

# Communities for Health—*Unlocking the Energy within Communities to Improve Health*

Luton Borough Council & NHS Luton



## Progress Report



Light & Easy  
Chair Based Exercise

### Background to Communities for Health Programme Luton

NHS Luton, Luton Borough Council and key partners are all committed to tackling health inequalities in Luton.

Life expectancy is one of the key measures for helping us to determine how well Luton is doing (compared with other Local Authorities) in improving local peoples health. Part of this approach has been to focus on individual lifestyles and behaviours, improving access to health, social care services and providing an environment that helps people to make healthier choices.

As a result, NHS Luton has lead in examining the differences in life expectancy across Luton. Government figures on life expectancy show that in England:

Males = 77.5 years

Females = 81.8 years

And in Luton we have found that:

Males = 76.5 years

Females = 80.3 years

However, there are areas in Luton that are far worse and have even lower life expectancies in men and women. For

example, in one area of Luton (Biscot ward), men have a life expectancy of 72.0 years and females have a life expectancy of 77.1 years. To find out more you can go to: *Luton's Partnership Strategy to Reduce Health Inequalities*.

[http://www.luton.nhs.uk/266/life\\_expectancy.aspx](http://www.luton.nhs.uk/266/life_expectancy.aspx)

### Unlocking The Energy to Improve Health

In 2008, Luton received £270,000 from the Department of Health to support the partnership work local community groups and statutory agencies are undertaking to improve health.

22 projects were funded to help local people and children and families in improving and changing health behaviour. There were a variety of projects ranging from family focused healthy eating to encouraging physical activity for older people in sheltered accommodation.

Most of the projects funded were from voluntary and community agencies that were located in an area of deprivation and/or an area of low life expectancy.

### Working with partners and our community to reduce

#### Luton's Health Inequalities focusing on:

- \* Improving diet and nutrition in key groups.
- \* Supporting communities to improve their local environment and community services.
- \* Improving physical activity in families and communities.
- \* Promoting community cohesion.
- \* Supporting volunteering.
- \* Improving wellbeing in key community groups.



## Support from the Local Strategic Partnership

Deciding who gets a grant is a complex and timely process.

All of the grant was allocated using a transparent and democratic approach. The main way of agreeing allocations of the grant was through the Local Strategic Partnership.

### Health & Wellbeing Partnership Management Group

Initially a small team of local, technical experts assessed each project according to a 10 point criteria drawn up from local community development guidelines. The final decision was made using the LSP

Health & Wellbeing partnership which includes commissioners and third sector partners.

Projects had to show that they were:

*Contributing to local priorities; Consulted with the community; Included evaluation on behaviour change; Clear outputs; Engaged with their community (target group); Sustainable; Innovative; Worked in partnership, In receipt of some funding; Prepared to support the behaviour change of individuals after the funding had run out.*

### “Your Say, Your Way”

The second method used the Neighborhood Governance Participatory Budgeting Process.

This gave communities the chance to receive funding on the projects they deemed to be important to the local



Using the “Your Say, Your Way” brand, the pilot has run in Area West since April 2009 and developed an outline programme and framework which has successfully met stakeholder needs, corporate aims and citizen expectations. **NG Project Manager\***

## The Projects

Out of the 22 projects, 16 of them were from voluntary/community groups. The total spend on these groups were in excess of £220, 000 which contributes to over 85% of the total budget.

Most projects had several target groups within their remit and utilized their access to local people to engage key agencies to work with them.

Projects*	Target Group
9	Adults/Community
6	Children & Young People
3	Learning Disabilities
6	Older People
5	Families
11	BME

**\*Each project funded met the needs of several target groups and did not just focus on just one community group.**

## Inside Story— What worked

Our evaluation has shown us that injecting support into community projects and programmes, creates community efficacy and confidence.

Projects have enjoyed the chance to apply for funding in a simple, quick and effective manner with support from the Programme Manager and technical experts working in the field of Health Inequalities; Community Cohesion; Community Development and Obesity.

Some projects had, in the past, weak links with health providers and this has been strengthened through the funding.

Some projects were able to try something new. The Upside Project (*right*) supported people with learning disabilities to take part in physical activity and learning using a Nintendo Wii in a fun and non threatening way.



**Upside Project—Keeping Fit with the Wii**

\*Quote from NG Project Manager in Committee Report 06/10/2010

## In depth Interviews with Projects

The **Upside Day Care Centre**, located in the east of Luton were looking for an opportunity to support special care clients.

Hearing about the Communities for Health grant, they were successful in securing a small amount (£800) to purchase a Wii Fit. This enabled clients to learn in a fun and free way as most clients had become institutionalized.

