

Working Together for a Healthier Community

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A report on the impact of the Sefton NHS Clinical Commission Groups' investment in the local voluntary, community and faith sector

2014-2017



Foreword

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sefton CVS and the VCF sector, in particular, for all their hard work over the past few years which is showcased in this report.

We have built up a great relationship with Sefton CVS who play a valuable role in working alongside the NHS to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities we all serve and represent by offering the people of Sefton the chance to join worthwhile community groups and to meet like minded people.

We recognise the valuable role the groups play in achieving better health and wellbeing for our Sefton residents. This is reinforced by what local people consistently tell us, that these groups are important in providing them with support.

Working closely with Sefton CVS and the sector, the Sefton CCGs grants have helped residents to support themselves and each other as individuals, in groups and in local communities.

The main aim of the grants was to improve people's sense of inclusion and involvement which in turn helps their health, wellbeing and independence. Drawing on local skills, knowledge or experience in designing and delivering local services and activities can also help to build additional capacity within the communities across Sefton.

The grants managed by Sefton CVS have clearly highlighted the potential 'reach' of the funding – far beyond the direct beneficiaries – but deep into people's families and communities.

With the significant financial challenges the NHS faces going forward, it is vital that we work closely together in the years ahead in order to balance these competing demands.

We look forward to the next three years working with the team at Sefton CVS, keep up the great work!

Fiona Taylor,
Chief Officer, NHS South Sefton CCG
and NHS Southport and Formby CCG

Between April 2014 and March 2017 the two Sefton-based NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups invested £2.5 million in a grant scheme that has enabled 52 different groups and organisations to deliver projects which have benefited more than 2,881 children and young people, 3,291 older people and 3,443 adults.

This report documents the wide variety of projects that took place to improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

Whether it was to employ staff, pay for resources and equipment or go towards offering day trips and activities, the fund has been instrumental in ensuring the lives of over 10,500 people have been enriched in a fundamental way.

The services benefited massively from the 590 volunteers who have given their time to support the projects, and we are both grateful and thankful that we have, in Sefton, such a wealth of people willing to give their time and expertise to help others.

Sefton has a vibrant and homegrown VCF sector that has both a deep understanding and a passionate commitment to their communities. This has enabled the fund to work so well and in such a variety of ways. The funding has also been instrumental in encouraging more partnership working to create better pathways and services for our citizens.

As a result of this vital investment, we can say, with confidence, that:

more children are now confident to face the challenges of growing up
more adults are positively equipped with skills to deal with managing their wellbeing and
more older people can lead an independent life where they don't have to feel alone.

The impact of all the schemes will ultimately assist in reducing demand on the hard-pressed frontline services of the NHS and, at a unit cost of under £240, we believe that this has proved to be excellent value for money. We hope that local grant-making schemes will be funded in the future, not just in Sefton but nationwide.

A national campaign entitled Grants for Good - www.dsc.org.uk/grantsforgood - is encouraging Government and public sector commissioners to continue supporting grant schemes such as the Sefton CCG VCF Fund, enabling smaller charities and community groups to deliver innovation and good quality outcomes through local investment.

Nigel Bellamy,
Deputy Chief Executive Sefton CVS

Children and Young People

In this category, there were three health areas: obesity, emotional wellbeing and transitions. Many of the 15 specific projects focused on one or more of these areas but they all tackled a variety of issues that can act as a barrier to children achieving their potential.

These issues stem from a variety of areas including: low self-esteem, inadequate nutrition, domestic violence, a lack of confidence and worries about moving up through the school system.

On the next eight pages are the projects illustrating how volunteers, organisations and the wider community can come together to create safe and stimulating environments in which children and young people can thrive.

The 15 projects are:

Tackling the Blues

Early Years Partnership

Healthy Families

U16 Sefton Street Soccer League

Noise

Navigate

Teens and Toddlers

Gymnastics Holiday Fun

Active Brunswick

Sefton Children's Trust

Mind Space

Young Person's Domestic Violence Project

Kids Kitchen

Redi Project

Play and Early Learning





Tackling the Blues

Partnership delivery: Everton in the Community, Parenting 2000, Edge Hill University

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: to support young people aged 8-14 who are experiencing, or are at risk of developing, mental health problems by offering a sport, physical activity and education-based programme.

286 young people engaged (unique participants) in the 227 high-quality sports sessions delivered with 257 participants staying throughout the project.

24 young people successfully gained a recognised qualification as part of a three-day event at Goodison Park, achieving a Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Level 2 qualification in Healthier Food and Special Diets.

All groups engaged in Tackling the Blues reported increases in self-confidence, self-esteem and reductions in anxiety.

"I'm more confident. I'll talk more and, in class, I'm not as shy as I used to be, so I answer more in class and get more involved."

The emotional literacy of children and young people improved and this helped them to better manage their mental health and relationships with others.

"I've learned about my anger, to control it, because most of the time I just want to punch a wall."

Tackling the Blues improved children and young people's self-evaluation, co-operation and emotional intelligence.

"I've learned a lot actually. To get to know more people you have to try and work with them, and also to work in a team, no matter who you're doing it with."

Autonomy and decision-making skills were developed by providing children and young people with choice and ownership of the activities delivered.

"We all participate and no one's ever left out in the activities. When we do the activities, we make sure we like them and have discussions about whether everyone enjoys it and, if they don't, we'll try and find something we all like. That's what the staff do, help us."



Early Years Partnership

Partnership delivery: Parenting 2000, primary schools and the private, voluntary and independent childcare settings.

Area covered: North Sefton

Aim: support for very young children to help them develop the capacity to learn resilience and emotional intelligence through a package of training to child support professionals.

Once trained to deliver Relax Kids (a relaxation technique to help children manage stress better while improving concentration) and Baby GroBrain/Baby Mindful (equipping professionals to guide parents on how their baby's learning is linked with how its brain is developing), the project provided sessions for children and courses for parents to pass on this knowledge.

More than 50 children benefited from the sessions which were delivered at a variety of places in Southport, including primary schools, children's centres, a nursery setting and a dance and drama school.

"My daughter has ADHD and I tried the Relax Kids group to see if it would help her to calm and relax even if just for the short time she was there. She really enjoyed her first time which I was thrilled at, as she finds it hard settling anywhere. After a couple of months I started seeing a big difference. When I would turn up to collect her, she would be asleep which is unusual for my daughter, and if she was ever getting too hyper at home I would get her little pillow and blanket like she had at Relax Kids and she would recite some of the things she had been taught."

Mother to a young girl attending Relax Kids after school in Southport

Healthy Families

Delivered by: Brighter Living Partnership

Area covered: North Sefton

Aim: to introduce families to healthy cooking on a budget with a focus on weight management.

The 12-week programme offered a combination of theoretical learning and practical cooking sessions for the whole family to join in, taking part in different activities and learning healthy diet and lifestyle tips. Some courses also featured structured physical activity sessions. Topics covered in the theoretical sessions included the importance of food, following the Eat Well guide, reducing sugar and salt consumption, and budgeting.

More than 11 families with 35 members were involved, recording increased cooking skills, reduced weight and confidence in putting together healthy family meals without breaking the bank. As the programme was a family-based intervention, it gave opportunities for children to assist their parents in meal preparation, become active as a family and allowed them to socialise and eat the prepared food in a comfortable environment.

Other results included: a knockabout cricket game at a local park which was the first time one family had participated in exercise for a long time; one child with fussy eating habits has now tried new foods as a result of being able to assist in the preparation; and several families have reported they are now shopping smartly for healthy options as well as walking to places they wouldn't normally.

Case study: "I have never been a good cook and do struggle with confidence in the kitchen. My two children haven't really been engaged in the kitchen other than maybe baking some cakes. I saw the 12-week course as an excellent opportunity.

"It offered different practical skills for the children in the kitchen - chopping, peeling, mixing, combining, measuring etc and it had the right amount of hygiene and safety contained in it. It was lovely to see my children have a go and it made me realise who enjoyed what the most, which gave me more confidence to get cracking in the kitchen. Now I don't buy jars of cooking sauce as I know how easy it is to make. I also include both children in simple meal prep.

"This course wasn't just about cooking and healthy lifestyles. It was about trying something new and my son did get stuck in. For me it was about confidence in the kitchen and meeting up with other families in the holidays. I knew my daughter would love all the healthy lifestyles topics covered and she still looks at the sugar app."



U16 Sefton Street Soccer League

Delivered by: Active Soccer

Area covered: Maghull

Aim: to set up a five-a-side football season one evening a week over ten weeks encouraging boys aged under 16 to join and, in the process, gain communication and social skills as well as develop an appreciation for physical activity.

A total of 55 young people aged between 13 and 16 took part in the league which culminated in a tournament night. Although only delivered over a short time period, the project had a positive impact on those who attended the Friday football evenings. For one young person, it was difficult to attend any social activity without parental support, but regularly taking part meant their confidence and self-esteem improved enough for him to make his own way to the league.

One young person commented:

"I took part because I just wanted to play football and get involved. It has improved my playing and my fitness. By taking part it has made me want to join a regular five-a-side league."

Noise

Delivered by: Merseyside Youth Association

Area covered: South Sefton

Aim: using music as the engagement tool, staff have got to know the issues young people from the area face, identifying those at risk, and consulting professional networks to source help.

Since January 2016, Noise has reached a total of 46 aspiring musicians, aged 11 to 18, from across south Sefton, with a free programme of music activities at Marsh Lane's SPACE centre. The young people have accessed a range of other opportunities through this project, designed to take them out of negative environments, expand their horizons and improve their mental health and wellbeing.

One such young person was **Daisy, 18**. Asked to describe her situation before accessing the project, she said: "Proper sad. Every day was a nervous breakdown and I was always in trouble. As well as feeling hopeless, I felt like I had more potential I wanted the world to know."

In response to young people's experiences Noise established a dedicated counselling service, with a BACP-qualified counsellor discreetly attending the Wednesday sessions, ready to help young people.

This service has been attended by six young people, seeking help for issues including anxiety, depression and self-harm. All had complained of long waiting times for counselling appointments at school or college, and had arrived at crisis point.

In the words of **Hannah, 16**: "Besides guitar lessons, the workers also gave me access to counselling, which I could not find anywhere else. Since I've been receiving this support, I feel as though I am functioning better. When I first came here I was a completely different person. I was so quiet and my confidence was rock bottom."

