

Fit as a Fiddle

Final Evaluation Report Yorkshire & Humber



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Introduction

1.1 Overview of this report

This report evaluates the fit as a fiddle project in Yorkshire & Humber and the impact the project has had for both older people and organisations. Recommendations are made to continue the work we have started to improve the health and wellbeing of older people.

The report has been written by Joanne Volpe (Regional Company Co-ordinator for Age Concern Support Services), who had day to day responsibility for the project in Yorkshire & Humber, in collaboration with Richard Siddall and Lee Thompson, the Fit as a Fiddle Project Co-ordinators in the region.

This evaluation report presents the programme aims, outcomes and key findings and is intended for consideration by commissioners and health and social care professionals.

1.2 Background to fit as a fiddle

The Big Lottery Funded Wellbeing Programme is a £165 million grant healthy programme encouraging healthy lifestyles and wellbeing. BIG's Wellbeing programme comprises three main outcomes aimed at:

- improving and developing levels of physical activity;
- mental wellbeing; and
- healthy eating habits for people and the wider community

The Wellbeing Programme is a reflection of the increasing emphasis put upon healthier lifestyles, nutrition and preventative health services by government as obesity levels rise, alongside an increased focus on tackling mental health problems, as demonstrated in the Healthy Weight Healthy Lives¹ cross governmental initiative and the New Horizons report, which sets out a vision for mental health services for 2020².

1. Healthy Weight Healthy Lives, Department of Health, see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_082378

2. New Horizons, Department of Health, January 2010, see http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/Mentalhealth/NewHorizons/DH_102050

Funding under this Programme is available for voluntary and community sector organisations, as well as statutory and private organisations through a series of national and regional Portfolios of activity.

Age Concern England was awarded £15.1 million by the Big Lottery Fund to deliver the fit as a fiddle portfolio across the nine English regions from 2007 until 2012. Age Concern and Help the Aged came together from January 2010 as Age UK to deliver this Portfolio. The main aims of fit as a fiddle coincided with the outcomes of the Big Lottery Wellbeing Fund championing healthy eating, physical activity and mental wellbeing for older people. The portfolio aimed to broaden and increase the opportunities for older people to undertake physical activities and improve their eating habits, contributing to an overall improvement in mental health.

The fit as a fiddle portfolio comprised of two national projects and 24 regional projects, delivered by over 200 organisations (99 of which are local Age UK's/Age Concerns). Each of the nine English regions received £1.2 million to deliver a range of innovative projects in their area. The portfolio builds upon Age Concern's Ageing Well Programme developed in 1993 to specifically improve older people's social and emotional wellbeing in a wider context. An independent enquiry into mental health and well being in later life revealed five main factors that impact upon older people's mental health and wellbeing: discrimination, participation in meaningful activity, relationships, physical health and poverty. By increasing the focus upon good expectations of good health in old age and encouraging older people to maintain, sustain and improve their health, fit as a fiddle aimed to address inequalities and empower older people to live fulfilling lives with the support of peers and their communities.

fit as a fiddle projects promote healthy ageing, based around the needs and ideas of local people. At a regional level, projects aimed to include black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, older people with specific health risks (e.g. diabetes) and those living in deprived urban or rural areas.

At a national level the programme is focused on training and support to become a volunteer to encourage lifestyle and health improvements via a National Cascade Training Programme. A series of leaflets, resources and materials have also been produced as part of a national Health Literacy project.

1.3 Aims and objectives

The purpose of this report is

- to demonstrate the impact the fit as a fiddle project has had in Yorkshire & Humber
- to review the process and methods used to implement the project and to assess the outcomes
- to evaluate the role of the voluntary sector in the health and wellbeing of older people
- to provoke action within the region to continue the work we have started.

It is intended to use the report to direct and influence future strategy with regard to health and well being in the area, and to identify guidelines for sustainability of both present and future activities. We are also confident that this report will provide a portfolio of action and success to support future funding bids.

The opportunity this evaluation affords us: to look back and consider what has worked, what went well and identify what we did not do well, means that both ourselves and other professionals can learn from the experience of fit as a fiddle in Yorkshire & Humber.

1.4 Methods

The report uses information gathered from the project process including

- **SNAP forms:** everyone who participated in a fit as a fiddle activity was required to complete a form which captured information on their gender, ethnicity, date of birth, post code, disability, health, long-term condition. This data has enabled us to profile participants on a number of indices.
- **Workshop registers:** each activity completed a register of attendees which informed us how many workshops took place.
- **Participant feedback:** some projects collected feedback from older people on the activities they took part in. This feedback ranged from enjoyment of the activity to the impact on their health.
- **Case studies:** these have been submitted by project co-ordinators, and demonstrate the qualitative impact fit as a fiddle has had in the region.
- **Focus groups:** the two regional co-ordinators and regional administrator ran focus groups at a random selection of projects. They ran focus groups with older people; with volunteers and with project co-ordinators.
- **Partner interviews:** the regional co-ordinators also interviewed some partner organisations, where possible, to inform the project and identify good practice.
- **Training Impact Survey:** a survey was sent to all volunteers who attended the training programme run by Age Concern Support Services as part of the fit as a fiddle project. This went out to 237 participants and 57 were returned.
- **Keele University and Ecorys evaluation:** a random sample of older people were asked to complete a questionnaire on their eating habits, the amount of exercise they do and mental wellbeing. This questionnaire was completed at the beginning of the fit as a fiddle activity, the end, and then as a follow up three months after the fit as a fiddle activity was over. The questionnaires were designed by Ecorys and then analysed by Keele University.

2. Overview of Good for Your Health (fit as a fiddle, Yorkshire & Humber)

2.1. Aims and intended outcomes

The aims and intended outcomes of the Good for Your Health project reflect those in the national bid: to work with older people to improve and develop their levels of physical activity; mental wellbeing; and healthy eating habits for individuals and the wider community.

To do this Yorkshire & Humber stated they would:

- Bring services to people in sparsely populated areas ... to reflect local needs and draw on local support.
- Roll out projects across the Yorkshire & Humber region to plug the gaps currently there.
- Roll out the Senior Health Mentoring model as the over arching theme... for Age Concerns to offer high impact activities led by Senior Health Mentors.
- Facilitate training, and all this training to be disseminated in the community, raising awareness of healthy lifestyle options, giving the community and older people the opportunity to explore, participate and adopt a healthier lifestyle.

2.2 Project context

Demography

The number of older people in Yorkshire & Humber will increase dramatically within the next two decades. In 2012 there are an estimated one million pensioners (60+ for women and 65+ for men), with this figure increasing to more than 1.14 million by 2021. In several of the larger black and minority ethnic communities such as Bradford, the older population will grow rapidly from the current low number. It is also evident that the growing numbers of older people will disproportionately be located in the north and east of the region.

(Sheffield Institute for Studies on Ageing (2002) Older People in Yorkshire and the Humber.)

The rapid growth of older people in black and minority ethnic groups, experiencing disadvantage, poor health, isolation, lack of services or poor access to existing services, is resulting in the need to develop facilities and services to support older BME communities, their families and carers. This requires new and strong partnerships between community organisations and the voluntary and statutory authorities, whilst building on models of good practice and recognising the value of work already being carried out across the region.

Marked mortality and health disadvantages have been identified in both South and West Yorkshire, with the highest rates being in the former coalfield areas that straddle South and West Yorkshire and in the deprived inner urban areas and amongst the black and minority ethnic communities. Socio-economic and environmental factors, as well as service deficiencies are implicated. A concentrated effort is required to not only improve services, but to offer opportunities for these communities to step up into healthier lifestyles.

Increased health and social care demands

People of all ages have rising health and healthcare expectations, and for many older people health problems are relatively common. A key area for reducing care costs will be investing more in preventative care. There are 15 million people with long term conditions who account for 70% of the overall health and social care spend. John Oldham, the QIPP Clinical Lead for Long Term Conditions and Urgent Care has stated that the NHS cannot sustain the management of people with long term conditions if it continues as it is at the moment. Providing opportunities to participate in exercise activities, explore and adopt a healthier eating regime and value community based activities are an effective tool to support physical and mental and social well being.

Rural communities

Bringing services to people in sparsely populated areas requires innovative approaches which, if they are to reflect local needs and draw upon local support, depend on a thorough understanding of the way particular local communities are structured and perceive themselves.

Voluntary organisations have an advantage, in that they function on the strength of local support and integration, and are more independent of the strict eligibility criteria imposed by many local authorities. They also have a degree of flexibility in their working practises which accords with the need for providers to disseminate responsibility to a variety of locations in order to respond sensitively to a range of local circumstances and changing local needs.

2.3 Project details

Who we worked with:

- Good for Your Health targeted older people who do not presently engage in healthy lifestyle initiatives. We aimed to work with **14,194** older people across the region, over the five years of the project.
- We have involved **17,492** older people involved in fit as a fiddle activities across Yorkshire & Humber :
- **10,736** involved in physical activities
- **3,250** involved in healthy eating activities
- **3,406** involved in healthy eating and physical activities (combined activities)

Where we worked

- We aimed to work with older people from isolated rural areas, BME communities, ex-mining groups and inner city areas. The map below shows where our participants live, showing that we worked in the mining areas of South and West Yorkshire,

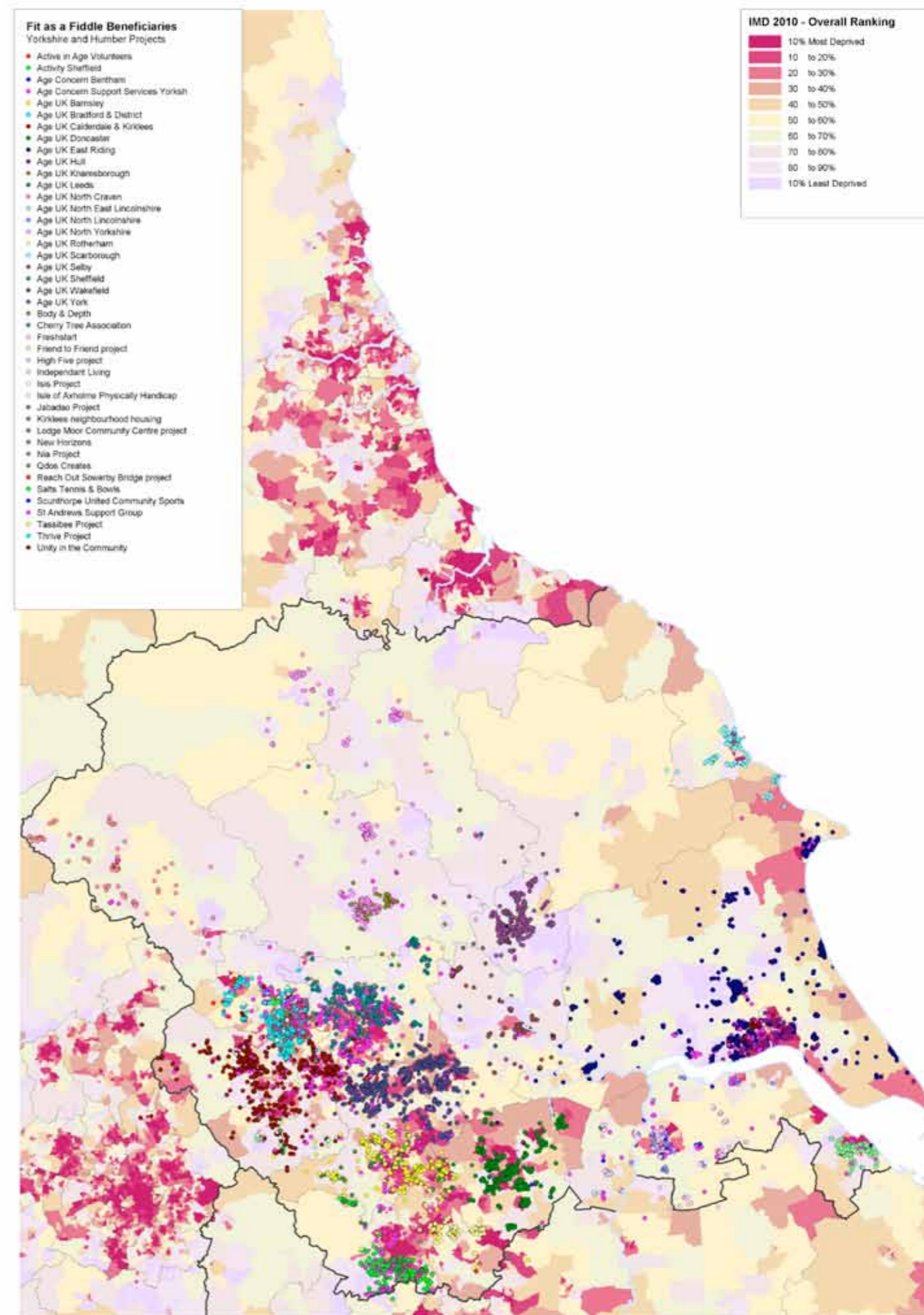
inner city areas such as Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford, and had good coverage in more rural locations.

2.4 Project management and leadership: the fit as a fiddle approach in Yorkshire & Humber

The model chosen to deliver fit as a fiddle across the region was designed to be flexible and innovative in its approach, to engage with local communities and to acknowledge diversity - respecting the experience and knowledge of the older community residents, and seeing them as an asset in the development of a vast range of activities to meet local needs.

In particular the model was democratic and inclusive, rather than prescriptive, allowing, within the parameters of the project, local organisations to identify and select the range of activities most suited to their requirements.

The project model encouraged a partnership approach and allowed it to be opened up to a range of agencies working with older people across the region not just Age UKs.



Portfolio Steering Group

Overall role: To oversee the allocation and management of the regional funds received to deliver fit as a fiddle.

Membership: Regional Company Directors

Frequency of meeting: Quarterly

Accountable to: The National Projects Committee.

Roles & Responsibilities:

- **Management:** Financial / budget; the portfolio; staff.
- **Decision making:** Developing selection criteria, processes and guidance.
- **Monitoring:** Ensuring activities within the portfolio are quality controlled and reach a broad spectrum of older people.
- **Communication:** Disseminating information; Developing a communications strategy; Engaging with external partners.



Regional Portfolio Co-ordinator



**Project Co-ordinator
South & West Yorkshire**



**Project Co-ordinator
North Yorkshire & East Yorkshire /
Humberside**

FAAF Coordinators: Regional Steering Group

Overall role: To provide input and oversight to the project and support participation.

Membership: Representation from each Age UK and other participating organisations

Frequency of meeting: Quarterly

Accountable to: The Portfolio Management Group.

Procedure

The Procedure allowed organisations to

- identify the type of activities that were in demand in their communities
- agree targets with regard to the number of workshop they would run, the beneficiaries they would attract, the number of volunteers that would help run and organise the events
- request funding four times a year

2.5 Involvement of older people and volunteers

In Yorkshire & Humber we involved older people in fit as a fiddle from the design of project activities. It is our belief that older people are more likely to take part if they have a say, rather than 'being done to.'

All activities had to be endorsed by the Portfolio Steering Board and had to show activities were relevant to local needs. In many cases the activities followed on from a successful local consultation exercise. Below are extracts from the funding applications:

Activity Sheffield 2011

Activity Sheffield have recently consulted with over 200 older people living in Sheffield, to identify the activities they would like to see developed in their local area and how we can market activities to this age group. This data will be used to guide the activity sessions developed as part of this project.

The focus of this project will be sustaining activity for older people within various settings (see below). Sustainability will be achieved through a number of means; encouraging older people to set up committees to fund further activity, encouraging older people to access training to lead activities (via the BHF Moving More Often programme) and encouraging older people to act as peer mentors through the Active Friends Volunteer Champions Programme recently developed.

Freshstart North Lincs Feb 09

Freshstarts consultation with older people has identified that they would be interested in finding out more about healthier eating and exercise in their local area (Riddings). In addition, in Messingham older people have started to play New Age Kurling and would like to play this on a more regular basis.

Age UK Selby Nov 08

The event will be a catalyst to develop the consultation techniques in of ourselves as an organisation, to encourage clients to participate in the decision making process i.e. where do we want to go? Our aim would be to increase their awareness of how a healthy lifestyle can contribute to good health and encourage long term changes in exercise / eating approaches.

2.6 Outcomes of the project

fit as a fiddle has a positive impact on the older people and the organisations involved in the project.

We achieved our intended outcomes which are detailed more fully in the body of the report:

- fit as a fiddle helped people to live healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices
- Healthy weight: we helped older people improve their diet and access healthy food
- fit as a fiddle helped older people on their way to meet guidelines on recommended physical activity

fit as a fiddle brought older people together to improve their quality of life. We facilitated 'social connectedness'.

- Volunteering helped alleviate the risk factors associated with loneliness.
- The quality of life for people with long-term conditions has been enhanced through participation in fit as a fiddle activities.
- fit as a fiddle ensured older people with a wide range of health needs were involved in the programme to prevent ill health. We did this by tailoring the project to meet people's needs.
- Participants were predominately older women. Men remained hard to reach.
- fit as a fiddle engaged with participants from a wide range of minority and ethnic backgrounds by working with existing groups and by ensuring that activities were accessible.
- Using volunteers meant we could take activities to people in their localities which overcome issues around transport.
- Partnership working has enabled fit as a fiddle to deliver activities in a joined up, well balanced way and has enabled the pooling of resources.
- Partnership working has raised the profile of the voluntary sector as a service provider
- fit as a fiddle enabled Age UKs to leverage in funding from a wide range of sources.

It encouraged Age UKs to establish activities based on social enterprise principles.

- Volunteering brought an economic value to the project through helping to sustain activities for older people at a low cost.

2.7 Successes and lessons learnt

Successes:

- **The funding process led to inclusivity and diversity.** Originally the project was only open for Age UKs to run activities. This was extended to the voluntary and community sector across Yorkshire & Humber.

Over the five years of the project, we funded 47 organisations to deliver 119 projects: from grassroots community groups to larger charities.

- **Taster sessions are successful in engaging older people**

Taster sessions at public events and fairs were successful, particularly in attracting people from a wide geographical area, which can present challenges in rural areas. Taster sessions in local sheltered housing facilities provided valuable outreach to often isolated older people, and were also helpful in providing new spaces for activity.

For many older people, taster sessions provided an opportunity to observe an activity before getting involved, which builds confidence.

Age UK Wakefield – Boccia League feedback from the taster event found 73 older people giving positive written and verbal feedback on the event, expressing a desire for future opportunities for involvement, and the development of a 'gently' competitive arena to develop the activity.

- **Project activities were successful because they were relevant, useful and fun**

The project was inclusive of all Age UKs, including the smaller ones, and a good spread of project activity was achieved across the region.

As well as providing excellent, innovative activities for older people, benefiting health and nutrition – there was real added value for older people in addressing social isolation, outreach to new groups (including younger older people) and geographical areas and raising the profile of Age UK to a wider audience.

In addition, the creativity and scope of the activities across the region has enabled the challenging of stereotypes of older people with regards to abilities and interests, and these aspects were viewed as a major positive impact of the project.

