

January 2019

Active Communities Partnership – Birmingham & Solihull

Local Delivery Pilot – Organisation Responsible

The Active Wellbeing Society – Beccy.Marston@theaws.org

Brief background about the place

The local delivery pilot brings together two local authorities; Solihull & Birmingham working collaboratively to share knowledge and develop best practice across their administrative boundaries.

The pilot is looking to be able to demonstrate a significant shift in physical activity and community activism, so that people become more physically and socially active. The approach is a whole systems approach that ultimately shifts power to communities, making them more resilient and better connected.

The project focuses on six pilot areas covering deprived wards across both local authorities – (1) Handsworth, Lozells and Aston, Soho & Jewellery Quarter, Birchfield, Perry Barr, Holly Head & Newtown, (2) Balsall Heath West, Landywood, Nechells, North Edgbaston, Highgate, (3) Kingstanding, Stockland Green, Erdington, Perry Common and Gravelly Hill, (4) Ward End, Alum Rock, Heartlands, Bordesley Green, Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East, Yardley West & Stechford, Small Heath, Tyseley & Hay Mills and South Yardley, (5) Shard End, Gleb Farm & Tile Cross (Birmingham) Smiths Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge, Chelmsley Wood, LSOAs of Greenhill and Hobs Moat North, (6) Brandwood & Kings Heath, Billesley, Druids Heath and Monyhull, Highter's Heath.

Key to the success of the pilot work will be the shared vision, leadership and collaboration across Birmingham and Solihull. The challenge is around working across two administrative boundaries, recognising that local communities use and access services seamlessly between Birmingham & Solihull (particularly in bordering areas). The principles of the pilot will be to put communities at the heart of the decision-making process, so that delivery is based on their needs and that they are part of sustaining activities and interventions. The wards targeted have the highest levels of deprivation and with this comes challenges around low levels of physical activity, high levels of obesity, social isolation and significant health inequalities.

What is the Birmingham and Solihull Pilot trying to achieve?

It is a community asset based development model aiming to achieve the following outcomes:

- The “unusual suspects” living in seldom heard communities and places, become more physically and civically active, reporting improved health and quality of life.
- Through activity, co-creation and facilitation, citizens will have a sense of place and belonging and participation and engagement, resulting in invigorated, strong and resilient communities.
- Sport England and our stakeholders have clearer insight into the impact and effectiveness of a whole system approach to tackling inactivity with citizens, community and place, through integrated data collection and analysis of past, current and future programmes.

Who is the target audience and why?

- **Later Life: Aged 60+**, social isolation, fear of crime and less active, resulting in greater demand for adult social care, mental health services and acute healthcare.
- **Women and Young Families**, sedentary lifestyle, time and cost constraints, resulting in a need for mental health and social support networks, associated health risks with lack of activity.
- **Under 15 years of age**, sedentary lifestyle, obesity issues and lack of active participation, resulting in health risks and self-esteem.
- **BAME communities**, cultural barriers and language skills, resulting in issues around community cohesion, exclusion and discrimination.

Progress in the Pilot (September 2018 – January 2019)

What has been happening in the Birmingham and Solihull Local Delivery Pilot?

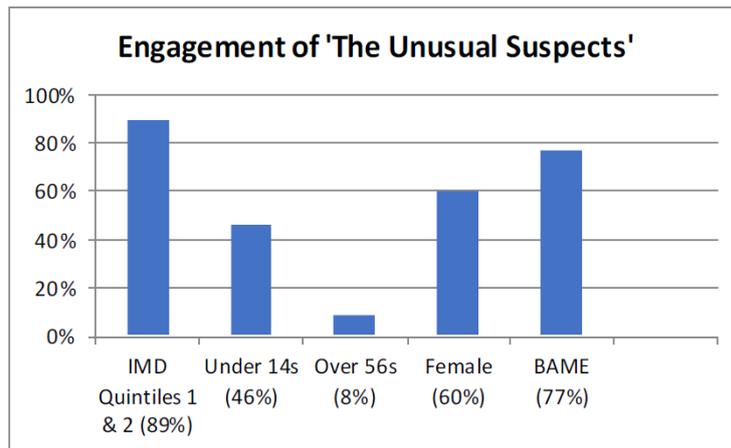
Over the last few months a number of things have been happening as we have been getting the programme up and running;

