

Case Study

Active Bedford

Equity focused
- over 45's

What were our objectives?

To increase physical activity in older people who are isolated.



Project description

Sport England awarded £205,000 revenue funding to Active Bedford through the Active England programme. This accounts for most of the total £268,000 project cost.

The project aims to increase physical activity among older people in deprived and rural areas in and around Bedford. The project employs a co-ordinator to set up activities and run training sessions for activity leaders.

The project has two main parts:

- Exercise Leaders for Community Groups – provides training for members of existing community groups so they can lead chair-based activities for their group; and
- Walk With Me – uses people with Health Walk Leader training to take older people out of their houses for walks, using a series of graded and assessed walks for different levels of ability.

Rationale

Elderly people in the local community were looking for opportunities to take part in physical activity. Others who were less mobile felt they would hold people back if they tried to join in mainstream activities. This is why Active Bedford started their 'Walk with me' project in July 2005.

Project aims

Active Bedford aims to increase the opportunities for older people to take part in physical activity. These people are often isolated and feel they are not able to go out alone.

The project also aims to set up activities that will be self-sustaining so there will be a legacy from the Active England funding.

Project performance

The project has made progress since last year:

- Total participants have gone up from 153 (2007) to 386 (2008);
- The number of coaches has gone up from 10 (2007) to 37 (2008);
- The number of sports qualification has gone up from 10 (2007) to 24 (2008); and
- Total throughput is 5,342 up to March 2008.

The project has successfully engaged with local groups and trained them to run physical activity sessions with older people. These include:

- People from deprived areas trained to lead chair-based exercise;
- Community groups trained; and
- The chair-based leaders trained in Otago, a leg strengthening and balance retraining exercise programme.

Active Bedford has connected with local groups and is working with Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) on group walks based on "Walk With Me".

The project is also working with Bedford Borough Council to produce a booklet including information on clubs and organisations open to older people.

The Future

The project started in November 2004 and the funding will finish in November 2008. There was an under spend on the project as the original project co-ordinator left and the position was vacant for a few months. So the project has been extended to 4 years.

All activities set up through Active Bedford are self-sustaining and will continue once the Active England funding ends.



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