There are a mixture of abilities however the project lead observed that *"each person grew in confidence when using the Wii Fit, and they*

*helped each other out..."*

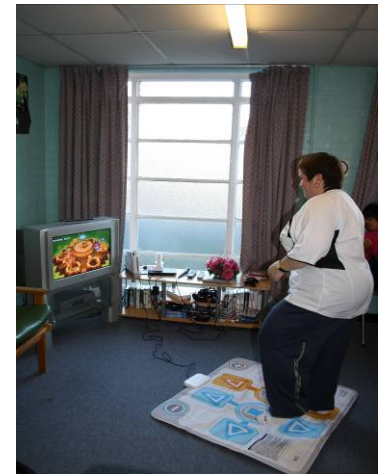
As most of the clients are aware of healthy eating, the importance of taking regular exercise it was initially thought that everyone would receive the new equipment with enthusiasm. This was not the case, and due to institutionalism, the clients soon learnt that the Wii was not just an "activity" for them but also a fun and easy way to get fit.

### Unlocking the Energy

Although the clients recognize that the Wii does not have cyber fea-

tures/individual design options that are disabled *"no one is in a wheel chair..."*. All 57 clients attending the day centre use the Wii Fit and have since, improved the project by purchasing new Wii equipment including a dance mat, golf clubs and tennis rackets.

*"My next goal is to train them to use the new equipment and support the clients with the exercise and dances in the hall without the Wii..."* **Project Lead.**



## Mitalee Youth Association Summer School

The Summer School organized and delivered by Mitalee Youth Association focus continually on providing a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.

Having successfully applied for £30,000 to deliver the summer school in 2009 and deliver more specific swimming sessions for girls, Mitalee have been instrumental in engaging young people, families and

developing capacity within the voluntary sector.

The summer school offered young people mainly from South Asian backgrounds living in areas of deprivation and low life expectancy a chance to engage in physical activities, educational programmes such as food hygiene courses and residential trips. This year the school put greater emphasis on engaging females in activities traditionally not taken up by girls.

### Unlocking the Energy

Due to the success of the summer school and the increased focus on health and wellbeing. More work was undertaken with volunteers to build their knowledge of health issues and to act as mentors.

*"We broke a barrier to all the chicken & chips that was being eaten by the young people by introducing 'mini awards scheme' to whoever brought in a healthy packed lunch."* **Project Lead**

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*"For me, it's about raising the confidence and self esteem of the young people...we give them a kick start and then they go on...we'll always be there to support them..."* **Project Lead, Mitalee Youth Association Summer School**

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### Carers Breaks

**Aim:** Supporting carers of all ages to take part in regular exercise.

**Local Priorities:**

Tackling Exclusion, Promoting Equality; Improving Mental Health & Wellbeing; Improving Physical Activity.

**Unlocking the Energy:**

Carers are free to undertake free swimming sessions at any pool in Luton by taking up membership with Active Luton.

**Outcomes:**

- Clients improved mental health
- Clients increase levels of physical activity

### Dementia Leaflets

**Aim:** To increase access to mental health and local dementia services.

**Local Priorities:**

Improving access to Health & Wellbeing services, Improving Mental Health & Wellbeing; Tackling Exclusion; Improving Independence.

**Unlocking the Energy:**

As part of the Luton Partnership for Older People Project (POPP) leaflets with specific and tailored information were printed in order to improve access to services.

**Outcomes:**

- Improved access to mental health services

It's the hands on things that we do in the community that makes the difference"

"we have a one door policy, there are different engagement techniques but everyone of them has health built around it."

Project Lead, Dallow Community Development Trust & Luncheon Club Lead

### Community Confidence Clinic

**Aim:** Supporting individuals to boost their confidence and wellbeing.

**Local Priorities:**

Tackling Exclusion, Promoting Equality, Improving Mental Health, Improving Diet & Nutrition.

**Unlocking the Energy:**

The Confidence Clinic offers a comprehensive short-term programme of focused and intensive advice, support, information and inspiration in order to assist individuals to maximise their own capacity to

both manage an appropriate lifestyle and boost their own innate sense of well-being.

Luton supported 10 individuals to go through a 12 week intensive programme. The programme included *Body Boost Pilates*, *Nutrition Profiling* and attendance to a *Healthy Mind Clinic*.

**Outcomes:**

- Clients health knowledge and understanding improved.
- Clients experience improved sense of wellbeing to prevent relapse.

### Community Food Advisers

**Aim:** The aim of the Community Food Interventions is to reduce health inequalities by raising awareness of health issues relating to diet, improving access to nutrition knowledge and cooking skills, through healthy cooking classes.