- **A programme of regional on-site training enabled and empowered volunteers to deliver activities.**

Accredited training in Food Safety and Active in Age run by the regional team was felt to be invaluable to enable volunteers to run lunch groups and to deliver low level physical activities. For many smaller organisations travelling to training could be problematic therefore the ability to offer training on-site was welcomed.

Training partnerships developed through the regional team with organisations such as THRIVE and Wild About Plants providing professional development opportunities for staff and led to innovative activities that improved dexterity for more immobile participants.

Fiona Preston, Fit as a Fiddle Co-ordinator at Age UK Calderdale and Kirklees said:
I have been using the flower pounding and willow wreath decorating from the Wild About Plants course in a few places where the individuals involved either have little mobility or find the idea of doing anything that seems like exercise off putting. ***The flower pounding is quite hard work for their upper body strength so even though they see it as a craft it is still giving them some upper body exercise.***
The wreath decorating has been tagged on to the sessions to allow for a little bit of a break between the pounding as I have found the groups tend to get tired quite quickly. I didn't know about flower pounding until I went on the course but it has given me another session that I can offer groups allowing me to interact with more people.

Lessons learnt:

- **A focus on communications and sharing good practice should have come earlier in the project**

Projects found that decisions from Portfolio Steering Group meetings were not always cascaded adequately. Newsletters, whilst well written, lacked clarity around their target audience.

Communication protocols between the regional team and projects were not in place and when project co-ordinators left organisations difficulties arose, predominately around their reporting requirements; levels of funding and targets.

Sharing good practice between project co-ordinators at the workers regional meetings was good, but should have started earlier in the project. The evaluation of the legacy conference by attendees was good with 74% agreeing the workshops, presentations and activities were relevant and interesting.

However a comment was made:

‘we should have done this earlier.

The national cascade projects were really interesting, we could have built on them.’

Because the national cascade projects were not open to projects already in receipt of fit as a fiddle funding, most Age UKs in Yorkshire & Humber were not able to access them.

- **Bureaucracy and paperwork needs to be in relation to the project**

The project was perceived to have an overemphasis on ‘number crunching’. The reporting system was felt to be onerous and time consuming. Projects could not understand why they were required to report half way through the quarter on that quarter.

It was felt direction from the national and regional team on the evaluation framework should have come earlier in the project.

The level of paperwork required for organisations requesting £180 was the same as the organisation requesting £62,000. It was suggested there should have been a lower limit on the amount of funding available or the requirements should bear relation to the level of support required.

- **The regional focus should have been liaison with the funder, rather than supporting organisations to ‘set up’ activities**

It was felt that design of the regional team needed more of a focus on administrative and financial support. The role of the regional co-ordinator, at seven hours a week was woefully underestimated and the Portfolio Steering Group were wise to invest more hours in this role early on in the project to enable greater liaison with the national team. The role of the two regional co-ordinators, who were originally employed to help local Age UKs in the region set up fit as a fiddle projects were not

needed in this capacity. Local Age UKs are proficient in developing new projects and services. The focus of the regional co-ordinators became training and partnership development, both of which are seen as a success. However had their been greater administrative support at the beginning of the project, some of the issues around bureaucracy may have been resolved earlier in the project.

- **Relying on volunteers without funding staff to support them has organisational capacity issues**

The ability of local organisations and Age UKs to manage the project, undertake the activities, the administration and monitoring work required, using only volunteers was a major issue at the beginning of fit as a fiddle in Yorkshire & Humber. Local Age UKs did not request support from fit as a fiddle due to the capacity issues this raised. The Portfolio Steering Group were able to drive through a change to the criteria and use money to pay for staff to support volunteers and deliver activities, at which point the fit as a fiddle spread across the region.

For projects to be successful, it is key to have dedicated staff to oversee project work and co-ordinate administration and volunteer engagement.

3 Key findings: impacts on older people

3.1 fit as a fiddle helped people to live healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices

3.1.1 Healthy weight: we helped older people improve their diet and access healthy food

The Challenge

- Excess weight costs the NHS more than £5bn each year. More broadly, it has a serious impact on economic development. (Dept of Health (2011) Obesity and Mental Health. A call to action on obesity in England)
- Many people are eating more saturated fat, salt and added sugar than Government recommendations; and too little fruit, vegetables, oily fish and fibre. Some people are also getting below recommended levels of particular vitamins and minerals. (Dept of Health (2011) National Diet and Nutrition Survey)

The Projects

In Yorkshire & Humber the emphasis on maintaining a healthy weight was a key focus embraced in both the training strategy and the types of projects funded through fit as a fiddle.

Nine organisations delivered 20 healthy eating programmes. Projects aiming to encourage participants to maintain a healthy weight ranged from:

- Specific weight loss programmes e.g. the Fat B’s sessions run for older men by Scunthorpe United FC; MODs (Mondays Drop-a-Size) run by Age UK Barnsley
- Cook and eat sessions by Age UK Leeds, Tickle Your Tastebuds in sheltered schemes and care homes run by Age UK Bradford
- Healthy eating demonstrations such as those organised by both Age UK Doncaster and Age UK East Riding (run by the East Riding catering college)

- Escorted shopping trips with healthy eating advice, allowing access to healthy foods by Age UK Knaresborough
- Production of healthy eating menu booklets – Age UK Barnsley; Age UK East Riding; Age UK York
- Gardening and cooking projects combined such as Get Growing, Get Cooking by Age UK Doncaster
- **3,250** involved in healthy eating activities
- **3,406** involved in healthy eating and physical activities (combined activities)

Analysis of fit as a fiddle in Yorkshire & Humber, by Keele University has shown, for those participants that responded, a positive change in their attitude to healthy eating and an increase in the portions of fruit and vegetables being eaten each week.

When asked the question:

‘I think healthy eating is important for my health, and I am doing something about it at the moment’.

At the beginning of the fit as a fiddle project, 84% of responding participants answered yes. At follow up 88% of responding participants said yes.

Portions of fruit and vegetables eaten each day rose from 4 at the beginning of the project, to 5 when respondents were followed up, three months after the fit as a fiddle project had ended.

Focus groups with older people and volunteers found the cooking courses and demonstrations gave inspiration to increase their intake of fruit and vegetables.

- “We were cooking recipes that made sure you had your five fruit and vegetables a day. There was also cooking on a budget sessions.” (Age UK East Riding)
- Interviewee 1: I am trying to get my five a day into my diet so came to get ideas. (Age UK East Riding)

Crucially, the Shop to Health project gave older people access to healthy foods:

- Volunteer 2 – I do shopping for a very severely disabled lady but she does come shopping with me and that is her one trip out a week which she looks forward to and she comes with another lady who is blind, she can hardly walk so we will all go out to Morrisons or Sainsburys. That is her only trip out for the week and if she cannot manage to do this trip I [the volunteer] will go shopping on her behalf. She would have no one to do her shopping and would not get out of the house if it were not for this project. (Age UK Knaresborough)



Case studies of individuals

The specific weight loss programmes developed by fit as a fiddle have proved beneficial to participants because they are tailored to their needs.

- specifically for older men who are traditionally hard to engage (Fat B's, Scunthorpe United)
- in their community, where people feel less intimidated (MODS, Age UK Barnsley)

Because of this the results for individuals were positive, as shown in our case studies:

Case Study from Fat B's, written by Scunthorpe United. Mr H first contacted ... the 'Fat B's programme' ... explaining how he found it difficult to attend local gym as he felt intimidated by other individuals within the gym.

Upon arrival of the first session Mr H explained to me of how the stresses of his work had an effect on his personal life and social life which had an effect on his physical health. He told me primarily that he wanted to lose weight and make himself feel better when looking in the mirror. Mr H was five stone over weight. He went from doing no exercise at all to an hour's gym session that he described as a lifetime.

As the weeks went by Mr H slowly started to get used to routine of the sessions and also was progressing in losing weight and getting fitter. From a fitness instructor's point of view he was a dream to work with, would never say no to anything and gave 110%.

After the sessions SUFC staff would offer their time to participants if they need any help or support whatever it may be. Mr H explained how when attending the sessions at first he still felt intimidated by males that weren't as big as him and were still physically fitter. I explained that he should concentrate on himself and explained to him how much weight he had lost which was more than anyone else that had been attending the session, from this point on there was a difference in Mr H.

The following week he approached me with a totally different attitude and explained that it wasn't intimidating any more if anything it was more comfortable being able to train within a gym environment with males like himself.

Each week Mr H changed becoming more involved in the session and also a shining light within the session.

Mr H from this point helps with the running of the sessions. If any new participants take part in the session he is always the first person to give a helping hand with encouragement and support. I feel this is always better coming from a fellow participants rather than a coach.

In recent weeks Mr H had told me how he feels better in himself and how much the Fat B's programme had helped him through a difficult time in his life. He has now informed me now that in future he would always offer support to other males that has the same worries he had.

Mr H is a credit to himself showing courage and determination with the help of the staff at SUFC Trust and also the opportunity given to him by fit as a fiddle to help change his life.

Case Study of Hazel who attends Age UK Barnsley MODS

Hazel is a 58 year old lady, married to Kevin. Hazel and Kevin's family are now all grown and live away from home. They have several grandchildren who they see regularly but live some distance away. They care for elderly parents most days.

Neither Hazel nor Kevin drive, so much of their time is spent travelling on public transport. This is also a drain on limited resources, as Kevin has recently been made redundant.

Hazel was very worried about her weight which was affecting her mobility. She complained about her knees and back being painful both were now beginning to limit her. Hazel felt unmotivated to deal with her weight problem despite knowing it was affecting her health, and admits to 'comfort eating'.

