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The NW Healthier Communities Programme provided capacity building for community health and healthy living centre partnerships across target areas of the North West of England.

The purpose of the programme was to secure positive social and health benefits and contribute toward a regional legacy of hosting the XVII Commonwealth Games in 2002. NW Healthier Communities programme was one of the programmes of the 2002 North West Partnership’s Economic and Social Programme, funded by the North West Development Agency’s Single Regeneration Budget and other partners such as Sport England in the North West.

The programme developed a number of different services to support community health projects including:

- **Networks**
  Developing networks of community health projects in target areas, which brings together community activists and volunteers from different fields such as community centres, sport groups, cultural projects and specific needs groups such as self-help groups, as well as those specifically involved in Healthy Living Centre partnerships;

- **Training and Development**
  A capacity building training and development programme designed and delivered to participating members of the above Community Health Networks brought together as Learning Sets in each target area.

- **Advice and Guidance**
  Advice and support was given on different aspects of health initiatives; development; delivery; evaluation and sustainability of community health programmes.

- **Resources**
  By monitoring the experience of the community health projects, a number of resource materials or ‘Toolkits’ have been developed within target areas across the North West.

The NW Healthier Communities programme was devised to complement local regeneration initiatives and maximise the opportunities created by the NOF Healthy Living Centre Programme in the run up to 2002.
Regional Activity

Regional Thematic Healthy Living Centres

In order to identify and meet the particular needs of different communities and to ensure a user-led value base, Healthier Communities developed health and well-being projects that address needs of thematic target groups who face specific health inequalities issues. The target groups were identified following a regional conference in July 2001.

These regional programmes were developed in collaboration with key agencies across the North West.

This report details how the NW Healthier Communities programme has provided development and project support to a range of communities health initiatives across the region.

The programme, incepted, developed and assembled 4 regional thematic healthy living centre applications to New Opportunities Fund. This innovative approach to the NOF initiative resulted in the development of regional programmes aimed at reducing health inequalities faced by:

- Vulnerable Young People - Healthy Arts Initiative
- Older People - Pathways to Health and Independence
- Ethnic Minorities - Merseyside Chinese Healthy Living Centre
- Learning Disabilities - Compass

Of the four bids that were submitted the Healthy Arts Initiative and the Pathways to Health and Independence have been successfully awarded NOF funding for their projects to start in April 2003.

Regional Community Health Projects

The program also set up and developed facilitated networks of Healthier Community projects with common concerns. This provided facilitated opportunities for peer-led learning, skills sharing and support; provided training and developed capacity building; facilitated specialist in-put and created a number of resource materials within targeted areas across the North West including:

- Merseyside
- Oldham
- Cumbria
- Blackpool
- Bolton

As part of the 2002 NW Economic and Social Programme, participants in this programme were also supported to become involved in the associated projects and the events and celebrations of the 2002 Commonwealth Games.
Hope Street Limited

HOPE STREET is a highly successful performing arts training and development organisation based in Liverpool. Launched in 1988, the organisation has an excellent track record of bridging the gap between education, training and employment.

The NW Healthier Communities programme approached Hope Street Ltd and supported them, and their partners in a bid for New Opportunities HLC funding. The ‘Healthy Arts’ HLC initiative was successful in accessing New Opportunities funding and is due to commence early this year.

This exciting development is aimed at young people who are vulnerable and unlikely to engage with statutory agencies, be disaffected or likely to become socially excluded and will enable Hope St to produce a range of projects including: a Theatre in Education tour, outreach workshops, a video project and peer group training activities. These educative projects will address health issues including sexual health and relationships, teenage pregnancy, smoking, alcohol, drugs and promote self-esteem and well-being.
Pathways to Health & Independence

NW Healthier Communities programme in partnership with Age Concern in the North West successfully bid for New Opportunities Funding to support the development of the Pathways to Health and Independence Regional Healthy Living Centre project.

Age Concern’s already established and effective network of local and regional organisations and partnerships makes it the ideal structure to deliver this project both regionally and locally.

The project activities have two main themes –

- **Action for Life** which aims to encourage people to stay active as they go into later life, promoting a healthier lifestyle for the over 50’s, helping people to make positive life choices to help them maintain their independence and lead an active and healthy retirement.

