



**INNOVATION AGENCY**

Academic Health Science Network  
for the North West Coast

## HELPING RESIDENTS TO NAVIGATE COMMUNITY RESOURCES

### Summary

Residents in an area of Merseyside are benefitting from an integrated approach to community centred wellbeing.

NHS providers and commissioners in Halton have been working with a social enterprise, Wellbeing Enterprises, to deliver Community Wellbeing Practices which have reduced demand on services – and improved the health of local people.

The approach includes social prescribing, community navigation and volunteering programmes with healthcare pathways as a means of improving clinical outcomes – and budget efficiency.

### About Halton Community Wellbeing Practices

The Community Wellbeing Practices provide community-based support to thousands of patients each year who are referred by a GP or other healthcare professional or by self-referral. The offer includes:

- **Community navigation** – one to one personalised support from a non-medical Community Wellbeing Officer who helps co-design a personalised wellbeing plan to address social issues impacting on health.
- **Social prescribing** – a raft of education and social inclusion learning opportunities including stress management, sleep and relaxation, self-care, life skills training and mindfulness.
- **Social action** – volunteering opportunities and grant schemes to put local people in the driving seat of the initiative.



### Outcomes

There is evidence of a wide range of positive patient and community outcomes, sustained long term along with cost savings. A recent independent analysis of outcomes demonstrated savings to the public sector of £8.90 for every £1 invested.

Moreover, Wellbeing Enterprises' social prescribing initiatives in neighbouring localities have shown a return of more than £12 for every £1 invested.

In 2015 Wellbeing Enterprises CIC and NHS Halton CCG received the highly coveted Health Service Journal Award in the Primary Care Innovation Category. They also won the NAPC Health Innovation Award 2015.

## What people say

Dr David Lyon, GP and Chair of NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "I work as a GP serving a very deprived population with all the related morbidities, including stress, depression, low pain thresholds, drug and alcohol addiction, as well as high cancer and heart disease rates and premature death.

"Wellbeing Enterprises have revolutionised my working life. Previously, there was little I could do and the counselling services couldn't cope. Now, Wellbeing thoroughly assess my patients and get to the bottom of what makes them tick and a plan is put in place to help turn around their lives."

A beneficiary said: "Since I have attended the courses with Wellbeing Enterprises, I have met new people and this has helped improve my confidence where I can now go to more groups. My eating disorder has always been a difficult area of my life but I have been connected to a local support group, which has helped me to manage so much better."

Eileen O'Meara, Director of Public Health at Halton Borough Council, said: "Given many patients attend the GP for a non-medical reason it is fantastic that we can enable them to access services in the local community, or jointly develop activities with the patient, that really improves their health and wellbeing and frees up GP capacity."

## How has the Innovation Agency helped?

The Innovation Agency connected Wellbeing Enterprises to influential contacts and thought leaders for advice on addressing challenges and obstacles as the initiative developed. Staff act as mentors and are on hand to provide advice as and when required. There have been regular collaborative team meetings, events and introductions to a range of innovation initiatives in the region.

## How did it develop?

The initiative was initially launched as a pilot project working with three GP practices who all opted in. The model was developed iteratively, and over time the initiative was expanded to include other GP practices because of the positive outcomes and feedback from patients and clinicians. From here, the model has been refined and is now fully integrated with all GP practices in the borough. Moreover, this has since expanded to include similar community centred wellbeing initiatives with acute and community care providers serving the borough as a way of augmenting patient outcomes and reducing demand and pressures on services.

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE...

The aim is to launch 'wellbeing hubs' across the UK, with Wellbeing Enterprises working with local partners to create the momentum needed to raise awareness of community centred health approaches.

[www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk](http://www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk)