

Energise and Willow Tree Healthy Living Centres

Evaluation Report

April 2008 / March 2011





History

The Energise Centre and The Willow Tree Centre were built as part of the New Deal for Communities regeneration of Lower Kersal and Charlestown. The area has high health needs and had no primary care facilities. The New Deal for Communities (NDC) and Salford NHS aimed to develop the centres as community hubs which would improve access to integrated primary, community and social care services. Salford NHS however, was required to undertake new primary care development through the MAST LIFT (Manchester Salford and Trafford Local Investment Finance Team), which restricted how the centres could be owned and managed. As a result the buildings had a fairly statutory appearance and feel.

In order to ensure the Centres were capacity building the local community and helping the community to develop self-help initiatives, Salford NHS tendered for an agency to manage the Centres. Big Life Centres won the contract following a competitive tendering process, in October 2007

Big Life Centres (which manages eight community resources across greater Manchester, have a track record of working in the Lower Kersal and Charlestown areas of Salford. It supported the development of a local social enterprise (CHAP, now Unlimited Potential) from its inception, managing its funding, providing training and mentoring the Board, developing its first business

plan, sharing policies and procedures, and employing staff until the Board felt it could manage independently. It also worked with the Health Action Zone and Salford University to pilot and research the effectiveness of complementary therapies; and took part in initial discussions with the NDC on the development of the two new healthy living centres, hosting learning visits to our centres elsewhere in greater Manchester.

Local Area

Salford is the 12th most deprived district in England and has been the focus of a number of regeneration initiatives over the last decade. (www.salford.gov.uk) In 2001 Charlestown and Lower Kersal, received £53 million of New Deal for Communities funding to regenerate the area.

The health of the population in Salford has improved over the last decade but is generally poorer than the average for both the North West region and England as a whole. The biggest causes of premature death (i.e. in people under 75 years) in Salford are Heart disease, Cancer and Lung disease. (Reference: Salford Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2010) In order to improve health outcomes the area needed not only good primary

care services, but also initiatives to tackle the underlying social economic factors that lead to poor health such as:

- Individual lifestyle (smoking, alcohol, diet, physical activity, drugs)
- Social and community factors e.g. unemployment, crime, social exclusion
- Living and working conditions e.g. housing
- General socioeconomic factors that impact on health e.g. poverty and low educational attainment

The proportion of the population claiming benefits in Broughton and Lower Kersal is 27%, which is high when compared with the Salford average of 20.1% and the

National average of 15.1%. Broughton has the highest level of benefit claimants in Salford with more than one in three working age people (35.4%) out of work. 50% of claimants (18.5% of the population) are receiving incapacity benefit which is double the regional average. (Reference: Office of National Statistics Feb 2010).

Salford has a predominantly white population with only 5.8% being from a BME community compared to 7.9% nationally. The Lower Kersal and Charlestown area BME community is largely comprised of Refugee families resettled into the area.

Photo: Willow Tree staff and volunteers



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Our Progress

Making the centres welcoming hubs of community activity

The number of visitors to the Centre has increased year on year. From 2008 when only 4,500 visitors were recorded to 2011 when 112,000 visitors were recorded. In the last three years the Centres have had a total of 212,660 visitors.

People have been encouraged to visit the centres by holding Open Days and events. Over the three years 26 events have been held attracting nearly 900 people. Events include Men's Health, Health and Well Being Taster Days, International Women's Day Celebrations, Counselling and Refugee Week Events.

Over the past three years 26 new services have been offered by encouraging partner agencies to deliver sessional services in the Centres. These include IT for beginners, Weight Management, Counselling, Asylum support, Money Matters, Grow Cook and Eat, Young Peoples Sexual Health and ESOL courses.

Offering employment to local people helps ensure the centre reflects local communities and is seen as accessibly by local people. Initially despite offering flexible working hours and carrying out a local recruitment campaign only two part time staff (of the team of six) lived in the local area. Over the following three years, we have been able to increase the local employment by introducing new flexible roles and encouraging volunteers to apply for posts. As a result five of the eight staff employed in 2011 - 62.5% of staff are local residents.

