



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

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.

The initial aim of Big Life Centres was to focus on a variety of options to increase the sustainability of PHLC. These included attempting to maximise income from renting space and facilities, reducing the costs of facilities management, ensuring the community Cafe worked as a stand alone business and focusing on making PHLC part of the mainstream delivery of PCT and TMBC health improvement programmes.

A further business was established in June 2008 at Elkin Court providing catering facilities for the residents in an extra care housing development. The view was that the café and restaurant would support each other through economies of scale.

Partington Healthy Living Centre

When Big Life Centres took over the day to day management of PHLC it was a virtually 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. In addition, many regular tenants were utilising the building on a rent free basis because of arrangements made before Big Life Centres involvement. These include Connexions, Next Step, and ENGAGE Older People's Forum. All PCT service or activity is also not charged due to a one off contribution towards room hire included in the current funding agreement. In order to respond to needs in the community, some new services that do not have income to cover rental fees, have been encouraged to use the Centre regardless (for example, mental health and financial guidance) so that the local community can benefit.

At the beginning of the Big Life Centre management period the reception area was managed by Trafford Direct and was staffed throughout the day. In the autumn of 2008 this was reduced to mornings only and 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.

The Centre Manager spent much of the first few months building up relationships with other agencies and organisations and arranged two community information days to gain an understanding of what local residents in Partington wished to see in the centre. The outcome of this consultation formed the initial Big Life Centres work plan (see Appendix 1). By autumn 2008 the activity in the Centre had nearly doubled with room usage almost at maximum (see Appendix 3)

Successes at HLC

- Change in building atmosphere, into a busy centre of activity.
- New services attracted into the centre, examples of these are: Computerised CBT service, Phoenix House (support for alcohol and drug addictions), Cancer Information Service drop-in, Support Group for Parents with ADHD, Money Made Clear (financial guidance).
- Increased volunteers from 1 to 23
- Maximised room bookings
- Trafford College has moved the Partington Learning Gateway to the HLC, and offers a variety of adult education courses.
- Three new groups
 - Luncheon Club for Older People
 - Walk-A-Weigh – meets weekly and provides advice, information and support around weight management.
 - Family Fitness Dance Class – meets weekly and is open to the whole family to enjoy fun exercise together.
- 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
- Increased sessions from Connexions and Next Step
- New partnerships with the Fit for Life Project (funded by the Lottery) and Partington Children’s Centre leading to the Mini Diners Club and Fruit and Veg Bag scheme
- Experimental projects around anger management for 11 – 14 year olds and support for people wishing to reduce cannabis smoking.

Increase in Centre Usage

The quantitative data indicates that Centre usage has increased in the past year with 15 new services or activities started or encouraged to move to Partington HLC (e.g. the Learning Gateway). An additional 800 people are now engaged in those activities and the Rainbow Café’s till transactions are projected to treble against last year’s figures. All this indicates that more

people than ever are using the Centre. In addition the 23 volunteers are gaining valuable work experience and knowledge.

The table below gives an overview of the additional centre usage and new services that Big Life Centres has been instrumental in establishing locally. Some service, e.g. Mini Diners has been developed in partnership with Trafford PCT and the Partington Children's Centre.

Project/Activity area	Aug 08 – Jan 09	Additional People using the new services established
Till transactions in the Rainbow Café 5111	6581	projected year figure of 8,051 transactions figure for previous 12 months was 5111 transactions In 6 months we have exceeded the full 12 months figure for the previous year
Visitors Signing In Book	483	Primarily additional people attending one off meetings or events.
Self Help Services	35	Has provided 480 hours of NICE endorsed therapy for people with depression and/or anxiety. Has a waiting list.
Walk-a-Weigh – weight management	21	All members have recorded a personal weight loss. Over 35 kgs lost so far. In addition, increases in motivation, self-esteem and quality of life.
Mini Diners Club	78	15 – 20 families attending each week gaining access to information on healthy eating for under 5's.
Cook and Taste	6	Brand new service – 6 weekly cooking sessions – got a waiting list already.
Fruit and Veg Bag Scheme	60	Selling approximately 30 bags at £2.50 per week.
Family Fitness Dance Class	17	Exercise sessions for the whole families – increased fitness levels.
Cancer Information Service	75	Monthly drop-in for advice and guidance on living with cancer (2 volunteers recruited for them too).
Luncheon Club for Older People	25	Providing affordable healthy meals for older people and reducing social isolation.

Volunteering Opportunities

In January 2008 there was one single volunteer in the café. A year later there are 23 active registered volunteers, giving their time to ensure the centre runs efficiently. The volunteers are predominantly female (with the exception of two men) and 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 some administrative tasks. 10 volunteers are also 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

Community Engagement

Big Life Centres takes the viewpoint that all parties to community engagement possess knowledge based on experience, observation and reflection. Effective engagement processes will share and use that knowledge. Skill must be exercised to build community, to ensure practise of equalities principles, to share ownership of the agenda, and to enable all viewpoints to be reflected. We use the ladder of participation to ensure that people from the local community can get involved at all levels of delivery and governance.

In March 2008 two open days were held and a questionnaire used to form the basis of a workplan for the HLC. The questionnaire had 60 responses and directly led to the establishment of new services and activities (Appendix 1).

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
Socialisation	44	2	18
Self-confidence	34	1	19
Quality of Life	26	2	23
Physical exercise	23	1	23
Physical health	22	2	24
Mental health	21	0	26
Motivation	13	1	13
Totals	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.

Rainbow Café and Elkin Court Restaurant

Over the proceeding years the café had suffered from lack of sales, limited menu and high turnover of staff. Following a difficult summer 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. The balance between affordability, quality and sustainability is very fine.

In order to create a sustainable enterprise Big Life took on the contract of 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 had seen a dramatic increase in sales the projected figures for the follow year were still showing a deficit. There is not enough footfall or high enough spend-per-person to operate the café without a subsidy. We looked at other Healthy Living Centre cafes across the country with most showing difficulties in breaking even without adopting new models of service delivery such as employment training. As such we will use both venues to deliver work placement programs. This change will not only increase the profitability of the venture 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.

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 people to respond to local community and individual needs. The HLC provides a base for information, advice, healthy eating, volunteering, physical exercise, lifestyle services and personal support all delivered in a friendly and accessible environment.

The first year has focused on building the basics for developing a thriving healthy living centre. Services have been developed to respond to the needs of the local community building the levels of confidence and aspiration to enable future community development to take place. Services have been delivered that are outcome focused that achieve clear health benefits.

In relation to the initial aim to increase the sustainability of PHLC we have made good progress. We have raised additional income through maximising the opportunities for organisations to book rooms. Although there is only a limited amount of space available we have utilised this effectively and have a high occupancy rate. As part of the Big Life Group we have secured an efficient facilities maintenance contract that will provide PHLC with cost effective support. We have changed the delivery model of the café to provide a better environment in which to reach sustainability. We have built partnerships with local agencies and brought a wide range of health and social care services into the area. We have also re-established the Healthy Partington Network.

However there is more that can be done in terms of securing a firm financial basis for the Centre and in developing more services that directly tackle the social and environmental issues prevalent in the local community. Critical to this is further partnership work with the adjoining Health Centre to identify individuals and common health related conditions that services and activities can be tailored to match. We have drafted an outline proposal to develop a model of working with the GP's in the health centre. In addition plans are progressing to create a vegetable and herb garden project.

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 problems. Over the past year we have created a firm foundation on which to build to achieve better health and social outcomes for the local community.