Through attending Noise, **Charlotte** gained a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet her musical idol Craig David, along with one other young person from the project, as part of a BBC outreach event. She said: "I found meeting Craig David to be very helpful. He gave me an insight on what the music industry is actually like and it has taught me you need to be completely determined."

Earlier this year, project attendee **James, 14**, was nominated by project staff for MYA's Step Up Fund, a discretionary award to help young people in need progress their talents.

Since receiving this award, recognising his commitment to the project, James' guitar skills have progressed and his parents report a marked improvement in his behaviour at home.



Navigate

Delivered by: Light for Life

Area covered: North Sefton

Aim: to support young people experiencing difficulties with the transition to adulthood, living away from home or leaving care, who are attending or intend to attend college to follow an accredited programme of study. A total of 83 young people were supported through the project giving them the skills and confidence to overcome obstacles.

Among the support given by the young person advisers: help to secure suitable accommodation and maintain tenancies; assisting with resolving troubled family relationships and promoting healthy lifestyles.

The result is that the young people are better equipped at managing budgets, motivated to complete college courses, more confident in deciding appropriate accommodation – and this all leads to increased mental wellbeing.

"I have been accepted on a course starting in September. I am really excited about this. I am determined to do my best and feel really motivated. I still plan to go to university but right now I feel that this is the best move for me. I am very content with my living arrangements and I am even making efforts to build bridges with my Mum."

A 19-year-old girl engaging with Navigate

Teens and Toddlers

Delivered by: Parenting 2000

Area delivered: All Sefton

Aim: to prevent unplanned teenage pregnancy by delivering a 16-week programme where young people work with toddlers to be better prepared as parents when they mature and are ready. Teens and toddlers is a government-supported initiative which empowers the young person to make positive life choices that result in education/training/employment/ understanding relationships and avoid unplanned teenage pregnancy/ sexually transmitted infections/risky behaviours.

90 young people from areas with high rates of unplanned teenage pregnancies have taken part in the project over three years. This has resulted in: improved family relationships, increased confidence and self-esteem, and childcare being considered as a career.

Case study: One participant was identified by school as she had issues around confidence and behaviour. She suffered with anxiety and was quite often the person who dabbled in some risky behaviour. Although she was popular, underneath her demeanour, she was shy and insecure. She was reluctant to share one-on-one time with her toddler but, as the weeks progressed, their relationship developed and her confidence grew. The confidence she found in the nursery also began to surface in the classroom sessions.

Towards the end of the course she spoke to the facilitators in confidence about her feelings, her life at home and how anxious she is in school. She said prior to T and T she did not know what to do with her future, and did not feel important enough to achieve anything at school. However, she now knows she wants to pursue a career working with children, and she wants to achieve this before thinking about starting a family.



Gymnastics Holiday Fun

Delivered by: Hatton Hill Gymnastics

Area covered: South Sefton

Aim: to increase children's health and self-esteem by encouraging them to take part in gymnastics during school holidays.

The project has seen 55 new members join the club since it started in August 2015. They have enjoyed learning new gymnastic techniques and routines which has boosted their wellbeing and increased their activity levels.

The holiday clubs focused on giving the youngsters the chance to try new equipment, providing new challenges, and achieving further goals.

An extra challenge was the friendly competition in which other local gymnastic groups were invited to compete, allowing the members to demonstrate their skills and ability, with the coaches reporting improvements in the young people's fitness.

Two sisters, aged ten and eight, were able to improve their display work on bars, floor and box to the degree their mum noted: "They are happier, and taking part in the team work has given them more confidence and the ability to complete tasks." The older sister has gone on to help with coaching.

One of the coaches at the school holiday club remarked: "It gave gymnasts a chance to explore skills they would not normally work on."





Active Brunswick

Delivered by: Brunswick Youth and Community Centre

Area covered: South Sefton

Aim: to tackle childhood obesity through a programme of activity, healthy eating and lifestyle change. Based at their Marsh Lane centre, the project involved children, young people and families in food growing and healthy cooking workshops as well as offering sporting activities.

The community garden at the centre became a focal point where youth groups prepared, propagated and planted out crops and flowers, giving them an opportunity to learn horticultural skills alongside how their fresh produce can be used in preparing homemade meals.

Their new-found skills were utilised when they transplanted what they had grown at the centre to a dedicated outside garden area at Oriel Road train station in Bootle.

Parents and toddlers had their own food growing sessions which added in a walking/activity element and this proved popular with many parents, making low-salt recipes at home and enjoying more outdoor play.

Through the project, families, young people and children have taken part in organised walks in Sefton, sports sessions at the centre and a girls group was formed who have gone on to do a Sustrans-arranged cycle ride along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

One of the girls commented:

“Without the sessions I wouldn’t have tried the exercise or done the healthy meal lessons which have been fun. I have tried different types of exercise and learnt to make different meals. I’d say I’m more confident now.”

One of the mums with a baby daughter said:

“I don’t have many friends who are also parents and I also suffer with depression so I thought coming to the parent and toddler sessions would be a good way to meet people and get support and advice. I’ve met other mums and dads and started to make new friends. I’ve been given loads of ideas and recipes for easy meals including how to make homemade baby food.”

More than 100 young people have been involved with the project’s different activities.



Sefton Children’s Trust

Delivered by: Sefton Children’s Trust

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: to provide a week-long residential at an adventure centre for children aged between eight and 12 from families who are experiencing difficulties in order to advance their emotional and social development.

Over three years of funding, a total of 210 young people were given the chance to take part in team-building exercises and social events such as raft building, archery, a talent show and more.

The children were encouraged to set personal goals at the start of the residential and, through the course of the week, the children were presented with challenges and new experiences which resulted in them achieving their goals – and went home with a certificate to prove it!

To build on this, the project also organised family days where a restaurant meal was then followed by a screening of the residential and this provided a chance for the children to relive that time and share their experiences with parents and carers.



Mind Space

Partnership delivery: SEAS consortium (Venus, SWACA, SPACE, PSS, Parenting 2000 and Sefton CVS)

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: to create new ways to offer support to young people aged between 10 and 25 across Sefton who may be self-harming or at risk of self-harm.

The initiatives and interventions included one-to-one counselling, group support sessions and a drama and arts-based programme.

The project has received more than 30 referrals for one-to-one support with 18 cases completed and 29 young people have been involved in group work. Receiving timely assistance has given the young people confidence to deal with their issues, resulting in one young person who self-referred being able to stop self-harming.

The therapeutic counselling sessions have seen significant improvements in the young people, including one person now able to communicate their feelings more and the school has noted increased positive behaviour.

One of the innovative ways of supporting the young people has come through the development of a drama film developed by young people and in which young mental health service users had input. The result is a DVD/digital resource to be used by groups and organisations to raise awareness of self-harming.

Additionally, 39 young people were referred during the 2014 project with 37 receiving in-depth support and a further 36 young people taking part in group work.



Young Person's Domestic Violence Project

Delivered by: SWACA

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: to explore relationships, increase awareness of domestic violence within the 14-25 age group and offer early intervention, as well as improve the safety and wellbeing of young people affected by domestic violence.

SWACA approached this by organising workshops for young people to attend and also offering direct support if the young person wanted it. A positive outcome of the project was the development of two 'teen talk' weekly drop-ins, an evening one in Southport and an afternoon one in Bootle. This informal approach appealed to the young people with one commenting: "It wasn't as scary as I thought."

Young people were offered face-to-face or virtual advice at the drop-ins and, if they wanted direct support, they were able to have an assessment with one of SWACA's young person's workers.

One young person who found this beneficial said: "I can get really nervous and wound up talking to professionals because I feel like they judge me for being young. SWACA is the only appointment I don't get nervous attending and feel like I can be honest."

More than 1000 young people attended the community workshops and drop-ins, 50 of whom sought direct support from SWACA, while many more went on to access other services and were helped with concerns such as anxiety and other mental health issues.

The project succeeded in raising awareness of domestic violence within this age group, and those who engaged said they were more confident in understanding what is and isn't a healthy relationship, as well as knowing where to go for help, for which they developed posters (see photograph).





Kids Kitchen

Delivered by: SING

Area delivered: South Sefton

Aim: to provide a free and nutritious meal and fun activities during the school holidays for primary school children who would normally receive Free School Meals (FSM).

The project was designed to support low-income families during the school holidays by giving children a place where they could enjoy a meal, plant out crops and use these to make their own meals, as well as take part in activities to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The children were encouraged to be hands on in preparing and cooking the meals as well as being involved in choosing meals.

By the end of the project parents noticed that even fussy eaters were enjoying family meals rather than having a separate dish.

A health visitor commented that the child they supported had started to put on weight since coming to Kids Kitchen and was trying different foods.

Children had the opportunity to grow produce such as vegetables including tomatoes, carrots and potatoes to be eaten as part of their meals, used in a cookery session, or to be taken home either cooked or to use as a family activity.

To increase confidence in exploring their local environment, the children accessed local parks and free spaces which also promoted a healthy, active lifestyle.

This included: kite flying at Burbo Bank, using the outdoor gym equipment at Crosby Lakeside and outdoor games at Potters Barn and Chaffers playing fields.

Comments from parents, young people and carers include:

"My child is more adventurous with food."

"I like going to the park."

"Great for kids to mix with others as during the holidays we are limited to where and what we do due to expense."

The project delivered on 88 days, catering for over 100 individual children with an overall average of 29 per day.



2,443

children and young people in Sefton were involved in projects supported by the CCG VCF Fund between 2014-2017.

Redi Project

Delivered by: Ykids

Area covered: South Sefton

Aim: to increase skills and emotional resilience in young people so they can fulfil their potential and build a positive future, leading to improved positive mental health and emotional wellbeing.

The grant went to part fund Ykids' successful Redi Project which saw a number of youth groups engage in a variety of programmes and activities, from learning about bee keeping, world cultures and how the emergency services operate to a ten-week boot camp of fun, putting on an art exhibition with a difference and more. Other sessions looked at risky behaviours, while friendship groups helped those experiencing an array of difficulties, including the transition from primary to high school or family tensions.

Over the course of the 2014-funded project, up to 132 children and young people engaged with the programmes. There were many positive outcomes including: young people learning resilience and building constructive relationships to the point they were happy to attend school, and confident enough to form new friendships. Communication and social skills also improved.

Case study: "Before I joined Redi I was quite a shy person but I still tried to get involved. I wanted to get involved to try new things and make new friends, which I have now done. As a result, I have achieved a lot - I know more about how to be safe and I am definitely more confident when meeting new people. If it wasn't for Redi I wouldn't have had a job aim."

