

# Physical Health – It's everyone's business

## Introduction

The Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership (OMHP) is committed to working with the 'whole person' and treating physical and mental health needs together. A distinction is often made between mind and body. When considering mental health and physical health the two should not be thought of as separate. Poor mental health can negatively impact on physical health, leading to an increased risk of some conditions. Similarly poor physical health can impact on mental health. Since the founding of the NHS in 1948 physical and mental health care have been largely disconnected. Nationally there has been an increasing call to consider the two together.

Over the last two years OMHP has developed a physical health initiative, 'It's Everyone's Business'. Physical health leads were identified across the partnership to act as a point of contact, to share and disseminate information. Our approach has been to challenge the culture across the partnership and provide support and training to staff to build awareness and confidence in the skills and reasoning beyond the actual physical health monitoring. Through increased awareness we link people into a variety of health promoting initiatives including smoking cessation groups, peer supported exercise, information courses, healthy eating and a whole range of activities.

This report shares positive practice across OMHP when supporting people to improve their physical health.



Response residents completing a short course on healthy eating with Activate Learning.

## My Physical Health Clinics

For the last 18 months the AMHTs have been running physical health clinics across the county for service users who are identified as not engaging in physical health monitoring offered by routine Primary Care. The clinics carry out routine physical health checks and support positive lifestyle interventions by offering interventions and action plans. Below are two examples of the clinical work carried out:

### Service User 1

On attending the clinic, a service user underwent physical health screening using rethink physical health checklist, Lester tool and standard physical observations. Screening placed the person in the red zone according to Lester tool as he was a current smoker with a poorly controlled diet and high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, a sedentary lifestyle and BMI of 38.8. He had a family history of CVD.

The service user was offered the following interventions and review at the health promotion clinic for 3 months. His physical health goals were fed back to care coordinator and reflected in care planning.

- Specialist smoking cessation advice at GP practice which he was supported to attend by Care Coordinator
- Referred for ECG
- To walk for 30 minutes 4 x weekly- pedometer and steps record provided
- To attend MIND badminton group 1 x weekly
- Education around diabetes and information sheets from diabetes/UK on good fats/bad fats and food pyramid
- Meal planning
- To have 5 pieces of fruit or veg per day
- To 1/2 fill his dinner plate with vegetables

The outcome was a more balanced diet reducing blood glucose to within normal range (5.8mmol/L) and reduced BM1 to 37.4.

### Service User 2

On attending the clinic, service user 2 underwent physical health screening using rethink physical health checklist, Lester tool and standard physical observations.

Screening placed the person in the red zone according to Lester tool as a current smoker, sedentary lifestyle, poor diet and BMI of 34.8. Recent annual bloods at GP surgery resulted in an abnormal fasting glucose level (pre diabetic) and high cholesterol which prompted referral to clinic by care coordinator. There was a family history of lung cancer and motor neurone disease.

The service user was offered the following interventions and chose to work on goals with her care coordinator as part of her physical health care plan.

- Alcohol diary (current use 24 units per week)
- Smoking cessation and British Heart Foundation guide (time to quit)

- To walk for 30 minutes 3 x weekly- pedometer and steps record provided.
- The service user identified enjoying skipping- has rope at home. To skip for 10 minutes 3 x weekly
- Information sheets from diabetes/UK on good fats/bad fats and food pyramid
- Meal planning and shopping support to identify healthy alternatives
- To have 5 pieces of fruit or veg per day

Outcome – the service user stopped alcohol use, reduced smoking to 10 per day. Maintained diet and exercise- reduced fasting glucose from 5.7mmol/L to 4.8mmol/L and cholesterol (serum lipids from 6.4mmol/L to 5.1mmol/L) both in normal range.

