



# BigLife Centres

impact report  
April 2013 - March 2014

# introduction

**BigLifeCentres** manages five health and community centres across Greater Manchester and also manages Being Well Salford – which offers free support to local people who want to make changes to two or more things to improve their health and wellbeing: alcohol consumption, smoking, exercise, low mood or weight. Early in 2014, we also secured contracts to deliver a health and wellbeing service in Rochdale and an alcohol and drug service in the same borough.

Our BigLifeCentres were visited **139,149** times between April 2013 and March 2014

**80%** of surveyed visitors said that there had been an improvement in their quality of life since they began to use Big Life Centres.

We held **15** Voice meetings in which local people, staff and volunteers worked together to discuss local issues and the services in the centres.




Maria, volunteer



# volunteers

Providing volunteering opportunities ensures that local people are involved in their community, and it's also a way to support people to regain control of their lives, rebuild their self-confidence and self-esteem, and move on into employment.

88 people volunteered with Big Life Centres,  
18 went on into paid employment or into further education.



*"I am a mother of four great grandchildren, and 9 grandchildren. I've been a Big Life Centres volunteer for 18 years now. I first started volunteering because I'd left school early with no qualifications and realised that if I went into paid work there wouldn't be much on offer for me. So I decided to approach Zion and give something back to community which I'd grown up in. Over the years I've run a women's group and a weight management group, and I do a lot of the events and I lead on the school uniform and Christmas appeals to help local families through hard times.*

*Big Life Centres has helped mould me into a better, more confident person, at times I'd doubt myself and my capabilities, but the support was always there to tell me I could do it. With the skills I've now got, I'd maybe like to do a Uni course and apply for jobs within The Big Life group. It sounds corny but I see Big Life as an extension of my family and the Zion Centre a home from home."* Maria



# ZionCentre & KathLockeCentre

**The Zion and Kath Locke Centres in Manchester work closely together to provide a wide range of services that reflect the needs of the local community and improve the quality of people's lives.**

Some of the services available in the Zion and Kath Locke Centres include: mental health support, drug and alcohol services, health and social care services, fitness and exercise classes, training, volunteering and employment support and a range of other drop in groups such as art, relaxation and even bingo. Between April 2013 and March 2014 the Zion Centre was visited **20,638** times while the Kath Locke Centre was visited **15,737** times.

**80%** of people accessing our services live in local postcode areas and **69%** of people are from ethnic minority groups.

**19%** of people using either the Zion or Kath Locke have a mental health need and **17%** have a disability. The centres hosted **29** groups with **5,500** visits to them. **10** new groups and activities started including the Eczema and Allergies Group, Yeng Yoga, Acupuncture, Health Walks, and a gardening group. We also ran **32** campaigns and events reaching over **1,000** local people. These included bowel cancer awareness, sickle cell awareness month, energy efficiency workshops, Hulme Winter Festival and health checks.

**11** health and wellbeing courses and activities attracted **467** people including the garden project, Christmas hampers, and Positive Lifestyles courses. **49** volunteers played a vital part in activities and groups, giving thousands of hours of their time. **12** volunteers moved into either employment or accessed training.

*“I am local to the centre, and grew up here in Moss Side. I have a passion for supporting people’s health and wellbeing through exercise. I started doing the classes after being in a car accident and dealing with the physical and mental trauma of it.*

*I used to work with Kath Locke (who the centre is named after) herself at other venues, doing African drumming, dance and women’s groups. I became involved with the Kath Locke Centre four years ago, working with people with mental health issues using aerobics which was really successful. I carried on doing weekly classes after this.” Esther*

86% of people were very satisfied with the way the Zion or Kath Locke Centre services met their needs.



[/zionandkathlocke](https://www.facebook.com/zionandkathlocke)



# Cheetwood Centre

**The Cheetwood Centre is a community and sports centre in Manchester offering a variety of services, activities and learning opportunities for adults and young people.**

**15** regular groups, activities and services ran from the centre including the Afro-Caribbean elders club, community shop, eTherapy, Boost self confidence courses, a job club where local people received support to find work, FC United, arts, crafts, sports and fitness activities.

Staff and volunteers from the Cheetwood Centre organised **15** events including open days, health promotions, a Christmas party and days out.

**60%** of visitors were under the age of 18

**112** young people were members of the centre and **60** young people went to the regular summer playscheme mid-week play sessions. **20%** of young people attending our play scheme were from black and minority ethnic communities.