"Redi took me on trips where I discovered I enjoyed outdoor activities, so from these trips I went on to study sport. I now plan to go into working in sports with children or young people."



Play and Early Learning

Delivered by: Homestart Southport and Formby

Area delivered: North Sefton

Aim: to train volunteers to deliver play activities to parents and children within the family home in order to develop the attachment between parent and child, and to encourage positive emotional health and wellbeing in children.

The project further developed this by assisting parents to find activities suitable for their child's development at local children's centres, libraries, playgroups and parks. They would then support parents to access these groups with their children, and so set positive patterns in childhood for a lifetime, widening their friendship groups and reducing their social isolation.

Several of the families were from minority ethnic groups or had young children with challenging behaviour. The project acted as a bridge to connect them with their local community by equipping them with social skills and self-esteem to overcome any barriers.

As a result of the volunteers undergoing specialist training and being matched with families throughout Southport and Formby, a total of 68 families and 120 children have benefited from the project.

80 per cent of the parents felt more involved with their child's early learning and development, 100 per cent of parents reported they had seen an improvement in coping with their child's mental health and 92 per cent felt they were able to cope better with managing their child's behaviour.

Feedback: One parent reported that their child was calmer and more settled by being in a positive routine. "My son's concentration has improved – he can now sit and play a board game with me. A year ago he couldn't do that."

One mum said: "I have learned the importance of singing and rhyme time on my daughter's speech and language."

A volunteer noted that the family she visited were now much happier and were enjoying their family life together: "Previously the house had felt stressed and mum had been at the end of her tether. Now the whole family sat down at the dining table and would use paints, glitter and stickers to make pictures. The little boy put down his iPad to join in with the games," she commented.

Older People Projects

In this category there were two health areas, social isolation and dementia. In Sefton there is a large older population with discrepancies between parts of the borough to do with quality of life and life expectancy. Studies have shown that social isolation and loneliness among older people are public health issues and have a negative effect on their overall wellbeing.

The following 12 projects looked to offer ways in which older people could get out, meet others, keep active and take part in activities that would stimulate them. By encouraging older people to become more active and build friendships, the projects helped them to remain independent for longer and, ultimately, reduce avoidable A&E visits.

The projects are:

Bootle Salvation Army

Older People's Welfare

Bootle Christ Church Youth and Community Centre

Alzheimer's Sefton

Empower, Enable and Educate

Formby CVS/Formby CTA

Keystone

The Formby Project

POPPIES

Sefton OPERA

Older People's Project

Social Inclusion



Bootle Salvation Army

Delivered by: Bootle Salvation Army

Area covered: Bootle

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: to provide subsidised hot meals to older people three days a week in a welcoming environment where they could socialise with other people.

The project has been running for more than three years and, in that time, over 12,400 subsidised meals have been served to the older members of the community. This provision allowed for relationships to be built with regular clients, who were then inclined to seek practical support for issues giving them cause for concern, such as with benefits, local and national government and health-related agencies.

Outcomes of these interventions included:

people successfully accessing pensions, one client positively appealing against a sanction,

supporting a client with early onset of Parkinson's to apply for a carers allowance,

supporting a client who suffered a stroke to contact the DVLA to have his deceased wife's number plate transferred to his new vehicle,

signposting clients on to local organisations such as SWACA, Venus, Lifeline, the Foodbank and the One Stop Shop.

The project built on its services by offering chair-based exercise, feet washing by a retired nurse and an informal relaxation session called Take a Break. Here older people could chat with one another, take up a craft activity or play board games.

It had a positive effect on those attending as they said they felt more relaxed and have grown in confidence, so they began attending social groups at other venues.

Case study: An older man who lives on his own initially came to the project for the meal but this led to him asking for help on how to access the internet on his new tablet. He later added that attending the meals meant he got out of the house and met other people which made him feel better.



Older People's Welfare

Delivered by: Age Concern Crosby

Area covered: Crosby and Blundellsands, Seaforth and Litherland, Thornton and Waterloo

Health area: older people social isolation and dementia

Aim: to benefit older people of all abilities by organising day trips, weekly lunches, social activities and exercises.

A minibus was purchased through the 2014 grant and this was used as part of the 2015 project to transport less mobile older people from home to the Monday club. On this day up to 23 people played games, took part in quizzes and an art group once lunch was over. Additionally, the group went on several outings to places such as the Philharmonic Hall and on a canal trip which further increased their wellbeing, and that is why a waiting list was drawn up as others wanted to join in the fun.

There were two further lunch clubs – on a Wednesday with 39 members and a Thursday with 21 members. Social activities were offered on a Wednesday and they took part in chair-based exercises, danced along with the Sefton OPERA band and listened to talks from Merseyside Fire and Rescue and the Stroke Association.

By providing the lunches, trips and activities, the older people had a chance to get out of the house and make new friends.

The introduction of memory boxes from Crosby Library has added another dimension to the groups with them reminiscing about gas masks, bombed streets and how they survived the war. This built the connection between members, improved their wellbeing and kept them mentally as well as physically active.

An 87-year-old widower from the Crosby area became a regular at the Wednesday club when he entertained the others by playing the piano. He said: "This keeps me going and makes me feel important. The meals were delicious, the company is excellent and the activities are superb."

There were 63 volunteers aged between 20 and 70+ involved with the project who came from the south Sefton area. They also benefited from the project because volunteering improved their self-esteem, especially as they attended training in driving a minibus, first aid and basic food hygiene.

Bootle Christ Church Youth and Community Centre

Delivered by: Bootle Christ Church

Area covered: South Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: to give older people in the area a welcoming destination where they could take part in a variety of activities, meet other people, learn new skills in order to remain active and independent. It also provided volunteering opportunities.

The programme of activities offered through the project was vast - tai chi, Zumba gold, indoor bowls, internet café, community luncheon club, soup and a roll, community café, quiz, coffee morning, chiropody, bingo, cookery groups, gardening group, ceramic pot planting and jewellery making.

A particular success was the cookery group with participants learning how to use fresh produce and the benefits of less salt and fat.

This led to the creation of a gardening group where they grew fresh fruit and vegetables in the garden outside the centre and these were used in cooking sessions.

In addition, trips were organised to places such as Llandudno Christmas Market, Skipton, the Empire Theatre and an intergenerational trip to Acorn Farm. Breaking down any barriers between older and younger people was an integral part of the project and they also organised an intergenerational BBQ and VE Day celebration. To help raise awareness of other local agencies and pass on information, talks were arranged on hate crime, dementia and the history of Bootle.

A further 37 new people joined in the programme of activities on offer, and, overall, there were 3,658 attendances during the lifetime of the project.

The older people saw an improvement in their social interaction, confidence in doing things on their own, and their overall health improved due to the physical activities and services offered including tai chi, chiropody, gardening, health checks and complementary therapies.

Feedback from quiz participants:

"It's a good laugh and we get to know other people."

A total of 14 volunteers were involved in the project.



Alzheimer's Sefton

Delivered by: Alzheimer's Society

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: older people dementia

Aim: to stimulate people living with dementia by providing a range of activity groups and sessions leading to their increased wellbeing.

The project engaged with more than 280 older people living with dementia through singing, reading, music and other sessions which were held in Bootle, Southport and Netherton. The smiley face questionnaire they used to assess how people felt before and after attending the sessions showed that they felt happier, less tired and more relaxed following the groups.

One man, aged 80 with mixed dementia, commented on how the sessions gave him "a wonderful opportunity to meet new people." And his son, also his carer, said his dad was enjoying his life again, had a sense of purpose and felt valued.

The sessions were attended by carers of those living with dementia and they benefited too, with one saying she was really happy and felt she had got her husband back.

A total of 23 volunteers were recruited into the project and they helped with other aspects of the project, including a pop-up memory café in Crosby, which complemented the others elsewhere in the borough, and also with building a sensory and memory garden exhibit for the Southport Flower Show that won a silver gilt award (see photograph).

Additionally, the volunteers gained skills and confidence by supporting the activities and groups, with one going on to secure paid employment. One male volunteer commented: "I like everything about volunteering, the groups are like big families. They have been a lifeline to me since my wife passed away."



Empower, Enable and Educate

Delivered by: Galloway's Society for the Blind

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: to offer people experiencing sight loss with improved choice and control over their lives in order to reduce the isolation and loss of confidence that this condition brings.

The project's Empowerment Officer supported visually impaired people by getting to know them and the help they needed, as well as teaching them how technology could improve their day-to-day living plus re-learning skills such as cooking.

A Living with Sight Loss course built on this support by helping people and their families come to terms with sight loss and learn new ways to remain independent.

A total of 55 people attended the courses and some went on to meet regularly outside of the project in their own peer support social group. Coming to terms with losing sight is difficult but, through the group, people shared problem-solving ideas as well as a range of emotions from shock, anger, sadness and frustration to depression and grief.

A core element of the project was offering individual advice and practical support. The project identified that people received little information about their sight condition from hospital appointments, and so was able to provide more than 170 people and their families with valuable emotional support and guidance about their conditions.

This provision improved how people felt about their situation. A 64-year-old woman from Southport said that, since her eyesight had deteriorated so much, she had to register as blind and her and her husband had struggled to cope.

"By attending the Living with Sight Loss course my husband and I began to understand each other's frustrations. I have started to use IT (speech software) which means that I can now use my iPad to email others and access the internet and I feel more confident about my future."

A 50-year-old Southport woman registered as blind commented that she felt isolated before engaging with the project where she learnt how appropriate equipment and new technology can help her remain independent.

She said: "Before joining the project my knowledge of computers was very limited. I went from 'can't live with to can't live without' my computer, I now download and listen to music, email and shop online with confidence. I have found the social activities such as tenpin bowling, croquet and trips have greatly improved my social life and I have more confidence to go out alone."

Formby CVS / Formby CTA

Delivered by: Formby CVS

Area covered: Formby

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: to provide a luncheon club for older people where they can socialise and take part in activities in a friendly atmosphere with minibuses transporting less able members to and from the club to reduce social isolation.

In the time the project has been funded, more than 35 people have joined the luncheon club so over 160 people were able to enjoy the food and company. This meant the project was busy serving around 10,000 meals.

By attending the luncheon club, people formed their own friendship groups which began meeting up outside of the project.

In addition, the project offered a shopping service to older people in the local community which proved so popular they increased its delivery. Older people were picked up in the minibus and taken to a nearby large supermarket, where they were met and supported with their shopping.

The shopping trip service allowed older people to shop for themselves and one woman said her confidence grew as a result and this improved her communication skills.

