

December 2009



## New Horizons for Mental Health and Well-being

The focus for this issue of the RHP newsletter is mental health and well-being. Developing national policy, regional policy and local practice are all coming together and building momentum (a head of steam) on this agenda. And it could not come at a more needed time with local families, communities and businesses reeling from the economic down-turn.

'New Horizons' was published in early December 2009 and sets out the government's ambitious cross-government programme for mental health and well-being in England with the twin aims of improving the population's mental well-being and continuing to improve the quality and accessibility of mental health services. The document recognises, as does the West Midlands Health and Well-being Strategy, the need to tackle the determinants of mental health - employment, decent housing, improved education, relationships - social support and networks, health status etc. Improving mental health is a key determinant and route to tackling inequality as well as empowering individuals and communities to build capacity and strengthen their resilience. This underlines once again the imperative for health and mental health to feature strongly and align with the goals of the forthcoming Regional Strategy to ensure that all regional agencies can contribute to improving the health and well-being, and therefore the prosperity of the West Midlands.

World Class Commissioning will be one of the key drivers for getting more upstream services and interventions to improve population mental health and well-being. Living Well West Midlands took this as their focus for their 2nd Annual conference. Well-being is a key unifying theme across the regional portfolio of 29 projects. A review of the

conference is included in this edition of the newsletter.

Good quality employment is a protective factor for good mental health and those with the poorest mental health are the least likely to be employed. The Regional Employment and Mental Health Team (The RET) have this at the heart of their strategy and action plan, which feeds into and informs the West Midlands Health and Well-being Strategy's action on economy, skills and health.

We know that the links between our physical and mental health are important with poor mental health being a risk factor for physical health problems such as coronary heart disease. How we feel, our capacity and motivation will affect the healthy lifestyle choices we make. This association is explored in the article on a research project looking at the mental health benefits of physical activity.

The Regional Health Partnership continues to be mindful of the importance of mental health to good health and to lobby for all agencies to play their part in improving the mental health and well-being of our region. This will ensure we provide opportunities to build resilience in individuals, communities and businesses across the West Midlands.

**For more information on Population Mental Health and Well-being in the West Midlands contact**  
[kate.ohara@wmrdc.org.uk](mailto:kate.ohara@wmrdc.org.uk)



Councillor Steve Eling  
Chair of the  
Regional Health  
Partnership

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Eling'.

### Useful websites

#### National Mental Health Development Unit

<http://www.nmhdu.org.uk/nmhdu/>

#### Promoting Well-being and Public Mental Health

<http://www.nmhdu.org.uk/our-work/promoting-well-being-and-public-mental-health/>

#### NEW HORIZONS – a shared vision for mental health

<http://www.newhorizons.dh.gov.uk/index.aspx>

#### Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing (July 2006 - October 2008)

<http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/Mental%20Capital/Welcome.aspx>

#### Mental Well-being Impact Assessment (MWIA)

MWIA uses a combination of methods, procedures and tools to assess the potential for a policy, service, programme or project to impact on the mental well-being of a population. MWIA makes evidence based recommendations to strengthen the positive and mitigate against the negative impacts, and encourages a process to develop indicators to measure impacts. Information on this tool can be found at the West Midlands Public Health Observatory on the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) gateway pages  
<http://www.apho.org.uk/default.aspx?RID=70494>

#### Measuring Mental Well-being: The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

For more information on this new 14 item and now 7 scale which gives an assessment of the overall positive mental health of the adult population go to  
<http://www.healthscotland.com/scotlands-health/population/Measuring-positive-mental-health.aspx>

#### Population Mental Health and Well-being

The West Midlands Regional Development Centre have web pages on a wide range of reports and resources. For more information go to  
<http://www.wmrdc.org.uk/mental-health/mental-health-and-well-being/>



# Living Well Second Annual Conference – Mental Well-being and Commissioning

**The Living Well West Midlands second annual conference in October saw over 200 delegates gather in Birmingham to discuss the challenges and solutions facing the future of mental health and well-being in the UK.**

The conference provided a platform to focus on projects within the Living Well portfolio that are testing different approaches to mental well-being in the community, a major theme of Living Well West Midlands. The conference looked at how this work can be continued into the future and how it can become integrated into part of wider mainstream services and programmes.