- **Living Choices** which aims to help the more fragile elderly people access the support and services they need. Focusing on the over 65’s, people will be given a free health assessment in their own homes leading to a personal action plan. This project is aiming to reduce the risk of falls, identify mental health issues and assess usage of repeat prescriptions.

The project is being delivered in six Age Concern areas across the region including: Liverpool, Lancashire, Bolton, East Cheshire, Oldham and Eden.

**Quote:** Stephen Dunmore, Chief Executive of the New Opportunities Fund, said: "older people are often marginalized in society so this funding will help to break down barriers to existing services for many older people as well complementary strategies to raise awareness of the health and social needs of older people".

**Quote:** Margaret Burford, Age Concern in the North West said: "we are excited about the opportunities opened up by the provision of this funding. We are certain it will greatly benefit older people in the project areas, and enable them to live healthier, more fulfilling lives".
Compass Project

With the support from the NW Healthier Communities programme, Lancashire Learning Disabilities Forum, a proactive network of groups for people with learning difficulties and disabilities submitted a project application for New Opportunities Funding.

The aim of the 'Compass' project is to re-shape the approach to supporting people with learning disabilities and supporting them much more in the planning of their services, including:

- Service users playing more active roles on decision making committees.
- Awareness raising and support in education establishments.
- Working one to one with families.

The Development of multi-media resources such as website, videos, etc. which are also planned will aid professionals in obtaining a greater understanding the support of need.

The project was unsuccessful in its application for New Opportunities Funding but is actively seeking further possible funding opportunities with the support of the NW Healthier Communities programme.

**Partners:** Catholic Caring Services, Alternative Futures, Lancashire Learning Disability Forum
With the support of the NW Healthier Communities programme the Merseyside Chinese Community project submitted a Healthy Living Centre project application to the New Opportunities Fund. The aim of the project was to provide a culturally centred holistic healthcare service drawing on both Western and Oriental traditions. This service would be delivered on an outreach provision across Merseyside and will particularly target people with poor health and suffering social exclusion, including those with poor English skills.

The project based at the Pagoda Chinese Community centre in Liverpool was unsuccessful but has been supported by the Healthier Communities to look at further funding initiatives and future development opportunities.

NW Healthier Communities has also supported the 8th National Chinese Mental Health Conference which was held at the Pagoda Chinese Community centre in June 2003.
In 2002, an International sporting event took place in the North West - the XVII Commonwealth Games. This event was the largest, most significant International sporting event held in the UK since the Olympic Games in 1948.

The North West Healthier Communities Programme helped to make the Commonwealth Games come alive for almost one thousand people in communities across the region.

More than 900 tickets to games events were donated by United Utilities, a partner in the Commonwealth Games. Healthier Communities distributed the tickets to community organisations within our own regional network, while new and exciting links with other networks and organisations ensured that people who would otherwise never have had the opportunity to go to unique sporting spectacular were able to do so.

Groups reflected the entire range of North West communities including Age Concern in the North West (22 individual Age Concern organisations), Merseyside HLC Network (43 community and voluntary sector HLC organisations) and various youth and disability groups.

The NW Healthier Communities programme also linked with the NHS through its regional award scheme, The 2002 Health Challenge Awards. This enabled community groups, who work hard to improve the health and well-being of local people, a chance to go to the Commonwealth Games in Manchester.
The aim of the ‘Sport for Health’ project is to promote sport for health in the communities of Allerdale and Copeland, within a locally agreed health agenda, focusing on addressing national health targets. The project, under the guidance of a multi-agency steering group, encouraged local people to become involved in sporting activities which contributed to improving their health and well-being. The steering group comprises representatives of the North Cumbria Health Action Zone, West Cumbria Primary Care Trust, West Cumbria and Barrow Sports Action Zone and West Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service.

To date a number of community health projects have been developed working alongside the various partnerships and groups across Cumbria including:

• Physical Activity and Sports Directory
• Walking the Way to Health initiative
• Cardiac Rehab Phase IV
• GP Exercise Referral Scheme

The ‘Sport for Health’ project has been funded for two years and through successful partnerships and networking the project has merged with a new volunteer bureau that concentrates on sport and health opportunities. This project will train people and help them to find employment. NW Healthier Communities is providing ongoing support to the project including guidance and advice on further funding opportunities.

