

Learning and Impact report Macmillan Prevention and Re-enablement project

Get active, have fun and feel better

The Macmillan Prevention and Re-enablement project was a pilot project funded by Macmillan Cancer Support and delivered by LinkAge Network. The project has operated in Bristol between 2015-2019, and is based on evidence that being active during or after cancer treatment can improve an individual's overall health and wellbeing in many ways. During this time, over 345 people aged 55+, living with and beyond cancer, have accessed support through the project.

The project has taken its lead from local people aged 55+ through the project's Advisory Group and from regular evaluations. It has subsequently developed using evidence, and patient and service user voices. By 2019, the project had evolved to offer;

- ✓ **Regular Wellbeing Days** showcasing taster activities and services available across Bristol in a safe and supportive environment.
- ✓ **Tailored information** providing information and guidance to help people get moving after cancer.
- ✓ **Activity Taster Tokens** offering people an opportunity to access up to five physical, creative and social activities for free (in collaboration with activity providers across Bristol).
- ✓ **Exciting opportunities** available through the LinkAge Network to support people to become more socially engaged.
- ✓ **Training for activity providers** on cancer awareness, physical activity and its benefits as part of recovery.

Supporting people aged 55+ living with and beyond cancer to get active, have fun and feel better, through the project's various initiatives, the project has learnt that being active *together* has a lasting impact on participants engaging in activity overall.



The togetherness found through participating in Macmillan Wellbeing Days has highlighted that meeting new people, becoming informed of the support available in Bristol and having fun are a valued part of these events.



Subsequently, 89% of participants at Wellbeing Days have since engaged in, or plan to engage in, activity. This recognises that the support offered through these events is beneficial in becoming more active after cancer.

This shortened report highlights some of the learning outcomes from the pilot project and briefly evaluates the impact achieved by individual project initiatives. The learning achieved through this report also highlights some of the key themes that can be further developed;

- Increased social connections are highlighted as an important part of engaging in activity after cancer with many participants staying in touch with each other following the event.

- The success of a participant to increase their level of activity is based on their own self-motivation to use information provided. The provision of information alone is not always enough support for an individual; better engagement can be seen through participants who have had further engagement through a group activity e.g. attending a Wellbeing Day.
- Establishing excellent working relationships with BAME community groups (and encouraging them to be the driving force) was key to successfully engaging individuals in this demographic with cancer support information and health interventions.
- Older adults at the end of the working age group (aged 55-65) find returning to work a barrier to engaging in activity. Our data has shown that only 28% of surveyed older adults in employment, living with and beyond cancer, reached the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate intensive activity per week. This highlights that more needs to be done to support those still in work, into activity.
- Cancer awareness training for activity professionals was found to be beneficial in supporting them to support participants who are living with and beyond cancer. However, further training was identified as important to activity professionals to support them to adapt their sessions and offer participants more specific information.

Over 345 people aged 55+, living with and beyond cancer, have accessed support* through the Macmillan Prevention and Re-enablement project between April 2015 – January 2019

*People who have been followed up by an action e.g. sent an information pack, attended a Wellbeing Day, been referred into another service.

Findings

Wellbeing Days (2018)



89% of respondents have since engaged in, or plan to engage in activity as a result of attending a Wellbeing Day in 2018.



63% of respondents have since engaged in new physical activity since attending a Wellbeing Day in 2018.



84% of respondents felt they have, or may have, experienced benefits to their mental health from attending a Wellbeing Day in 2018.

Of those who completed the survey, **40%** stated they have seen benefits in managing their stress, anxiety, low mood and depression since engaging in activity. A further **40%** have seen improvements in their sleep and appetite.

Activity Providers Cancer Awareness training (2018)



of activity professionals felt what they could better support people affected by cancer after attending the training.



of activity professionals felt they achieved what they had hoped to get out of the training.

- Cancer awareness training for activity providers was found to be beneficial in helping them to support participants who are living with and beyond cancer.
- Further training was identified as important to activity professionals to support them to adapt their sessions and offer participants more specific information, e.g. CanRehab.

Macmillan Taster Token scheme



Access to free activity taster sessions (like those available through the Taster Token scheme), although surveyed as an important factor to getting active, is not enough to encourage people into activity. Feedback has shown that other contributing factors such as poor health, times, locations, and diversity of activity on offer can remain a barrier. Data suggests that participants are getting active from the overall support offered by the Macmillan Prevention and Re-enablement project – regardless of the Taster Tokens.

BAME Cancer Wellbeing Workshops



With the understanding that the project needed to reach a more diverse audience, in late 2018, the project planned a series of Cancer Wellbeing Workshops that collaborated with BAME community groups. The events needed to be inclusive; culturally appropriate, and valuable for participants.

- 72 people attended in total.
- Establishing excellent working relationships with community groups and organisations was key to delivery of the workshops.
- Offering organisations a clear objective, that was backed by evidence, was important when establishing relationships so there was meaning and didn't result in being a tokenistic exercise
- Tailoring each workshop to each audience was important to ensure content was relevant

Returning to work after cancer: barriers for working age older adults



The research focused on gathering data from the lower age range of the target audience (aged 55-69) who returned to employment after cancer. Our data showed that:

- People aged 55-65 who are still working find returning to work a barrier to engaging in activity.

- Time of day is an important factor – many activities aimed for the over 50's take place in the daytime when people are at work.
- People may not be aware of what is going on locally, due to their working commitments.

Final thoughts



The strongest lesson for the Macmillan Prevention and Re-enablement project was the value of people coming together to exercise. The data demonstrated that participants were far more likely to increase their activity levels and stay active after a wellbeing day than the sole provision of information and/or Taster Tokens. Shared, group experience of activity for people aged 55+ living with or beyond cancer was a powerful tool to motivate people to change their behaviour.

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