- Appointed a dedicated team to manage and deliver the programme – this includes, Programme and Operations Managers, Insight and Data Analyst and a Community Practice lead. This was followed by a local video recruitment drive that resulted in the appointment of the first of 6 Local Community Action Officers – Dee Manning. This new approach enabled us to reach and employ a local and connected person from within the target community.
- Delivered Holistic interventions (our version of a social prescribing model) which include; knitting, crochet, English, photography, mehndi to name but a few in Handsworth, Calthorpe and Saltley. The 180 women on this programme are being introduced to walking, cycling and badminton based on the trust they have built with their local community delivery organisation.
- Delivered community engagement events for both the community voluntary organisations and members of the public in Handsworth, Fordbridge, Kingshurst, Smiths Wood, Hobbs Moat/Lyndon & Chelmsley Wood.
- Worked with local groups and housing associations to start mapping all the activity and assets available across the areas of focus.
- Started to set up a network of GP's who will refer patients into the holistic interventions, and a working group has been convened.
- Delivered run, walk, cycle and a range of sports and family activities in parks and closed streets events providing food through our partnership with the Junk Food Project.
- Grown a 500 strong community crowd of people, initially across Handsworth, Aston and Lozells. 'The Crowd' is a large gathering of connected individuals and organisations to bring people together to collaborate, have a space (virtual and physical) to share ideas and act on these with the aim of empowering local people to make change for good in their local communities.
- Developing a collaborative approach with training experts for a comprehensive workforce package looking at a whole systems of engagement.

From June – Oct 2018 we had 3,096 attendances at activities and events.

A large amount of this engagement has come from groups we have termed the 'unusual suspects'. This includes:

- Those living in Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles (IMD) 1 & 2
- Those under 15 years old
- Those over 60 years old
- Those identifying as female
- Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities



Recent thoughts and learning

Due to the ward boundary changes in Birmingham we have completed some analysis of the demographics and have extended into some additional wards and removed a handful of others to reflect the programme's target audience.

We are looking at the challenges of the current engagement workforce, both in and out of the sports sector, and the problems of getting funding to those that desperately need it in order to change behaviours.

We are learning about the challenges and barriers to people being active through our community engagement events and from our local community action officers face to face insight. This is resulting in connecting community organisations in order to reach new audiences and mapping community assets to ensure they are being used.

Our community action officer has discovered a need for people to hear about what's going on locally and we have created newsletters as a result to update people on the teams' work and to promote the active communities activities and local partner activities.

Feedback about the need for a recognisable brand has led to the commissioning of a dedicated programme logo.

Feedback from our recruitment process has led to greater involvement from the community in the decision-making process, which has been built into the next phase and will continue to be evaluated and improved based on that feedback.

What's coming up

More activity providing free food to engage with people who aren't usually interested in physical activity and sport, building trust and encouraging them to join our Crowd movement. This is being led by citizens and community organisations such as Meriden Adventure Playground, in Chelmsley Wood, running engagement events, weekend and half term activity delivery with local partners.

We will continue to test and learn new and innovative ways of our engagement methods and locations – for example, benefits document verification queues, food banks, religious outreach events and worship breaks.

We are asking local people to design activity programmes with us and get involved by taking part or leading, and we can support them to do this. We will also be connecting groups of people together to help them form groups to be physically, socially or civically active. For example, a group of mums in Lozells want help to set up some family events and a Handsworth resident wants help to set up a community gardening project.

The Crowd will have a web portal to enable people to find out about what's going on, where they can volunteer and connect with each other. This will be a real benefit to local community delivery partners and they will have space to promote their services and attract new people. It will also be a place where people can share physical things as well as skills to benefit the community. For example, Mrs Shah would like to help her neighbours and has an afternoon a week free with access to a car. Mrs Mohan is isolated due to not being able to afford to travel but would really like to attend a coffee morning or exercise session – The Crowd website will support these people to connect so that Mrs Shah can help Mrs Mohan. The portal will act as an online version of our Local Community Action Officer to enable local people to make connections themselves.

Our first Local Community Action Officer and Practice Lead will be rolling out the first Library of Things for citizens to be able to loan for free, items of need such as DIY/Gardening/Cooking/Sports/play items.

We will be recruiting from the community, or within the existing community organisation structure, the 5 remaining Local Community Action Officers.

We will create action plans to support each workstream of our bid, including the rolling out of a small grants scheme and local activity delivery schemes for community organisations to help reach traditionally unengaged people. Community and volunteer festivals will be organised based on the communities leading these, with elements of storytelling, wilding work and upscaling of the social prescribing work across all active communities' areas.

Further links to find out more information:

<https://theaws.co.uk/activities/active-communities/>

<http://www.solihullactive.co.uk/>

A dedicated email contact has been set up for citizens to interact with the team. activecommunities@theaws.org and they can also contact the team via 0121 728 7030.

January 2019