

Target: Wellbeing Evaluation Update Report 2011

Reporting period April 2009 – August 2010

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Executive Summary



Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank staff at Groundwork UK for their support and advice, particularly Maggie Moody, Nancy Brown, Rhiannon Davies and Rob Squires. We also thank the members of the Target: Wellbeing Governance Group for their support, advice and direction on this work. Thanks also to all Programme Managers and Project Managers for their support of the evaluation.

Thanks are extended to all those who have assisted with the production of this report from the North West Public Health Observatory, in particular, Steve Timmis for his development and maintenance of the Target: Wellbeing registration database, Neil Potter for his work on the reach analysis and Penny Phillips-Howard and Caroline Hilliard for their proofreading and comments. We would also like to thank Lee Tisdall from the Centre for Public Health for his help on design.

1. Executive summary

Target: Wellbeing (TWB) aims to help people across the North West live healthier and happier lives. TWB is delivered through a portfolio of community based programmes and projects, and has been funded by the National Lottery for the period October 2007 to March 2012 through the Big Lottery Fund, with funding linked to health outcomes.

This evaluation update of the TWB portfolio provides reach analysis and evidence of behaviour change from the ten local programmes between January 2009 and August 2010, and provides an update to last year's *Target: Wellbeing Evaluation – Annual Report February 2010*ⁱ.

The analysis relates to the area based community projects within the TWB portfolio and covers the TWB participants and their evidence of behaviour change. Reach analysis is produced via the registration database with behaviour change evidence from analysis of welcome and exit questionnairesⁱⁱ. Forty-four projects have contributed responses to this evaluation, about half of the total number, and sixty-six have used the participant database, contributing to the reach analysis.

Key Messages

- Target: Wellbeing results show positive impact across the portfolio and all the primary themes.
- Target Wellbeing is having a positive impact on mental wellbeing levels of participants, with significant improvements across all projects in the evaluation on average. The highest improvements are for mental wellbeing projects where attendees start with lower mental wellbeing levels but exit with similar levels to the average.
- The majority of registered participants live in the more deprived areas, but most participants registered on the database are not coming from the designated TWB target areas.
- A significantly higher proportion of respondents from physical activity projects have a positive attitude to physical activity compared with respondents from across the portfolio when entering TWB, which suggests that those projects are not attracting those who need to be more physically active.
- High scores at the welcome stage mean that not many significant improvements have been seen across a number of physical activity and healthy eating projects.
- It is suggested that projects focus on attracting those most in need of the services they offer, especially the physical activity and healthy eating projects. Physical activity and healthy eating projects appear to be attended by those already interested in being physically active and/or enjoying a healthy balanced diet.

ⁱ NWPFO (2010). Target: Wellbeing Evaluation – Annual Report February 2010 Available at:

www.targetwellbeing.org.uk/resources/target_wellbeing_evaluation_annual_report_february_2010

ⁱⁱ Not all projects use the database and/or questionnaires that have been developed by NWPFO, so for the purpose of this report figures only refer to responses from projects using the NWPFO's evaluation tools and registration database.

1.1 Target: Wellbeing participants

- Two-thirds of projects use the participant database to keep track of who is attending their sessions (66). Over 75% of participants registered on the database live in the two most deprived 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation quintilesⁱⁱⁱ, with over half living in the most deprived areas.
- However, less than half of registered participants live in the targeted lower super output areas (LSOAs)^{iv}. This varies from 67% to 28% by programme, though it is important to note that not all participants are registered on the database.
- Over 40% of registered participants self-reported experiencing some form of nervous trouble or depression in the last 12 months, greater than the regional average.
- Target: Wellbeing participants reported higher levels of asthma, diabetes and back problems, in the last 12 months than people living in the most deprived areas in the North West. Due to the similar nature of the two groups, this possibly indicates that TWB is successfully targeting people with health needs.
- More females than males are registered in TWB (62% vs. 38%), with similar ratios seen amongst those completing welcome and exit questionnaires.