Speaking at the conference, Gregor Henderson from the National Mental Health Development Unit clearly set out how issues such as poverty (currently 22% of people in the UK live below the low income threshold), inequality and the economic down-turn must all be taken into account in order to make improvements to mental well-being. In particular, he spoke of challenging the stigma attached to mental health as an essential part of the shift to acceptance in the community.

Karen Newbigging, from the University of Central Lancashire, working in conjunction with the National Mental Health Development Unit, went on to introduce the developing commissioning guidance for Public Mental Health and Well-being. This new guidance can act as a decision-making tool for underpinning and understanding mental well-being and enable local health and local authority commissioners to make decisions about mental health improvement strategies and programmes that will suit their local circumstances. The guidance is due to be published in March 2010.

Fraser Battye from GHK Consultants, who evaluate the Living Well West Midlands Portfolio, explained to delegates that there has been a lack of investment in evaluation, particularly in relation to restorative interventions and economic evaluation. He went on



to discuss, how, with limited resources and competing claims, there are many problems surrounding preventative services that need to be overcome.

These include gaining professional acceptance and credibility, pressures from the media and the public as well as a lack of information for potential commissioners.

Also speaking at the conference was Dr Neil Deuchar, Medical Director, NHS West Midlands. He highlighted the importance of people's choices to improving their future mental well-being. In particular, he focused on the decisions and influences for younger people and the overall health and well-being impact that these have later in adulthood. He discussed how the range of mental well-being policy already in existence, including the Darzi Review, the Foresight report and the current work being carried out for the New Horizons consultation, created a solid strategic base for mental well-being as we move into the future of prevention and treatment. He went on to explain how these policies are beginning to show a shift from merely responding to established mental illness towards preventative and upstream interventions – intervening at the beginning of the cycle.

Alan Turley, Head of Sustainable Community Development at Stoke-on-Trent City Council, focussed on commissioning from a Local Authority perspective. He explored the importance of partnership working with public, private and voluntary sector organisations when delivering early

intervention health services from the grass roots upwards.

During the afternoon, thematic workshops covering mental well-being and physical activity, the third sector, workplace, schools, older people and black and minority/majority ethnic communities provided opportunities to hear specific information from a number of the portfolio's projects. Discussions from these workshops focused on a number of issues including;

- generating a social movement for mental health and well-being,
- the need to increase people's knowledge about what is important for their mental well-being,
- the value of commissioners as champions to take forward mental well-being programmes,
- the need to develop capacity within communities (using train the trainer approaches) and
- the importance of partnership arrangements and flexibility within these.

Delegates agreed that the projects offer a useful way of initiating dialogue and help commissioners and planners to see mental health and well-being as part of whole-system transformation with increasing focus on up-stream interventions.

**For more information about Living Well West Midlands contact Zena Lynch [z.lynch@wmra.gov.uk](mailto:z.lynch@wmra.gov.uk)**

**Living Well Web-site [www.livingwellwestmidlands.org](http://www.livingwellwestmidlands.org)**



# Mental Health and Employment

## **In the West Midlands, around 96,000 people are claiming Incapacity Benefits or the new Employment Support Allowance for mental or behavioural disorders.**

Work is widely recognised as having a positive impact on mental health, while unemployment has a negative affect and often leads to deterioration in mental well-being.

Mental health problems are widespread and affect both people in work and out of work. In the UK, it is estimated that:

- 1 in 4 people will suffer from some form of mental health problem during their lives
- At any given time 1 in 6 working-age adults have symptoms associated with mental ill-health (e.g. sleep problems, fatigue, etc) which do not meet the criteria for diagnosis
- A further 1 in 6 working age adults experience diagnosable mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety, etc) at any given time
- The Royal College of Psychiatrists have estimated 1%-2% of the population (a proportion stable over many years) have severe mental health problems (e.g. schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, etc)

## **West Midlands Regional Observatory – Mental Health and Employment Briefing Paper – August 09**

The recent Mental Health and Employment Briefing Paper produced by the Regional Observatory, highlights the issues facing the West Midlands. In the year to March 2009 in the West Midlands, only 29% of people with a mental health problem were in employment, compared with 61% for all those with health problems, and 72% for the general population. [www.wmro.org/resources](http://www.wmro.org/resources)

Recent years have seen a growing number of initiatives from within government, as well as the charitable and business sectors, to raise awareness about mental health problems and to assist people who experience mental health problems to return to employment.

