. Ultimately, this is to drive down health inequalities, improve overall health outcomes and experiences.

By providing support to attend health appointments, this helps to reduce fears and anxieties which enables people to build up the right conversations with health care professionals. This allows for further knowledge and understanding of what to expect from services and professionals, and improves their overall experience.

We deliver appropriate and meaningful educational programmes and workshops, to raise awareness of health conditions and self management. This enables people to gain a better understanding of their health, and allows people to identify signs and symptoms. Early detection and prevention is key to minimise and detect health conditions becoming a serious problem.

**The Health and Wellbeing Project provides light touch support for people with learning disabilities to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing.**



**Providing preventative support to reduce anxieties for those fearful of visiting the GP, increasing and improving access to primary care by helping foster the practitioner-patient relationship, encourage independence and the individual's responsibilities for their own health.**

The project supports people to attend health related appointments to increase their confidence ultimately to enable them to attend appointments independently in the future with confidence.

Some of the clients have stated that without the project's help the individuals supported would not have attended independently.

Health appointments vary which includes GP visits, hospital outpatient appointments, hospital admissions, annual health checks and support to attend and undergo health screening appointments.

## OUTCOME 1

Attending health appointments, health checks and medication reviews have a significant positive impact on an individuals' health and having the ability to attend such appointments may prevent long term health conditions and hospital admissions.

By helping to facilitate and accompany people to attend hospital appointments and hospital procedures, it notably reduces peoples fears and anxieties. This allows people to get the best from their appointments and gain confidence and understanding.

Supported hospital appointments have ranged from cervical screening, mammogram, bowel scope screening, endoscopy procedures, X-rays and MRI scans.

**Within this reporting period we have attended 157 health related appointments. 21 of these appointments have included medical procedures and screening appointments.**



**We encourage people and aid with the completion of hospital passports to help break down any barriers for hospital admissions and procedures so people can get the right care and support.**



Hospital Passports

**We continuously promote annual health checks and believe that these health checks can help identify underlying health conditions early and prevent future ill health and conditions. During this year we have supported 12 people to attend an annual health check.**



### **Case Study -Tracey**

Tracey is a 65 year old female with a learning disability who lives independently in North Tyneside. In the past Tracey has been critically ill which has resulted in permanent kidney damage. Tracey also suffers with ongoing respiratory problems and is prone to reoccurring chest infections which often develops to pneumonia. Tracey is unable to identify the signs and symptoms of when she becomes unwell so does not seek the right help or medical assistance. Tracey's health can decline rapidly and become critical very quickly.

Tracey often forgets to take her medication and does not recognise the importance of taking her medication as prescribed or the affect this has on her health conditions. We arranged for her medication to be prescribed into a dosette box which now allows her to take her medication at the correct times.

Most recently we supported Tracey to see her GP due to a possible chest infection. Tracey was given antibiotics. We checked in with Tracey a few days later, and noticed her health had deteriorated. Tracey initially refused to see a doctor or medical assistance, however with a lot of encouragement she finally agreed. Due to the rapid deterioration she was admitted into hospital and diagnosed with renal failure.

When Tracey's mental health is low, she can become extremely anxious and confrontational and this was projected when she was admitted to hospital; support was given to Tracey with this admission to help alleviate anxieties. We supported Tracey to complete a hospital passport which enabled hospital staff to understand her fears and anxieties and how they present, ultimately so they can support her in a way that best suits her needs. The Doctor informed staff that had we not got Tracey to seek medical assistance that day, she could have possibly died.

## **Deliver educational activities to improve individuals' knowledge on health and wellbeing.**

The health and wellbeing project continues to deliver informative workshops to enhance people's knowledge of their own health and wellbeing to improve their physical and mental health.

At the end of each workshop attendees are invited to chat with a member of the Health and Wellbeing Project to discuss any further issues in detail, seek guidance or any follow up support.

The follow up support has ranged from arranging GP appointments, screening appointments and annual health checks. Supporting people with dietary needs in the forms of EasyRead meal planners and healthy eating follow on sessions.

EasyRead literature is also given at the end of each workshop so people can take information away to read them at their own leisure or refer back to them at a later date.

All the workshops are interactive with hands on activities, which can also include models as well as presentations and group discussions. They are delivered in a relaxed and informal environment. We believe Interactive participation is key for people to gain a greater understanding and knowledge to enable informed healthier choices.

486 people have attended our workshops within this reporting period. The topics of the workshops range from Men's Health, Cervical Screening, Mental Wellbeing, Mindfulness, Looking After your Eyes, Staying Safe and Healthy Eating and Healthy Cooking following on sessions.