**40** people used the community shop run by our volunteers.



/cheetwoodcentre

The Cheetwood Centre was visited **6,742** times last year.

In a survey of people attending the centre, **70%** said it increased their happiness, friendships and social life, 70% said it increased their knowledge, sense of direction and motivation by attending activities. The centre has contributed to a **57%** reduction in crime on the Cheetwood Estate according to figures obtained from Greater Manchester Police.

This year the Cheetwood Centre worked with local parents and children to develop and submit a proposal to the DfE for a new free school in Cheetwood – the proposal was successful and the team will be working with the community to develop and open **Unity Community Primary** in September 2015.

***“I started coming here 5 years ago when I was 8, because there was loads of activities on here. I love playing football. They were having football trials a few years ago and someone from the centre helped me get to the trials and encouraged me to go. Now I play for Manchester City Ladies.***

***I volunteer here helping out over the summer holidays with the groups, playing with the younger children and making snacks for them. I like volunteering because it makes me feel good, and I like giving up my time for other people. There would be nothing to do around here if the Cheetwood Centre wasn't here.”*** Aliza

# Energise Centre & Willow Tree Centre

The Energise and Willow Tree Centres provide a range of health and wellbeing services that support and motivate local people to live their lives to the full. Services include: GPs and clinical services, health and wellbeing groups, mental health services, creative and art groups, drop in and support groups and an IT suite.

This year, the Energise and Willow Tree Centres were visited **86,722** times.

Around **75%** of visitors to our centres were white British and **12%** from a black and minority ethnic minority. Around **33%** had a disability and **29%** had a mental health need.

The centres hosted **18** different events and campaigns across the year, staff and volunteers engaged **1,125** visitors in conversations to raise awareness of things such as oral hygiene, cancer awareness, mental health, women's safety, credit unions, healthy eating and Fibromyalgia.

**417** people attended **24** well being programmes like Positive You, and Relax and Unwind, or took up the offer of a Fruit Bag from our healthy eating scheme.

**150** people participated in **17** groups, including **5** new self help groups such as the singing for fun group, spectrum group, fibromyalgia group friendship group and creativity group.





90% of people using the Energise Centre or the Willow Tree Centre said their quality of life had improved.

*“I have Fibromyalgia, which is a long term condition which causes pain all over the body. I learnt about a support group in the Energise and decided to give it a try. My first impression of the group was really good; everyone was very understanding and friendly.*

*It feels good to listen to other people in the group and share my own thoughts of the symptoms of Fibromyalgia, and listen to how we cope in our daily lives with the illness.*

*I would like to see the group spread more awareness of the condition in the local communities, GPs and other healthcare professionals. I feel that it is important that all GPs and healthcare professionals have a greater understanding of this illness as some people do not get a diagnosis for up to five years as there is a real lack of understanding with healthcare professionals.*

*I would say to anyone thinking of joining the group, to come along and meet other people who are warm, friendly and fully understand the emotions and frustrations of what it is like to live with this condition. The group also helps you feel that you are not alone.”*



/energiseandwillowtree



Being Well Salford launched this year and is a partnership managed by The Big Life group, with seven other third sector providers; Langworthy Cornerstone, Salford Community Leisure, Salford Health Matters, Salford Unemployed and Community Resource Centre, Social adventures, Unlimited Potential, YMCA, who help to deliver the service and Salford University, People's Voice Media and Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust who support the delivery through training, evaluation and clinical supervision.

In its first year we received **933** referrals from **83** different referring agencies leading to **577** assessments.

**63%** of people BWS worked with were from the **20%** most deprived areas in Salford.

**46%** were male.

**78%** of people using BWS are making good progress on goals.

**52%** of people who recorded alcohol as an issue reduced their alcohol intake, **23%** had not drunk at all since their last session.

**50%** of people had increased exercise since last session.

**35%** of people had reduced their weight

with 1 in 10 people reducing weight by more than **5%** of starting weight

**37%** of participants quit smoking since last session,

a further **19%** reduced smoking by more than **5** cigarettes per day

and a further **7%** reduced cigarettes by between 1 and 4 per day.



/beingwellsalford



@bwsalford



Being Well Coaches work with people on a one to one or group basis. **80%** of our coaches live in Salford. We have also employed **2** apprentices and **14** people have taken up volunteering opportunities. **2** volunteers have gone into jobs locally in the health sector.



Watch our Being Well Salford films to find out more about the service and hear from the people who have used it:  
[www.youtube.com/thebiglifegroup](http://www.youtube.com/thebiglifegroup)

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