Salford University is on the doorstep of the Lower Kersal and Charlestown and the Centres have developed close working relationships with the University to ensure the area benefits from its close proximity. The Centre has offered volunteer and placement opportunities to 7 students in the last three years who have been on Health and Social Care, Environmental Management, MBA's and Fine Art degree courses

Centre Hosts were employed and Volunteer guides recruited to provide a welcoming signposting service to people visiting the centre. A community room was created at the Willow Tree Centre providing information and access to computers. Funding was obtained from North West Arts and a local artist employed to work with local people to create a permanent art exhibition in the atrium at Willow Tree. 18 Art workshops were held. New signs were commissioned to help people navigate their way round the centres and encourage them to come in.

The success of these initiatives can be seen in the results of the 2009 user survey, which showed that 90% of the people visiting the centre were very happy with the customer service they received. In addition, 83% of people who used Energise and 90% of people who used Willow Tree said they were happy with these.

“The Energise Centre has become my life line, and without it, and the people who are involved with it, I would probably be in a total mess and would have lost both my wife and family to alcohol. I swear without the help and advice and encouragement from every member and group within the centre I would not be here today.”

Terry, Energise Centre

Photo: Children's party at Energise



Our Progress

Supporting local people to help themselves

The Centres offer a range of volunteer opportunities to local people to help them develop their skills and confidence and to feel valued within their community. Offering volunteer opportunities also ensures that local people are actively involved in the delivery of the Centres services and are not just recipients of services. Over the last three years we have had 49 volunteers in a range of roles including Receptionists, Centre guides, Community Resource Assistants, and group leaders. Three volunteers moved into employment.

The Centres have supported local people to develop 14 self help and user led groups and activities over the last three years. These include an ADHD support group, Stammer Support group, Women's group, Music group, Hair loss support group, Mens Domestic Violence support group, a Parents and Tots group, and a Carers group. With the support of staff, the group leaders have produced publicity and promoted services to the local press.

In 2009 group leaders were interviewed to find out the impact running the groups had on them personally. The outcomes they recorded were developing greater self-respect, increased confidence, reduced social isolation, development of new skills such as communication, planning and budgeting, and feeling positive about their community.

"I first attended the Hair Today Gone Tomorrow Group in July 2008 after suffering with Alopecia for 15 years. I'd lost my confidence and didn't think that anyone understood what I was going through, and so I felt very isolated.

My visits to the hair Today Gone Tomorrow Group started some really positive changes in her life. I started to feel a lot more confident. At home, I began to talk more openly with my family and with the support of the group, I also purchased a new wig.

I feel a million times happier and have tried a lot of new things including joining the committee. I more confident and have learnt new skills. I'm excited to see how the group will develop this year. I hope the group can do more awareness raising work to ensure that people who develop hair loss are informed of the support that is available for them."

Danielle, Hair Today Group

Photo: Hair Today group



Our Progress

In order to develop a comprehensive menu of services at the Centre, Big Life Centres established an Advisory Group involving agencies based in the centres or who use the centre sessionally, volunteers and other partner agencies (such as Salix Homes and neighbouring community centres). It meets quarterly and is attended by the Centre Manager and Development worker. The Advisory group visited other Community Resource Centres to learn from best practice, undertook a needs analysis and developed a Strategic Plan for the development of services at the Centres. It reviews the services that are being delivered and helps develop solutions and ideas for working better together. When the New Deal for Communities came to an end in March 2011, the Advisory group helped establish a Partners Networking lunch to help sustain the co-ordination of services in the area – a role previously fulfilled by the NDC.

Providing access to high quality public services which work in partnership with local people

There are three agencies based at each Centre providing a core set of services:

Unlimited Potential (UP) – Energise Centre

UP are a community engagement social enterprise, they offer a range of services including; Time Bank, Salford Link, Health Trainers, Re-energise and Smoke Free Spaces.

Rowland's Pharmacy – Energise and Willow Tree

The pharmacies offer a range of services including: minor ailment scheme, medicine management, stop smoking service, emergency hormonal contraception, diabetes blood glucose screening.