It has been evident that the workshops delivered have had a substantial impact on individuals, raising their awareness and knowledge and knowing who to go to should they suspect changes in their bodies or health.

## **OUTCOME 2**





Common causes of poor diets within our client base are financial factors such as living on low budgets and low benefits and often making poor food choices. Our Healthy Eating Workshops promote making changes and improving poor diets and increasing physical activity to help reduce the risk of disease and long term health conditions, focusing on prevention as opposed to cure.

Through our workshops we encourage such changes by raising the awareness of unhealthy food groups, good food groups and how to maintain a healthy diet.

Interactive participation is key within our workshops due to many of our client group having limited literacy skills. Showing participants how to identify food labelling such as hidden sugars and unhealthy fats in foods and drinks is important as many of our client group who have a learning disability can find this confusing.

Essentially our aim is for people to make more informed, healthier choices which in turn will have a significant positive effect on their health and their wellbeing.

The feedback we have from attendees show the workshops continue to be well received and in high demand. After completing a workshop, participants are invited to attend a six week healthy cooking course.

Our Healthy Cooking Course shows participants how to cook nutritious meals from scratch using adapted easy read recipes. This also gives people the tools and the confidence to ultimately choose and cook healthy meals after the sessions finish. Our Healthy Cooking follow on sessions continues to be in high demand , delivering over 600 sessions in this reporting period.

#### ATTENDANCE NUMBERS

Educational workshops/ events

Healthy Lifestyles

Healthy Eating Workshops

Healthy Cooking Follow on





NORTH  
EAST

## **Facilitated signposting to improving access to services for people who have a learning disability**

The project supports and signposts clients to specialist and mainstream health professional services to ensure individuals receive the right services and assistance.

Some of this support has included referrals to social prescribing, registering with GP surgeries, dental practices, podiatrist and North Tyneside Mental Health Team. Arranging and attending initial appointments or registrations and acting as a go-between for health professionals and clients.

We also make referrals to social work for people whose health and mental wellbeing are in decline due to a lack of support. 37 referrals to other agencies have been made within this reporting period, 8 of those have included social work referrals to prevent further crisis and to support people to gain the required support they need to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

## **OUTCOME 3**

We work closely with the Community Learning Disability Team nurses (CLDT) and have built strong relations with Public Health England and the NHS Cancer Alliance.

We continue to be active members of The Learning Disability Health Group. (LDHG) The aim of group is to improve the health and wellbeing of people with a learning disability, by raising awareness and promoting public health messages regarding healthy lifestyles, amongst people with a learning disability, their carers and social care professionals.

The groups objectives are to listen to people's concerns and establish and address any barriers that people may encounter when accessing health services. Scoping community resources and services and identify how adjustments may be implemented to include people with a learning disability.

## Partnership working

### Active North Tyneside



Within this reporting period we have worked closely with Active North Tyneside and their Weight Worries Programme (now known as Body Benefits). Active North Tyneside are very proactive in ensuring that the services and programmes they provide are accessible and fully inclusive to all North Tyneside residents. Through our close collaboration work with the LDHG, Active North Tyneside asked the project for advice to ensure that their materials and programme was inclusive to people with a learning disability.

After consultation we identified how their literature could be adapted using easy read format to ensure inclusivity. We helped with the identification and implementation of adapting the content to an easy Read format. Additionally we assisted 2 ladies who have learning disabilities to access the programme and trial the new Easy Read format. Both ladies were overweight and wanted to follow a healthy lifestyle. The health project supported the ladies to attend the weekly coaching sessions, access the gym and physical activity classes which are an essential part to the programme. Not only did the 2 ladies lose weight, one lady is no longer type 2 diabetic which has had a significant effect on her wellbeing, resulting in her now accessing the gym independently.

### NHS Cancer Alliance



The health project has continued with the North Tyneside Cancer Plan Task & Finish Group (supported by the Northern Cancer Alliance). The Task & Finish Group have been developing a plan to influence the development of cancer services within North Tyneside. The North Tyneside Cancer Plan is specifically for the people of North Tyneside with aims to increase prevention, speed up diagnosis, improve the experience of patients and help people living with and beyond the disease.

The Project aids with the compilation of EasyRead literature to encourage people with learning disabilities to attend public events and to be involved in the influencing process of changes. We also compile visual minutes at public group events. The Task & Finish Group have further meetings to develop the work further and we look forward to reporting more on this work on our next report.

"A fundamental aspect of this work has been to ensure that all members of the community have had an equal opportunity to get involved, sharing their experiences and views. Having support and guidance from LD North East as member of the Task & Finish Group has been invaluable as it has helped the group develop an inclusive approach to all of its activities".

