

NHS Leading Together Project – “Healthy Abingdon” Initiative

Meeting of interested parties held at Northcourt Centre, Abingdon, 28 June 2016

Introduction

Dave Butterworth (OCVA Community Ambassador for Abingdon has teamed up with Ros Alstead (Director of Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust) to improve health and wellbeing in Abingdon by encouraging and helping the NHS and the voluntary sector to work closer together. This initiative is part of the NHS “Leading Together” Project led by Oxford Academic Health Science Network.

Dave called a meeting of interested parties to discuss how this initiative might work and what it should include.

Appendix A lists those who attended. Those attending included sponsors, providers and users of services. In terms of provides this included groups that help people keep well and stay well, groups that help people recover and groups that help people cope better with ongoing problems.

Ros Alstead sent her apologies for not attending as she was on holiday.



Discussion

Dave explained that he, with two further volunteers, would carry out a number of activities and suggested that these might be

- Helping voluntary groups to run campaigns on aspects of health and wellbeing.
- Encouraging voluntary groups to be more inclusive of those with physical and mental problems.
- Signposting people to groups that may be able to help them with their health problems
- Identifying where new voluntary services may be needed and encouraging new or existing groups to take these on
- Helping people into suitable voluntary roles both for their own wellbeing and for the benefits of the groups they work with.

There then followed a very lively discussion

It was agreed that these were sensible activities to start with but it was also suggested that the team could act as a focus for handling common major issues faced by voluntary groups. One such mentioned was the lack of transport for people with problems to be able to attend activities on a regular basis.

It was agreed that every attempt should be made to ensure that Healthy Abingdon was a fun activity rather than a preachy one.

There was some discussion on possible campaigns but no clear ideas came forward.

It was agreed that many activities contributed to wellbeing such as dance, singing and the arts and so such groups need to be drawn into the scheme. Dave mentioned that a number of such groups had been invited to the meeting and it was a pity that none were present to give their views.

The importance of self-help groups was stressed. Examples were given of the success of such groups both for those with health problems and their carers. This concept had been embodied in a number of localities by "Recovery Colleges" where those with problems could teach others how to deal with them. Also, mentoring was recognised as valuable. Such mentoring could come from professionals or from fellow sufferers. It was therefore suggested that this might be an area to develop under Healthy Abingdon.

Those involved in signposting pointed out that it was difficult to find out what is available as there are over 200 voluntary groups operating in Abingdon. A number of online data bases are available (see Appendix B) but some are difficult to use and none are comprehensive. Many people expressed the view that a booklet listing groups was more useful to many people because many of those we want to reach do not use the internet. While it was true that booklets were difficult to keep up to date it was also true that web site listings are also rarely kept up to date. This was clearly something that the Healthy Abingdon team needs to consider.

Another key issue which will need to be addressed is how to communicate to the Town at large about what activities are available and when there are special events.

There was some discussion on the problems of finding good volunteers. One issue was that volunteers tend to be older people but, while it would be nice to bring in some younger people, it was no bad thing to have older volunteers.

A suggestion was made that having a table at a supermarket exit was a way of communicating with a good cross section of people to say what activities are available, to canvas views or promote some initiative.

Dave would like to launch the Healthy Abingdon scheme in October with some form of event to generate publicity. No major suggestions were made about what this might be.

Dave was looking for two volunteers to help him run the scheme. These people would need to be available a few hours a week. They would be OCVA volunteers and would receive training and expenses. Those present were asked to help find these volunteers.

You can find more information on Dave Butterworth and Ros Alstead by following these links

- www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/about-us/governance/board-of-directors
- www.ocva.org.uk/dave-butterworth

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Appendix A

Those attending

Attendee	Organisation/role
Rosemary Allan	Patient Rep. and Friends of Abingdon
Adrian Bodimeade	Stroke Association
Viv Boorman	Abingdon Health Walks
Dave Butterworth	OCVA
Ashley Chapman	Vale of White Horse District Council
Terry Cornford	Care Navigator, The Abingdon Surgery
Joy Dadswell	Archway Foundation
Eleanor Dangerfield	Abingdon Green Gym
Rosita Ellis	Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
Fiona Habermehl	Abingdon Carbon Cutters
Diana Hasting	PPG Rep. Abingdon Surgery
John Hayes	OCVA
Lynda Lawrence	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
John Phillips.	Abingdon Stroke Club
David Pope	Abingdon Town Councillor and Rotary Club
Halcyon Pope	GP, Marcham Road Surgery

Appendix B

Web sites listing sources of help and voluntary groups in and around Abingdon

Listing	Produced by	Web address
Community Information Network Directory	Age UK	www.communitynetworkdirectory.org.uk/search
COACH Charity Services	Oxfordshire GP Federations	www.my-coach.org.uk Follow links to "Support & Advice" and "Local Charities"
Clubs and Societies	Abingdon Town Council	www.abingdon.gov.uk/community-services/clubs-societies

OCVA is also working on searchable on-line list for Oxfordshire.