ⁱⁱⁱ The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation covers the whole of England. It measures 7 aspects of deprivation for LSOAs which are combined to create an overall deprivation score for each LSOA. This allows each LSOA to be ranked in comparison with one another according to their level of deprivation and allocated to a deprivation quintile for England, running from the most deprived to the least deprived.

^{iv} LSOAs are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics. The SOA layers are of consistent size across the country and will not be subjected to regular boundary change. The 34,378 Lower Layer SOAs in England (32,482) and Wales (1,896) were built from groups of Output Areas (typically 4 to 6) and constrained by the boundaries used for 2001 Census outputs. They have a minimum population of 1,000.

1.2 Behaviour change

Evidence of behaviour change in this annual report, across the portfolio and the three primary themes under investigation (mental wellbeing, physical activity and healthy eating), is based on pre- and post-intervention scores. This analysis was conducted on 1468 welcome questionnaires and 699 exit questionnaires received by the NWPHO between April 2009 and August 2010. Forty-four projects contributed responses to the evaluation, about half of the total number.

1.2.1 Improved mental wellbeing

- All TWB respondents report significantly higher levels of wellbeing following TWB intervention, with an average increase of 2.9 points from 22.4 to 25.3 on the Short Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. (This scale varies from 7 to 35 points. For information, the methodologically different North West Mental Wellbeing score gave a regional average score of 27.7)
- Projects focussing on mental health also revealed a significant improvement with an increase on aggregate of 4.8 points to an exit score of 25.2, bringing their subjective assessments of wellbeing more in line with the portfolio post-intervention scores.
- Significant improvements in life satisfaction were seen across the portfolio and mental wellbeing projects. With mental wellbeing projects increasing their mean score by 1.7 points, from 5.0 at the welcome stage to 6.7 at the exit stage. On aggregate the portfolio increased their life satisfaction by 1.1 points from 5.9 to 7.0 on a self-reported scale between 0 and 10.

Improved self management

- The majority of TWB participants (89%) reported that TWB had helped them develop skills that would help them have more control over their life.
- Beneficiaries of mental health projects demonstrated a significant 3 point increase in measured self efficacy on average.

Increased job control

- A fifth of all respondents felt that TWB had helped them find new employment, with 17% of respondents reporting that the project had helped them to do their current job.

Increased sense of community belonging

- Over half of TWB participants self-report that TWB had helped them meet new people and 40% self-report that the project had helped them feel part of their community.
- Community belonging measures show significant improvement across the portfolio in people regularly meeting with friends and relatives and regularly attending activities in the local area.
- Fewer TWB questionnaire respondents report feeling 'very/fairly strongly' that they are part of their immediate neighbourhood compared to those who report feeling 'not very/not all strongly' at welcome questionnaire stage. This outcome is reversed after engagement with a TWB project. The percentage of those that feel 'very/fairly strongly' that they are part of their immediate neighbourhood improves significantly to 56% after engagement with the project.

Increased self esteem

- Mental wellbeing projects show demonstrable improvements in self esteem scores pre- and post-intervention, with a points difference of 3.6 between the two scores.

1.2.2 Improved physical activity

Increased cycling and walking

- Average weekly minutes of walking decreased from 285 at welcome stage to 278 at exit stage, a non-significant decrease of 7 minutes across the physical activity projects. The whole portfolio shows a similar result, with results from all respondents also showing no significant change in average weekly walking.
- These results are not statistically significant and may not reflect those participants who maintain their walking levels but take up other activities i.e. cycling.

Increased use of open space for physical activity

- 78% of physical activity project respondents self-reported that they now make more use of the outdoors whilst doing physical activity.