Jo Mackintosh - Northern Cancer Alliance Delivery Manager

## Partnership working

As we know, people with a learning disability are more likely than the general public to have issues around weight and control. We know that diet and exercise are important elements in achieving a healthy lifestyle and without any form of support, people with a learning disability often struggle to achieve this. Our last annual report stated through our work with the Learning Disability Health Group (LDHG), we were in the process of organising an event to support the National Diabetes Prevention Programme (Ingeus). The aim was to raise awareness of diabetes and to ensure that the whole population can benefit.

The Health & Wellbeing Project organised a Health & Wellbeing Event in April 2019 for National Diabetes Prevention Awareness Week to promote the National Diabetes Prevention Programme. Various organisations were invited to promote inclusive activities and services within North Tyneside that promote healthy lifestyles and wellbeing. Organisations such as Ingeus, Active North Tyneside, Better Days, Community Learning Disability Nursing Team (CLDT), Northumbria Sports and North Tyneside SIGN attended on the day. The day was very successful with over 90 people coming along, 57 of those attendees having learning disabilities.

The event did highlight to us and others within the Learning Disability Health Group partners that the programme may not be fully accessible for people with learning disabilities. We established that an adapted programme for people with learning disabilities would be more beneficial.

Together with the Community Learning Disability Team we devised a Healthy Lifestyles Programme which encompasses not only diabetes, healthy eating, oral hygiene and physical exercise but also included topics such as how to identify sign and symptoms and awareness of screening programmes.

October 2019 we ran a Healthy Lifestyles pilot programme which ran for 8 weeks. Inviting specialists in to talk such as infection control nurses, breast screening nurses and opticians. The programme was well received and we hope to start running this programme from various localities within North Tyneside to reach a wider audience.



### HEALTHY LIFESTYLES WORKSHOP





## OUTCOME 4

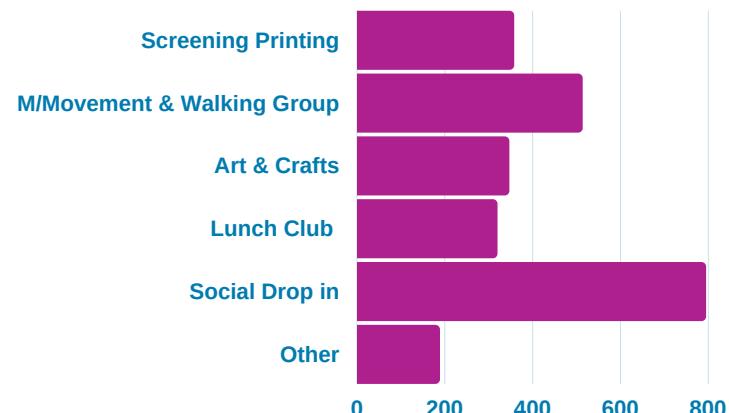
### Encourage people to join in health related activities, make friends and improve mental wellbeing

The project has supported people who suffer from poor mental health to access activities to improve their mental wellbeing and health, in turn gaining confidence, new skills and making new friends. We have supported and encouraged people to access local college courses, LD:NorthEast music group, arts, local history club, and craft sessions, therapeutic art classes, reading and literacy clubs.

Many people who the project has linked in with lack the confidence to attend leisure facilities, gyms and fitness classes. It has been highlighted that some of these factors are due to low self-esteem, lack of confidence and a lack of understanding on where or how to attend such an activity. Because of these factors we run a weekly healthy walking group and an inclusive Music to Movement physical activities session for all abilities, where people feel comfortable to enjoy physical activities and in turn build their confidence.

Through joint working with the Tomorrows team at LD:NorthEast, we deliver various activities which includes craft sessions, a social drop in, lunch club, therapeutic art and therapeutic printing sessions. These activities take place weekly and have had a significant impact on improving several of the participant's mental wellbeing. The sessions and people's involvement have improved their confidence and wellbeing and made new friends in the process. There have been 2517 attendances in total over this reporting period.

#### ATTENDANCE NUMBERS



# CHALLENGES

Towards the end of this reporting period, March 2020 the population was affected by the COVID-19 Coronavirus outbreak. The UK Government announced a strict lock down of the country. We know this will heavily impact on our clients and this will significantly affect their physical and mental wellbeing. The project also has concerns on how people will follow the message to isolate and stay safe and we will look at how we can reassure and convey these messages to our client base. We will look at sourcing various types of technology in order to stay in contact with people, to help alleviate anxieties and fears in this unprecedented time. Additionally we hope this will also help combat loneliness and social isolation. In the forthcoming 6 months we will report on how we have tackled these challenges.





*Live Life Your Way*

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