Physical Activity and Sports Directory

St. Martin’s College developed an initial database and worked with over 25 partners in the West Cumbria and Barrow Sports Action Zone to develop a much needed Physical Activity and Sport Directory. The Directory will be available to all Clubs and organisations throughout West Cumbria and will help to paint the bigger picture of what activities and services are available in different localities and help to provide promotional material for tourism purposes.

The directory will also be used by health professions to encourage individuals to participate in activities that will assist in rehabilitation from particular conditions.

The directory will be a valuable source of information, and with an increased awareness of available activities locally it is anticipated that people will become more active!
The aim of the Merseyside Healthy Living Centre Network was to work with both statutory and voluntary sector interests and members of the community health projects/Healthy Living Centres partnerships.

The network received funding from Merseyside HAZ and the NW Healthier Communities programme and was developed to provide best value for the healthy living initiatives by providing support not only whilst projects were bidding for New Opportunities Funding but also to help seek other sources of funding and to provide support post funding. The key objective being to support Merseyside to develop quality projects which meet the needs of the local communities and tackle the wider health problems and so lead to a reduction in inequalities.

By encouraging new and innovative approaches to health, the health of the whole community can be improved.

Improved communications between the healthy living projects has lead to increased sharing and dissemination of best practice and provided an added value project across Merseyside. Initiatives have also been supported to be aware of how their project links in with other programmes such as Surestart, SRB, Neighbourhood Renewal and other potential complementary funding streams and programmes.

**Achievements**

- 43 HLC bids submitted across Merseyside,
- 12 HLC projects were successful securing NOF funding totalling £8 479 703, with the total cost of funding secured of £23 884 878 with match funding of £15 405 175.
- With the support of the network several HLC’s that were unsuccessful in securing NOF funding have succeeded in securing funding from other sources and are now operating,
- A successful programme of training had also been delivered across the network.

Merseyside has received one of the highest allocations of HLC’s in the country. NOF has stated that it is their view that the Network has played a significant role in this success.

An Evaluation of the programme is currently being undertaken by the University of Liverpool, HACCRU and will be available from April 2003.

The Merseyside Healthy Living Centre Network has played a key role in developing the Regional Healthy Living Centre Network which will provide some overarching links between the regional HLC’s. It is not envisaged that this Regional Network will perform the same function as the Merseyside HLC Network and therefore the Merseyside network needs to be sustained, providing a key pilot role in shaping developments of Healthy Living Centre networks.
Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) is a major cause of early death in the UK. One way of addressing this is to focus on prevention of heart disease. Lifestyle factors (ie. Inactivity, poor eating habits and smoking) are known to play a part in the prevalence of CHD, and in Bolton a team of health specialists have worked in partnership to produce a healthy lifestyles resource to be initially used with children and young people in schools.

The ‘Stay Active, Stay Healthy’ project’s aim was to use the whole school approach to help children make healthy lifestyle choices in regard to food and physical activity. The SASH pack has been produced in partnership with Bolton L.E.A. Curriculum Advisors, Bolton Healthy Schools Team, school teachers, Bolton Metropolitan Borough Councils Health and Exercise development team, Bolton Wanderers Football Club. This pack is to run alongside a training programme which has been developed to help initiate the pack within the curriculum and staff including teachers and school nurses will be trained to deliver the activities.

Funding from the Healthier Communities Programme and East Bolton Regeneration (SRB6) has meant that the project team has been able to respond and produce a supplementary curriculum resource for schools.

Links to Bolton’s Healthy Schools Programme:

- Supports the integration of health issues into the delivery of PHSE as well as the wider curriculum
- Encourages parental and wider community involvement
- Encourages positive attitudes to healthy eating and physical activity
- Seeks to develop relationships between schools, families and the wider community with the potential to bring additional resources and skills to the school
Tackling Health Inequalities

NW Healthier Communities is working with Blackpool Leisure Services Sports Development Unit looking at how Blackpool Leisure Services will contribute to local Health Improvement Plans and address health inequalities in the Blackpool area.