Whilst shopping one day at the Co-op she spotted a poster advertising a new group at the Cornerstone Christian Fellowship Church, Staincross for 'Be wise – Drop a Size' for Christmas (M.O.D.S. – Mondays drop-a size) a new healthy eating group. She contacted Age UK and I explained the aims of the group and encouraged her to attend.

At the first meeting Hazel was one of seven people who attended. Health trainers assessed body mass index, height, weight and blood pressure. All were given the fit as a fiddle healthy eating and healthy lifestyle booklets along with weight monitoring cards and recipe ideas for healthy cooking/eating. There are now ten members and the group is going from strength to strength.

Hazel was morbidly obese for her height and was referred to her GP with high blood pressure. She was truly upset to find out her weight and how it had crept up over the years. She now realised that this was affecting her blood pressure, mobility and general health. She describes this knowledge as a 'wake-up call' and is now determined to change her lifestyle and eating habits. Hazel also felt very down and depressed at times feeling helpless to help herself.

Joining the new group has given Hazel inspiration and a little competition. The group runs once every two weeks on Mondays and started on Halloween night. On her second visit she had lost 1kg (2.2lbs) whilst other members all lost as well. Hazel, along with three other members decided to come along to the health walk, recently set-up under fit as a fiddle as well.

Hazel has now lost almost 6.5kg (nearly a stone) in weight. She feels and looks much happier, she has become quite bubbly and enjoys the social interaction. She gets on well with both groups and has developed a real sense of humour. Hazel feels that the exploration of fats/calories/healthy eating plate so far covered has educated her much more than she ever thought it would.

She admits that she has never been an exercise 'fan' but now loves walking. Her walking has improved week on week and she feels her painful knees and back have improved tremendously. Apart from the walking group she now walks instead of taking the bus when feasible.

Hazel is now considering becoming a volunteer to help in both of these groups. She feels that there are many others who could benefit from the group support and reassurance which have really improved her motivation levels. She is convinced and committed to succeed in reaching her weight and exercise goals and therefore in the long term extending her life expectancy and chances.



The Training

The range of training offered across the region to promote healthy eating included

- The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health level two certificate in Healthy Foods and Special Diets. This course was offered not only to volunteers working with older people (often producing meals and snacks), but also to older people themselves in a variety of locations across the region. In total 14 courses were offered and 136 people obtained their certificates.
- Six courses attended by 69 people were offered on the topic of “Assessing & Managing the Nutritional Needs of Older People”, giving participants a better understanding of the nutritional needs of older people, and how to assess under nutrition. The course also allowed them to learn about the possible reasons for poor nutrition, and ways of helping older people to improve their diets.
- 1077 people attended Food Safety courses run by the regional fit as a fiddle team, enabling local community groups to run lunch clubs in a safe environment.

3.1.2 fit as a fiddle helped older people meet guidelines on recommended physical activity

Our evaluation found offering older people a range of activities, that suit their needs, that they can enter at the appropriate level, access easily and that helps them progress as the fit as a fiddle model suggests is the key to increasing levels of physical activity.



The Challenge

- Despite the evidence that physical activity can improve the health of older adults only 17% of men and 13% of women aged 65-74 meet the international physical activity guidelines. For those aged 75 and over, this falls to 8% of men and 3% of women (A Vision for 2020, Sport England, 2004)
- The National Travel Survey 2005 found that 45% of adults over the age of 70 years take a 20 minute walk less than once per year or never

The latest guidelines for older people has a renewed focus on being active everyday and spells out the recommended minimum levels of activity:

150mins – two and half hours – each week of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity (adults should aim to do some physical activity every day and muscle strengthening activity should be included twice a week).

The Projects

In Yorkshire & Humber the emphasis on increasing participation in physical exercise activities was our other key focus and was embraced in both the training strategy and the types of projects delivered as fit as a fiddle.

46 organisations delivered 100 physical activity (or physical activity and healthy eating) programmes. Below are examples of the projects aiming to encourage participants to increase their levels of physical activities:

- Chair based exercise for physically handicapped – Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society
- Boccia – Age UK Wakefield District
- New Age Kurling, Zumba, – Age UK Calderdale and Kirklees
- Extend – Age UK Scarborough
- Yoga 4 Seniors – Age UK Sheffield
- Walk to Health, Tai Chi, Movement to Music; Circle Dancing; – Age UK North Yorkshire
- Cycling – Age UK York
- Wii games and activities – Age UK Leeds
- Tea dances – Age UK East Riding
- Tennis and Bowls afternoons – Salts Sports Association

Analysis of fit as a fiddle in Yorkshire & Humber, by Keele University has shown, for those participants that responded, the project:

- maintained their level of ‘minutes of activity making breathing harder’ at 60 minutes a week
- saw an increase for the minutes walking each week from 30 minutes at the start of the project, to 60 minutes three months after the project had ended

Project evaluation

Individual project evaluation proved that older people will continue to attend physical activities, for example:

- In Wakefield 95% of participants said that they would continue with exercise.
- In Barnsley 65% of their participants involved in physical activities have increased the amount of activity they do as a result of being involved in fit as a fiddle.
- In North Yorkshire feedback from their Tai Chi, circle dancing and gentle exercise classes shows that 53% had increased mobility; 94% had increased flexibility.

Focus groups with older people and volunteers

The project case study conducted by Ecorys on the Extend classes run by Age UK Scarborough stated:

Participants commented on the benefits of being able to do, **“as little or as much as we like”** (Older person), and the classes were structured so that participants could work at the level which suited them best and join in where they felt most able to do so.

Some participants had previously suffered from poor health and had difficulty with movements; one participant found that the class helped with lifting her knee, and also with building confidence to be able to try being more active at home.

Comments by older participants at the Cherrytree Community activities in East Riding state:

“A very enjoyable class. I was wary of joining but find this is not too hard for my age group.” (Betty)

“A great way to exercise for my age group. A good company of people and a great instructor.” (Pat)

Case studies of individuals

The individual case studies emphasise the need to tailor physical activities to the need of older people:

Mrs C: Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees participant

Mrs C is a 64 year old lady who lives in Halifax. She had a stroke around five and half years ago. Mrs C has been attending Heath Stroke club in Halifax two days a week for around five years now. Mrs C says that she had a comparatively mild stroke in comparison to some of the other members but she has difficulty with coordination and balance. The club offers her different activities which help her with coordination and balance. The staff are trained to offer support and help with everyday tasks. At the stroke association Mrs C takes part in activities such as bingo and reminiscence, this helps with her memory but she said that the only activities she takes part in which have a physical aspect to them are fairly low level such as seated exercise and bowls.

Mrs C can do a little house work once a week but she has to do it in very short bursts. Once she has completed the Hoovering she is generally very tired. She unfortunately fell down a flight of stairs a few months ago and now she can't walk as well as she did before. She says she has lost the confidence to do a lot of things....

.....Mrs C has tried the flower pounding and Kurling. She really enjoyed the Kurling but she wanted something she could do to music as she used to dance. Mrs C asked the staff if there was any possibility of having a Zumba session at the club that was a less energetic than the classes seen on telly and in the class that is run in the church hall next door....

....At the moment the sessions are running every few weeks on a Friday afternoon for around 30 to 40 minutes. Mrs C says that she loves it as the short bursts of dance don't put as much strain on her as walking does but she can feel her heart rate rising and likes it as a form of exercise. The Zumba is the first activity that she has taken part in which really raises her heart rate and she says that she really feels energised after the sessions. Mrs C has said that she also likes the fact that it makes her warmer as the sessions really boost the circulation to her legs. Mrs C would like the sessions to continue as she feels that she is getting the next stage up in exercise and its helping her to more a little more.

The Training

- **Active in Age** is an Open College Network level two accredited training programme designed to equip peer mentors, volunteers and care workers with the underpinning knowledge and practical application to mentor and deliver gentle movement and exercise sessions in community settings.

Twenty three courses were delivered across the region attracting 221 participants. In turn those volunteers ran physical activity classes for 804 older people. This has proved an excellent model for sustainability.

3.2 fit as a fiddle brought older people together to improve their quality of life. We facilitated 'social connectedness'

The Challenge

- There are 1 million socially isolated older people [in the UK] and this number is projected to rise to 2.2 million in the next 15 years. (Older People and Wellbeing, Jessica Allen, IPPR, 2008).
- 'There is some evidence that social exclusion can become a degenerative cycle as people with multiple levels of social exclusion report more difficulty in establishing meaningful relationships and thereby experience increasing loneliness.' (Link Age Plus National Evaluation: End of project report, Howard Davis and Katrina Ritters, DWP 2009)

Analysis by Keele University

Respondents were asked to provide a rating of their satisfaction with 'life as a whole nowadays' on a scale of 0 – 10. At the start of the fit as a fiddle projects, respondents rated their satisfaction at 7.70, at the end of the project this had rose slightly to 7.98 representing a maintenance of life satisfaction.

Project evaluation

Where projects have carried out their own evaluation surveys we have found an increase in life satisfaction as a result of being socially connected:

Age UK Selby Meet and Eat Project

19 participants involved in the project completed evaluation surveys and 100% said the benefits they had gained were 'socialising with people' and a 'happier mood'.

Age UK Leeds Exercise by Stealth Project

Eight of the participants in the Wii Active group completed evaluation surveys and 100% said the benefit they gained were a 'happier mood'.

23 of the participants of the Age UK Leeds Activity Centre completed the Warwick Edingburgh scale when they started the exercise sessions and then three months after their involvement in activities. The results showed there was a 15% increase in members of the group saying they had good mental-wellbeing.