More active in daily lifestyles

- Physical activity projects appear to engage participants who are already motivated to be physically active as over 80% report achieving high/moderate levels of physical activity at the welcome stage. There is an insignificant increase at the exit stage, with 89% reporting high/moderate levels of physical activity post intervention. It may be difficult to attract people to do physical activities who are not motivated to do exercise, but there may be some ways to do this, (eg GP referrals for physical activity). (However, as quoted above, participants are more likely to have some types of poor health). Similar results are seen across all respondents with only a 5% increase to 80% of respondents achieving high/moderate levels at the exit stage.
- Over 70% of participants on physical activity projects agree that they are more active in their daily lifestyle as a direct result of their participation with TWB.
- A significantly higher proportion of respondents from physical activity projects have a positive attitude to physical activity compared with all respondents at the welcome stage.
- Around a third of participants on physical activity projects have taken up other physical activity as a direct result of involvement in the project, demonstrating a displaced benefit.
- 93% of physical activity project participants self-reported that they would continue to be more physically active in their daily life as a result of their engagement with TWB, demonstrating a perceived sustained benefit.
- Across all responses, over half of respondents felt that the TWB project had helped them to look after themselves physically.

1.2.3 Improved healthy eating

Increased availability of healthy food

- Across the whole evaluation and healthy eating projects, respondents have increased their average fruit and vegetable consumption. With healthy eating projects significantly increasing the average from 4.5 portions a day to 5.4 portions.
- Following TWB engagement, the proportion of healthy eating project respondents reporting they eat five or more portions a day increased by over 20%. Overall results show a significant increase in the percentage of respondents eating five or more fruit and vegetables a day.

Improved levels of food preparation and cooking skills

- Over three quarters of respondents enjoyed putting effort and care into the food they ate at the welcome stage. As with some physical activity measures good welcome scores indicate that projects are engaging individuals who already demonstrate confidence around healthy eating. These figures do increase at the exit stage but not significantly.

Increased knowledge about healthy eating

- Healthy eating project participants have improved their confidence across a range of knowledge statements including choosing healthy foods, shopping on a budget and following a simple recipe. Although the number of responses means that results are only indicative at this stage, it is encouraging that TWB healthy eating participants seem to be improving their knowledge and confidence around healthier food.
- More than 75% of healthy eating project respondents reported that they enjoyed eating a healthy balanced diet at the welcome stage. This highlights again that healthy eating projects could target those most in need of improving their diet more, rather than those already enjoying a healthy diet.

Increased number of people involved in food growing

- Fewer participants on healthy eating projects reported being 'confident' about food growing after participating in a TWB food growing project, although this is not statistically significant. Not all healthy eating projects have a food growing element, so the results may be masked by other non-food growing healthy eating projects, (only 11 have a food growing element).

1.3 Summary conclusions

- Across all the respondents and within each primary theme Target: Wellbeing is having a positive impact on those that participate with the projects.
- Engagement with TWB is having a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of participants with mental wellbeing significantly improving across the whole evaluation. Particularly large improvements are reported by mental wellbeing projects, which bring their mental wellbeing scores in line with the total respondents average at the exit stage.
- The majority of registered participants appear to live in the more deprived areas, but most registered participants are not coming from the designated TWB target areas.
- A significantly higher proportion of respondents from physical activity projects have a positive attitude to physical activity at the welcome stage compared with respondents from across the portfolio, which suggests that those projects are not attracting those who need to be more physically active.
- High scores at the welcome stage mean that not many significant improvements have been seen across a number of physical activity and healthy eating projects.
- From the analysis carried out a learning point to arise is the possible need for projects to focus on attracting those most in need of the projects' services, especially the physical activity and healthy eating projects. By the nature of the work they do, it might be easier for mental wellbeing projects to attract those most in need of improving their mental wellbeing as, for example, a counselling service is unlikely to be attended by those with high levels of mental wellbeing. However, the physical activity and healthy eating projects appear to be attended by those already interested in being physically active and/or enjoy a healthy balanced diet.

1.4 Recommendations

- Projects across the portfolio may want to consider how to increase the proportion of participants from their programme's target areas.
- Physical activity projects could consider how to target those who have low physical activity levels, as the majority of attendees at the moment have at least moderate levels of physical activity when first attending project sessions. (Perhaps through linking with referrals for low physical activity from general practitioners).
- Targeting those with low cooking skills and/or poor diets may also be an area that healthy eating projects might want to investigate.

Target: Wellbeing is a programme of over 90 projects that increase exercise, encourage healthier eating and promote mental wellbeing. Funded by £8.9m from the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund, it's managed by Groundwork for the benefit of targeted disadvantaged communities across the Northwest.

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