### Short stories from the clinics:

- A service user was identified with high BP in clinic and referred to GP. Treatment has commenced and their BP is now stable and monitored in the 'My Physical Health Clinic' every fortnight. Smoking cessation is also being discussed with the service user and the plan is to refer them to the smoking cessation lead.
- During a clinic a service user revealed they had found a testicular lump, which they had been worried about, but were too scared to discuss it with their GP. They felt more comfortable talking about it with their mental health nurse. They were referred to their GP for a check and were subsequently examined and given the all clear.
- A service user had shooting pain in his buttock and felt he couldn't talk to GP, but brought it up in the 'My Physical Health Clinic' leading to it being treated.
- After talking about self-examination of testicles, a service user brought up that they were suffering with impotence, with a history of around 4 years, which was impacting on his marriage. This led to a medication review, which led to a change in medication, and an improvement in symptoms. The service user is now much happier, and had felt no one has asked the question before, which is why it had never been raised.
- One service user had lots of weight gain which was flagged in the 'My Physical Health Clinic'. This led to a medication review, a change of medication, and the service user is now losing weight.

### Day to day work of the clinics:

- Several service users were seen in My Physical Health Clinics, who hadn't had any blood tests for 12-18 months. They were then able to be successfully booked in for blood tests with their GP on the spot.
- Weight gain increases have been captured at the 'My Physical Health Clinic', and has been fed back to medics and led to medication reviews.

## Changing Staff Philosophy

One of the biggest challenges has been changing the culture around physical health and staff understanding why the partnership is using measures such as BMI. Feedback was received from staff they did not feel confident in providing some aspects of physical health monitoring. The partnership physical health leads collaborated to develop a physical health road show for staff which went round to all partner organisations. Feedback from the road shows included:

//

'I thought the roadshow was really positive and really showed partnership working at its best, especially with the offer for OH staff to go into projects and coach staff'

//

'A big thank you to all who attended yesterday's physical health road show – just over 30 people! I received some wonderful feedback from people who attended – someone requesting a longer one in future!'

//

'I was inspired by how much work staff in Response do with residents regarding physical health, as often success and positive working practices are not greatly shared amongst the different services'

## Further initiatives which demonstrate our change in culture:

- AMHT staff had an away day which included physical health speakers, and there has since been a tangible change in the culture of the team towards physical health, specifically amongst the Social Workers.
- Staff at the 'My Physical Health Clinics' have been increasing awareness about checking breasts and testicles with all patients, who had shown an unawareness of its importance and have since given good feedback for it.
- A patient wanted to create a diabetes teaching session for staff about the condition from a patient's perspective. The teaching session is being developed with support from staff and will be run in the near future.
- Several staff within Response have completed training for smoking cessation and sessions start in early August for residents who wish to kick the habit. There have been several enquiries for this and by having sessions run by staff they already work with, and in their own surroundings providing a consistent and supportive approach to a very challenging aspect for many.

- A sexual health drop in session was held on the 26th July by Sexual Health Oxfordshire. This was well attended by staff, and the purpose was to support staff to initiate conversations around this with their clients and accessing clinics and health advisors.

## Across the Partnership

In matter what services in the partnership a person uses, physical health is now very much t of the support offered. Supported housing is not just about mental health and housing related support. Staff work creatively with service users on all aspects of their life – dealing with the ‘whole person’. The following stories demonstrate good practice in our supported housing projects:

### Getting the right support and treatment

Mr A was having problems with his landlord and his privately rented flat was in a terrible state of disrepair. This was significantly impacting his mental health but also he was experiencing headaches and feeling physically unwell. He put this down to the problems at his flat. Mr A made an application to OMHP Housing and with support from housing staff, Mr A made an appointment with the optician as he thought his headaches might be due to problems with his eyesight and he had not kept up with regular eye tests (Mr A wears glasses). The optician had some concerns with Mr A’s results and he was referred for further tests which showed he had a brain tumour. Mr A is now receiving appropriate treatment.

### Supporting peers into fitness and health eating

When Mr C came to live in a mental health supported housing project he always had a desire to explore the options of finding work in the field that he enjoys the most, which is fitness. With his key worker Mr C tapped into many local supporting agencies including ‘Ox forward’ where he was supported to gain the skills and confidence to write up a CV and start to apply for jobs. Not too long after this Mr C applied for a job in one of the local agencies – Crisis Skylight that he was using in Oxford and has been appointed the post leading fitness classes on a part time basis. Mr C has gained in confidence since this positive news and it has given him hope for the future, he is really looking forward to starting his new role. He has helped and introduced healthy eating options and exercise to other residents. In the future we hope he will be able to offer this to other residents in a peer to peer role.