The project linked in with other Sefton organisations including the Formby Hub which organises social events for older people in the area, as well as the Older People's Forums co-ordinated by SPAC. Through connections like these the project provided chair-based exercises which proved popular.

One woman, aged over 90, was previously reluctant to go anywhere like the club as she did not believe she needed help. She was collected by the minibus, made some friends and joined the chair-based exercise group telling her son she never felt better.

A number of volunteers were integral to the success of the project's delivery, with several providing the vital lifeline of driving the minibuses.



Keystone

Delivered by: Keystone

Area covered: Crosby and Hightown

Health area: older people dementia

Aim: to provide groups for carers of those living with dementia so they have time to relax and gain peer support from other carers, as well as supporting those with dementia or other memory problems.

Initially, two groups were established through the project. One meeting at St Luke's in Crosby with up to ten members and the other in St Frideswydes, Thornton, with six carers of people with early onset dementia.

One of the ways the project supports carers is by meeting at a café in Crosby where they also bring the people they care for. In the three years since the group has been attending, the café staff have more awareness of how dementia affects people and now provide suitable chairs and drinks in mugs rather than a cup and saucer.

And, through the groups, the project has built up a network of volunteers to care for the carers and visit them at home, offering lifts to hospital appointments, or staying with the cared for. Keystone has started a befriending service for those known to the support groups.

The groups provide vital space and opportunity for people to share their concerns if they want, and this has meant the carers feel more connected with one another and have somewhere they can unburden themselves without being judged. It has made a significant difference to those who attend.



"I feel less isolated since coming and I know I can contact Keystone if I have a question and see a befriender most weeks. The groups are lovely and I know I can say what I need to without anyone criticising. It's been a lifeline," said one carer.

Another said: "I count the group as friends now. I wish I'd found the groups months ago."

Conferences have been delivered in order to raise awareness of dementia with Penny Garner from the Contented Dementia Trust giving talks. Those who attended said it gave them increased confidence on how to approach dementia and a positive outcome was that a third group was formed in Hightown which has grown in size to 11 carers.

The connection between members has developed so much that they meet informally outside of the regular group meetings for friendship, coffee, lunch and walks on the seafront. This ensures the level of social isolation is further reduced and lessens the feeling of stress the carers can sometimes experience. And they celebrate Christmas with a large festive meal in a local golf club which is a focal point of the year for the members, cared for and volunteers.

The project has also been successful in raising awareness of dementia throughout Sefton by giving talks at other faith venues, with the prospect of establishing additional Keystone groups. And in 2017 Keystone is involved in planning Dementia Friendly Crosby and Dementia Friendly Hightown to further promote people's understanding of this condition.

The Formby Project

Partnership delivery: Brighter Living Partnership (Lead Agency), Formby Christian Fellowship, Formby Luncheon Club, Formby Pool Trust, Sefton CVS, Sefton Pensioners Advocacy, the Formby Hub and the Formby Befriending Scheme

Area covered: Formby

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: to establish a befriending network through volunteers being matched to older people in need of company, as well as utilising social events organised by the Formby Hub to further reduce social isolation of older people in the area.

There were two elements to this project which began in 2014. The first was the befriending side which saw up to 60 volunteers visiting 60 older people in their homes for at least one hour a week.

Each volunteer completed an induction process prior to being matched with an older person, and then went on to give support with shopping, attending health appointments, companionship and acting as chaperones to coffee clubs and other social events.

The befriending provides a vital lifeline to people who have found themselves isolated within their own homes due to illness, bereavement or loss of mobility.

People like 86-year-old Mrs S who is without family and finds it difficult to get around. Her befriender Irene visits regularly and they go out to garden centres, the project's own coffee club, the shops and more. According to Mrs S she wouldn't know what to do without Irene as "she keeps me going".

The second element of the project is working in conjunction with the Formby Hub, set up to provide events so older people could meet up and socialise, as well as compiling a register of activities, groups and sessions within the locality used to signpost people.

The hub document was updated regularly and placed at strategic venues in the area to maximise the opportunity for people to access it. These included the four information hubs at the pool, library, Formby Luncheon Club and a children's centre. Volunteers also help out at the Hub events.

Over the three years there were more than 790 attendances by older people to the Hub events.

Through the project, many older people have gone on to make friends with others attending the events, established lasting rapport with their befriender or have joined other clubs, such as Formby Luncheon Club.

People such as independent Mrs W, a 94-year-old, who was encouraged to attend the Hub's strawberry tea event and since then has gone on to become a member of the Luncheon Club as well as enjoying the chair-based exercises; or Mr P who was lonely after his wife died but is now part of the project and making the most of everyone's company.

Through support given by Sefton CVS's Group Development Officer, Sian Martin-Baez, the group delivering the befriending element has become a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) which means more older people in Formby will benefit from ongoing befriending opportunities. Additionally, there are plans for The Hub to move under the umbrella of Formby CVS to ensure events are held in the future for older people to enjoy.



29,312

meals were served to older people across the borough by Sefton projects supported by the CCG VCF Fund between 2014-2017.

POPPIES

Delivered by: St Leonard’s Youth and Community Centre

Area covered: South Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation and dementia

Aim: to further build on the range of health and wellbeing services and activities aimed at reducing social isolation for older people, helping widows/widowers and offering dementia support.

POPPIES stands for Promoting Older People’s Pastimes, Information, Education and Socialising. An older person’s worker was employed by the project to oversee the social activities offered.

These included: weekly tai chi, ballroom dancing, a walking club and bowls as well as additional pursuits such as trips out, talks from health groups to raise awareness, pamper sessions and, within the weekly chair-based exercise they incorporated quizzes, mental stimulation games and the use of a memory box.

As a result of this programme, more than 97 attendees have benefited from engaging with the project and a regular survey was taken of their views.

Of those who filled in the survey, 80 per cent said they felt their levels of fitness had increased with people commenting: “As a disabled person I do find the chair-based exercises help me without putting too much pressure on my already sore joints.”

“I have been looking for a club which has indoor bowls and where I can play sitting on a chair, and this project has organised things so I can do this.”

The project also looked to raise people’s awareness of what was available to them locally by organising regular older people’s information days.

Around 28 different agencies have been available to pass on details of their services to more than 100 older people. The agencies ranged from the Stroke Association, Affordable Warmth Team and Macmillan to Hugh Baird College.

Overall, the project is seen as a place where the community can get together, especially for older people. This was something identified as important by Mr H looking to find a place he and his wife could attend and follow shared pursuits: “I had not long retired from working night shifts and, needing to socialise more, I wanted to go somewhere to give me a chance to get out more and improve my health.

“Through the project I have more friends and feel part of my wider community. I think my health has improved and I spend much more time with my wife who attends the project at the same time.”

Case study: Mrs X is in her 70s, retired, lives with her husband in Bootle but has become socially isolated as her husband doesn’t like going out of the house due to his cancer.

POPPIES gave her the chance to be herself and she comments: “I feel I can park my problems at the door. I am happier, healthier, more confident and have so many new friends.

“I have learnt several new skills too. All the tutors are so patient; we are allowed to go at our own pace. We have a laugh and I feel very much supported and able to talk to people and staff if I need to. This project is a lifeline for me, like therapy, I can be me!”



Sefton OPERA

Area covered: All Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: for a development worker to co-ordinate the delivery of early intervention health and wellbeing activities, supporting older Sefton residents to enable them to make healthy choices and improve their quality of life.

A wealth of social and physical activities were offered to older people throughout Sefton including: day trips to places such as Bury, Llandudno, the Lowry Food Festival in Manchester and the Royal Court theatre; swimming sessions; a walking group; craft-based activities which resulted in the formation of the In Stitches group, an intergenerational programme of sharing craft skills including knitting and crochet; and a men's group that organised its own outings and activities.

As a result, older people have forged sustainable friendships and sometimes meet up socially outside of the project or, if one of them does not attend, the others make contact to check on their welfare.

Their physical health has also improved with one older man from the swimming group saying his kidney condition is not as severe.

Sefton OPERA developed several bespoke programmes aimed at helping older people stay healthy and active.

One was the Never Too Late to Look Great programme of activities which included attending Chester Races Christmas Market, taking regular exercise and sharing tips on healthy eating.

The other was the Be Wise Socialise programme which ran regular trips out and organised get-togethers to combat social isolation.

The aim to reduce social isolation of older people extended to include those living in sheltered or nursing accommodation by providing appropriate activities including chair-based exercises with an integrated falls awareness session.

The importance of preventing trips and falls was further addressed through a Falls Prevention Roadshow and awareness days with more than 120 people receiving information.

The project staged regular tea dances up and down the borough, where people could get together for an afternoon of dance but were also given information about suitable services that might be of interest to them. Partnership working helped the project to reach even more beneficiaries.

Older people benefited in other ways too by volunteering with the project. More than 13 people supported the programme, with some going to visit others in hospital or doing some shopping as well as being trained in first aid, safeguarding and certificated hand and back massage.

This gave the volunteers a feeling of self worth and increased their wellbeing.

Volunteer case study: D initially came to Sefton Opera after the project visited a nursing home in Bootle, where her mum was living.

D was a quiet, shy person and settled into the project where she grew in confidence and began to blossom. She told the development worker that she has made so many friends it has given her a reason to get up.





Older People’s Project

Delivered by: SING

Area covered: South Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: to increase the wellbeing of older people in the Seaforth area by encouraging them to take part in the daily social activities and other services based in SING’s shop.

Every weekday morning the shop was open to older people in the area, as a place where they could come together for a chat, and take part in a range of activities including knitting, using the computers, chair-based exercises and crafts.

Talks from organisations were arranged in order to raise people’s awareness of services available to them locally, and to increase their confidence of venturing to other groups.

The project forged partnerships with other organisations so older people could benefit from that connection.

One such connection was with Age Concern Liverpool and Sefton which started a Companions drop-in session which included healthy eating, Christmas activities, a quiz and a befriending element.

The sessions increased people’s confidence and self-esteem to the degree that they started sharing ideas, the stories of their lives and supporting one another.

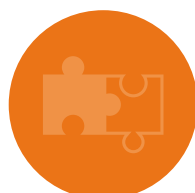
The Knit and Natter group was a particular success because several of the older women who initially attended were low in confidence. However, by regularly coming to the project they became increasingly involved as they learnt new skills.

Visual displays in the shop window of knitted scenes relating to a particular event, such as Remembrance Day, gave them an incentive and feeling of accomplishment.

