

The Route to Health Improvement

Notable Practice Case Study

This practice relates to one (or more) of the below key features :				
Corporate Culture	Policy Development ✓	Collaboration	Capacity Building	Governance

Background & Context:

Following the success of a 1 year pilot scheme to determine the feasibility of an exercise prescription scheme in Llanelli. Funding has been obtained from the National Assembly of Wales 'Inequalities in Health Fund'. The project aims to develop a community heart disease programme initially in Llanelli and then expanding to other areas of Carmarthenshire over the 3year term.

The project will include an exercise referral scheme, cardiac rehabilitation scheme and community nutrition programme.

Our targeted wards feature in the top 100 most deprived wards in Wales according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation for both income and health domains. This would suggest that the communities are generally not healthy and have little disposable income.

Description & Characteristics:

The participants will attend the scheme 2-3 times a week for a period of 12 weeks. On their initial visit to the scheme the individual will be given a fitness assessment, lifestyle screening, pre-exercise screening with a consent form signed by the participant and an induction for the Gym highlighting exercises and machines to be utilized. A personalised training programme with times agreed upon for attendance, full tour of the facilities and explanation on how the scheme operates.

After completion of the 12-week scheme

- 1) The Instructor completes a full report on the individuals exercise programme and fitness assessment results, one copy is maintained and 1 copy sent to the GP.
- 2) The Leisure Site offers reduced cost incentives to continue exercising at their site, e.g. reduced charges for sessions, other promotional free sessions etc.

Why was/is this initiative/approach successful?

637 clients have been referred to the Vitality Scheme during 2005-2006 (263 in 2004-2005); we have surpassed this figure already this year. This is an increase of 374 clients from the previous year. All the GP Surgeries in the County of Carmarthenshire are now referring patients on to the scheme.

A more diverse range of group based activities have been developed for clients, focusing our resource into quality delivery of activity, in a socially vibrant setting. This appeals to more diverse client base and thus increases the long term adherence of physical activity and positive lifestyle changes.

The key factors that gives our scheme the advantage within today's complex society, is

the inclusiveness and integrated approach to health related activity, developed and adapted over a five year period. We have in place two way referral processes with:

- GP Practices, county wide.
- Phase Three Cardiac Rehabilitation, county wide.
- Phase Four Cardiac Referral, county wide.
- Phase Three COPD, Llanelli.
- Phase Four COPD, Llanelli.
- Dietetics Department, Pembs and Derwen NHS Trust.

This allows us to risk stratify the clients referred according to their specific need, ensuring that the individuals gains access to the appropriate service. There is natural collaboration and transition from one service to another, seeing doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and dieticians all working out of Carmarthenshire County Council's four main leisure facilities. The beauty of this model is that we are providing an integrated health service, in a social setting. The clients are comfortable with their health professionals being on site, ensuring a seamless transition from the higher to lower risk groups (Phase three to Phase four to GP Referral to mainstream activity).

Our diverse scheme and highly qualified instructors deliver all the above (with the exception of phases three COPD), covering the physiotherapists on their annual leave and period of sickness. We complement and support one another. One scheme cannot survive without the other, as there will be gaps in the service and a much less inclusive provision of activity, resulting in an increase in health inequalities in Carmarthenshire.

Historically, similar schemes to ours have used physiological measures to measure success. However, a twelve week period was showing insignificant physiological changes, thus having a negative effect on the motivation of our clients. With this in mind, we are now able to quantify and monitor physical and psychological changes much more accurately, via functional and psychological assessments. These types of assessment techniques are able to provide far more accurate, positive and measurable physical.

After the twelve weeks of prescribed physical activity, the clients take part in a Graduation Ceremony, where they are presented by a celebrity with a Graduation Certificate of Achievement, sign posted to other appropriate forms of activity (free swim initiative, walking the way to health, exercise classes, rambling groups etc). We now have a post scheme adherence rate of over 70% of the clients participating in structured activity.

Impact on health inequalities

- During the last twelve months, a client attends physical activity sessions on average 19.5 times in 12 weeks.
- This equates to £1.54 per session, which demonstrates that finance should not be a barrier to accessing the scheme.
- There are five leisure Sites delivering the scheme throughout the County. By dispersing activity opportunities rather than one central location, this will reduce travel time for clients as well as the cost of travelling to a participating Centre.

The Scheme has been proactive in organising training in the County through the Wright Foundation. In 2005-2006, two further NVQ Level 3 courses have been held in GP Exercise Referral. This allows the Leisure Centres to send gym instructors to locally run training that will improve and widen access to the Scheme within the County Not only is there an increase in qualified instructors available to the scheme and employed by the

County, but there are a number of self employed instructors that can be accessed to provide a support system when instructors are on annual leave, sick leave etc.

The scheme also operates a mentoring system whereby newly qualified instructors can work alongside experienced personnel and develop skills and knowledge whilst working on the scheme. This contributes towards providing a quality service and experience for clients

Carmarthenshire County Council takes the issue of health very seriously, integrating and allowing the health based functions to take the lead in its leisure provision. The revised Leisure structure includes the amalgamations of the GP Referral scheme/Phase 4 Cardiac Rehabilitation with the generic physical activity/fitness provision provided by leisure (the former being in the Sports Development unit with previously with the latter being hosted by the leisure Department). These functions will now come under a new service unit headed 'Health and Wellbeing'. This new function is essential in maximising the potential of our health and fitness facilities, and in contributing towards the leisure / health agenda, which is clearly identified as an area for development within the Leisure Vision.

- The whole ethos of these schemes is to change people's lifestyles, and by definition require continuity and sustainability. In particular, there is a need to ensure that the co-ordinating and administrative roles for both schemes are secured on a permanent basis. The instructor / provider role should be integrated into the duties of existing staff within the authority's leisure (centre) facilities and services.
- The GP referral scheme currently receives £75K per annum on a fixed term basis (until March 2007) from the assembly's Inequalities in Health fund. This funding is likely to be extended and increased in all probability. Staffing originally included a full time Co-ordinator, a full time fitness instructor, and a part time (21 hrs) administrator.
- Proposed structure will have a FT Health and Well-being manager, overseeing 2x Health and Well-Being Co-ordinators (Fixed term and externally funded). Function will oversee the development of the County's Health and Fitness facilities (working closely with Leisure facilities staff); manage and develop the Well-being referral programme; and be the key link in addressing health related targets outlined within the Leisure Vision (again working closely with Unit Managers across the service)
- The Admin Assistant post for Health and Well-being will be shared with Sports Development unit as at present. This will be a permanent post, line managed by the Sports Development Unit Manager.

Measures of Success:

The number of referrals have increased every year.

2002 – 2003 = 207

2003 – 2004 = 113

2004 – 2005 = 266

2005 – 2006 = 647

2006 – 2007 up to the end of 3rd quarter = 466

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