Projects currently being delivered:

- Audit to assess current provision in terms of a variety of outreach activities for older people, young people across Blackpool. The information collated from this audit helped to provide a baseline and identify the activities to be undertaken over the next year, highlighting obvious gaps in provision.

- Extension of multi disability Health and Fitness Programmes – a pilot project is currently being undertaken with a view to extending provision of this service into sheltered accommodation.

- Audit and development of health and fitness activity database resource within the community.

- Be Active, Stay Healthy (BASH) pack activity - project aims to link with and build upon the SASH pack work currently being delivered in Bolton.
‘TOPS’ – Toolkits for Older People

By using the combined skills of Age Concern Organisations across the region, with links to local ethnic minority elders’ groups, rural services and Health and Sports Action Zones, a series of Toolkits for Older People (TOPS) have been developed and piloted in different settings. Three areas were invited to participate actively, taking a lead on at least one of the Toolkits and using their different strengths to support the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Leading on</th>
<th>With particular skills in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td><strong>Holistic Risk Assessment Toolkit (TOP1):</strong> For older people to live independently, a process of adjustment is necessary. This means understanding that there are risks to independent living but that support networks do exist to help people maintain their own homes, encourage mobility and social and other activities.</td>
<td>Consulting Older People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Cheshire</td>
<td><strong>Local Resources Toolkit (TOPS2):</strong> In order to keep up to date with local resources, whether provided by statutory, public or voluntary organisations, a computer-based information resource is ideal, avoiding costs of published directories (which quickly become dated). A multi-layer database has been developed which can be searched, by service user, volunteers or staff.</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Concern Lancashire covering East Lancashire</td>
<td><strong>Training Toolkit (TOP3):</strong> In order to ensure that these Toolkits can be accessed and used by the widest range of people a Training Toolkit has been developed and implemented with Service Users, Age Concern Volunteers, Age Concern Staff and Colleagues from other organisations.</td>
<td>Training Needs Analysis, Developing Training Programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Toolkits

By monitoring the experience of the community health projects a number of resource materials or ‘Toolkits’ have been developed within target areas across the North West.

Regional

Resource: Healthy Living Centre ‘Toolkit’
This resource has been developed to support the management of community health projects; including evaluation, financial and output management and partnership development.

Contact details: For further information about this ‘Toolkit’ please contact Jo Lord at Structured Outlooks: jo@structuredoutlooks.com

Cumbria

Resource: Multi-Media ‘Physical Activity and Sports Directory’

Contact details: For further information about this ‘Directory’ please contact West Cumbria Volunteer Services: cvs@westcumbriacvs.solis.co.uk

Bolton

Resource: Stay Active Stay Healthy (SASH Pack)

Contact details: For further information about the ‘SASH pack’ please contact Libby Denham at Bolton Leisure Service Health & Fitness Team: libby.denham@bolton.gov.uk

Oldham, Lancashire, East Cheshire

Resource: Toolkits for Older People (TOP’s)

Contact details: For further information about the ‘TOPS’ programme please contact Maggie Clay at Age Concern in the North West: clayM@ACE.org.uk

Blackpool

Resource: Be Active Be Healthy (BASH Pack)

Contact details: For further information about the ‘BASH pack’ please contact Andy Holland at Blackpool Leisure Services Development Unit: andy.holland@blackpool.gov.uk
Financial Outputs

Table 1. NW Healthier Communities Programme Summary of Programme Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Funding</th>
<th>Total All Years Forecast</th>
<th>Total All Years Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRB</td>
<td>299,001</td>
<td>299,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport England</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector contributions</td>
<td>465,430</td>
<td>466,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL COST</td>
<td>824,431</td>
<td>825,565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantifiable Outputs

Table 2. NW Healthier Communities Programme Summary of SRB Quantifiable Outputs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Output Description</th>
<th>Total All Years Forecast</th>
<th>Total All Years Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of jobs created</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of voluntary/community groups supported</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of capacity building initiatives carried out</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of HLC applications made</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of individuals receiving NW Healthier Communities training</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of organisations using NW Healthier Communities toolkits</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>