

Joint roadshow raises awareness of link between obesity and diabetes

Diabetes UK, in partnership with MEND and using funding from the Big Lottery Fund, are delivering 'Healthy Lifestyle Roadshows' in the 70 most deprived Local Authorities in England during 2011 and 2012.

The aim is to raise awareness of Type 2 diabetes and its risk factors, perform risk assessments, encourage people to eat more healthily and become more active to reduce their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

Taking the roadshow unit to town and city centre locations enables the partnership to take the messages right to the heart of local communities and to raise the profile of both organisations on the street with members of the public (particularly those at risk of Type 2 diabetes).

MEND will attend at least 40 of these events to provide healthy lifestyle/weight management programmes to at least 640 eligible people from deprived communities.

The roadshows will allow MEND and Diabetes UK to empower people to make long-term changes to their health behaviours through programmes such as More Active Health. The adult healthy lifestyle programme comprises a toolkit, health coach appointment and six-week pass to a local leisure centre. This can all be discussed on the day with newly trained local leisure centre staff before registering for an immediate start to engage their positive response to the roadshow.

In addition, MEND will train and cover expenses for 100 graduates from its programmes to act as MEND ambassadors. These ambassadors engage with the public, talk about their experiences on a MEND programme and encourage members of the public attending the roadshows to register.



By September 2012 the Diabetes UK/MEND Healthy Lifestyle Roadshow will have risk assessed 10,000 people and helped nearly 650 to benefit from MEND's healthy lifestyle and weight management programmes.





After just the first six events, the roadshow had attracted over 1,200 people to be risk assessed for Type 2 diabetes with around half being referred to their GP for further checks. Over 6,500 pieces of literature were distributed to engage people during the initial events and MEND was able to attend 100% of these to promote healthier lifestyles through their programmes.

With 30 More Active Health places available at each joint roadshow, the local staff have so far managed to register an average of 28 people per event.

As the two-year partnership has progressed, review meetings have revealed solutions to initial challenges. Footfall through the roadshow 'journey' and the need to keep staff

and volunteers fully informed with top up training are just some of the ways the project will progress and enable the healthy lifestyle message to continue to be shared.

By September 2012 the Diabetes UK/MEND Healthy Lifestyle Roadshow will have risk assessed 10,000 people and helped nearly 650 to benefit from the healthy lifestyle/weight management programmes provided by MEND. Through the hard work of Diabetes UK and MEND the partnership is destined to be a great success in achieving the aim of raising awareness of the risk factors of Type 2 diabetes and encourage people to make lifestyle changes to reduce that risk.



A healthy route into employment

Using an award from the Department for Work and Pensions' Future Jobs Fund, the Community Activity Leaders project gave unemployed young people the chance to become qualified fitness instructors and secure a job in the leisure industry while supporting their local communities.

The project was delivered by MEND, DC Leisure and Lifetime and opened doors to a career in the leisure industry for more than 140 young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) in England. All participants were aged 18-24 and claiming Jobseeker's Allowance.

As community activity leaders (CALs), participants promoted healthy lifestyles to local people and increased active leisure participation within local communities by working with school sports partnerships and community, youth and cultural centres. CALs helped people of all backgrounds and ages get involved in leisure, sport and fitness in their local area. They also ensured that local leisure facilities were used as often as possible by offering innovative and community-orientated sessions during off-peak times.

Every CAL received expert training and mentoring, spending three weeks with Lifetime learning about anatomy, physiology, principles of exercise, fitness and health, health and safety and the More Active Health programme, powered by MEND. They then spent a week with their mentor at one of DC Leisure's 120 sites and were employed at that site for the following five months.

The project provided greater employment opportunities for participants as well as health benefits for local communities.



"I've stopped sitting at home doing nothing. I'm getting up and out the house. Instead of taking Jobseeker's Allowance I'm putting something back into society."
Antonio

Encouraging MEND graduates to get active in their communities

The MEND team in Ealing developed MEND Urban Moves, a six-week street dance programme, after consultation with MEND graduate families around what support they wanted to keep them active after the MEND programme finished.

The classes are offered at a reduced fee, and are not only a fun and energetic way to help the children maintain the improved levels of fitness achieved on the MEND programme, but also a great way for children and families to continue to receive regular support in sustaining changes made on the MEND programme. The sessions are also used to maintain quarterly healthy growth checks and have far higher attendance than independent sessions planned solely for the purpose of taking measurements.

Classes last 90 minutes and give children the chance to learn street dance choreography from a qualified dance instructor. At the end of term the children perform at a celebratory event. Families due to graduate from current MEND programmes are invited to attend the show to give them an idea of what the programme is like. A taster workshop is also offered to families before they commit to the full six-week course. As a result of requests from parents the programme has been extended to include belly dance/Bollywood fusion workshops for the mums and dads.