Results of the Training Impact Survey

One of the comments on the returns from the training impact survey stated:

"The training has helped my organisation to target the elderly, less social clients and bring quality of life back into there everyday routine, by attending the classes they have made new friends, some through similar interest and some through simply companionship."

Case studies of individuals

“I wanted to get people back to fishing as it’s such a relaxing, calming activity and it was no hardship for me to volunteer my time as I love it!!” (Johnny)

Freshstart really wanted to tackle social isolation amongst older men. They decided to set up a fishing group and fit as a fiddle enabled a fully subsidised programme to be delivered. The idea was to introduce men who had never fished, had fished in the past and had left the sport, or who did not have the equipment any more because of downsizing their accommodation.

The project were then lucky enough to find a volunteer who is fishing mad. Johnny said “I wanted to get people involved who may have a disability so we could help and support them too. We have two fishing matches every week, and despite the cold weather we have a good turn out most days. We have a golden peg to make it more competitive but ...
..the main idea is to have fun, enjoy a day out of the house and each others company.”

Overcoming depression with support: The Isis Project: Women of Wisdom

Mrs R was referred to the Women of Wisdom group to help with her severe depression and agrophobia. She came with her support worker at first, until she felt confident enough to come on her own. She learned to swim at the groups women only sessions and started an independent Zumba class with one of the workers from the project. Mrs R attends the Zumba class every week and is much more confident, even acting as a ‘buddy’ to new members of Women of Wisdom, meeting them from the bus and accompanying them to the group.

3.3 Prevention of ill health: fit as a fiddle ensured that older people with a wide range of health needs were involved in the programme, through tailoring the programme to meet their needs.

The Challenge

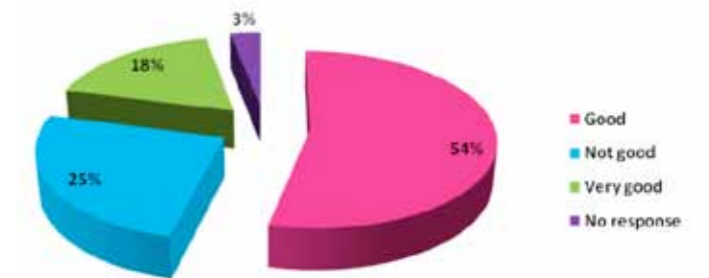
- ‘Participation in regular, moderate physical activity can delay functional decline. It can reduce the onset of chronic diseases in both healthy and chronically ill older people...It can also substantially reduce the severity of disabilities associated with heart disease and other chronic illnesses...it can also reduce the risk of falls’ (WHO Active Ageing Policy Framework, 1998)
- The British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Group carried out work on the cost of physical inactivity by PCT. In Yorkshire and Humber the cost ranged from £0.9 million to £10.1 million per PCT.

We successfully involved a huge range of participants with various health needs

Snap data

fit as a fiddle targeted older people with a range of health needs to work on prevention as well as to delay in decline.

When questioned ‘Over the last 12 months, how would you say your health has been on the whole?’ the 17,492 participants responded



More work needs to be done on the cost benefit of these activities for health commissioners. A health economics approach could help this.

Case studies of individuals

Nia, (Neuromuscular Integrative Action) was a project funded to work predominately in Leeds and was very successful engaging older people who were suffering with mobility problems.

Peter, aged 58: prior to using this service Peter had great difficulty walking. He was prone to falling, needed a stick and assistance, overweight and experiences swelling and pins and needles in feet and legs. His purpose for attending: to walk better.

Benefits/How life has changed: now able to walk without assistance. Has improved in his ability to focus and concentrate. With improvements in movement and increased awareness of his own body Peter has become more aware of areas of pain and discomfort and has begun to learn to move his body in new more pleasurable ways. He has also taken relaxation and movement options offered in the Nia sessions and applied them in his home life to help him relax and drift off to sleep at night. Peter has described Nia as ‘giving him more strength.’

As a region we are investing in training a number of Age UK staff to become Postural Stability Instructors. With this resource in the region, we believe we can make even more difference to the lives of older people prone to mobility problems.

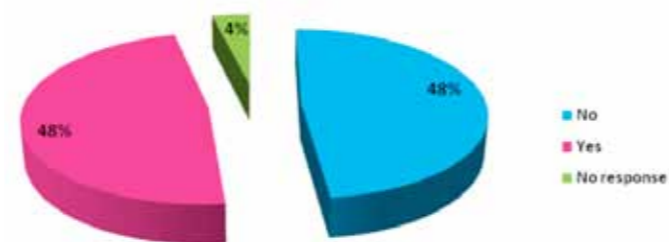
3.4 The quality of life for people with long-term conditions has been enhanced through participation in fit as a fiddle activities

The Challenge

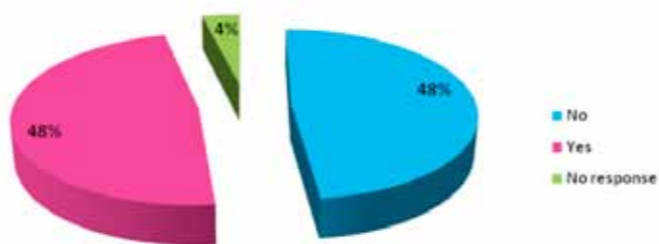
- There are around 15 million people in England with at least one long term condition – a condition that cannot be cured but can be managed through medication and/or therapy.
- The Department of Health’s website states ‘People with long term conditions are the most frequent users of healthcare services. Those with long term conditions account for 29 percent of the population, but use 50 percent of all GP appointments and 70 percent of all inpatient bed days.’

Snap data

- 48% of our beneficiaries have a long term condition or disability



- 86% of those beneficiaries with a long term condition or disability say it impacts on their lives



Case studies of individuals

Making a difference with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD):

Age UK Wakefield Exercise Trainer

“I would like to encourage others to stretch themselves and not to give in. If I can do it, so can they!” Cliff

Cliff is 58 and takes part in COPD Step Down, an exercise class specially designed for people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. The class encourages diaphragmatic breathing, and the strengthening of leg and chest muscles.

Due to his limited lung function Cliff was unable to complete a whole 45 minutes of the class and needed to sit out to regain a normal breathing pattern. A slow increase in function occurred at first but with persistence and motivation he has improved. After four months of attending the class Cliff has built up his leg muscles and can climb the stairs “all in one go” instead of on all fours. He is also thrilled that he can play in the garden with his youngest grandchild without getting out of breath.

“I didn’t think that I would improve, but I have learned that improvement does not only happen in the body but also in the mind.” Maureen

Maureen is 59 and attends COPD – Step Down exercise classes. She was encouraged to visit by her physiotherapist during one of her routine visits. Maureen was a gymnast as a young adult and finds it difficult coming to terms with the restrictions her body places on her. In her first few visits to the group she needed to rest more than she participated and for the first month brought along her oxygen to use during the class.

Maureen has been attending the group for three months and is able to walk further. She says she is able to do more about her home and is much freer. She does not need her oxygen quite so often.

4 Key findings: impacts on partnerships and sustainability

4.1 Partnerships

4.1.1 The added value to the project

Working in partnership has enabled fit as a fiddle to deliver activities in a joined up, well-balanced way and has enabled the pooling of resources.

For example, the healthy eating and gardening projects all involved working with the PCT and local authority. As detailed in the Age UK Doncaster Fit as a Fiddle Evaluation report:

“NHS Doncaster and Doncaster and Bassetlaw NHS Trust Hospital:

Support from the Department of Dietetics has ensured that staff and volunteers are trained to the highest standard and that we can contribute to promote health messages in a coordinated and effective way. We continue with our links both through direct referrals and through shared events to promote healthier eating and lifestyles through programmes such as Passion for Life and Public Health Improvement.”

Karen Bielby Public Health Improvement Practitioner Public Health Directorate NHS Doncaster

I have worked with Gary throughout the various fit as a fiddle projects duration and have witnessed his positive influence on local partners, particularly in relation to promoting the wellbeing of his target group. He has made a great contribution to partnership working and local planning and delivery, including contributing to the Health Communication Partnerships held in local neighbourhood areas and by helping other projects using his comprehensive knowledge of his subject area and of particular client groups. For example without the fit as a fiddle contribution towards our local healthy garden project I believe that the project would not have been as successful.

Where partnerships were established activities were more likely to be well attended. We need to go where the older people are:

Activity Sheffield: From a previous older peoples project we learnt that older people can be difficult to engage in physical activity. For this project we overcame this by targeting delivering in venues such as residential homes or lunch clubs where older people already attended. This resulted in us seeing a large number of participants from the first week of each session instead of having to build numbers up.

Age UK Leeds: Chair based exercise sessions also proved very popular, attracting large numbers of people, particularly those in sheltered housing. The fit as a fiddle funding was used to cover the taster sessions to establish interest initially, however due to the demand for regular sessions volunteers were recruited and trained in

order to meet the demand in the community. The number of people in attendance varied widely but the most successful was held in a sheltered housing scheme in Bramley, which is classed as a super output area of deprivation. Nearly 20 people attended the first session many of them remarking that they had particularly enjoyed it because there isn’t any other regular exercise activity running at the scheme and the range and frequency of social activities are also limited. The manager of the sheltered housing scheme was so impressed with the number of people attending the Age UK Leeds event that they continue to fully support and encourage their residents to attend the weekly sessions now delivered by trained volunteers.

