



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING TEAM

EVALUATION

APRIL 2009 to SEPTEMBER 2009

In November 2008 at the request of the Control Team an urgent visit was made to a young woman. Susan (her name has been changed) a single parent with two children under the age of ten had applied for Discretionary Housing Payment and further information was required before any decision could be taken.

At the visit it was discovered that Susan was suffering from cancer. She was unable to cope with her paperwork as she had just started a first course of radiotherapy and was feeling extremely ill. Added to this her children were not allowed to have contact with her for the first seven days after her treatment – they were staying with her parents so she was alone in the house.

Susan was also trying to claim other state benefits because she was so ill. She had been working part time prior to her illness and claiming Tax Credits. These credits stopped because she was no longer in employment but the Inland Revenue who deal with these benefits had failed to advise the Department of Work and Pensions (who deal with state benefits) that the tax payments had stopped. It was also discovered that Child Benefit was also not being paid (an oversight on their part).

The result of all this was that due to her illness Susan was unable to cope with these problems and she perceived a mountain of debt.

The visiting officer, Sheila Tait assured Susan she would give her as much help as possible to resolve her problems. In the event this only took a few phone calls using knowledge and contacts in the benefits system. It was discovered that her debts amounted to approximately £1,200.00. Citizens Advice Bureau was then brought in to help and a meeting was held with Susan at her home. Sheila Tait also attended this meeting at Susan's request.

As a result of this case it was evident that there was no local service available to vulnerable and hard to reach people in our community. These people who require welfare advice and support to cope with the many agencies, often remote and only accessible through Call Centres, but who have no knowledge of how to navigate their way through very complex systems.

The seed was planted

Lynn Brisley in her new role of Benefits Welfare Officer in December 2008 contacted JobCentre Plus to ascertain what help they would be providing as a result of the shocking closure of the long standing and much loved Woolworths stores – both Dover and Deal were hit, making 32 loyal employees redundant almost overnight.

The result was a joint presentation at both stores during the Christmas holiday break by Lynn and JobCentre staff ensuring the best possible support was being provided by the Council and its partners for members of our community.

At the same time the Head of Business and Community Transformation, David Willis, together with his Divisional Service Managers were concerned about the effect of the economic downturn, the credit crunch, rising prices, fuel poverty and increased redundancies in our community and more importantly what could the Council do to help?

Immediate action was called for and the Health and Well-being Team was born in February 2009.

The team consists of the following seven people who were already Council employees.

- **Brinley Hill – Community Development Manager**
Brin has worked for Dover District Council since 2000, first within the Regeneration Team and then later heading up the Community Development Team. Brin is a champion for partnership working for the communities we serve. He acts as an internal and external challenge to ensure what we do meets the needs and aspirations of our communities.
- **Sheila Tait – Community Development Team Leader**
Sheila brings experience of working within a welfare and benefits environment and was recently supervisor of DDC Inspection and Review Team.
- **Lynn Brisley – Health and Well-being Officer**
Lynn delivers the redundancy support service to employers and employees in their work place, attends road shows and surgeries to promote the team's holistic approach to services via conducting health and well-being assessments. Lynn facilitates home visits if necessary.
- **Bernie Wetherall – Health and Well-being Officer**
Bernie is an experienced visiting officer who works mainly in the community to help our residents apply for Welfare, Housing and Council Tax Benefits. He is also able to assist with applications for Discretionary Housing Payments and makes referrals to other agencies.
- **Cindy Morley – Health and Well-being Officer**
Cindy assists customers with a holistic approach to their needs through home visits, interviews in any Council Office, over the telephone and via email. Cindy also attends road shows, surgeries and spends one day a week working in the CAB Office in Dover. Cindy is a specialist in assessing claims for Housing and Council Tax benefit.
- **Miranda Pitt – Health and Well-being Officer**
Miranda co-ordinates our joint working with the Pension Service which ensures we provide our over-60 residents with a dedicated help and advice service. She also attends road shows and events as well as being the main contact point for the team in the office.
- **Carol Reeves – Community Development Officer**
Carol is formulating the Dover District Financial Inclusion Strategy in partnership with the Dover District Financial Inclusion Task Force that is focussing on finding lasting solutions to the problems associated with debt and financial capability as well as providing support for local businesses. Carol is the road show co-ordinator.

The aim of the Health and Well-Being Team is to help all members of the community achieve economic and social health and well-being by providing a wide range of information and advice. Social and physical regeneration will create opportunities to build a world-class community making our residents proud of their achievements. The Team have adopted a holistic approach to those seeking advice and support and have nurtured the rapport built up with our partners.

