



## ***What a difference a year makes***

### **OUTCOMES REVIEW OF BIG LIFE CENTRES ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES IN PARTINGTON HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE**

**Review Date: March 2009**

**Review Period: Jan 08 – Jan 09**

*“Partington is dead, but the HLC is a hive of activity.” Female aged 70+*

## **Outcomes Review of Big Life Centres Activities and Services in Partington January 08 – December 08**

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### **History and Context**

Partington Health Living Centre was built in 2004 as a result of a successful partnership bid from Trafford MBC and Trafford PCT to the National Lottery New Opportunities Fund. It was initially intended that Partington Community Development Trust would manage and operate the building on behalf of the local community. However this structure was not successful and the Trust has since been wound up. As a result of this the management of the centre was put out to tender with a view to making the project sustainable and transferring the building asset out of local authority control. In early 2007 Big Life Centres successfully won the tender. Following lengthy contract negotiations Big Life Centres took up the management role for the community café in October 2007 and for the HLC in January 2008. Revenue funding from the Big Lottery, Trafford PCT and Trafford MBC was guaranteed until June 2009.

Big Life Centres aimed to:

- Make the Healthy Living Centre a thriving community centre in the heart of Partington
- Increase the services and activities offered at the centre to improve the health and well being of local people
- Maximise community involvement in the centre, increasing local people's sense of control over their lives
- Improve the sustainability of the PHLC by maximising income from renting space; reducing the cost of facilities management; ensuring the community Cafe works as a stand alone business; and focusing on making PHLC part of the mainstream delivery of PCT and TMBC health improvement programmes.

### **Making Partington Healthy Living Centre a thriving community centre in the heart of Partington**

When Big Life Centres took over the day to day management of PHLC it was virtually an empty building, with the same regular tenants and groups meeting each week. There was significant under capacity in the usage of rooms, coupled with a general feeling of emptiness within the building. The Centre Manager networked with local agencies and organisations and arranged two community open days in March 2008 to encourage people back into the centre and get them actively involved in turning it round. The outcome of this consultation formed the initial Big Life Centres work plan (Appendix 1).

In the first year Big Life Centres has achieved the following:

- Activity in the Centre had nearly doubled with room usage is almost at the maximum

- Christmas Toy Appeal –toys were distributed to 125 children and young people in December 2008.
- Healthier Partington Network re-established and attended by 30 plus professional and community people.
- Alcohol Campaign involving local families launched
- 15 new services and activities are now offered, with 800 people accessing them regularly.
- Rainbow Café's till transactions trebled against previous year's figures, showing an increase in centre usage.
- Rainbow Café redecorated to make more welcoming and new equipment purchased.

The reception area was managed by Trafford Direct and staffed throughout the day until the autumn of 2008, when this was reduced to mornings only. This contribution will cease altogether by the end of May 2009. The Big Life Centres Development Worker has recruited and trained volunteers to manage the reception area fully from the end of May. This will enhance the atmosphere of the building by using local people to encourage more local people to use the centre.

### **Increase the services and activities offered at the centre to improve the health and well being of local people**

Six new services have been brought into the centre in the past year including:

- Trafford College now deliver a variety of adult education courses from its new base at the PHLC
- SHS have delivered 480 hours of Nice endorsed computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for people with depression or anxiety.
- Phoenix House (support for people with alcohol and drug addictions)
- Cancer Information Service drop-in has attracted 75 visitors
- Support Group for Parents with ADHD
- Money Made Clear (financial guidance).

Three new groups have been developed by Big Life Centres staff and volunteers:

- Luncheon Club for Older People - providing affordable healthy meals for 25 older people every week, reducing social isolation.
- Walk-A-Weigh – 21 people meet weekly to access advice, information and support around weight management. All members have recorded a personal weight loss. Over 35 kgs of of weight lost so far. In addition, members describe increased feelings of motivation, self-esteem and improved quality of life,
- Family Fitness Dance Class – meets weekly and is open to the whole family to enjoy fun exercise together. 17 people have been attending regularly, contributing to improved fitness.

Three new services have been developed in partnership with PCT and TMBC staff:

- Mini Diners Club has 15 – 20 families attending each week gaining access to information on healthy eating for under 5's.
- Fruit and Veg Bag Scheme sells approximately 30 bags of fruit and veg a week at £2.50 each, contributing to achieving the 5 a day programme.
- Cook and Taste sessions – six people have enrolled on this new course.