### Getting Active

There are many reasons why physical activity is good for your body – having a healthy heart and improving joints and bones and just two. Physical activity is also beneficial for one’s mental health and wellbeing.

### Any activity, any age

One of Responses older residents spoke with his keyworker about having played football many years ago and how this had helped to not only keep him fit, but enjoy a good level of social interaction with others. He discussed how he could no longer play and how he missed it. As

the home has a very large garden, his key worker bought a football and once a day would have a short wander around and gently kick the ball about. After a couple of weeks, the resident decided he could have a short walk and maybe kick the ball a little with him. This then became a regular activity with 2 or 3 people having a gentle kick about several times a week. This has led to people becoming more physically active and developing confidence within themselves and with others.

Mr D completed the Pathways to Wellbeing Course at Oxfordshire Mind's Wellbeing Service. He reflected on "Get Active" as one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing and talked to the course facilitator about this as he hadn't done anything very active for a long time. Mr D was supported to make an appointment with his GP for a health check and to discuss his wish to achieve a healthier, more active lifestyle. Mr D spoke to his GP about the Yoga Sessions on offer at the Wellbeing Service; he was unsure about these and whether they would be appropriate for a man in his 60s. Mr D's GP encouraged him to give it a try and also linked him in with local Health Walks. Mr D told the Wellbeing Service Workers what his GP had said and that he was nervous about joining the yoga class. Staff were able to support Mr D to try a class at the Wellbeing Centre and he loved it! He's been every week since and has been able to share his experience with other people who aren't sure whether yoga is for them or not!

## An increase in fitness

Whilst at the Warneford as Mr E faced a number of physical health problems. Following investigation he was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes, advice for medical practitioners has all been relating to diet and exercise so we have worked to improve these areas. When discharged Mr E was happy to have his BMI measured during a keywork session and said that he found having the information and access to the BMI scales useful and motivating. He continues to attend Littlemore Gym each Tuesday (transport is provided) and a gentle exercise program has been drawn up. With support he also requested an exercise on prescription referral from his GP and has been accessing the Healthwise support sessions at the Windrush Leisure Centre three times a week. The programme is a little more intense but he is closely monitored and supported by one of the Healthwise fitness instructors, Mr E has noticed an increase in his fitness levels since starting the programme.

## Dog walking leads to so much more

Mr F was referred to Elmore by the Adult Mental Health Team. He did not leave his house due to experiencing social anxiety, depression and OCD. He described "moving one step forward and three steps back" for years after coming out of prison and lacked any hope for his future. Elmore worked consistently with Mr F to build his self-worth, and to challenge his anxiety by going for dog walks. They also supported him to apply for social housing and secure his own. This was a turning point for Mr F and highlights the importance of secure and stable housing for client's self-esteem and identity as a valued member of society. Mr F is now managing his own tenancy, is leaving his flat regularly, has become a part of his local community and made new friends. Most importantly, he has hope for his future. He has started accessing Aspire's Healthy Body Active Mind boxercise classes, with the view to hopefully gain qualifications through them as his confidence builds.

## Brilliant progress

Mr G suffers from severe and enduring mental health difficulties, and lives in supported housing. He used to be involved in a gang, and has a history of dealing drugs and criminal behaviour. Mr G now attends a peer support football group every week and there has been a marked improvement in both his mental health and aggression. Previously, Mr G would often display aggressive behaviour on the football pitch, which was inappropriate and intimidating for other members. Since the football group introduced a more structured exercise programme with an experienced coach, fitness drills, and honest team discussions between activities, Mr G's behaviour has improved remarkably. Mr G is now no longer verbally aggressive on the pitch, and instead is very supportive of other members, and encourages those who find the activities challenging. Mr G's mental health has also improved, and he says he always looks forward to football, and it is the highlight of his week. Mr G has recently settled into a new relationship, and feels that he is at a stage in his recovery where he can look for paid employment which is brilliant progress.