The programme helps to support graduates in maintaining healthy lifestyles, but also encourages them to engage in new community activities.

“I enjoyed having so many friends to dance with and had fun learning new things.”

Anita, aged 8



Responding to local needs

Oldham Community Health Services (OCHS) held a consultation event in 2009 to see how they could support families after their MEND programme. They now offer an eight-week, family-based Cook4Life programme, family bike rides funded by the Big Lottery Fund, walking sessions where participants are given a free pedometer, a six-week Growing Families course funded by Digging4Health and quarterly healthy growth checks.

In partnership with Oldham Community Leisure, all MEND graduates receive a MEND card allowing children to access discounted OCL activities including the weekly land-based and water-based Kidz Fun sessions. The consultation identified that many children either cannot swim or are beginners. All families attending MEND have been able to access subsidised swimming tuition either at OCL pools or Royston Swimming Club. MEND siblings have been included in the offer of ten lessons for £10, subsidised by MEND.

In partnership with Oldham Athletic Community Trust all MEND graduates can attend Oldham Athletic football or streetcheer camps during the school holidays for free. Oldham Outdoor Pursuits provide a wall-climbing session for every MEND programme and families are offered places at the climbing club, paid for by MEND. Integrated Youth, part of Oldham Council, also run weekly free sessions for MEND graduates as part of their mainstream work. They also run the Junior Sports Leader Award alongside the MEND programme which MEND graduates can work towards.

After requests from parents and children, Oldham MEND began to offer MEND refresher sessions containing both theory and exercise. OCHS also held a focus group for MEND graduate teenagers and have supported a group of six to:

- write a bid for Kerrching funding for two physical activity sessions per week
- develop their leadership skills to mentor younger MEND graduates.

Oldham Community Health Services set up a wide range of activities and services to support families after their MEND programme.



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Pennine Care
NHS Foundation Trust



Corporate partnership makes a difference

The Morgan Stanley International Foundation (MSIF) has provided two years of financial and in-kind support towards MEND programmes for 240 families in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

The project involves a partnership between MEND, MSIF, the Barts and The London NHS Trust and Public Health Tower Hamlets (NHS East London and the City). MSIF chose to support the scheme because it met their requirements of being close to their main office, was focused on child health and education, was backed by solid evidence of effectiveness and provided scope for staff volunteering and links with their other local projects.

This partnership allowed the council and NHS to build local capacity to provide effective child weight management programmes at a time when the numbers of obese children in Tower Hamlets is at a critical level - over 25% of year 6 children in Tower Hamlets are obese according to 2008/09 National Child Measurement Programme data.

Thanks to MSIF funding, NHS and local authority staff were trained to run local programmes. Three MEND programmes now run in key locations across Tower Hamlets in each school term. We worked jointly to engage Morgan Stanley staff volunteers in activity to enhance the project's impact and outcomes. For example, as part of recruitment efforts, staff attended a launch event in a local leisure centre for local families to sample programme activities before signing up. Morgan Stanley staff also formed teams with local children to participate in fun physical activity!

To support retention, Morgan Stanley hosted a 'Ready, Steady, Cook' event for families in their professional kitchen. Children had a great time watching the chefs and had the chance to taste the MEND-friendly recipes and enter a healthy sandwich competition.

We're now working together to find more ways to engage staff volunteers. For example, having staff join leaders and children on supermarket tours and graduate celebration or reunion events as well as running local school assemblies and classroom sessions to generate interest in programmes and referrals.



“We’re delighted to be part of a project that combines public, private and social enterprise organisation skills, resources and funding. Data shows that we’re making a positive impact on local families and we’re looking forward to supporting the project even further with additional input from staff volunteers.”

Emma Tamblington, Vice President for Community Affairs at Morgan Stanley

Elite athletes inspiring MEND families in their local community

Having run successful MEND programmes since 2008, NHS Dudley was selected to pilot MEND's mentoring scheme. The pilot was run in partnership between MEND Central, NHS Dudley and the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust and aimed to use elite athletes as mentors on the MEND 7-13 programme to inspire and motivate participants to live fitter, healthier and happier lives. NHS Dudley worked closely with former Olympian and Double Commonwealth Gold Medal winning swimmer Adam Whitehead to run the pilot in 2010.

The MEND team felt retaining participants was the key area which needed to improve on their programmes and met with Adam to discuss how they could use his presence and skills to aid this. They told participants about Adam prior to his first visit in week three of the programme and planned his second visit for the first week back after half term, when historically some families have stopped coming, in order to give participants more of an incentive to come back. This worked very well. Adam then attended the graduation ceremony to present the children with their awards.

The pilot demonstrated an innovative approach to delivering a MEND programme and was particularly successful in sparking participants' interest in sport and physical activity. It has also laid the groundwork for rolling the scheme out more widely as a contribution to our Olympic Legacy.