Partners include:

- Business Link
- CASE Kent
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Coalfields Regeneration Trust
- Community Information and Liaison Assistants
- Dover District Volunteer Bureau
- East Kent Health Walks
- Kent County Council
- Next Step Redundancy Service
- Pension Service
- Primary Care Trust
- Children Centres and many others

Achievements so far

Four successful Road Shows were held during March in Dover, Deal, Aylesham and Sandwich. These events were timed to coincide with the issue of the 2009/10 Council Tax bills. The Road Shows were a great success and very well received by the public. In September a multi agency Road Show was held in the St Radigunds area of Dover. The event was planned round the identified needs of St Radigunds and was very successful with many residents attending. Our future plans are to hold this type of event again and are working with the Tower Hamlets Children's Centre and Priory Fields School to ensure it is tailored to their specific needs. We have attended 17 Road Shows and events organised by our partners and this has proved to be a very successful method of getting our message out to the community and enhancing partnership working.

The team work in partnership with the Pensions Agency, which is an agency within the Department of Work and Pensions. From April 2008 to March 2009 £785,304.00 in extra benefits was generated for our community through working in partnership with the Pension Service. During the period May to September 2009 we carried out a benefit take-up campaign with data supplied by them and as a result £5,296.00 has been awarded in extra Council Tax benefit and £939.45 in Housing Benefit. We discovered an incorrect date of birth and the benefit claim was re-assessed awarding £3,380.96 backdated Housing Benefit and £1,053.35 backdated Council Tax benefit to a very happy customer. These amounts are in addition to the under noted figures.

Our statistics below show the impact that the team has made on our community. Data capture initially proved difficult but we now have a system in place which, not only gives us at a glance, up to date figures on how we are performing but will feed into the Mosaic system (a data analysis system) recently purchased by the Council.

Mosaic will enable the Council to target its services more effectively and efficiently, which will be an invaluable tool for all departments to use. We are also now using SNAP (an evaluation programme) to analyse our feedback comments both from our customers and partners. By using both these programmes the team will be able to plan better for the future as the information provided, will tell us what area to target, either through a road show or a drop-in day at a local school or community hall and ensure the specific problems of that area are addressed.

As demonstrated from the figures below, we have been able to generate £398,185.20 of extra annual income for our community as a result of the services we offer.

366 Referrals were made to the Health and Well-being Team during the period April to September 2009. These were generated as follows:

Health and Well-being Helpline	66
Health and Well-being Email	8
Benefits Team	75
Council Tax	6
Rents	8
DHP (Systems Improvement Team)	5
Events Road shows	13
Partners	38
Customer Services	20
Rising 60/65 List	127
Total	<u>366</u>

366 contacts made to the team resulted in 461 referrals being made.

Debt	32
Discretionary Housing Payment	34
Volunteering	3
Travel	7
Partner deceased	7
Help with Form completion	141
Benefit Updates	69
Access to services	51
Housing	13
Benefit	98
Redundancy	6
Total	<u>461</u>

Annualised increase in benefits through work carried out by Health and Well-being Team are:

April	£33,366.06
May	£41,368.71
June	£20,384.17
July	£26,413.80
August	£39,057.56
September	£20,442.90
April to September referrals to the Pension Service	£217,152.00
Total	<u>£398,185.20</u>

Case Study 1

Mr Smith (name has been changed) was referred to us by Customer Services Dept in June – he was experiencing medical difficulties, found it hard to concentrate for long periods of time and his debt was creating a daily struggle to survive. During the subsequent home visit Mr Smith's plight was highlighted even further as his house was in such disrepair that the birds were pecking at his rotten wooden window frames to provide material for their nests. The internal of the property was also in a poor state of repair and Mr Smith's depression was being made worse by the feeling of despair, helplessness and also his worry that he was letting his neighbours down by allowing his house to deteriorate.

I was able to initiate the following help:

- Referral to Private Sector Loan Scheme Co-ordinator who arranged for new windows/doors, new kitchen, bathroom, cavity wall insulation and electrical repairs to be carried out (this scheme is ideal for Mr Smith as the loan does not require any payment until either the property is sold or the owner passes away – eventually Mr Smith wishes to sell the property and purchase a house boat). He will now be able to sell the house at a future date at the market value rather than struggle to sell/reduce price dramatically due to its condition, repay his mortgage and the loan and fulfil his dreams with the equity remaining.
- Collected the correct forms from his home to alleviate the pressure he was feeling while under the threat of having his Council Tax Benefit cancelled due to inability to provide the correct paperwork.
- Referral to Adult Social Services to access help for his condition.
- Obtained information from Canterbury City Council for Mr Smith to give to his friend (this may seem unusual but Mr Smith has a friend experiencing a similar situation as himself and was so impressed with our service that he wanted to pass on details to his friend).