Comments from those attending include: “If I hadn’t come to the group I wouldn’t have taken up knitting again.” and “It’s great that we can come up with ideas and they are listened to.”

Case study: A Seaforth woman, aged over 80, found she was staying indoors more and more because her husband was housebound.

Going to the Older People’s Project gave her the chance to talk with a wider group of people with similar interests, and share skills and knowledge. She said: “I’m glad this is here as I’d end up talking to myself if I was stuck in the house.”



2,464

older people across Sefton took part in 123 activities and 49 day trips organised by projects supported by the CCG VCF Fund between 2014-2017.

Social Inclusion

Partnership delivery: Netherton Feelgood Factory and the Brighter Living Partnership

Area covered: throughout Sefton with a focus on the Southport and Netherton areas

Health area: older people social isolation

Aim: to tackle the growing problem of older people feeling lonely and isolated by providing a programme of social activities to encourage them to socialise, keep mobile and improve their mental wellbeing.

The initial project reached 157 older people with a range of activities under the banner of Brighter Mondays in Southport and Feelgood Fridays in Netherton.

These involved sessions around crafts, films, talks, floristry and chair-based exercises, along with walking football.

An unexpected outcome was that 80 per cent of the groups were aged 65+, but the sessions also attracted younger people who were experiencing mental health issues or had learning disabilities.

More than 140 people have so far engaged with the 2015 project as well as working with up to 65 of those who attended the previous year.

Learning from what people enjoyed, the project developed a 'Man Cave' in Netherton aiming to be a grown-up youth club, and this also attracted younger men, mainly with anxiety issues, and three of them have gone on to form their own guitar group. Meanwhile, in Southport, a lunch club and a weekly film club are growing in popularity.

As a result of these programmes, people are reconnecting with their local communities and building up networks of friends.

For instance, an 84-year-old woman from Thornton with limited mobility and social isolation joined in the two-hour Feelgood Learning session where they discuss a range of subjects to keep minds active. "It is important to me to participate in a group that allows me to carry on thinking. Just because I am older doesn't mean I can't keep learning," she said.

A 74-year-old woman from Southport commented: "I am in a wheelchair and living on my own. Being isolated and depending on others led me to developing depression and feeling lonely."

"Coming to the clubs has allowed me to have a new purpose, I have made new friends and it has kept my mind and time busy."



Adult Mental Health

In this category the projects were diverse in the ways they approached helping people overcome issues such as anxiety, low self-esteem, a lack of confidence and stress. Mental health has grown in prominence as to its importance to people's overall health and wellbeing. In Sefton there is a higher than national average of people suffering depressive episodes and mixed anxiety, and mental health has been shown to be the biggest cause of ill health.

However, these specific projects demonstrate how Sefton communities are devising ways of tackling the effects of mental ill health with encouraging results.

The seven projects are:

- Anger Management
- Work-Ability
- Health First Sefton
- Feeling Funny
- SAMHAWC mental health charter
- Southport Mental Health Drop-in
- Sefton Autism Hubs



Anger Management

Delivered by: COMPASS (Counselling on Merseyside, Pastoral and Support Service)

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: to enable individuals to understand and deal with anger in a constructive way by gaining greater insight into what is unhealthy anger, leading to them acquiring skills to control their anger and developing more self-confidence.

Over the past couple of years, the project has offered anger management counselling to Sefton residents through two different approaches. One is through group sessions, with people being referred to attend a two-day course because their anger has become a problem. The other approach is one-to-one counselling lasting six separate sessions.

These approaches have made people look at their own situations and assess how their anger affects other people as well as themselves. In all, the project has delivered eight courses with 60 clients attending, and more than 449 hours of one-to-one counselling has helped more than 105 people.

One man said: "I have improved my basic listening skills and this has resulted in improved relationships with my partner and my children. I have noticed an improvement in my general physical health as I often felt agitated and had a low mood.

"This often led to a feeling of anxiety, difficulty sleeping and an upset stomach – this is now greatly improved."

A 48-year-old woman commented:

"I was a very angry person, with an easy loss of temper due to social problems at home."

"The project has really helped me not to shout as much, to be calmer and to control my temper."

Another client remarked: "I feel I can put this advice and the strategies I have learned into place and get to a much happier time of my life."

Work-Ability

Delivered by: Work-Ability

Area covered: South Sefton

Aim: to support people with disabilities and long-term conditions, such as learning disabilities, ADHD and Asperger's, to overcome barriers to them accessing mainstream health and social care provision as well as education and employment opportunities.

The project employed a specialist advocate to assist these people by a variety of means, including: one-to-one personalised support, job searches, volunteering opportunities, registering with a GP or dentist, creating a CV, accompanying them to benefit advice meetings and arranging suitable accommodation.

In addition, a steering group made up of service user representatives and professionals from the disabled communities informed the project's direction, taking on board issues uncovered by the support given by the advocate.

Through the project 70 people have been helped and have gone on to refresh their CVs in pursuit of gaining employment, attend job interviews, find employment, enrol on computing courses, resolve relationship issues in a positive way that has increased their wellbeing, taken up volunteering roles and been encouraged to seek mental health support from appropriate agencies.

This level of support has resulted in the clients reporting their confidence has grown to the degree they can now successfully manage their health and mental wellbeing, while others have combated their isolation and joined community social activities and expanded their network of friends.

One client received training around benefits, life skills, dementia awareness and how to operate an iPad which boosted their wellbeing.

They said: "Knowing the support was there if I needed it really helped my self-esteem. Work-Ability is also good at being able to signpost to other services. Being a member of the project steering group has given me a sense of purpose and the chance to interact with others."

Another client found themselves isolated after leaving education and often sat alone in their bedroom. After engaging with the project they were supported and motivated to attend a specialised training course and later joined a self-advocacy group. "Being part of the project has changed my life," they said.



Health First Sefton

Delivered by: People First Merseyside

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: to make sports and fitness activities more accessible and appealing to people with learning disabilities (PWLD) so they can improve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The project worked in collaboration with the council's health and wellbeing team to develop a series of roadshows in order to promote health messages and improve access to activities at sports and leisure facilities in Sefton.

The roadshows were designed and delivered by PWLD who were trained as Health Champions to help them get health messages across as effectively as possible. Leading up to the first 27 of their roadshows, health specialists coached the 14 Health Champions in areas such as stopping smoking, diet, alcohol, physical activity and health checks.

They then went on to develop suitable interactive games and activities to use at the roadshows to engage other PWLD and, so far, more than 220 PWLD have enjoyed the roadshows.

And the health messages are being heard.

More than two thirds stated they were going to take part in some exercise, saying:

"Football and keep fit."

"Keep fit and chair-based exercise."

80 per cent stated they were going to do something to be healthier, saying:

"I will have less sugar."

"Cut down and do more exercise."

"Eat more healthy food."

"More walking. No more pies."

"Eat more fish and try to cut down on chocolate."

Additionally, the Health Champions reaped the benefits as well with some taking up a sport by themselves for the first time. Other advantages have included health conditions improving due to regular exercise, progress towards independent living, increased confidence in making decisions and great improvements in their mental health.

One of the Health Champions has noticed an improvement in her outlook since the project began. She said: "I love being a Health Champion - it is really good. It has made me feel happier. I enjoy talking to people at the roadshows and I've tried new activities like Zumba. I would never have thought I could do anything like this, especially with my arthritis.

"I have also gone swimming and this is something I was really scared about but it has helped boost my confidence loads. This is a massive thing for me. I have started looking at my food and only buy healthy stuff and diet drinks now."



256

volunteers from throughout the borough were involved in Sefton projects for older people supported by the CCG VCF Fund between 2014-2017.

Feeling Funny

Delivered by: The Comedy Trust

Area covered: South Sefton

Aim: to use humour and laughter as tools to encourage communities to address social and health issues around mental health and wellbeing.

The project used two different strands to get across that humour can be used as a mechanism to cope with life's stresses and that it can help us to connect with other people.

Firstly, the Well Funny sessions, presented by a stand-up comedian from The Comedy Trust, were delivered in a variety of settings - from workplaces to community groups - and tailored accordingly so everyone could participate in them.

People said afterwards: "What an interesting and fun way to look at the benefits of humour on our health and wellbeing. I probably don't laugh enough but I definitely will try to do it more after today."

"It's made me think that humour and laughter are such an important part of coping with the stresses that life can bring."

"Laughing is the only contagious thing that I wouldn't mind catching! I felt much better after today and wish there was a way of bottling laughter as I think everyone could do with a supply of it stored in their cupboards!"

There were more than 195 attendees at the Well Funny sessions.

Secondly, a six-week long comedy workshop course was offered to men aged 18+, as a way of encouraging them to open up about their feelings. The course culminated in a stand-up performance of routines the men had put together during the previous six weeks and their family and friends came along to support them.

Two of the three courses have been completed and the 22 men who have taken part, with a range of mental health issues including anxiety, stress and OCD, said they felt more relaxed. Their self-esteem increased and they found the peer support from the other participants also improved their wellbeing.

The participants commented:

"Being part of the Feeling Funny project has been a very cathartic experience for me. It made me feel like I was not alone with what I have been through and now feel I am able to confront things in my life that I would not have been able to previously."

"The Feeling Funny course has helped to rebuild my confidence and made me focus on more positives in life in general."

Mental Health Charter

Partnership delivery: SAMHAWC (Sefton Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Consortium)

Lead agency: Feelgood Factory

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: the project was divided into two distinct areas – the first, to establish a charter between SAMHAWC partners and the IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) service and, the second, to develop ten mental health awareness events in the borough.

The goal of the charter is to strengthen the referral pathway to IAPT by developing good working relationships which will ensure people are receiving appropriate treatment in a timely fashion.

The events are designed to raise people's awareness of mental health, including where to turn for suitable services and resources, as well as how to increase their own positive mental wellbeing.

So far, around 300 people have engaged in six of the mental health events with the result that people have been helped to attend a Christmas lunch as well as receiving support in acquiring household items which have given them a boost in wellbeing.

Partners in SAMHAWC are the Feelgood Factory, the SWAN Centre, the Venus Centre, Compass Counselling, Expect Ltd, Age Concern Liverpool & Sefton, Parenting 2000 and Sefton CVS.



Southport Mental Health Drop-In

Partnership delivery: SAMHAWC (Sefton Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Consortium)

Lead agency: Expect Ltd

Area covered: Southport

Aim: to provide four informal drop-in sessions per week where people with mental health issues could meet up in a safe and friendly environment as a way of improving their situation.

