

VANGUARD: Better Care Together

Case study: Active Lives Project within the Carnforth Integrated Care Community



Purpose:

The purpose of introducing the 'Active Lives' project into the Carnforth area was to enable a semi-rural community to access a free diet, nutrition and exercise programme in order to improve their physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing.

The 'Active Lives' project aims to:

- Extend the life of joints e.g. knees and hips
- Reduce pain
- Promote the importance of a healthy heart and lungs
- Encourage weight loss
- Improve stamina
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower blood sugars and cholesterol
- Improve energy levels
- Improve psychological wellbeing
- Reduce social isolation

Context (processes and conversations)

Carnforth Integrated Care Community has a population of approximately 15,000. The area has a significantly older population than the national average level. Currently life expectancy for males is 80.4 years and for women 84.4 years. Approximately 60.3% of the community has a long term health condition, which is significantly higher than the England average. Additionally research has found that the population in Carnforth have high rates of joint issues, and linked to this the number of joint replacements which have taken place for people living in the area is above the England average. Following the publication of data by NHS England demonstrating high rates of Musculoskeletal problems in Lancashire, the NHS Lancashire North Clinical Commissioning Group and the Better Care Together programme identified that it was a priority for the Carnforth

Integrated Care Community (ICC) to address these issues.

Consequently, Dr David Wrigley, the lead GP for the Carnforth Integrated Care Community (ICC) and Sarah Baines, the Integrated Care Coordinator for the Carnforth ICC began looking at how lifestyle changes could improve their patients' conditions.

Research undertaken has found that:

- Regular exercise can reduce arthritic pain
- Exercise can ease stiffness, improve movement and strengthen muscles
- Maintaining a healthy weight eases the pressure on joints
- Eating a healthy diet whilst helping with weight loss provides the correct nutrients to stay healthy
- Regular exercise can keep people healthy, independent and boost self confidence

Subsequently Sarah Baines approached Lancashire County Council who run the 'Active Lives' project, which is a free diet and nutrition project based at the nearby Salt Ayre Leisure centre. Discussions showed that Lancashire County Council were keen to bring the programme into a community setting.

Following a series of conversations between Sarah Baines and Erik Worsley, the Manager of the Active Lives project, it was agreed to expand the initiative to the Carnforth community using Carnforth clinic as a host site.

An appropriate venue room in Carnforth clinic was identified and permission to use it free of charge was gained from the building manager. Risk assessments for the building were already in place and Lancashire City Council confirmed their insurances covered all participants at remote locations.

**How it works,
setting out the
steps:**

Once it was acknowledged that the 'Active Lives' programme could be delivered safely within the Carnforth community setting, and that there was an appropriate space available and a workforce to support the initiative, suitable people to take part were identified.

Lancashire City Council offered the scheme to 12 patients with a BMI between 25 and 34.9. Sarah Baines added a further criterion of people who has been diagnosed with osteoarthritis in the past two years. This additional criterion was added with the view that encouraging patients with osteoarthritis to exercise could prolong the life of their joints. Sarah then ran a report of the practice patients and identified 57 suitable patients who were all contacted via a letter. 16 positive responses were received and as a few people were unable to attend every week it was agreed to admit all 16 onto the programme.

The participants attend a two hour session each week for 12 weeks. The sessions are fun, interactive and provide nutritional advice, weight loss management and individual exercise programmes. The nutrition element of the programme focuses on a variety of different topics such as portion control, reading food labels and cooking healthy meals. Each session includes a mixture of both cardiovascular and strength exercises, which are progressive starting with chair based exercise and developing to more vigorous

	activities.
<p>Change elements</p>	<p>1) Collaborative working</p> <p>The 'Active Lives' sessions are run by an experienced team from Salt Ayre Leisure centre who, working in conjunction with Lancashire City Council, aim to make the programme accessible by bringing it into the community. This team is working with the Carnforth ICC who host the project with the support of Dr David Wrigley, the lead GP for the Carnforth ICC and Sarah Baines, the Integrated Care Coordinator for the area.</p> <p>2) Implementation of the changes (patient and public communication)</p> <p>Suitable participants were contacted by Sarah Baines via a letter explaining the programme and asking if they were happy to participate. 16 positive responses were received and as a few people were unable to attend every week it was agreed to admit all 16 onto the programme.</p> <p>Each participant was given a ten minute appointment slot on the afternoon of the first session, prior to the start of the programme, where a brief overview was provided and written consent to share information and undertake observations and measurements was gained. Measurements taken included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight • Blood pressure • Wellbeing score • Pain score • Cholesterol • Blood glucose levels <p>It was decided that all measurements would be repeated at the end of the 12 week programme, in another three months and again six months later to evaluate physical and mental wellbeing.</p>
<p>Success so far:</p>	<p>Those who have attended the sessions regularly have either lost weight or maintained their current weight. Specifically one lady has lost 10 kilos over the course of the programme.</p> <p>All participants have improved their levels of physical activity and report actively making changes to their diet following healthy eating and behaviour change education.</p> <p>As the programme aims for long term sustainable changes there are plans to provide participants with further opportunities to continue their exercise once the 12 week programme is complete. Sarah Baines has subsequently secured the use of a local Lancashire County Council Community Centre free of charge, for existing participants to use weekly and indefinitely. Sarah is also arranging further 12 week programmes for new participant groups.</p>

Programme attendees have shared positive feedback on the programme:

Carol Aimson said: “The sessions are so friendly and the team are great. You’re not compelled to lose weight; I’ve used it to help get ready for surgery.”

Joan Hodkinson said: “We can take part in a light hearted way- it’s a laugh and we enjoy coming!”

David Field said: “The programme has helped me to rehabilitate my leg after surgery which I was previously struggling with.”

Marian Worthington said “It’s the best thing that’s ever happened to me. The sessions have made me think about healthy eating and portion size, I also do the exercises every morning! Since coming I no longer need to take pain medication for my arthritis which is great!”

GP Surgery staff are optimistic that introducing the project into the community will have a positive impact on the local population:

Sarah Baines, Integrated Care Coordinator for the Carnforth ICC said: “We want to provide the right care in the right place for a rural community. Access to activities can be difficult for those living in rural areas and so we wanted to bring the care to our community and provide opportunities for people who otherwise might not have been able to access them.”

Dr David Wrigley, GP, Ash Trees Surgery, Carnforth said: “It’s refreshing to see patients coming together to learn more about their conditions and improve their health in an innovative way.”

Lancaster City Council are pleased to be delivering the ‘Active Lives’ programme in the community:

Andy Forrest, Active Lives Officer, Lancaster City Council said:

“We brought the Active Lives programme into the community so that it would be more accessible to a wider range of people. It gives us the opportunity to support individuals to change their lifestyles progressively in a non-judgemental way, so that goals are both achievable and sustainable. We know it’s working as attendees have started going out and buying their own resistance bands to do the exercises at home!

“We basically want to give people the right tools to help themselves.”

Lessons learnt:

- Service user and staff engagement is essential.
- Plan how you will evaluate the service from the outset and do this regularly to gauge its impact.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership work is essential/ critical.• Staff need to be given the freedom to be innovative and work in new ways.• It is important that a health professional known to attendees is supporting the programme in order to encourage attendance and adherence figures.• Partnership working is key i.e. Lancaster City Council and primary care staff
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