## **Regional Employment Team (RET)**

In 2006 the Cabinet Office published 'Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion' which outlined the government's strategy for targeting effective help at the most excluded groups in society. Here in the West Midlands we have formed a Regional

Employment Team, which is a partnership of regional organisations that encourages a coordinated and coherent effort to progress the mental health and employment agenda, particularly for those with severe and enduring mental ill health.

We have strived to get representation from the key government departments in the region, user and carers; the business community and the learning and development sectors. The three visions of the Regional Employment Team are that

1. All individuals who have a mental health problem and who want to work will receive help and support so that they are ready (capable and confident) to gain and retain employment.
2. No discrimination is shown to people who live with a mental health problem concerning employment issues and arrangements.
3. The mental well-being of the whole workforce is actively promoted and maintained by employers and employees.

Regional Employment Team members have given us a very wide perspective on the issues facing people with mental ill health entering and retaining employment. It has also enabled us to work with other organisations to tackle stigma and discrimination and to promote mental healthy workplaces.

## **Staying Mentally Healthy Following Redundancy**

We were recently contacted by colleagues in Jobcentreplus, who were looking for advice and guidance for Jobseekers who having been made redundant and were experiencing increased, anxiety and stress issues. As a result of this work, we have produced the 'Staying Mentally Healthy Following Redundancy' leaflet which has been distributed to all Jobcentreplus districts in the West Midlands and GP Practices in the top five wards for unemployment and notified redundancies in the West Midlands. You can access this leaflet here [www.wmrdc.org](http://www.wmrdc.org)

## **Line Managers' Resource**

Shift's Line Managers' Resource, originally produced in October 2007 is a practical guide for managing and supporting people with experience of mental health problems in the workplace. The guide has been extremely well received by line managers in the region and we are delighted that a new updated version, endorsed by Dame Carol Black, has been released in October 2009. It is available on line at [shift.org.uk](http://shift.org.uk)

7th December saw the publication of three important papers for mental health & employment

## **Work Recovery & Inclusion**

Following the Life Chances (Social Exclusion) Cabinet Committee in March 2009, Ministers agreed a Mental Health and Employment Strategy to underpin PSA16 delivery, the Public Service Delivery Agreement which aims to increase the proportion of socially excluded adults (including those with severe and enduring mental health problems) into settled accommodation and employment, education or training. Work, Recovery & Inclusion, is a new government delivery strategy which sets out a series of actions that will help meet the aspirations of people in contact with secondary mental health services who want to work.

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/314039/work-recovery-inclusion.pdf>

## **Realising Ambitions**

Rachel Perkins, delivered independent report on mental health and employment for DWP.

It sets out a number of recommendations for Government. These fall in to three broad groups:

- increasing capacity and dispelling myths within existing structures so they are better able to meet the needs of people with a mental health condition "model of more support"
- implementing Individual Placement and Support (IPS) in a Great Britain context
- establishing effective systems for monitoring outcomes and driving change.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/realising-ambitions.pdf>

## **Working our Way to Better Mental Health**

Dame Carol Black's, cross government framework designed to improve well-being at work for everyone, and deliver significantly better employment results for people with mental health conditions, supporting them into work, helping them to stay in work and assisting them to return to work more quickly after sickness absences.

<http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/Working-our-way-to-better-mental-health-tagged.pdf>

**For further information on the work of the Regional Employment Team, please contact Mary Dunleavy at [mary.dunleavy@wmrdc.org.uk](mailto:mary.dunleavy@wmrdc.org.uk)**

# Research project published

## West Midlands Regional Development Centre publish report on “Exploring mental health benefits of physical activity using a social marketing approach in community settings”

The research project was designed to be a scoping exercise within two segmented population groups in the West Midlands and to identify ways of marketing physical activity for its mental health benefits. The aims of the research were threefold:

- Explore perceptions relating to mental health and associated benefits of physical activity and exercise.
- Identify barriers associated with physical activity participation.
- Identify ways of ‘selling’ physical activity for its mental health benefits.