Preliminary research by the consortium identified there was a need in Southport for this type of service and more than 20 people attended the sessions which were established at two locations in Southport.

People could come and relax or join in the activities, such as arts and crafts, a Feel Good Hour or informal talks. Additionally, service users were given support with telephone calls to sort out issues with benefits, GPs, utility companies etc.

This small-scale provision appeared to increase mental wellbeing during periods of uncertainty with personal finances and benefit changes.

Consequently, many of the service users reported increases in confidence. They felt more socially connected and through CHASE – a person-centred tool to capture evidence – 86 per cent displayed improvements in awareness of unhealthy behaviours, such as self isolation and non attendance of medical and psychological appointments.

68 per cent of attendees of the project were unemployed at the time of joining the project. All service users were given the opportunity to utilise support in accessing employability services and 20 per cent achieved paid employment.

93 per cent of drop-in attendees reported and displayed signs of increased confidence and communications skills.

This was demonstrated by their repeated attendance and interaction with those within the group and staff, an increased ability to liaise with professionals and communicate their wants, needs and opinions effectively. Several service users went on to form their own social group, meeting to go to the cinema, pubs and bowling, which they would not have visited before attending the project.

Others are now: volunteering; eating more healthily following advice on making healthy choices; enrolling on college courses and taking up regular exercise again by cycling and going to the gym.

One service user commented:

"I attend as I feel it's the only place I can go to as I don't have many friends to meet up with and be around. I also go to gain confidence; speaking to others and getting to know them makes me feel good."

Sefton Autism Hubs

Delivered by: Sefton Carers Centre

Area covered: All Sefton

Aim: to establish three hubs throughout the borough in order to provide lower level preventative support for adults with Autism / Asperger's who do not qualify for social care support.

The Waterloo Hub is based within Sefton Carers Centre, the Southport Hub is based within the Atkinson Centre and the Bootle Hub is due to be based at The Cedars.

A combination of information, learning support and a variety of activities is offered at the hubs through which people gain confidence in their abilities, achieve a level of independence to complete training courses, secure employment, feel good about themselves and help reduce social isolation.

Identification and contact has been made with 285 adults with Asperger's through an established Autism Sub Group Partnership which includes Sefton Carers Centre, Autism Initiatives, People First Merseyside, Sefton Council, NHS South Sefton CCG, NHS Southport and Formby CCG and Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.

In a short period of time, those attending the Southport and Waterloo hubs have completed a project working with Clapperboard UK, a media charity, to deliver creative media sessions and, from this, hub members have used film to capture their ideas, individual interests, aspirations and video diaries.

Opportunities have opened up for members to volunteer, get paid work, and work towards setting up their own independent media company. Some of the members' films have been selected to be showcased at a Clapperboard Award Ceremony in April 2017, and some members will be going on to write and film with Clapperboard.

The next phase of the project is looking to further develop the hubs and partnerships, deliver new courses that continue to help build confidence, offer further learning and employment opportunities, promote health and well being and support members to develop new friendships.

Combination

In this category there are 18 projects which look to address a combination of health areas and these will be identified in each of the separate accounts of what the projects achieved.

Whether it was looking to reduce social isolation for older people and improve their mental wellbeing, or encouraging all members of the community to adopt a healthy lifestyle, every one of the following projects had innovative ways of reaching their goals and a deep knowledge of the local community in which they were operating.

The projects are:

SSAFA Sefton

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SSAFA Sefton

Delivered by: SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association)

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation and dementia, adult mental health

Aim: to increase and improve the provision of services to ex-armed forces personnel and their families living in Sefton.

The co-ordinator of the project made valuable connections with local groups in the borough so members of the ex-service community and their families were aware of what was available to them. Caseworkers provided direct support to clients after completing the SSAFA case working course and then acted as mentors to volunteer caseworkers.

Through the project the caseworkers were able to support ex-armed forces personnel with financial and practical help such as: residential home fees; care home top-up fees; locating white goods and furniture; and council tax fees.

The co-ordinator passed the referrals to the case worker who met the client to discuss any concerns. That level of direct support made a big difference. In one case, a woman in her 60s with mobility problems contacted the project because her late husband had been in the army and she felt vulnerable due to a lack of lighting outside her house. "When I contacted SSAFA I was at a low point in my life as my husband had just passed away, there had been some break-ins in the neighbourhood and my adult children lived away. The caseworker came to my home and helped me fill in a form.

"The caseworker sorted everything from there and now I have security lighting and don't feel vulnerable."

Another client, aged in his 30s, had served in the army and had council tax debts. After engaging with the project, the case worker prevented his eviction and he commented: "I now have peace of mind. I suffer from PTSD and this situation was making my condition worse. I took advice from my caseworker and worked out a monthly household budget. The project has made a significant difference to my health and wellbeing."

There have been more than 50 cases completed with the six caseworkers supporting multiple other service users. In addition, the project has recruited two fundraisers.

Sefton Shares Reading

Delivered by: The Reader

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation and dementia, adult mental health

Aim: to deliver shared reading groups as a way of increasing people's wellbeing through listening and discussing books, poems and other written material.

A co-ordinator from The Reader initially set out to forge links with community organisations to locate suitable places for establishing groups. Following this, anyone interested in becoming a volunteer facilitator of the shared groups was given Read to Lead training from The Reader.

Together with The Reader staff-led sessions, this meant more than 111 shared reading group sessions were delivered at places throughout the borough, including Crosby, Formby, Bootle, Southport and Maghull.

Listening to a story read out loud evokes memories and feelings which may encourage people to share their experiences and gain encouragement and comment from others within the group.

People going to the groups found it benefited them in a number of ways. For instance, a member of a visually-impaired group, where a session was held, explained she read often before her eyesight deteriorated and then enjoyed her husband reading aloud.

However, after he died this no longer happened - until the shared reading group and she was then able to enjoy listening to a story and sharing her feelings afterwards.

Friendships have also been made through the groups, with several people meeting up independently, and one woman saying she regained confidence she lost after retiring from teaching.

A volunteer visiting the Formby group said she found the experience "inspirational", while another volunteer enjoyed delivering shared reading so much she has established a second weekly group at another venue in Crosby.

Women's Social and Therapeutic Allotment Project

Delivered by: SWAN

Area covered: South Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation, adult mental health

Aim: to provide women with mild to moderate mental health problems, who find it difficult to engage in support groups, with access to a counsellor to discuss their problems in a less formal environment.

Women helped out on an allotment in Litherland which gave them the chance to occupy themselves, build social networks and talk with a counsellor.

Over time, the allotment saw 24 women visit on a regular basis who transformed it into somewhere they could catch up with one another, tend to the plants and crops and enjoy the fruits of their labour – basketfuls of rhubarb, cabbage, onions and different fruits – by making jams, chutneys and soups.

But the allotment provided more than this. The women said it was their refuge because home life was chaotic. It reduced their stress, made them look at their problems in a different way and stopped them from feeling alone.

In addition to working on the allotment, the project involved the women having one-to-one sessions with counsellors, attending learning sessions on topics such as jam and soup making, benefits of feng shui and building up scrapbooks of their experiences.

This would be theirs to keep and something to refer back to, thereby reinforcing the positive feelings associated with the allotment and the project as a whole.

Several friendship groups formed with the women meeting one another independently of the project and this gave them added confidence, easing any social anxieties.

Here are a couple of the women's comments: "Before joining the project I felt totally isolated but I was put at ease and made to feel welcome. I started to make friends and learn new skills. The allotment is 'my' time."

"The project has enabled me to get out of my house and occupy my mind. I am now going out on my own and making new friends which I haven't been able to do for a long time."

The confidence gained from the allotment project propelled some of the women into volunteering as well as employment and re-entering education.

The counsellors report that one woman has been able to go on holiday by herself and feels able to use public transport, while another volunteered on Christmas Day giving out meals.



53,802

meals were served to local residents across Sefton by projects in the borough supported by the CCG VCF Fund between 2014-2017.



Ainsdale Community Care

Delivered by: Ainsdale Community Care

Area covered: Ainsdale, Birkdale, Formby

Health area: Older people social isolation, older people dementia, adult mental health

Aim: to create a secure and social environment in which older people can gather for a hot meal and conversation. Also to provide hot meals to people in their own homes when they are unable to attend the centre.

The 2014 funded project concentrated on building up a range of social and physical activities to offer older people in the area when they came in for the hot lunches, and this was built on for the 2015 project.

In all, in excess of 13,337 meals were served, with the membership topping 202 people, as well as giving volunteering opportunities to more than 85 people, some of whom had learning disabilities.

Although the lunches ensured the older people ate a substantial meal once a day, they also provided the chance to meet others, especially as many of the members were single. This enabled them to build a friendship network and pursue interests or take up new hobbies.

People like P, who has been volunteering at Ainsdale Community Care for 16 years. He remarked that he enjoyed the work and the people: "It gives structure to my day, helps with my mood because I suffer with depression and helps me get through the day."



Also, M, living with Parkinson's disease, attended both Qigong and chair-based exercises. He said the first "probably improved my balance and movement" and saved him sitting down so often.

To cater for older people not able to make the lunches, the project organised a home delivery service. For many, this daily lunch being dropped off was the only contact they had with another person during the day.

The introduction of thermo boxes to keep the meals warmer for longer, meant the delivery drivers could spend more time with people than before, thereby providing much-needed company.

Between the two projects, a total of 9,425 meals were delivered to more than 32 individuals in Ainsdale, Birkdale and, increasingly, in the Formby area.

Thanks to the activities on offer and the hot lunches, many older people in these localities reported their self-esteem and wellbeing had increased.

Those who engaged with the project went on to form other groups to take part in indoor bowls and some friendly competition.

One man, from an all-male group attending healthy cooking on a budget sessions, had a poor diet but began putting on weight following the course because he dispensed with the chips and packets of crisps.

59+ Domestic Violence Project

Delivered by: SWACA

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: adult mental health, older people social isolation, dementia

Aim: to raise awareness of domestic abuse with older women and improve accessibility to SWACA's service within this age group, especially as they make up around 20 per cent of Sefton's population and often have complex issues.

Through the funding, SWACA was able to have a worker dedicated to engaging with communities and services for the 59+ group, and addressing the lack of reporting and referrals to services.

More than 83 women were referred to the project and 70 received direct support. They were referred by a variety of ways: GP, the police, adult social care or a family member.

As many women had been in abusive relationships with partners or a family member for a long time, it was difficult for them to recognise they were in such a relationship, while others felt guilt which prevented them from disclosing their situation.