This was an innovative approach to delivering a MEND programme and was particularly successful in interesting participants in sport and physical activity.



Utilising a high profile, local partner

NHS Northamptonshire has been working with their local Premiership rugby club, Northampton Saints, to promote and add value to their MEND 7-13 programmes.

In March 2010, the club provided 50 graduate families with a 'Matchday Experience' at Franklins Gardens. This involved access to its study centre where they got the opportunity to make name badges, play games and interview a player. In the afternoon the children took part in a tag rugby session, coached by Saints community coaches on the training pitch next to the club. 30 children were also chosen to make up the Guard of Honour for the teams to run through onto the pitch before kick off. The match was broadcast on Sky Sports live to many countries, making it a fantastic opportunity to boost MEND's profile.

Later that year, Northampton Saints Community Team offered MEND graduates a venue overlooking the pitch, a ground tour and free tickets to a forthcoming Rugby 7s tournament for all of their graduates and their families. The graduates were presented with their certificate and a Saints medal by Bernie, the Saints mascot. All MEND graduates are also given free membership of Bernie's Gang which entitles them to lots of offer throughout the year.

The high profile position of a Premiership rugby union team in the local community means MEND programmes can reach a broader range of participants than ever before and the range of activities offered by their community programmes can rally appeal to MEND families. This is a fantastic example not only of a great initiative on the part of NHS Northamptonshire, but also of a large, high profile organisation taking responsibility for the health of its local community. The Saints partnership paved the way for all 12 Premiership clubs to begin delivering MEND programmes from January 2011.



The partnership paved the way for all 12 Aviva Premiership rugby clubs to begin delivering MEND programmes.



**SPECIAL COMMENDATION:
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NHS
Northampton Provider Services



Successfully recruiting through NCMP

Many sites have found that recruiting to their programmes through the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) feedback letters has produced a disappointing update and a number of complaints from parents. But South East Essex NHS has effectively linked their MEND 7-13 programmes to the NCMP programme.

In 2010, the MEND team worked closely with the School Nurse Team (SNT) to build a better working relationship to promote referrals from the SNT, and to improve the NCMP feedback process. A process was agreed at management level that all NCMP measurements that could potentially be over an ideal body mass index (BMI) would be passed by the SNT to the MEND team via secure email or hand delivery. This data was then reviewed to ensure that the child fitted the criteria for the MEND programme.

Parents or carers of children whose weight status fitted MEND criteria were sent a letter which included a BMI chart for a visual illustration of a child's BMI in relation to a healthy BMI. The letter provided information about the risks associated with childhood obesity. The letter also stated that their child had been reserved a place on a local MEND programme. This stimulated a good response as people felt that they had been given preference over the general population. It also provided the MEND programme manager with the opportunity to discuss the programme with those who didn't want to take up their reservation.

MEND produced a brief follow-up letter for those who didn't reply to the initial letter. This coincided with a half page local press advert and leaflets for both programmes being distributed in schools. This sparked a number of phone-calls and sign-ups from parents.

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Using volunteers to support graduates in the wider community

East Ayrshire Council (EAC) MEND Graduates Club takes place on a weekly basis and is free of charge for graduates and their siblings. Parent volunteers and young people who have been recruited within the Leisure Development Volunteer Database deliver these sessions. Graduates continue to set weekly nutritional and exercise targets and report back each week to the group with their progress. To support graduates to achieve their targets, cooking sessions and a Phunky Foods for Families programme has been delivered to focus on healthy food preparation.

Graduate parents have also formed a coffee club and walking group to allow them to share ideas and provide support for one another.

In response to demand for voluntary roles for graduates, EAC offers an array of free training opportunities which include sessions on child protection, food hygiene, active play and fun fitness. Volunteers recently attended a 'Heart Start' course delivered by the British Heart Foundation. Three parent volunteers also recently completed Walk Leader Training and have since organised a MEND Walking Group.

To date, eight graduates have successfully completed a six-week MEND leadership training course so they can assist on MEND programmes.

MEND graduate parents and children have formed the MEND Editorial Team and have begun to publish a MEND newsletter which is circulated to other graduates and partner organisations. EAC also organised a two-day summer camp with the support of MEND parents, staff and volunteers. The event included orienteering, athletics, Mini MasterChef and a MEND Graduates Prom. It was also visited by Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years.

The community can be mobilised with limited funding and resources, through the power of volunteers and social action.



The Graduates Club is in the process of applying for charitable status in the hope that this work can be sustained. EAC's work demonstrates how the community can be mobilised with limited funding and resources, through the power of volunteers and social action, improve its own health, fitness and wellbeing.



WINNER: 2011 MEND Best Practice Award for Sustainable Outcomes



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