

CASE STUDY

NHS Bolton

Health Trainer Programme

NHS Bolton's Health Trainer programme was developed to tackle serious health inequalities in the borough and improve the life expectancy of its population. The Health Trainer programme is a vital part of a wider health improvement initiative – the Hope You're Well campaign.

NHS Bolton serves a population of approximately 260,000, improving the health & well-being of the borough residents and commissioning health services delivered in local health centres and hospitals across Bolton.

"The whole experience was very professional from the online assessment right through the six-month programme."

Ann Melmoth, Hope You're Well participant



vielife

The challenge

One of the key issues facing NHS Bolton is how to improve health inequalities and poor life expectancy among members of the community. Life expectancy in Bolton averages 76.9 years for men and 81.1 years for women - 2.32 years and 2.1 years below the national average, respectively.¹

Within Bolton there are even greater inequalities in average life expectancy, with a 15-year difference in life expectancy between the deprived central area of the town (average life expectancy 67.5) and the more affluent areas.¹ According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, almost 60,000 people live in areas ranked within the most deprived 10% nationally.¹

Bolton has one of the highest rates of cardiovascular disease in the North West, accounting for over a third of all deaths in Bolton.² There are over 88,000 people aged over 45 in Bolton and approximately 30,000 are believed to be at high risk of developing cardiovascular disease within the next 10 years.²

Deputy Director of Public Health, Deborah Harkins, says:

"The only way we are going to be able to have an impact on health inequalities in the next four years is if we make sure our services are available to everyone who could benefit from them."

The project

The purpose of the Bolton Health Trainer programme is to provide a quality, patient-focussed service. Working in partnership with **vielife**, NHS Bolton applied a health assessment tool and a range of materials to support the patient through their journey.

Launched in July 2007, the programme takes an innovative and personalised approach to delivering a community health improvement service. With one-on-one health coaching and step-by-step advice, participants focus on making simple lifestyle changes to lead healthier lives.

The Health Trainers provide referrals and signpost patients onto services, including smoking cessation, weight management, and mental well-being.

The following outlines the patient journey:



The findings and outlook

In May 2008 **vielife** delivered a health & well-being report to Bolton PCT, based on participant responses to the health & well-being assessments. Significant findings include:

- **63% of the Bolton PCT respondent population rated "high risk" of developing serious conditions in the future**
- **The most common medical conditions are high blood pressure (29%) and high cholesterol (19%)**
- **Excess body weight was an issue for 73% of the population**
- **31% of respondents were classified as clinically obese**
- **42% of respondents reported they do no regular physical activity**
- **Over half of the population (58%) identified pain is an issue, with 42% suffering severe pain**

The outlook

As a result of the Health Trainer programme, in conjunction with support from the wider Hope You're Well services, NHS Bolton has been able to identify and assess the health & well-being of residents and help participants make small lifestyle changes to reduce their

health risks and achieve their goals.

One of the most compelling indicators of the success of the programme is the overwhelming positive feedback from participants. Bolton resident and Hope You're Well participant, Ann Melmoth, found she could achieve her weight loss goals and get more out of life.



"I really enjoyed my session with the health trainer," Ann said. "She was very encouraging and I didn't feel as if I was being lectured. I knew what I wanted to do – lose weight – but what the session did was motivate me to get on with it."

As a result of Ann's weight loss, her body mass index (BMI) has reduced from 25 down to 21.75. "I feel fitter and more confident," she said.

Ann's experience is just one of the many success stories of the Hope You're Well campaign. With greater awareness of health risk factors, and access to practical health information, NHS Bolton residents now have the ability to manage their own health & well-being and improve their quality of life. Healthier individuals create a healthier and happier community and help reduce health costs for the NHS.

1. Equitable Access to Primary Medical Care Services, Bolton PCT. 2008. http://www.bolton.nhs.uk/EOL/scheme_outlinev2.pdf (accessed 5 August 2008)

2. Bolton PCT NHS press release. 13 June 2008. <http://www.bolton.nhs.uk/publications/press/interactive.asp?Prellink=219> (accessed 5 August 2008)