As a result of the help provided, Mr Smith said, "First-class professional service. Lovely staff – 10 out of 10 – I can't quite believe the help that has been provided. I keep having to pinch myself!"

Case Study 2

Lynn Brisley initially met Mrs Jones (name has been changed) at a Health and Well-being Road Show in March 2009. She is diabetic and was due to have a heart by-pass the following month – she was concerned about the cost of paying the travel costs to St Thomas' Hospital in London. She issued her with details regarding the NHS low-income scheme and arranged for the relevant forms to be sent to her.

During the follow up telephone call, it was established that Mrs Jones was extremely unwell and society was failing to support her in the way they should – an appointment to visit her home was promptly arranged. As a result of this visit:

- Mrs Jones was provided with a battery for her diabetic machine free of charge and a telephone number for lifelong maintenance of her machine (after requesting this from St Thomas' in London, Deal Hospital and the Cardiology Rehabilitation Team – all of whom failed to help despite hospitalisation due to her diabetes).
- An appointment was made with an optician for her to have her eyes re-assessed (the diabetes made her eyes deteriorate – she did not make an appointment as she could not afford new glasses. However, as she is in receipt of pension credit, she is entitled to them free of charge but she was unaware of this).
- Lynn completed the claim form for re-imburement of travel fees to the London hospital (the original reason we became involved, but the deterioration in Mrs Jones' eyes meant that she was unable to complete the form herself). Also advised her how to gain immediate reimbursement from hospitals in the future by keeping her Pension Credit letter with her.
- Mrs Jones was experiencing debt to the extent of not being able to provide food for herself (a friend had been buying her groceries). Lynn went through the whole of her

finances – normally referred to CAB, but due to staff issues they were unable to see her promptly.

- Lynn discovered that Mrs Jones' gas and electricity readings had been incorrect and resulted in a refund of £400.
- A postal scam was identified – Mrs Jones had been forwarding cheques weekly, as she was afraid of the threats they contained – this was reported and Mrs Jones has now ceased sending funds.
- Lynn arranged for her mortgage to be extended, thus reducing her outgoings dramatically.
- Arranged for water meter to be fitted reducing her bill.
- Repayment programmes were agreed with all of her debtors.
- Referral to Invicta Telecare for a dedicated Floating Support Officer to help Mrs Jones on a regular basis in the future.
- The final result of this visit was to give Mrs Jones peace of mind – she is now able to sleep at night. Her disposable income has also changed from NIL to £420.34 per month. She said, "I just do not know what I would have done without you!"

We must consider in conclusion if Mrs Jones had not been able to access our team what the end result might have been?

Feedback from our residents that we have helped

- Miss A – 'All good – thank you.'
- Miss P – 'Pleased with the outcome.'
- Mr H – 'Very impressed – excellent service.'
- Mrs L – 'Very good and efficient.'
- Mrs M – '...so co-operative and quick to reply.'
- Mrs W – 'Very good, very helpful, nice approachable people and it has really helped us ... it has made a difference and provided financial help. It is nice to be constantly introduced to organisations we didn't know
- Mr S – 'Brilliant!' He would like to see us visit Aylesham on a more regular basis.
- Miss T from Dover – 'Very helpful – thank you.'
- Mrs H – 'All good – thank you.'
- Mrs C – 'Helpful, friendly and efficient.' Would like to see more road shows and said that it is a shame there are not Health and Well being Teams up North – her father could have benefited greatly from our service a few months ago.
- Mr K's daughter – 'Great – thank you.'
- Mr B – 'Provide an excellent service'
- Mr R – 'you pulled out all of the stops, were sympathetic, excellent. You couldn't have done any more! – Thank you. '
- Mr H – 'You have given me ideas and the enthusiasm to pursue them.' (Aims to start a business selling guns/cartridges for clay pigeon shooting.)
- Mr R – 'Brilliant.'
- Mrs S – 'You have made the world of difference – wonderful service.'
- Mrs B – 'Excellent service – I was desperately worried and it has given me peace of mind. Life changing for me.'

Feedback from our partners

This comment from one of our customer's relates to the joint working with the pension service.

I've just had a lady on the complaints line with a compliment! Apparently she was recently 60 and was just thinking about how to go about claiming her pension when someone from here phoned her to ask if she needed any help. She was very impressed that we were being pro-active and also that we were working so closely with the pensions service, she is an ex social worker and thought this type of joined up working would never be possible.