**Local Priorities:**

Reduction in increase in obesity in children & adults; Improving Diet & Nutrition

**Unlocking the Energy:**

Following a successful community programme

trained lay people supporting local people to cook healthy foods. More communities for health funding was used to support the food advisers working in schools, community centres and other community settings.

**Outcomes:**

Improving Diet & Nutrition; Tackling obesity rates; Health Education



## Luton Young Leaders Academy

**Aim:** To improve health awareness amongst African-Caribbean boys through leadership training.

**Local Priorities:**

Improving knowledge of Health & Wellbeing; Tackling Exclusion; Improving Diet & Nutrition; Improving knowledge on alcohol and drugs.

**Unlocking the Energy:**

The Communities for Health grant enabled Luton Young Leaders Academy to encompass more health and wellbeing focused activities alongside other educational activities. Developing leaders, fathers, uncles, sons and cousins for tomorrow through tailor made activities on

healthy eating and cooking such as “dash de crisp...” Drug and alcohol educational sessions with the local PUKÉ service and improving knowledge on origins and nutritional contents of traditional foods.

**Outcomes:**

Improved knowledge on diet and nutrition; Improved knowledge and understanding on the risks associated with drugs and alcohol; Improved knowledge on cultural food



## Grow It, Cook It, Eat It

**Aim:** To engage with obese children and children at risk of obesity and their families through the school located in an area of deprivation and low life expectancy.

**Local Priorities:**

Engaging young people and their families to access healthy fresh fruit and vegetables; Tackling obesity; Improving health & wellbeing knowledge.

**Unlocking the Energy:**

Groundwork Bedfordshire & Luton worked in part-

nership with selected local junior schools to encourage growing seasonal and ethnically appropriate foods. Children had the opportunity to grow their own foods and take home the produce.

After a stream of successful celebration events, young people were taking seeds home and growing their own produce with their families

**Outcomes:**

Improved knowledge of diet and nutrition; Tackling obesity; Improved self esteem and confidence



## The Smile Project

**Aim:** To conduct dental health promotion with Gypsies and Traveller children living in Luton.

**Local Priorities:**

Tackling Health Inequalities; Dental Health Promotion.

**Unlocking the Energy:**

Following a Health Needs Assessment, Central a & Cecil Housing Association—CARA (Luton) identified that many of the children had dental problems. Linking in with Bedfordshire Dental Health

CARA was able to offer dental packs to 20 families opportunistically.

**Outcomes:**

Improved dental health knowledge amongst the Traveller community; Improved dental health & Tackling Health Inequalities.



## Communities for Health - Unlocking the Energy within Communities to Improve Health

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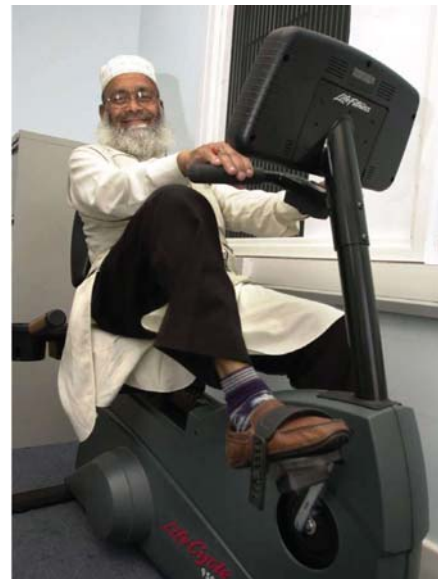
This progress report highlights some of the early findings from the Communities for Health grant received in 2008. It gives a flavour of the variety of projects funded for the duration of 1 year each and the outstanding health and wellbeing benefits arising from the success of obtaining funding and support. Furthermore, several projects have gone on to obtain more grants from other sources locally and nationally.

We can confidently say that enabling community groups unlocks sustainable Early findings show that whilst community organisations are key to enabling statutory agencies to reach far deeper

into local communities, there is a heavy reliance on volunteers. Most of the projects relied on volunteers and in some cases the personal interest of project leads, schools and communities in order to unlock the energy. This aspect of project delivery is currently being explored further within a more in-depth questionnaire. This can be found at a time limited link: <https://secure.luton.gov.uk/surveys/healthevaluation/> This link will expire at the end of Nov 2010.



Inter-faith Football League,  
Luton United Football Club  
(left)



BME Luncheon Club  
Luton Borough Council & Partners  
(above)



Active Families,  
Dell Farm  
(left)



Holistic Health Project,  
Dallow Community Development Trust  
(left)