

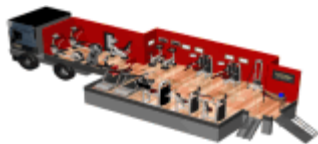
Case Study

Mobile facilities

Wellness on Wheels

What were our objectives?

To help people get active and improve their general health and wellbeing



Project description

Wellness on Wheels (WOW!) received £230,000 capital funding and £411,600 revenue funding through the Active England programme. The capital funding went towards a mobile fitness facility with 16 workstations, floor space, consultation room and office. Revenue funding employed a project manager and three fitness instructors. The total project cost £1.1million.

WOW! is an articulated trailer equipped with Technogym fitness equipment and the Techogym Wellness System, which enables recording and monitoring of users' progress. The trailer expands when parked into a fully functional fitness facility and can accommodate up to 16 people exercising at any time. The unit travels around Wear Valley District providing physical activity to key target groups. The unit remains in one location for an 8-10 week period.

Project origin

The Wear Valley Sport Action Zone (SAZ) Needs Assessment and Action Plan (NAAP) under the key theme of social inclusion identified a need to introduce a portable (mobile) fitness/physical activity initiative.

The facility provides an opportunity to enhance and complement activities offered by schools, Positive Futures, LEAP Initiative and the Cardiac Rehabilitation & prevention programmes. WOW! also links with community-based programmes delivered by the Wear Valley Sport Action Zone funded Community Physical Activity Co-ordinators.

Rationale

The Wear Valley is primarily a rural area with only two leisure facilities in the towns of Crook and Bishop Auckland. These are a long way from many of the small rural communities, made even worse by the difficulty of the journey on slow country roads. In response to this problem, the truck goes out to these communities. It stays for ten weeks in one spot, where instructors are on hand to advise, develop programmes and sign up members.

Project aims

WOW! started in June 2005 and aimed to attract new participants, get them involved in physical activity such as using the main leisure facilities or taking up other informal opportunities, for example walking, cycling or running.

Project performance

WOW! has achieved its objectives and now that the Active England funding has finished has been mainstreamed by Wear Valley District Council. WOW! engaged with 5,807 participants and 61 health referrals over the three years of Active England funding.

Innovation

WOW! is addressing the issue of accessibility to fitness facilities in Wear Valley. The truck is eye-catching and makes quite a statement when 'landing' in small communities. There were concerns about what would happen after the truck left and this prompted Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund to give an additional £132,000 for a legacy programme.

As part of this legacy programme, each community that is visited is given the opportunity to have £15,000 of fitness equipment, if it will agree run a local facility and pay back the money within twelve months. So far, four communities have done this, basing the equipment in community buildings. One of these schemes, St Johns Chapel, has 23 volunteers and has formed a constituted committee which has been able to access funds from elsewhere, so the project has become self-sustaining

The Future

Consideration is being given to the options for taking WOW! forward into the future. These include the possibility of setting up a social business to provide a service of this kind to other rural areas, or refitting the truck to deal with another social issue such as obesity.



To get active visit
<http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=12647>

For more information:
T 08458 508 508
www.sportengland.org

March 2008