Salford Health Matters – Willow Tree Centre

Salford Health Matters is a Community Interest Company delivering General Practice services at the Willow Tree Centre, and lead on a social prescribing project at the centres.

Horizon Centre Practice – Willow Tree Centre

The Horizon Centre is a Salford NHS General Practice for Asylum Seekers in Salford

Dr. Jeet's Practice – Energise Centre

A GP led primary care service

Big Life centres has worked with 14 different agencies to deliver a comprehensive menu of services in the centres such as basic computing, food hygiene, parents and toddlers, breast feeding support, stop smoking, counselling, computerised cognitive behavioural therapy, contraceptive advice for young people, and holistic therapies.

The Centres have also accommodated a range of NHS services including Midwifery, Health Visitors, Podiatry, Diabetes Clinic, Continence, Osteoporosis, Epilepsy, Falls and Blood Clinics.

Photo: Acupuncture at Willow Tree



Our Progress

In addition to working with partner agencies to bring new services into the Centre, Big Life Centres staff and volunteers support the delivery of the IT suite and community resources room. They directly deliver Walking groups, the Over 50s exercise group, Community Arts projects, Music and Poetry sessions. The Centre Hosts also provide information and signposting services to people using the centres.

Developing activities which reduce isolation, alcohol intake, smoking, mental distress, obesity and poverty

“I first came to the Willow Tree Healthy Living Centre in May 2009 when I heard that an exercise group for the over 50s had begun. I suffer from arthritis, and pain from this condition can be reduced by keeping active.

Since I started attending the exercise class, I feel happier and fitter, and it's helping towards my joints becoming more flexible and more mobile, which is reducing the pain I get from arthritis.

Not only is the class good, the centre is right in the middle of the community and so I have met new neighbours and made new friends since coming here. The Willow Tree is a warm and welcoming place, and since coming here I've begun to think more about staying healthy.”

Edith, Over 50s Exercise Class



Photo: Counselling at Willow Tree

In the last year:

- **6,382** people received information or signposting
- **367** visits were made to the over 50s Exercise class
- **686** visits were made to the Energise with music sessions
- **193** visits were made to the ADHD support group
- Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy was accessed **1,543** times
- **133** visits were made to the Legends – Salford Stop Smoking Service
- **2,242** visits were made to the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service

Photo: Art project at Willow Tree



Value for Money

We have been successful in attracting funds into the Centres:

- **£5k** from the Arts Council from the Willow Tree and Energise Community Arts Project
- **£1K** Business Security Grant from Salford City Council and **£2500** from NDC for the upgrade of CCTV system at the Energise Centre to include car park security.
- **£2401** from East Salford Community Committee for Empowerment Day event.
- **£500** from Groundwork for Willow Tree Gardening Group

In April 2009 NHS Salford undertook a Social return on investment (SROI) to evaluate the progress Big Life Centres had achieved at the centres. SROI is a framework for measuring the change, benefit and learning that individuals experience from accessing the centres services. It showed that for every £1 invested by NHS Salford, it reaped £13.10 worth of benefit.

“Too often, the full value of community-based approaches is lost or dismissed because it has appeared not to be measurable. We hope that this first attempt at SROI starts to reflect not only the current value, but the future potential of the Centres. It should help both us and our commissioners, to target investment more appropriately, to demonstrate the value of organisations working together with each other and with local people, and to support our accountability and future dialogue over the development of the Centres.”

Chris Dabbs (Chief Executive, Unlimited Potential),
Chair - Energise and Willow Centres Advisory Group

“Achieving a social return of £13.10 is extremely impressive and we are pleased to be able to build on this and similar partnerships in the future.”

Dr Julie Higgins Executive Director of Public Health
NHS Salford

	08/09	09/10	10/11
Income (PCT)	£136,775	£139,104	£139,104
Room hire income	£4,217	£2,451	£1,538
Other income	£5,591	£8,201	£2,468
Total income	£146,587	£149,756	£143,110



Photos: Willow Tree volunteers and drumming workshop at Energise

BigLife Centres

Energise Healthy Living Centre

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