All the original services have been maintained (such as ENGAGE Older Peoples Forum), with Connexions and Next Step increasing their provision at the centre.

Two new experimental projects are being developed to respond to needs identified by local people - an anger management service for 11 – 14 year olds and a support group for people wishing to reduce cannabis smoking (a need identified by a local GP).

During January 2009 a short two page questionnaire was used to gather people's views and opinions on the effectiveness of the HLC. A total of 142 questionnaires were completed and provide a more up to date snap shot of the Centre's users and their views (Appendix 2).

The qualitative data shows that the HLC is making a real difference to the lives of the local community. Respondents were asked to measure changes in various indicators based on their experience of using the HLC. The table below shows the positive effects Partington HLC has had on the lives of people accessing the centre.

Factor	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the Same
<b>Socialisation</b>	44	2	18
<b>Self-confidence</b>	34	1	19
<b>Quality of Life</b>	26	2	23
<b>Physical exercise</b>	23	1	23
<b>Physical health</b>	22	2	24
<b>Mental health</b>	21	0	26
<b>Motivation</b>	13	1	13
<b>Totals</b>	183	9	146

Overall over 55% of people taking part in activities at PHLC report a positive benefit. Particular highlights come in the area of socialisation and developing self confidence where positive success is rated at 68% and 62%. We have worked to build PHLC as a community hub which supports local people to grow and develop and then contribute to the continued sustainability of the local community.

**Maximise community involvement in the centre, increasing local people's sense of control over their lives**

Big Life Centres believe that community involvement often focuses on identifying needs and ignoring the contribution that local people can make to improving their own health and well being. We use the ladder of participation to ensure that people from the local community can get involved at all levels from being consulted to being involved in the delivery of services.

In March 2008 two open days were held and a questionnaire used to identify a work plan for the PHLC. The questionnaire had 60 responses (Appendix 1) and directly led to the establishment of new services and activities described above. The success of this exercise can be shown in the uptake of services and in the participation of local people in the operation of the centre.

In January 2008 there was one volunteer and a year later there are now 23 active volunteers, giving their time to ensure the centre runs efficiently. The volunteers are predominantly female (two men), the youngest is 19, and the oldest is 62. Most of them are not working due to ill-health/incapacity or childcare responsibilities. Volunteering opportunities have been created in Reception, in the Rainbow Café, Elkin Court Restaurant, in the Mini Diners Club and Administration. Ten volunteers are enrolled onto a 10 week Level 1 Certificate in Volunteering course in partnership with Trafford College.

*I actually came to the Luncheon Club to eat one day last summer and one of my friends was volunteering here and served me, so I thought I would give it a try. I haven't looked back since! I suffer from deteriorating health and at one point was stuck in my house alone a lot of the time. Coming here has given me a massive boost and has been the best therapy for me. I really miss it at the weekends when I'm back at home. I encouraged my daughter to volunteer here too. It's a great way to boost self esteem. In Partington everybody knows everybody else and so when I joined the team here it was like being with friends – we work really well together. Being with other people here has been the best medication for me. - Janice*

Unemployment is high in Partington (x%) and there is a culture of benefit dependency. Big Life Centres believe that improving health and well being requires us to develop skills, work place training and job opportunities. In addition to the volunteering placements Big Life Centres has secured 4 jobs and created an additional 4 jobs in this year of operation. All of these (except two) have been filled by people living in Partington.

**Improve the sustainability of the PHLC by maximising income from renting space; reducing the cost of facilities management; ensuring the community Cafe works as a stand alone business; and focusing on making PHLC part of the mainstream delivery of PCT and TMBC health improvement programmes.**

When Big Life Centres took on the management of the PHLC many regular tenants were utilising the building on a rent free basis. These include Connexions, Next Step, and ENGAGE Older People's Forum. In 2008/9 the

PCT paid an annual contribution towards room use by their provider services. In this year, Big Life Centres has increased the rental income by £12,000 (fye), and has increased usage of the centre by non paying community groups. This is probably the maximum income that can be gained from renting space at the centre, given the space available and local rental values.