The researchers worked with two groups: adults living in a deprived community and older adults. The importance of family as a focal point for activity came out very strongly for the first group, as did social contact, maintaining independence and cognitive function for older adults.

The report provides a wealth of insight information for these two groups and concludes that the two populations perceptions of the benefits of physical activity and key issues relating to participation were different.

In general, both groups were more aware of the physical benefits of physical activity than the psychological benefits. The term “mental health” was perceived to be limited to a relatively narrow range of factors – mostly negative.

Participants tended to focus on the individual and interpersonal level, rather than the wider context of “community” or “neighbourhood”. However, through engagement in the focus groups participants could move to a position where they acknowledged positive mental benefits of physical activity.

The report also recommended further development of this work, which should include:

- Exploring perceptions from different market segments e.g. working professionals, BME groups and younger people.
- Further exploration of the social and cultural context for differing perceptions to mental health benefits of physical activity
- Pre-testing marketing approaches on these different segments
- Physical activity programmes should consider measuring mental health outcomes for participants.

The full report can be downloaded from [www.wmrdc.org.uk](http://www.wmrdc.org.uk)

For more information contact **Suzanne Gardner, The Physical Activity Network, West Midlands.**

[Suzanne.gardner@pan-wm.org.uk](mailto:Suzanne.gardner@pan-wm.org.uk)

### What project participants said about how the mental health benefits of physical activity:

#### ADULTS

“Build your confidence”  
“Have a laugh with your family”  
“Jumping for joy”  
“Get up and out”  
“Make new friends”  
“Come and join the fun”  
“Something for the family to do”  
“Physically fit. Mentally well”  
“Active minds, better health”  
“Exercise doesn’t have to be hard”  
“Improve your life”  
“An active mind takes the stress out of your life”

#### OLDER ADULTS

“[it] gets you out of your depressions”  
“exercise makes you more alert”  
“relaxing afterwards, you feel better”  
“you’ve got company, you see different people”  
“we meet people we didn’t know, it creates a community”  
“you feel pleased with yourself for making the effort”

## A new learning and skills landscape begins to take shape

We have reached an important milestone in the reform of the institutional structures of learning and skills. Parliament has passed the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill. It has now received Royal Assent and the Bill has become an Act of Parliament. This paves the way for the dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the creation of the Young People’s Learning Agency and the Skills Funding Agency. Both will become fully operational in April 2010.

The Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) will be created as a non-departmental public body, with a non-executive Board, sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The Skills Funding Agency will be an agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The two new agencies each have different remits and separate reporting

arrangements, but with an important shared mission to work to support learners and employers and build the skills of the nation.

The Skills Funding Agency will be responsible for all publicly funded adult skills training in England outside of higher education. Its main role will be to direct public funding quickly and efficiently to further education colleges and other providers, to facilitate flexible, dynamic and innovative responses to individual and employer demand. The Agency will also house the National Apprenticeship Service.

The Young People’s Learning Agency will be an enabling body, designed to support local authorities in fulfilling their new 16-19 learner duties. It will also fund and performance manage academies and provide support for learners, in particular

the Education Maintenance Allowance for 16-19 year olds.

Over the past months the LSC has prepared for the new structures by identifying the staffing and teams that will operate from April 2010 onwards. To ensure a smooth transition, the LSC has begun to operate within new interim teams and management arrangements.

For the SFA  
[www.dius.gov.uk](http://www.dius.gov.uk)

For the YPLA  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk)

**Access to Improving Health, Increasing Employment newsletter available through the link below**  
[www.bhwp.nhs.uk](http://www.bhwp.nhs.uk)

Contact for further information  
[michael.kilduff@lsc.gov.uk](mailto:michael.kilduff@lsc.gov.uk)