4.1.2 the added value to the organisation

Partnership working increased the profile of organisations

Where fit as a fiddle projects have been able to work in partnership they have increased the profile of their organisation in the region. A typical example of this has been Age UK North Yorkshire whose range of partners include:

- **Harrogate Borough Council** – Staff, Leisure Services, resources and venues.
- **North Yorkshire Sport** – Joint initiatives and funding bids.
- **Sheltered Housing Schemes** – for example Montpellier Court – use of lounges and taster events.
- **Care & Nursing Homes** – Use of space plus regular classes for residents – across Harrogate, Ripon and Hambleton areas.
- **Community Halls & Village Halls** for example Hampsthwaite; St Aflred’s Church.
- **Leisure Trusts** for example Bedale and Richmond.
- **Local infrastructure Organisations** for example CVS – accommodation; help with publicity and promotion of events.
- **Local Volunteer Bureaux** – recruitment of volunteers
- **Hambleton & Richmondshire District Councils** – help with promotions, joint initiatives, strategy development.
- **NYYPCT and Health Partners** for example. Local GP surgeries; health specialists eg. Dieticians.

- **Other Voluntary Organisations** for example Arthritis Care; Mencap; Alzheimer’s Society – joint working or help with delivery of activities or taster sessions for specific health needs or Long Term Conditions group. Also RNIB Home for Gardening project.
- **North Yorkshire County Council** – Work on JSNA and influence on ‘Thriving Third Sector’ and Public Health Agenda.
- **Northdale Horticulture** - ‘Dig for Victory’ gardening project and venue for Healthy Eating Men’s Group.

Partnership working raised the profile of Age UKs as a service provider

From both an operational and strategic point of view, it is felt that the fit as a fiddle project has been of benefit in raising the profile of Age UKs as service providers and also as influencers. With the ability to present recent evidence and feedback from older people on the importance of exercise, the key strategies we are hoping to have an impact on are:-

- Local District Joint Strategic Needs Assessment targets and Older People’s Strategies
- Health and Well-being Strategies
- Public Health Agenda and Strategies

Partnership working has enabled sustainability as demonstrated in the case study below:

Case Study: written by one of our partners THRIVE

This case study demonstrates how Gardening Choices can create a ripple of impact across older people services. Alongside the other case studies it demonstrates how the experience

of high quality training is the key to ensuring dedicated professionals make the most of opportunities to utilise gardens and gardening as an effective therapy for those with dementia. This portfolio demonstrates much of the impact the project has had but the true value will continue beyond the life of the project.

NHS Trust begins to value gardening

Sally Baker a health improvement practitioner works with the NHS for the South West Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust (SWYPFT). She attended a Gardening Choices day hosted by Age Concern Support Services in Leeds as part of their fit as a fiddle project in May 2010.

Sally explains how the day shaped her work. “I had read a lot about the benefits of gardening for those with dementia but wanted to gain the practical skills that would enable me to deliver a gardening project successfully. I found the course really helpful in lots of ways, it helped me to understand the challenges client would face and how to break tasks down and adapt them to meet the client needs. Alongside this I was able to network with others in the area trying to achieve the same things. The course gave me the skills to put together a suitable programme of Social and Therapeutic Horticulture”.

“The course led me to further investigate opportunities for developing gardening for health service for the SWYPFT. I was successful in gaining an innovation fund from the trust and with this developed a pilot project called The Memory Garden. The pilot scheme was successful the participants all gained something from being involved for some it was the chance to be social when they were otherwise isolated, new friendships began. Others gained a sense of well being able through growing and then sharing what they grew”.

“The benefits of The Memory Garden were there for all to see and our evaluations were very positive. The Trust became enthusiastic about similar schemes starting across the Trust and with this in mind a second day was arranged so that my colleague from across South West Yorkshire could gain from the training as I had”

“The second day in March 2012 was attended by 20 professionals working within hospitals and in the community. I was delighted to be able to arrange a day for free as it would have been a significant chunk from the budget created for Memory Gardens across the Trust. The day was a huge success and feedback very positive many participants explaining that they had gained in very similar ways to the way I had the previous year”.

“So now we have over 20 of us across the Trust all using or beginning to use gardening as an effective way of supporting those we care for”.

4.2 Sustainability

4.2.1 How projects have been sustained

- **Sustainability of activities was most successful where local volunteers undertook training to become providers** for example this took place in East Riding with Brantingham Active in Age sessions; in Age UK Bradford through the training of volunteers in their member groups to continue the activity.
- **Groups are sustaining themselves through low level charging and fundraising activities**

Activity Sheffield found that to sustain sessions we linked with organisations such as Osteoporosis 2000. These sessions can continue following the fit as a fiddle project as there are enough people attending to cover hall hire and instructor courses. We also encouraged groups to become self-sustaining. To do this we encouraged them to form a committee and get their own bank account so they could apply to external funding bodies. Activity Sheffield officers are now supporting these groups to apply for funding to continue their activities.

- **Low level capital funding for community groups has helped sustain activity once funding has ended.**

In Calderdale and Kirklees there are a number of groups which will continue with the Kurling after the project has finished as once the equipment is bought there is no need for an instructor as long as they have insurance to run the session. Some of the groups include

- Cleckheaton Library (Spenborough activity group) Cleckheaton library have bought some kurling equipment to keep the Spenborough activity group going
- Bradley Court Huddersfield bought equipment with after one session

- Pennine Housing's sheltered scheme Clifton bought equipment with funding from the residents fund within Pennine
- **The wellbeing of participants is being sustained through referral to statutory sector provision**

In Barnsley some participants have been referred to PSS (health trainers) who have devised personal exercise plans and weight management for individuals. Other individuals have then been referred to our walking activities.

- **fit as a fiddle demonstrated need and a model that works to pull in other funding to sustain activities, for example:**

In North Yorkshire a successful bid was made to the North Yorkshire County Council's Innovation Fund for an Ageing Well service for three years in the Hambleton and Richmondshire Districts

Age UK North Yorkshire has also been selected as one of the Age UKs to be involved in the service development / flagship models on healthy ageing.

The value of Age UK Knaresborough's Shop to Health project has also been recognised by North Yorkshire County Council who have offered some ongoing funding for aspects of the shopping service.

In East Riding fit as a fiddle was able to demonstrate the need for activities, which the local authority then took over, organised and funded, for example: Withernsea tea dances.

- Integrating fit as a fiddle activities into the community has helped sustain some clubs, for example:

Lundwood Breakfast Club, Barnsley was set up in a very deprived and poor area by Age UK Barnsley. The club was assisted to open in June 2011 by a donation from the local supermarket. The venture was slow in getting off the ground initially but is now thriving as a weekly "pop-in", consistently averaging 15 attendees per week. The volunteers provide healthy breakfasts, ideas and support on healthy eating and a good social meeting point where many customers have made new friends. The group is also supported by volunteers from the locality unit for adults with learning disabilities and their supervisor. These volunteers have gained new skills including cooking, dealing with money, meeting and greeting and being able to socialise in their own local community with more confidence. The group is now self-sustained and is managed by the centre's management committee.

5 Key findings: impacts on volunteering

5.1 Tackling factors that affect wellbeing: employment

5.1.2 Volunteering has enabled groups to be established in communities which has had a positive impact

- 221 people were trained in Active in Age
- They delivered classes to 804 older people

Participants of the Active in Age training were asked if the training acted as a stimulus for employment, which it did for 5% of the participants (2 out of 40 people who responded).

Focus group with volunteers

- Volunteer 3: I was widowed 20 years ago and live alone as my family had left home. I was a nurse, a midwife and decided I wanted to volunteer so I got involved with the day centre. I really found being recently widowed the clients actually helped lift my spirits. When you see what some of the older generation have to put up with and they are still cheerful about their lot, it made me feel a lot better. Really I did it for what I could get out of it as well as helping people. (Age UK Knaresborough)

Case study:

Mrs R was made redundant as a professional fundraiser three years ago. She is in her 50's and was not ready to retire. Although she had ageing parents to care for this did not provide enough stimulation for her.

She enquired at the volunteer bureau where she was given the name of a community group looking for help with elderly people at day care. She went along, became involved then was offered the opportunity to take the Active in Age training to enable the group to broaden their service.

She took the training and began delivering gentle exercise sessions as a volunteer in two centres. After one year of gaining experience and building her confidence in a new skill she applied and was successful in securing the post of Activity Coordinator for a Housing 21 scheme.

She is so excited about her new post which would not have happened if she had not volunteered in the centre and had the opportunity given to her by the fit as a fiddle programme.

Case study:

Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees: in Ripponden two ladies from Greenacres sheltered housing (run by Pennine) are running Active in Age sessions for other residents within their community centre. The ladies have become “official” volunteers for Age UK and have taken the Active in Age training. They run sessions once a week for between 30 minutes to an hour and are getting nine people attending. Age UK have supported the ladies to run these session by encompassing them under the Age UK insurance as without it the ladies would be unable to run the sessions due to the high costs of individual insurance.

The ladies have said that they “enjoy the sessions which they are running and they are happy to be able to offer something to other residents which keeps them happy and active.”

Volunteers are a community resource as illustrated below:

Age UK Doncaster: As the project developed it became clear that volunteers would become the key component in making the project sustainable. That said the requirements of the programme meant that considerable commitment and training would be required by each individual to reach the necessary level of skill required to deliver sessions. Volunteers were recruited by a number of means including Volunteer Bureau, Age UK Doncaster website, through our healthy eating session’s delivery in local communities and general promotion of volunteer opportunities.

Partnership Support: to deliver cook and eat sessions volunteers were required to obtain the following competencies: -

- (1) OCN Level One Nutrition Skill
- (2) OCN Nutrition Skill How to facilitate a Cook and Eat Session

All volunteers undertook food safety certified training delivered by Age UK Doncaster. In terms of delivery of sessions volunteers have contributed in a number of ways

- Delivering sessions within Age UK Doncaster day centres
- Supporting the sessions run by the Food Educator
- Running sessions with their own groups
- Contributed to the development of the service such as recipes, suggested venues, identified potential beneficiaries etc.