The cost of facilities management has historically been met through the Big Lottery grant and provided by TMBC. Big Life Centres have tendered the hard facilities management services required by PHLC with its other centres, in order to gain economies of scale. It has secured a very competitive price for the delivery of this contract which is included in the budget for 2009/10.

The Trafford Direct Service has historically provided reception cover, which was halved in the autumn of 2008 and will cease in April 2009. Big Life Centres have attracted and trained a group of local volunteers who will provide a welcoming reception service to the building in partnership with the centre staff. This will both provide opportunities to utilise local people skills, provide work training opportunities and be cost efficient service to the centre.

Over proceeding years the café suffered from lack of sales and a limited menu. In the summer of 2008 the café was re furnished and a new menu was introduced in the autumn. Since then sales have increased dramatically. The majority of café customers use it for breakfast and lunch, and their profile is generally female with small children, living within a fixed budget income.

In order to create a sustainable enterprise with economies of scale, Big Life took on an additional contract providing restaurant meals at Elkin Court residential housing in July 2008. The majority of customers are residents living on a fixed income but the restaurant is also open to the general public. Income levels have been low but steady with room for expansion.

In January 2009 we reviewed both catering operations. Even though the Rainbow Café has seen a dramatic increase in sales the projected budget for the year 2009/10 still show a deficit when the Big Lottery funding ceased. In comparing the café with other community cafes across the country, we concluded there was insufficient footfall or spend-per-person to operate the café without a subsidy. We considered new models of service delivery and have developed a model which secures 6.5 jobs and offers 8 training placements across the two catering operations. This change will not only ensure the ventures are sustainable but will also support the skills development of the local labour market.

*My name is Christine Barber. I come to the café most days. I come because it gets me out of the house for a couple of hours or so everyday. There is always somebody to have a chat and a laugh. Some days I bring my sketch book with me and I find I can come up with new sketch ideas whilst I am here. I've recently had an exhibition of my work here where people have bought many pieces of my work. This has given a great boost to my confidence, and I'm looking into ways I can develop my own business making cards and doing drawings for people. The café is a great*

*place for making new friends or meeting old friends. The food is good and is a reasonable price. I recommend it to anybody who is visiting Partington.*

It is clear that the café provides a very important function to reduce isolation and increase socialisation for local people.

In Spring 2008 Big Life Centres co-ordinated and participated in a Strategic Health Forum meeting which brought together TMBC and PCT staff to discuss the future development of the health park in Partington. This led to the re-launch of the Healthier Partington Network and the development of some joint services with the Children's Centre and the PCT staff. The meeting also concluded that the PHLC should look to mainstream some of its health improvement services. In the autumn of 2009, Big Life Centres again met with the PCT and subsequently developed an innovative proposal for developing PHLC services by focussing on the most at risk patients identified through the GP practice lists.

## **Conclusion**

Partington Healthy Living Centre has a central role to play in the local community. It acts as a health, community and social hub, bringing together services and local people to respond to local needs. The HLC provides a base for information, advice, healthy eating, volunteering, physical exercise, lifestyle and personal support services, all delivered in a friendly and accessible environment.

The first year has focused on building the basics for developing a thriving healthy living centre. Big Life Centres has achieved many of its initial aims. PHLC is now a thriving community centre in the heart of Partington. It has a broad range of services and activities which contribute to improving health and well being in Partington. It has created jobs and volunteering opportunities in the centre – maximising community involvement. And it has made strides towards sustainability, through business development of the Café, use of volunteer labour, efficient commissioning of FM services and developing proposals for mainstreaming service provision.

However, there is a lot more to do. Big Life Centres has not managed to deliver the level of close working the GP colleagues we believe would deliver the greatest health benefits. We believe the current proposals for service development would help achieve this. Whilst we have maximised community involvement through job creation and volunteering, Big Life Centres would like to further develop community involvement in the governance and service developments at the centre. Big Life Centres also believes that there are more efficiency to be gained by exploring joint FM and management services with the Health Centre. This has been constrained by the rigid contractual relationships defined through the LIFT contract, but as there are good working relationships with LIFTco, this could be explored in the future.

The town of Partington has unique health and social problems. Isolation and deprivation combine to create many problems. Partington Healthy Living Centre is ideally placed to respond to these challenges. Over the past year Big Life Centres has worked with the local community and partner agencies and has created a firm foundation, to achieve better health and social outcomes for the local community.