## Working with Active Body, Health Mind

Miss H referred herself to the Active Body, Healthy Mind programme as she felt she was very overweight, and this affected her self-esteem, confidence, and consequently her mental health. Miss H decided that she would like to try to go to the gym, but would need a lot of support for this to be possible. When Miss H met the ABHM coordinator at a local leisure centre, she admitted that she had been physically sick several times due to the anxiety of meeting someone new, and going to a leisure centre for the first time. The ABHM coordinator then worked closely with Miss H to slowly build up her confidence. For the first two appointments, Miss H just built up to looking inside the gym, without exercising. This alone caused a huge amount of emotional distress to Miss H, but she was determined that she wanted to be able to achieve her goal. By the third visit, the ABHM Coordinator supported Miss H through a gym induction with a member of staff, and she began to use the equipment. The leisure centre staff and Oxfordshire Mind staff worked together to support Miss H. After a few visits, Miss H continued to use leisure centre with the support of a friend, and only minimal support from the ABHM coordinator. Miss H is now regularly attending the gym, and is working towards her goal of achieving a healthy weight. Miss H's confidence has improved significantly, and her anxiety and agoraphobia have decreased. This has allowed Miss H to make huge steps towards her own personal recovery of improving both her mental and physical health.

Mr I got involved with Aspire's Active Body, Healthy Mind boxing group in Didcot, as he was looking for a way to improve his mental health and maintain his recovery from drugs and alcohol. He grew in confidence during this period and started attending the boxing club every day in his own time, helping to develop his fitness and motivation outside of the group sessions. He has found new motivation and stability from engaging with the boxing club and has now been clean from drugs and alcohol for over a year. He is now living in his own private rented accommodation. Aspire wanted to take this further by putting Mr I forward for the Level 1 Coaching Course with Boxing England, and they were so pleased for him when he completed it successfully! He is now volunteering for the project and supporting new members during the boxing sessions. He has also trained as a Turning Point Peer Mentor and is now helping to support other service users in their recoveries. His plans for the future are to start working as a volunteer coach with a Boxing England club and to eventually gain paid employment in the field.

## Lots of work we do:

- Applying for grant for foam mattress to ease neuropathy in a client's feet
- Helping clients apply for OT assessments to address their physical needs at home
- Supporting client to have piles removed, including going to appointment and then transporting them home
- Arranging for district nurses to visit to change bandages
- Liaising with incontinence team
- Supporting client to attend vascular appointment (including getting them to and from the hospital)
- Reminding client to attend memory clinic appointment
- Going with client to diabetic nurse appointments (including taking to and from appointments)
- Contacting GP to ask for (at client's request) a physiotherapy assessment, in the context of limited mobility
- Liaising with podiatrist to ask questions client had wanted answering
- Arranging (and rearranging) podiatrist appointments for client
- Supporting client to get to hospital for surgery, including taking their wheelchair and then returning this to their home address (the client stayed on the ward)
- Supporting client to attend midwife appointments
- Assisting client to set up exercise bike in living room
- Supporting client to lose weight by following healthy eating advice from GP and dietician
- Going with client to assist them in buying healthy food to facilitate weight loss
- Applying for charity grants to help client buy gluten free food to help explore intolerances
- Supporting to attend numerous physical health appointments, including:
  - Dentist
  - Optician
  - Dietician
  - Physiotherapist
- Attending GP appointments for numerous reasons, including:
  - Inflamed stomach/oesophagus
  - Alcohol use
  - Osteoarthritis in hip

## Beyond the Partnership

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**

Here for Health teamed up once more with OUH Oncology, Macmillan Cancer Support and Oxfordshire Mind to host a free Health and Wellbeing event for anyone affected by cancer.

The event ran a number of workshops on different aspects of health and wellbeing, including a workshop focussing on practical strategies to maintain emotional wellbeing throughout a cancer diagnosis and a physical activity workshop to promote recovery and long-term health by Oxfordshire Sport and Physical Activity. Guests had the opportunity to meet and talk with a variety of Oxfordshire organisations committed to health and wellbeing. The event was well-received by those that attended with 100% of the attendees rating the event as good or excellent.

## And More.....

This report captures a few examples of the good work going on across the partnership. It gives a flavour of the how the OMHP works with people who use mental health services and what we do to promote good physical health, wellbeing and healthy lifestyle choices including diet, exercise, weight and smoking. Giving people the message that physical health matters!