12 volunteers were trained in this way and are now a resource for their community.

5.2 Volunteering for fit as a fiddle has had an impact on the lifestyle and risk factors associated with loneliness

The Challenge:

As a region we aimed to deliver activities in areas where public transport is unavailable or infrequent to reduce the risk of isolation amongst older people who had few activities in their locality.

East Riding is a large geographic area with lots of small market towns. Taking tea dances into the community and working with volunteers had a real impact on people’s lives.

Case study:

Mrs D was widowed three years ago. She is in her 80’s and lives in a sheltered housing complex in Beverley. Although active, she finds it difficult to make friends.

She has attended a number of tea dances held by the project and despite initially being concerned that she might not remember the steps from her dancing days in years gone by, she is now confident enough to help lead the dancing and show other people what to do. As a result of attending the tea dances she has now made new friends and helps out at some of the events as a volunteer.

Project Evaluation

Age UK Knaresborough: a weekly shop has proved to be the perfect vehicle for regular befriending, communicating important information, monitoring an older person’s overall situation, intervening promptly when problems are spotted and providing opportunities to involve other services and agencies if needed.

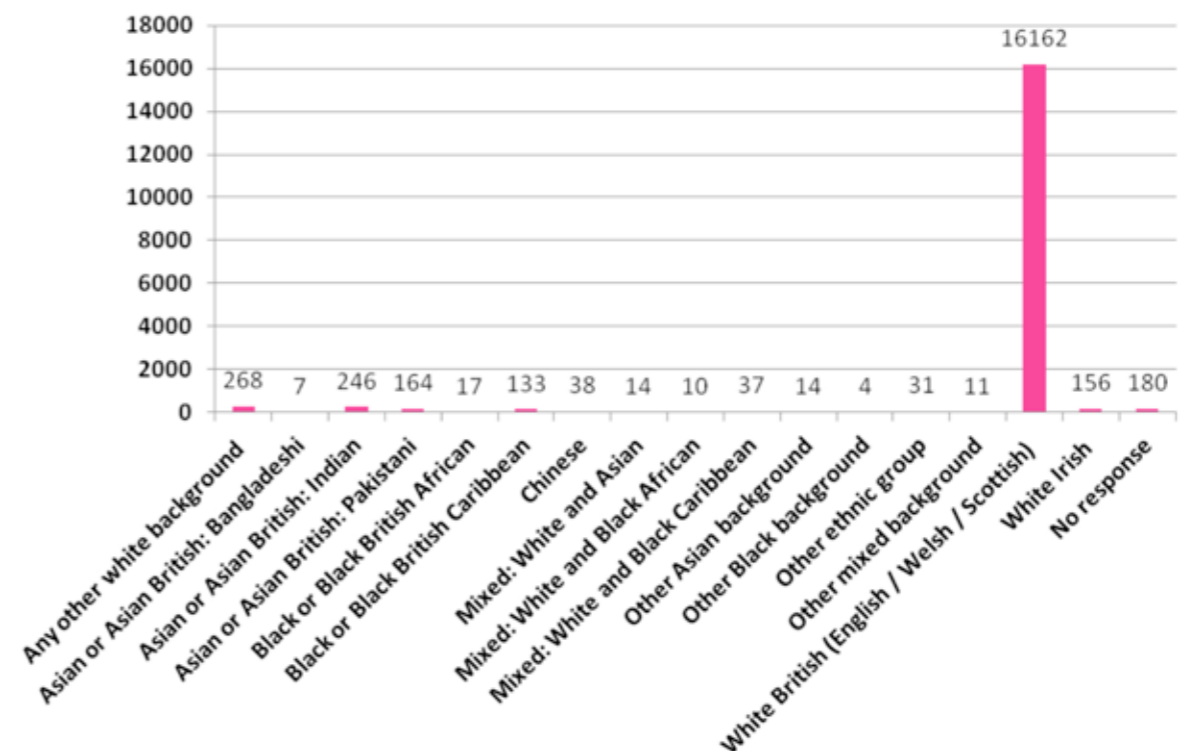
“The Shopping Club lets me go out shopping to the market and to all the shops and people I know and where I used to go with my husband when he was alive”

6 Key findings: impact on equality and diversity

6.1 Ethnicity

fit as a fiddle in Yorkshire & Humber has engaged with participants from a diverse range ethnic minority backgrounds:

The 2001 Census recorded 6.5% of the population in the Yorkshire & Humber region as being from ethnic minority groups. The fit as a fiddle projects were able to exceed this, engaging 8% of participants from backgrounds other than White British. The graph below shows the range of minority ethnic backgrounds we were able to engage with.



We were able to achieve this result by working with existing groups for black and minority ethnic older people, which did not already run physical activities or healthy eating workshops. For example, Activity Sheffield found:

“The project wasn’t engaging well with older adults from BME backgrounds. We therefore worked in partnership with a local Asian Women’s Project. As a result we were very successful with engaging with the local community and this session had one of our highest attendances. From this we learnt the importance of engaging with local partners who already have relationships with older people in specific communities. Without this partnership work I don’t think the session would have been nearly as well attended.” (Activity Sheffield)

Regionally fit as a fiddle in Yorkshire & Humber had a similar impact with our training. Below is a case study of the work we did with Humber All Nations Alliance (HANA), completed by Linda Tock the Co-ordinator for Delivering Race Equality in BME Mental Health with HANA.

Through the fit as a fiddle programme we have been able to offer a range of training to the BME community of Hull including Level two Food Hygiene and Nutrition and Special Diets courses. This has had a significant impact for individuals and community groups. It has also led to an increase in opportunities and activities for BME Elders in the area.

Of the four Level two Food Hygiene courses and two Nutrition and Special Diet courses hosted by HANA and run by the fit as a fiddle regional team 95% of those attending were from the BME community. Only two of those attending have failed to achieve the accreditation.

Diversity Of Individuals And Community Groups Attending The Courses Hosted By Hana And Provided By The Fit As A Fiddle Programme

- Hull Gate, Gypsy and Traveller Community
- Sudanese Friendship Association
- Hull Branch of the Russian Community
- Hull and East Riding Hindu Association
- Sheikh Community
- JAMA – Ghanaian Community
- Chinese Cultural Centre and Association
- Mexican Folklore
- Bosnian Association
- Brookside Initiative
- Africa Forum
- Hull Mosque
- Afro Caribbean Association
- Gvants – Lakh Kushia

Impact for BME Community Groups

The fit as a fiddle training has assisted community groups enormously to:

- Set up projects and initiatives for BME Elders
- Access funding to provide safe and healthy projects for both the community and their respective Elders
- Increased volunteering opportunities
- More involvement of Elders
- Has been a catalyst for community groups working together and connection with other organisations and opportunities
- Community groups have become connected to the Annex Kitchen located in the Community Enterprise Centre providing food and catering. For example the Gypsy and Traveller group are providing a drop in café one day a week in the centre. Other groups are currently looking to provide a similar café in the centre on additional days.
- Increased the community groups potential to income generate through the provision of menus from across the world
- Saved the groups money by providing their own catering rather than using outside caterers

Conclusion

The trainer Richard Siddall has been enormously supportive and helpful to us as an organisation, to individuals and to the community groups.

He has provided programmes that are delivered in a clear and understandable format. He has kept us up to date regarding the programme and the many other opportunities available that increased the involvement of Elders and ultimately improve their health and well being.

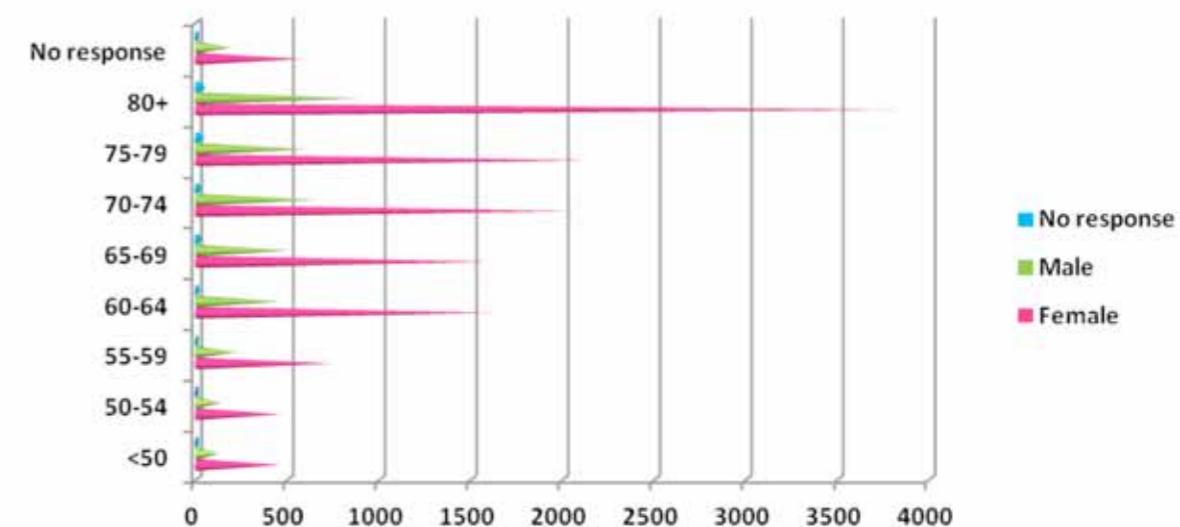
We were able to work successfully with BME older people by ensuring activities were delivered in a way that were accessible to participants from different cultural backgrounds.

In an interview, one of the Managers within Anchor Housing stated:

‘Very often customers from different cultural backgrounds are reluctant to take part in activities as they feel they will not achieve what other customers can. These sessions really broke down these barriers because they realised it did not matter what their cultural background was everyone could do it.’ (Tee Tatum Hospitality Manager, Anchor Housing re Tickle Your Tastebuds)

6.2 Age and Gender

fit as a fiddle in Yorkshire & Humber has engaged with a wide range of participants of varying ages, from volunteers under 50 to 4800 participants over 80.



fit as fiddle participants were predominately older women, who made up 72% of participants:

In the 2001 census women over 50 comprise of 55% of the population, with men comprising 45% of the population. Unfortunately these figures were not replicated in the participants of the fit as a fiddle projects.

More work needs to be done in the region to engage with older men and to link into the learning from the national fit as a fiddle cascade programme on older men.

6.3 Sexual Orientation

fit as a fiddle projects did not monitor sexual orientation of participants, however in Yorkshire & Humber we were aware of the following challenge for lesbian, gay and bisexual older people who are:

- Twice as likely to be single, two and a half times more likely to live alone and four and a half times more likely to have no children to call upon in times of need. (Age Concern, Opening Doors, 2001)
- One and a half times more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, alcohol and substance misuse issues are 1.5 times more common in LGB people. (M. King, University College London)

Regionally fit as a fiddle worked with the Over the Rainbow team and attended one of their conferences with a questionnaire for participants on their lifestyle, diet and physical exercise. Our research found that

Eating habits:

- 74% said that healthy eating is important and they are doing something about it
- However, 56% said they eat less than Department of Health recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Those who live alone tend to eat the fewest portions of fruit and vegetables per day, and also tended to report lower levels of satisfaction with their lives
- Lesbians living alone reported higher levels of poor eating habits than other groups.

Physical activity:

- All respondents are aware that physical exercise is important, however 32% are not doing anything about it
- 68% of those surveyed get less than the recommended 150 minutes aerobic exercise each week (i.e. exercise that makes you breathe harder than normal)

Mental Health:

- When asked how satisfied they are with their life as a whole, 28% of delegates scored very low, and of these, all but three lived alone

From these findings the region were able to secure funding from Awards for All to run a peer mentoring training programme to raise awareness of depression in lesbian, gay and bisexual older people. More work is needed however on improving the diet and amount of physical exercise older LGBT people take.

7 Key findings: economic value of the project

The challenge to support people with long term conditions:

70% of the health and social care budget is spent on older people with long term conditions. Sir John Oldham, National Clinical Lead for Quality and Productivity has said “The challenge for the NHS and care system will be changing the way we manage people with long term conditions. Unless we do, the system is not sustainable.”

Long term conditions comprise of conditions such as COPD, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, depression. Physical exercise and healthy eating can have an impact on all of these. fit as a fiddle has demonstrated the value of low level prevention services and the impact on reducing dependency or accessing statutory service resources in particular individual cases.

With the increasing pressure on Public Service Spending, the need to develop alternative and cost effective services becomes increasingly important, and the time is particularly relevant in relation to demonstrating the value of Third Sector services to offer preventative services like fit as a fiddle.

Cost per unit

fit as a fiddle and the use of volunteers has meant we have created a cost effective model to providing older people with physical activities and healthy eating programmes. The cost per participant involve can be calculated crudely as follows:

$$\text{total spend} \div \text{total participants}$$

$$£1,201,145 \div 17,492 = £68.67$$

If we are to compare this to the cost of health care, for example the cost of a GP consultation which is “£36, based on a 12 minute consultation where the cost of a GP in a clinic or surgery is £3 per minute (Curtis 2009),” then enabling an older person to take part in fit as a fiddle cost less than two GP visits.

Economic impact of volunteers

fit as a fiddle placed a great emphasis on the use of volunteers to keep the costs of activities down and to ensure sustainability at the end of the project. The mobilisation of volunteers alone has been of huge economic benefit to the region and to our organisations.

- Across the Yorkshire & Humber region we have involved 1282 volunteers.
- Some of our projects calculated the number of hours their volunteers worked. For example Age UK Leeds used a total number of voluntary hours used 646.5. Below is a typical profile of one of their volunteers:

Volunteer profile: 11		
Age: 63	Gender: Female	Ethnicity: White British
Recruited via: partnership working with LCC JCCS Allyson Bertram, recruited via Leeds Card Magazine	Trained: Active in Age	
Role: Chair based exercise leader to a group in the community	Hours volunteered: 15	
Currently active: YES		

Some fit as a fiddle projects used social enterprise principles

Age UK Knaresborough: The fit as a fiddle funding has provided the essential springboard and pump priming to provide for the development and first three years management and ancillary staffing for the Shopping Club. The project has run as a social enterprise covering approximately a third of its total costs from client charges to date. There is scope for some increase in charges going forward.

Some organisations successfully brought in funding based on or as a result of the fit as a fiddle activities they had been offering:

Below are examples:

- Age Concern Support Services (Yorkshire & Humber) successfully bid for £352,281 from the Department of Health's Innovation & Excellence Fund to work with older people with long term conditions.

- ACSS successfully bid for £9810 from Awards for All to run a peer mentor project to raise awareness of depression in LGB older people.
- Anchor Housing – invested £5,000 from their legacy funding to continue the work of Tickle Your Tastebuds
- Age UK Calderdale & Kirklees have received a one off payment of £12,000 from NHS Calderdale to continue the employment of their fit as a fiddle co-ordinator
- A successful bid was made to North Yorkshire County Council's Innovation Fund for just under £50,000 for an Ageing Well service for three years in the Hambleton & Richmondshire Districts



8 Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion

As a region, Good for Your Health, the fit as fiddle project in Yorkshire & Humber achieved its targets.

Overall, our fit as a fiddle projects have been successful in identifying and engaging with their targeted groups and achieving the objectives set out in the original funding application. We have delivered effective projects which have met or exceeded the majority of outputs.

The diversity of organisations involved and the diversity of the projects they have delivered has been reflected in the diversity of the people who have participated in fit as a fiddle.

Projects have been good value for money and a large number of individuals have benefitted from their support. Importantly, the projects have made positive impacts on the communities in which they have been engaged particularly with regards to socialisation and mental wellbeing.

Training volunteers who have then used their skills and knowledge to run activities for older people has been a cost-effective model to reach older people in their communities.

The activities offered have also helped to challenge some stereotype images of what older people want to do, and have provided a variety of opportunities.

Engaging in fit as a fiddle activities has resulted in the improved health and wellbeing of older people. Harder to reach groups have become more socially connected.

The commitment of the Age UK project workers in sustaining the vigour and enthusiasm for groups over time has clearly emerged and the name of Age UK has definitely assisted in delivering the project as it is regarded as a safe and trusted provider.

Group members have generally shown a willingness to contribute to future costs and this has assisted the transition of groups and activities to an independent and self-sustainable phase. At the end of the project we are leaving a legacy of activities and resources.

Other factors considered essential to the success of the projects have been:-

- Consultation and engagement at the outset - development of new activities, based on peoples' preference provides a wider range than just the traditional activities for older people
- A supported and sociable way of introducing an active approach to older people and trying new activities they have previously not considered
- Ensuring activities are relevant, owned and clearly communicated to those who live in the area in question
- Harnessing the enthusiasm, skills and abilities of individuals to contribute and take responsibility

A true benefit is that the exercise they are doing doesn't feel like a "chore". It is the social connectedness which allows exercise to be enjoyed and not endured and therefore of long-term benefit and more likely to be sustained over time.

Recommendations

- **Sustainability is a major factor** in any activity, particularly in areas of economic deprivation and low population density. This project has shown that with low levels of funding and working in partnership cost effective activities can be cascaded to large numbers of older people. **On-going support to volunteers and training opportunities to invest in further capacity will be key to a future successful well-being strategy.**
- As stated sustainability can be difficult to achieve particularly in areas of low income where participants cannot always contribute to maintaining activities. It is unfortunate that funders are often reluctant to provide continuation funding to maintain successful projects but often look toward new innovative project instead of sticking with proven success. **We recommend investment in a proven model.**
- Volunteers have played a crucial role in fit as a fiddle. A review is needed of the practice of data collection on volunteering to establish a way that the contribution from volunteers can be monitored and valued.
- **Gathering hard evidence and robust monitoring data will be essential in building up strong business cases for funding from commissioners.** The fit as a fiddle project had a key focus on quantitative outputs for example, number of workshops held, number of participants involved.
- More work is needed on improving the diet and amount of physical exercise older **LGBT** people take.
- **Men: more work is needed to engage with older men and make activities more relevant to them.** The average UK male life expectancy at birth is currently 77.7 years compared to women whose average UK life expectancy is 81.9 years. Men take risks. Two in five (39%) drink too much. More than one in four (28%) smoke and one in three younger men (35%) use illegal drugs. Men are increasingly unlikely to consult a doctor.
- **Rurality:** consideration should be given to the cost of (and the opportunity cost of not) providing services to older people in rural communities, particularly as scheduled bus services fall. **We recommend a model that takes activities into communities.**
- **Partnership working with key health practitioners will be important** to target long term conditions patients, and those who could be helped to avoid hospital admissions for example falls, respiratory conditions, strokes, circulatory issues.
- **fit as a fiddle** is a recognised name and a valued brand, we recommend Age UKs continue to promote their health and wellbeing activities under this banner.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the fit as a fiddle project in Yorkshire & Humber, to make it such a success.



Thanks to members of the Project Steering Group: Vickie Ferres, Keith Nathan, Paula Bee, Alex Bird, Christine Broadhead, Rosalind Eve and Sally Gould.

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