It was recognised that, over the course of the project, more older women came forward to report and seek sustained support for domestic abuse from a partner, especially as previously SWACA had found it difficult to retain them in the service.

One reason given for the increased engagement was the positive experience the women had of tailored support.

As a result of engaging with the project there were a number of positive outcomes including women accessing SWACA's legal surgery for advice.

One woman instigated divorce proceedings after a three-year abusive relationship and at least 18 women reported improvements at home.

Many had increased confidence in sharing concerns with other agencies/professionals, some women reported their emotional health had improved with better sleep patterns, eating habits and communications with others.

One woman had gone back to volunteering and another secured employment. Others said their wellbeing increased as they felt more comfortable discussing their situation.

The project has meant that women who had been in an abusive relationship for a long period of time could find the confidence to remove themselves from it and begin a new chapter.

People like Y, who had been married for more than 25 years and had suffered depression during that time, and contacted SWACA for help.

After a month of receiving support she was able to secure her own house and was looking forward to what she described as "peace in her later years."



257

volunteers from throughout the borough were involved in combination projects supported by the CCG VCF Fund between 2014-2017.

Family Health Worker

Delivered by: Venus

Area covered: South Sefton

Health area: adult mental health, children and young people obesity, emotional wellbeing, transitions

Aim: through the Family Health Worker (FHW), families already involved with Venus or referred in are supported to identify and address issues such as obesity, exercise, healthy eating, smoking, attending health appointments and other aspects of a healthy life.

Many of the families are vulnerable, isolated and often mistrusting of mainstream interventions and the FHW builds up a trusting relationship with them so they can benefit the most from the project.

More than 72 families have been supported by the Family Health Worker since July 2015 and a further 215 parents have attended health sessions at Venus to build on their knowledge of healthy lifestyles.

The families who engaged with the project had a range of health problems leading to several hospital, GP and other medical appointments. Some of the health issues families were suffering with included: postnatal depression, anxiety, diabetes, COPD, obesity and various cancers.

But after support from the FHW, the families reported increased wellbeing and being more aware of the importance of good health. Others were more inclined to engage with further health services.

For example, a mum-of-four had avoided dental appointments but via the FHW, she had multiple visits which improved her teeth, and also gave her the confidence to attend future appointments.

A single mum found the support from the FHW was particularly beneficial. Struggling with COPD, the mum had issues with benefits as well as attending health appointments but the FHW was able to ensure these issues were resolved. The mum said about the FHW attending appointments: "I find it helpful having someone to listen to the information they are giving me and to help me remember afterwards what was discussed and the way forward."

The health sessions delivered at Venus touched on a variety of health topics and families were given information on healthy cooking, contraception and wellbeing.

Fresh StArt

Partnership delivery: Venus and Parenting 2000

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: adult mental health, children and young people emotional wellbeing

Aim: to provide women - either at risk of entering or with experience of the criminal justice system - the chance to gain confidence and move on with their lives through learning in a safe, supportive and creative environment.

The project was divided into two segments. The first was providing art therapy courses in Sefton for women recently released from prison and/or supervised by the Probation Service, and the second was a seven week, community-based course for vulnerable women to prevent reoffending.

The art therapy courses saw more than 45 women come together and develop bonds which made them feel better about themselves. One of the ex-offenders said: "Before the art therapy classes I couldn't socialise but now I can actually talk to other people." Another said it gave meaning to her week, while probation staff have reported seeing an increase in the women's self-esteem with one woman saying it had stopped her from thinking of self-harming.

Those on the seven-week course, which ran four times, attended workshops looking at decluttering, healthy relationships, wellbeing and money management. The 16 women developed different skills which gave them confidence to carry them on at home.

One young woman felt able to cook healthy meals at home with her small daughter and had more confidence in budgeting, and another woman thought about returning to education.

The wellbeing of the women going to the community workshop courses and the art therapy courses has improved as a result of learning and being aware of services, activities and different ways of coping with life's challenges. One woman also found additional benefits: "I feel that I now have a support network of friends through the art therapy," she said.

High Park Think Family, Think Community

Partnership delivery: Brighter Living Partnership and the High Park Think Family, Think Community Partnership

Area covered: High Park in North Southport

Health area: older people social isolation, children and young people obesity and emotional wellbeing

Aim: to develop a resilient community by building positive partnerships, offering activities to encourage a healthy lifestyle for the whole family, establishing volunteering opportunities and creating opportunities for the High Park community to come together.

The project has been running since 2014 and has achieved its goal of leaving a legacy for the High Park community by involving its many different members who have supported a variety of activities and events.

More than 12 community events have been held, from family fun days to dogs being microchipped. A weekly luncheon club began for older people, with local services and groups acting as 'guest cooks' and explaining more about the services they offer.

Views from residents were canvassed regularly, resulting in arts and crafts classes, adult computer training and charity fundraising events being held. Younger members of the community were also catered for by treasure hunts and an interactive play bus was sited in the local park attracting more than 30 children at a time. Kite flying, arts and crafts, football and other sports were offered with parents giving positive feedback, saying: "It's so good for the children to be out in the park, running around and having fun."

The project co-ordinator also helped interested residents form a community action group which fed into the consortium made up of representatives including those from: schools, church, the police, health organisations and young people's groups.

One mother was motivated by the project to start a group for parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities. The group – Charlie's Way – has gone on to provide awareness and shared knowledge events which are continually in demand.



L21 Network

Partnership delivery: Venus in conjunction with the L21 Think Family, Think Community Partnership

Area covered: Seaforth and Litherland

Health area: older people social isolation, adult mental health, children and young people obesity

Aim: to reduce the social isolation of older people in the community as well as addressing lifestyle behaviours with a focus on reducing childhood obesity.

A community health development worker co-ordinated the project, bringing in different elements of the local area in an effort to foster lasting relationships between neighbours, encourage families to adopt healthy behaviours and develop volunteer opportunities.

All this was achieved by regular family fun days when the health bus attracted children and families to take part in fun activities, such as making environmentally-friendly and affordable bird boxes, community yoga, practitioners demonstrating healthy meals and youngsters enjoying the football sessions. More than 200 people came along to the various fun days.

In addition to the fun days, older people in nearby residential homes have said their wellbeing improved since joining in the chair-based exercises, and people who have taken part in choir events, organised at the local children's centre through the project, reported feeling uplifted and their stress reduced.

In an attempt to sustain these lifestyle activities, the development worker linked in with numerous local agencies, such as schools, children's centres, community centres and other organisations, and they helped with providing activity sessions to raise awareness of their services so the community knows where to turn for specific help.

In addition, a Christmas lights switch-on event at a nearby park at which two local primary school choirs performed, and a Christmas card competition involving several primary schools, further highlighted the aims of the project.

The project has gone on to establish the L21 Community Network after becoming a company limited by guarantee.

Let's Live Well

Partnership delivery: Eco Resource Network (consisting of Faiths4Change, Energy Projects Plus and Liverpool World Centre)

Area covered: Ainsdale and Birkdale, Crosby, Bootle, Seaforth and Litherland

Health area: older people social isolation, adult mental health

Aim: to work with three faith communities to deliver a programme that will empower older people to stay well and safe in their home environment for longer.

As a way of bringing older people together from the same local community, the project offered different health and wellbeing sessions. These included food and nutrition classes that ranged from bring a friend to lunch day to learning how best to cook for one person.

The emphasis in all of the classes was eating well in older age, focusing on changing nutritional needs.

The health and wellbeing sessions also looked at affordable warmth by raising awareness of help available to older people in paying their energy bills to avoid them not having enough heating or a means of cooking.

More than 230 older people took part in the sessions over 18 months, with people commenting that not only had the sessions given them the confidence and motivation to eat more fruit and veg, it had also given them the chance to make new friends and they were also grateful for the energy use advice.

A widower on one of the sessions commented: "I wanted to learn to cook fresh food for myself instead of relying on things from a tin or having to go out to eat. Then I can invite people round to dinner with me."

There were a few additional outcomes from the project. It was able to instigate a growing partnership between Ainsdale Community Care, Sacred Heart and St Johnstone in Ainsdale, and then St Mary's and St Faiths in Crosby, with the aim of linking in with an older person's group in the area. Additionally, Eucharist Ministers in Ainsdale were identified as being able to reach vulnerable older people to highlight signs of fuel poverty among their members, and received appropriate training in order to carry this out while visiting people in the area.

Waterloo Community Kitchen

Delivered by: Waterloo Community Association

Area covered: Crosby, Waterloo and Bootle

Health area: older people social isolation and dementia, adult mental health, children and young people obesity

Aim: to tackle social isolation across the generations and provide healthy, nutritious food at low cost.

The project organised a series of cooking sessions as one way of reducing social isolation, but it also helped to inspire families to make soups and casseroles, and to learn the basics of food preparation, cooking, storing, shopping and budgets. More than 20 people who had weight issues and felt isolated completed the sessions.

Another way of reducing social isolation was through the weekly lunches which gradually grew in numbers to the point more than 65 people came along on a Thursday.

Those who attended were given the option of a three-course meal and comprised single men, older people, workers from nearby businesses, families, people with learning disabilities and their carers, and professionals.

By coming along to the kitchen, people became aware of classes they could become involved with and this included a cycling club which organised cycling trips to coincide with the finish of lunch on Thursdays so people could combine the two activities. Other activities offered were Zumba, yoga and chair-based exercises.

The mix of different people fostered a sense of community and people gained confidence to the degree that one young person with special needs assisted in the kitchen with the support of his carer, as did as a recovering alcoholic.

A 90-year-old woman found the kitchen of particular benefit and said: "I don't like sitting at home. A lot of people my age are not active but I want to keep going. Also not having to cook a hot meal for myself, as I live on my own, is good because I can just have a sandwich later on."



Sefton Extra

Delivered by: Sefton Extra

Area covered: Central Southport, Seaforth and Litherland

Health area: older people social isolation, older people dementia, adult mental health

Aim: to reduce the feeling of being alone for older people through arts activities and to help those with long-term conditions feel better through a range of musical and physical activities.

The project's Rhythms for Life sessions offered a combination of singing, tai chi and Zumba. More than 60 sessions were held in community venues to make it easier for people to attend and people reported having more energy after taking part.

One of the Zumba teachers said: "Some of my clients have lost weight and are living healthier lives. One thing is for sure, they always leave happy, joyful and full of life."

Separate Zumba sessions were also offered and drawing classes saw people able to sketch and try their hand at life drawing.