The lady's asked for her thanks to be passed on to the team responsible.

This comment was received from Jane Meehan at Case Kent following a road show held on 25 June 2009:

Michael and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you /your organisation for taking part in today's Over 50s Health & Wellbeing Road show at St Mary's Parish Centre today.

We received some excellent feedback, both written and verbal, from members who attended and the organising committee.

Received from Donna Crozier, the Manager at In Touch Home Improvements as a result of receiving the following comment from a recipient of our partnership working:

First class, professional service. Lovely staff, 10 out of 10 – I can't quite believe the help which is being provided!

Many thanks for passing on this information; it certainly does go to prove that partnership working is the way to go and that we all are working for the greater good of many people.

Lets hope we can continue to maintain this advantage.

This comment was received from Jane Meehan at Case Kent following a road show held on 23 April 2009

Just a quick note, on behalf of Michael and myself, to thank you so much for being part of our very first Health and Wellbeing Road show at Shepherdswell on Wednesday – we have had some tremendous feedback, both written and verbal and hope that you found the event as worthwhile as our 48 attendees did! We hope too that you will want to repeat the exercise!

This comment was received from Louise Rogers, CASE Kent, after attending the network meeting for the VCS

Just a quick note to say thanks you so much for coming along and speaking so well at yesterday's Dover District Voluntary and Community Sector Network meeting. I've just been looking through the evaluation forms and people really seem to have found all the speakers and table discussions really useful. Hopefully you found it interesting too. I really appreciate you taking the time to come along and speak, thank you

Presentation at Tower Hamlets Children's Centre Working Group Meeting on 8 September at Priory Fields School

We met this morning at the Tower Hamlets CC working group @ Priory Fields. Following your presentation, I feel that your service would be beneficial to our team who have regular contact with families at groups and home visits. We have Touchbase meetings which most of the Children's Centre Team attend, and were wondering whether you were available to come and do another 10-15 minute presentation? The next Touchbase is Monday 12th October at Triangles CC with an 11am slot available if this is convenient?

I have passed details of the event at Triangles on to some of our team members & they will hopefully pop in.

Regards,
Mandy

Mandy Aspinall
Team Leader - Operations, Dover
Dover, Deal & Sandwich Children's Centres

This comment was received from Gale Glass, In Touch Home Improvements after dealing with many cases referred in both directions (September 2009)

I have found the service to be extremely fast and efficient. On making referrals all staff have been most helpful. It has been a great benefit to caseworkers at intouch to have a contact that is reliable, and covers such a wide range of service.

It is also useful for us to know the outcomes of the referral and again when possible all staff have carried out.

Many thanks for all your help.

Regards

Gale Glass
Caseworker
intouch
Dover Home Improvement Agency

This comment was received from Jane Meehan – CILA – illustrates the excellent partnership working which has developed between us.

We have now reached over 180 older adults in the Dover District through the 4 Road shows, which is wonderful, and this wouldn't of course have been possible without you and your organisation's assistance. True partnership working in the community.

Very many thanks again to all those who took part this time and hopefully we will be able to welcome those who didn't to one of our future events.

Kind regards
Jane

Jane Meehan
Community Information and Liaison Assistant (Dover) - INVOKE Project

Comment Received from Jane Meehan of Case Kent – Our testimonial assisted them in achieving this

Competition and the future

You may be aware that, for our Over 50s Road shows, we were awarded a big cheque for £250 at the NHS AGM recently, for coming in the top 10 in Kent Link's competition for recognition of our contribution to health and social care services in East Kent – thanks to you all for helping to make this happen! We hope to put the money towards our Road shows for next year as we have also received confirmation of funding for our project for another year so its all good news at the moment – the finer detail of exactly what our remit will be is yet to be confirmed – so watch this space.

Thanks again for working with us on these worthwhile events.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Dear Sheila,

I am writing to say how useful our partnership work in the Dover CAB office had become.

Having your Health and Well-being officer Cindy based in our office on Monday has made a big difference to our clients, who can now be seen by the appropriate agency on site without further delays ensuing waiting for appointments.

It would be a good idea to extend this service to our other offices if possible.

Being able to offer the residents of Dover District this partnership working does help to address the issue of the council's image in the District, our clients can truly see that you are approachable and there to help as we are ourselves.

Yours sincerely
Jan Stewart
District Manager CAB

To contact the Health and Well-being team please call 01304 872338 or email healthandwellbeing@dover.gov.uk