

NHS Health Trainers

■ Summary



The Health Trainer Service promotes health and wellbeing amongst communities who are marginalised and who experience the greatest inequalities in health; vulnerable young families, over 55's and black and minority ethnic communities. The ethos of the programme is to provide 'support from next door not advice from on high'.

The service assists people in:

- Reducing stress
- Healthy eating and eight watching
- Becoming more physically active
- Stopping smoking
- Sensible drinking
- Improving sexual health

■ The problems and how we tackled them



Many of the health problems seen in local communities are influenced by lifestyle or behaviour change. Despite experiencing poorer health, people in disadvantaged circumstances are more difficult to engage in behaviour change health promotion programmes and achieve lower levels of success.

Health Trainers focus on building relationships with individuals and groups in the local community or their place of work, providing information on health and well-being and encouraging individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles.

■ Outcomes and impact



The key outcome of our service is to achieve a decrease in health inequalities and make a positive contribution to health improvement. The service has also been successful in training people living or working in deprived communities to become health trainers to work with people from their own communities to motivate change:

Service user experience

"I first heard about the Health Trainer Service from a visit to my local youth and community centre. I had made many attempts to lose weight over the last few years, but always put the weight back on. I had also just been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. I referred myself to the Health Trainer Service and met with my Health Trainer the following week. She was very helpful and I could contact her at any time, if I had a problem. Over the 6 weeks I learnt about managing my diet and was able to control my diabetes. I also had support from my Health Trainer to build my confidence and self esteem.

From the support of the Health Trainer Service, I was empowered to help other people to make changes and applied to become a HealthTrainer and am I now employed as a Health Trainer and completing a City and Guilds Level 3 National Qualification".

■ Who was involved?

Health Trainers work from a wide variety of settings including children's centres, local schools, libraries, GP's surgeries, Job Centres. We visit faith groups and community groups and have a good knowledge and understanding of languages, beliefs, social and cultural characteristics.

■ Next steps

The Health Trainer programme is a new initiative and it continues to grow and evolve. The service is already having a significant impact on health outcomes, particularly in deprived areas and now links with training and skills development and employment services in a way which promotes inclusion.

Our equality journey

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