Reducing inequalities in exercise participation

Evaluation of the novel 'Bracknell Forest Health and Well-Being Physical Activity Service' commissioned in 2022 to tackle physical activity inequalities

- Cost
- Engagement
- Community
- The Impact

The community in Bracknell Forest shows relatively low levels of deprivation and physical inactivity but there are some marked inequalities (Sport England, 2022):

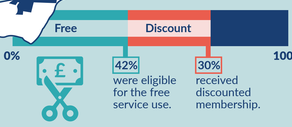
45% of residents with a disability or limiting condition are inactive

the 55-74 age group have lower levels of activity than in similar authorities

39% of females in deprived wards are inactive compared to 20% in the least deprived wards

Of the 320 service users from Nov 2022 to Oct 2023...

40% were from the five most deprived wards.



42% were eligible for the free service use.

30% received discounted membership.

Recommendations

The service offer needs to be:

- Free or subsidised, as this acts as a motivator.
- Provided with a 6-month extended timeframe to allow people to pause and return.

The average costs associated with:

service delivery

£172 per service user

unit of change for:

mental health **£29**

waist circumference **£295**

Of the 320 service users...

39% had more than one long-term condition.

31% had mental health problems.

7% were sedentary.

32% were living with obesity.

18% had musculoskeletal problems.

Nonusers from target inactive population.

229 residents in the 4 most deprived BF wards who were physically inactive but not engaged with the service were interviewed.

59% had seen a GP in the previous 6 months.

35% had been advised to become more active.

NONE had been referred to the service.

Recommendations

The service offer needs to be:

- Accessible to those with limited access to transport.
- A more flexible programme with diverse opportunities, not just Leisure Centre based.
- Made more appealing for inactive individuals and older people by offering bespoke personalised programmes.
- Supported by a better marketing strategy.
- Creating a feedback loop between service referrers and deliverers.

As part of the service...

Health Coach = crucial enabler

...service users were paired with a dedicated Health and Wellbeing Coach, who were seen as crucial enablers to the service.

They highly valued the extended six-month timeframe of the programme due to the complexity of lives and health conditions.

6 months

69% referred by Primary Care professional.

11% referred by Health practitioner from the ACUTE NHS Hospital Trust.

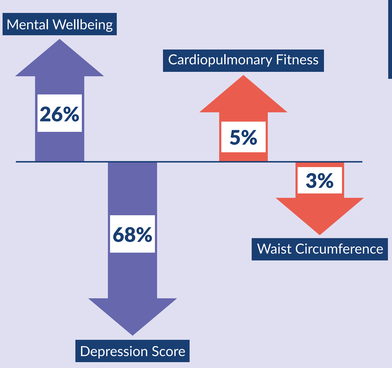
15% self referred.

Recommendations

The service offer needs to:

- Provide opportunities for individuals to connect.
- Use social prescribers as supporters and part of the offer, not just as navigators.
- Use the principles of "Making Every Contact Count" so that any public-facing service can raise awareness about the importance of physical activity and engage services in the service, e.g. benefits office, housing, social care.
- Engage more than one Health Coach, as crucial enablers, with diverse skills and characteristics.

The individuals who completed the full six-month service offer showed improvement across all adopted health measures and scales.



Recommendations

- For higher impact link physical activity promotion and service offers with strategies and policy plans focused on obesity, mental health and inequalities.

> *I've got into the habit, at the same time, practically every day...now I will go to the gym..... So that's like, it's in my routine.*

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+ Read more about the findings from this evaluation by scanning the QR code

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