Another part of the project was aimed at tackling social isolation for adults with long-term conditions and older people, including those living with dementia. Over 70 sessions of mobile craft were delivered in the community – from an arts centre to residential homes – and this consisted of making greetings cards, origami and crocheting. One of those who attended a local centre in Waterloo said: "The groups are a wonderful way of meeting like-minded people and de-stressing."

And a woman from a residential home commented: "The girls from the project are so very helpful, especially with my age-related macular degeneration of the eyes. I feel very proud of my craft achievements which remind me of earlier days when my eyes were better."



Sefton Older Person's Forums

Delivered by: SPAC (Sefton Pensioners' Advocacy Centre)

Area covered: Bootle, Formby, Crosby, Southport, Maghull

Health area: older people social isolation and dementia, adult mental health

Aim: to identify the needs of older people, bring together the networks which provide them with support, and to give them the opportunity to be part of the planning of services.

The forum meetings are held monthly in each locality, with around 170 older people attending to share ideas and discuss relevant issues, usually as a result of presentations from statutory and voluntary organisations, and their views are then taken on board.

They have been involved in consultations to do with: reviewing communications aimed at older people; podiatry appointment systems throughout the borough; transport; audiology; and falls prevention where they developed a falls champion role for forum members.

As a result of the forum's work, Sefton Adult Social Care decided to display telephone number ID when calling older people at home and this was to be used as a quality standard by Sefton Council. Also, Active Lifestyles took on board their comments and went on to consider putting on activity sessions in community venues in addition to council leisure centres to make access easier.

The forums make a vital contribution to the Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens (SPOC) action plans and half the members of SPOC are elected by forum members.

Besides the forums giving older people a voice, they also help individuals by giving them confidence, a chance to socialise with other people in the community, and to learn more about their own locality through agencies and groups highlighting their services.

One forum member benefited from the chair-based exercises introduced at the forum meetings, as it improved her balance and confidence to the degree that she began going out independently of her daughter.





Sefton Veterans Project

Delivered by: Expect Ltd

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation, adult mental health

Aim: to help ex-service personnel and their families integrate into the local community.

The project manager and volunteer co-ordinator were both ex-service men and their experience meant they were better able to engage with the veterans.

More than 256 veterans were referred into the project over three years, with around half being self-referrals and often having complex needs.

Referrals reported struggling to get out of the house; low confidence in new situations; health issues such as PTSD, depression, dependency or having restricted mobility; or difficult personal circumstances, such as living alone which compounded their sense of loneliness or isolation.

Consequently, improving social networks was often a primary motivation for taking part with the project.

To support the veterans, the project held regular NAAFI breaks, similar to what they would have experienced during their service, where they mentioned issues causing them concern.



They were then supported in trying to resolve those issues and this resulted in: securing suitable accommodation; being rehoused nearer to family; being signposted to services relating to finance, benefits or dependency; and finding employment.

An unexpected outcome was the introduction of a senior NAAFI break because older veterans joined the project.

This led to breaks being set up in social housing throughout Sefton, helping older veterans reconnect to their local communities and giving them something to look forward to.

Families reported seeing an improvement in their wellbeing since becoming involved in the project.

Volunteering opportunities were offered as a way of supporting veterans with their self-esteem and giving them a chance to build up networks of their own.

One person went on to run a NAAFI break in Southport, as well as helping at one of the many organised trips.

He was depressed when he first engaged with the project but the support he received made a positive difference to him and also his family. He said: "I was desperate when I first came to the project, but it was much easier explaining my issues to fellow veterans.

"Now I feel closer to my family - making my wife and kids smile instead of cry. My self confidence is growing - it has been life changing."

Community Wellbeing Centre

Delivered by: Woodvale and Ainsdale Community Association (WACA)

Area covered: Ainsdale, Birkdale and Formby

Health area: older people social isolation, adult mental health

Aim: to provide activities that will create a welcoming environment to support people with mental health issues or feeling socially isolated, and improve their wellbeing.

Thursdays became established as the wellbeing day which started with a stress less and mindfulness course, followed by a relaxation session, and, finally, the drop-in where people could chat with others and continue the feeling of wellbeing.

Three five-week stress less and mindfulness courses were delivered at their base in Woodvale near Ainsdale.

Of the 21 people who completed the course, which helped people recognise and manage their stress levels, two of them suffered from PTSD and found it helped to relax them. Several others exchanged contact details to meet up and built their own social network.

A six-week healthy body and mind course, relaxation stress buster sessions, complementary therapies and health and beauty treatments completed the wellbeing ensemble.

Through the project, a relationship was established with the NHS wellbeing centre and, specifically, its pain clinic from which clients were referred in to the wellbeing project's card and craft group.

One wheelchair-user suffered immense pain but found attending the group had given her motivation to get out of the house. She said that normally the pain would have kept her in bed but, as she enjoyed the group so much, she made the effort to attend.

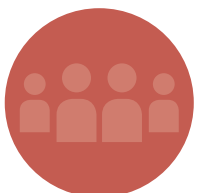
The project encouraged people to express their ideas on what groups they wanted to create, and so the card group was formed, run by volunteers with the aim of keeping it running beyond the end of the project.

Overall, the 45 local people who joined in the project's different elements said they felt more relaxed, and also, more connected to their community.

A participant from the stress less and mindfulness course commented: "It's made me realise how neglectful I have been towards my own wellbeing and oblivious to the warning signs of stress. It has lightened the load by talking amongst people who have shared similar feelings."

Another participant had recently lost his wife and felt as if he was failing. But the course gave him such a lift he took up gardening again and began writing poetry.

The course tutor remarked: "Getting support from other group members has helped him and his wellbeing score increased greatly since taking the course."



348

Sefton families engaged in projects across the borough supported by the CCG VCF Fund between 2014-2017.



Remove to Improve

Delivered by: Community Risk Intervention Service (CRIS) – formerly known as Fire Support Network (FSN)

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health areas: adult mental health, older people dementia and social inclusion

Aim: to provide practical and emotional support to clients hoarding large amounts of clutter and/or with dilapidated properties where there is a high risk of trips, falls or fire hazard.

The project ran over two funding periods and supported more than 100 people with hoarding issues, some with complicated situations needing six or eight visits from the team.

Building up a trusting relationship meant the team were better able to work with the person as they often had mental health problems which other agencies had difficulty with.

A woman aged 65+ with dementia and mental health issues had severe hoarding issues to the degree she was sleeping on the stairs because the other rooms were full. Remove to Improve worked with her and over six visits, 2.5 tonnes of waste was disposed of which meant the woman was then able to live safely and her mental health improved.

Other clients reported: better family relationships; skin and breathing conditions improved; being more inclined to go out of the house; taking up hobbies again; an increased sense of wellbeing as the threat of eviction or environmental health service charges were removed; being less likely to be lonely as friends and family could access their home; being reunited with their children after a house de-clutter where children were removed due to clutter;

improvement in client's diet and nutrition due to accessing the kitchen removing the reliance on eating cold, high-fat junk food; feeling more positive about the future after receiving support to make home improvements.

The project also had a positive effect on speedier hospital discharge times because homes had been safely cleared to allow medical equipment and beds to be installed.

Initially, 891 home fire safety checks were made to older people's homes in the first project and this was followed by 84 more in-depth property and lifestyle visits to minimise hazards and optimise self-care to prevent hospital admission.

To help deliver Remove to Improve around 62 volunteers were recruited and received extensive training, and the project also developed a multi-agency referral system which involved teams such as district nurses, environmental health, social services, voluntary sector groups and registered social landlords.

The project had a big impact on the people they worked with, who said: "They went at my pace and listened. It's much tidier now and I have had visitors because I am less embarrassed."

"They helped with connections to other services, I was suicidal before but now do not feel this way."



Litherland Youth and Community Centre

Delivered by: Litherland Youth and Community Centre

Area covered: Bootle, Seaforth and Litherland

Health area: older people social isolation, children and young people emotional wellbeing

Aim: to engage with young people and older adults from the community by offering activities at the newly refurbished centre that will increase the adults' level of independence and encourage younger people to volunteer through the project to build confidence.

Numbers attending the Friday feelgood sessions at the centre steadily increased with up to 41 people coming along to take part in quizzes, advice sessions and health and wellbeing sessions. These included chair-based exercises, pampering, flower arranging and Reiki.

The sessions proved a highlight for many of the older people in the area with several saying they went to their hairdressers beforehand so they looked their best. Project co-ordinators gathered the views of the older people on what interested them and from this six trips were organised, from Fleetwood and Bolton Market to theatres.

Lunches were provided and it was here that the younger people became involved, serving the food, and also children from the after-school club took time to chat with members of the group. In all, more than 14 young volunteers helped out at the sessions.

The project provided help and advice on a number of issues which included setting up meetings with elected members. The co-ordinators signposted people to activities and services in the community which could benefit them, such as walking and cycling days, and the project offered a library lending service with books from Sefton Council's libraries.

For some of the older people mobility made it difficult to get around but they said coming to the project gave them something to look forward to, and it was worth coming to the sessions because they could catch up with friends and it improved their confidence.



The Sefton Project

Delivered by: The Brain Charity (formerly Neurosupport)

Area covered: throughout Sefton

Health area: older people social isolation and dementia, adult mental health

Aim: to provide The Brain Charity services to meet the needs of people living in north and south Sefton by offering emotional support, practical help and social activities to anybody with a neurological condition, and to their family, friends and carers.

A concentrated promotion of the project in Sefton by the Information Worker resulted in 278 referrals with varying degrees of support needed in terms of employment, welfare benefit advice, counselling and information on their neurological conditions which included epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, chronic pain and stroke.

Of these, 85 people - 64 with neurological conditions - received support through outreach activity sessions which comprised coffee mornings, craft clubs and a Good Grub Club that saw clients learning how to cook healthy meals and pick up tips for a healthy lifestyle.

A drop-in facility and a signposting service complemented the activities and helped to increase people's wellbeing to the degree that several of them went on to volunteer and run outreach services for other charities in the local area and for The Brain Charity.

For instance, one woman joined the mosaic group looking to build up confidence and commented: "I wanted support to help with my anxiety."

"The group has stimulated me a lot to develop my confidence and I am now volunteering for the craft club - this is a huge step for me."

Another woman with autism also benefited and said: "I have set up a group for adults with autism. This is something I wouldn't have done had it not been for the craft club."



Contact

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Figures quoted in this document were correct as at 1st March 2017, with some projects continuing beyond this date.

