

Total Wellbeing Luton: the benefits of an integrated health and wellbeing service



Summary

In Luton multiple wellbeing services are integrated through a shared front door providing access to things like talking therapies, smoking cessation programmes, swimming and more. For people with multiple conditions there is a specialist team run by exercise trainers.

Main points

- There used to be two separate healthy lifestyle services as well as a provider for talking therapies
- These have been brought together by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and council public health team into one service delivered in partnership by Turning Point and Active Luton ,
- It provides a single point of access to a wide range of services
- A specialist long-term conditions team has been established within the service
- The organisation has a five-year contract from April 2018 with the option of another two years

"MY PERSONAL TRAINER ALWAYS MADE SURE I WAS COMFORTABLE AND NOT DOING SOMETHING OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE. THIS PROGRAMME HAS BEEN AN EXCELLENT EXPERIENCE"

– SHEILA, 84, PERSON WITH MULTIPLE CONDITIONS



Context

Luton is in the county of Bedfordshire and is primarily urban. It has a population of just over 200,000 with a significant Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community, particularly those of Asian descent.

Life expectancy is lower than the national average and the population has low rates of physical activity. It is the 59th most deprived local authority area out of 326. Around 37,000 people have a long-term condition – nearly a fifth of the local population.

“HAVING ONE POINT OF REFERRAL FOR ALL THESE DIFFERENT SERVICES IS ACTUALLY EASIER FOR BOTH PATIENTS AND HEALTH PROFESSIONALS THAN IT WAS PREVIOUSLY”

– SARAH SIMMONDS, TOTAL WELLBEING LUTON LONG-TERM CONDITIONS MANAGER

What was done?

Luton has had a range of different health and wellbeing services for people with multiple conditions for some time. There were specialist rehab services for people with cancer and heart disease which were run by Active Luton while Live Well Luton offered a range of lifestyle and weight management support. Meanwhile, East London Foundation Trust ran the local talking therapies service.

But three years ago the council and CCG decided they wanted to develop something more integrated. It led to the creation of Total Wellbeing Luton.

Active Luton is overseen by a board of trustees that include representatives from the council, CCG and voluntary sector. It partnered with social enterprise Turning Point to create the new umbrella organisation, Total Wellbeing Luton, in April 2018.

Total Wellbeing Luton acts as the front door to all the different services provided plus others like the local stop smoking service. The aim of the service is to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of the community. Partners include the British Lung Foundation, Macmillan Cancer Services, the MS Society and the Stroke Association.

Within Total Wellbeing Luton, there is a specialist team for patients with long-term conditions. The five members are all exercise rehab specialists and are level 4 qualified in specialised exercise rehab for different conditions.

The team organises support for the individuals they work with from the menu of different services that are available, tailoring programmes that meet their client's needs. That can include everything from generic services including weight loss programmes, swimming lessons and talking therapies as well as dedicated programmes, involving rehab, strength and balance exercises. There are also dedicated classes for people with long-term conditions, including Tai Chi, Pilates, dance and gardening.

To be referred into the long-term conditions team an individual has to have one of the following – cancer, stroke, mental health issues, cardiovascular disease, neurological problems and respiratory conditions. The overwhelming majority have these combined with other conditions.

The team provides intensive support for 12 weeks and this is then followed by on-going support afterwards. The classes and activities are heavily subsidised, although small contributions - £2 to £3 – are asked for.

What has been achieved?

The specialist long-term conditions team sees more than 500 people a year across the different venues, including in community and leisure centres. The impact on those individuals has been huge.

One of those that has been helped is Sheila. She is 84 and was very inactive before getting help from Total Wellbeing. She has Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder and was struggling with mobility and depression. She took part in a specialist exercise programme for people with respiratory problems. It has transformed her life. She feels good about herself and has now ditched her walking stick and is even able to climb the stairs.

She said: "I really enjoyed my sessions in the gym because all the exercises I did were always adjusted to suit me and my personal trainer always made sure I was comfortable and not doing something out of my comfort zone. This programme has been an excellent experience and I highly recommend it to anyone who requires support for their health."

Luton Council public health manager Suliman Rafiq said the service is proving to be hugely beneficial for residents and is continuing to develop all the time. "It has supported hundreds of local residents. The service provides a holistic approach to a healthy lifestyle and in particular is dynamic in the emotional wellbeing services available to support residents with long-term conditions."

The data from the first year showed:

91% increase in physical activity

75% reduction in GP and A&E visits

93% improvement in emotional wellbeing

84% improvement in self-efficacy

90% now achieving their 5 a day

"THE SERVICE PROVIDES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND IN PARTICULAR IS DYNAMIC IN THE EMOTIONAL WELLBEING SERVICES TO SUPPORT RESIDENTS WITH LONG-TERM CONDITIONS"

— SULIMAN RAFIQ, LUTON COUNCIL PUBLIC HEALTH MANAGER





What lessons have been learned?

When Total Wellbeing Luton was first established, there was slow uptake in referrals at first.

Health specialist manager for long-term conditions Sarah Simmonds said: "Hospital staff and GPs are busy. They were used to referring into the individual services and took some time to adapt to the new way of working.

"Looking back we could perhaps have done some more work promoting the new service in ways such as more advertising, planning earlier and more community outreach to raise awareness.

"But over time they got used to it and we are now seeing the benefits. You have to have patience – after all having one point of referral for all these different services is actually easier for both people with long-term conditions and health professionals than it was previously."

What is happening now?

The service is now two years in to a five-year contract with the option of carrying on for another two years.

Ms Simmonds said: "We want to keep improving. Engaging people from BAME backgrounds is a particular focus at the moment. We have not had brilliant uptake yet.

"We are working hard to address this. Luton is very diverse. We have been to community events and festivals and given talks at mosques. We want to help all our communities so it is an important thing to do."

As well as this, the team is also constantly assessing the sort of conditions it supports. Recently it has started accepting neurological conditions, such as dementia and Parkinson's. "It is still relatively early days. We want to build on the success we have had so far," added Ms Simmonds.

Contact details

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