

The Work of Dudley's Health Promoting School Service

An overview of recent work undertaken by Anna Hill and Ruth Hill, Schools Obesity Prevention Coordinators at Dudley Health Promoting Schools Service (DHPSS) can be found below.

Fire Blazers

Fire Blazers is a 6 week after school programme working in partnership with the fire service addressing the importance of physical activity and healthy eating. It is aimed at children in Years 3 and 4 and is jointly funded by DHPSS and West Midlands Fire Service. The programme has been developed in partnership with the fire service and is structured to incorporate both physical activity and nutritional information every week, based around the Change4Life 8 Top Tips. The children are provided with a fruit snack and water at the beginning of each session. Each child is also given a log book which gives detail of what they have covered in each session and has activities for them to complete at home. This ensures that there is some parental involvement and that important messages are reinforced at home.

Healthy Living Theatre in Education

DHPSS worked in close partnership with MOPA(*) theatre company to develop a healthy living theatre in an education programme. The performance conveyed key health messages around physical activity and healthy eating in an innovative way. Complementing the national "change4life" health campaign, the programme aimed to equip pupils in years 5 - 7 with the skills, confidence and knowledge to make positive lifestyle changes.

DHPSS worked with MOPA theatre company through 3 pilot performances before the programme was finalised.

Each session consisted of an interactive piece of theatre that used different scenarios to understand key healthy living messages and three smaller workshops that enabled pupils to explore these themes further and set their own personal health goals.

DHPSS adapted the change4life top tips leaflet to produce a 'my health plan' booklet. The plan outlines information around each top tip along with a table to record personal goals. These booklets were distributed within the workshops and pupils were encouraged to complete them. Staff at the school were then asked to follow up pupil's progress within PSHE time.

Whole School Improvement Obesity Prevention Plan

DHPSS have developed a Whole School Improvement Obesity Prevention Plan (WSIOPP) for primary schools to use as a planning tool within the context of tackling childhood obesity, complementing the Healthy Towns programme. The tool sets out minimum standards under specific headings within physical activity and healthy eating, adopting the whole school approach. Developing a WSIOPP will ensure a school responds to the issue of obesity at a local level and receives all relevant local support, programmes, resources and funding they are entitled to. Furthermore a WSIOPP will provide an invaluable foundation for those

schools that identify obesity as a priority for the National Healthy Schools Enhancement programme.

In developing the tool local partners and stakeholders were widely consulted and their input was invaluable. Many felt that this framework brought all the services together which in turn will allow schools to make the necessary links between services.

Schools taking up this opportunity will be provided with **ongoing support, funding and resources** to implement their WSOPP and on completion will receive a certificated 'healthy town status'.

The WSIOPP programme is being offered to primary schools through a phased approach. Those schools that fall within a 1.25km catchment of a Healthy Town Hub will be offered this opportunity first during phase one.

Healthy Towns

Dudley is one of nine towns and cities in England to be awarded "Healthy Town" funding from the Department of Health. The purpose of the funding is to look at local innovative approaches to preventing childhood obesity through environmental change. Dudley's programme is focusing on increasing activity levels through the provision of safe active travel corridors that promote and provide walking and cycling opportunities, and through the development of five family health hubs.

The family health Hubs will contain a building with toilets, a kitchen and a large community space, and will be staffed by a Park Activity Ranger. Next to the building will be an outdoor gym targeted for use by children and families. The hubs will be situated in the following parks;

- *Silver Jubilee - Coseley*
- *The Dell and Fens Pool – Brierley Hill*
- *Netherton Park - Netherton.*
- *Huntingtree Park - Halesowen*
- *Mary Stevens Park - Stourbridge*

Further information on the programme can be found at www.dudleyhealthytowns.co.uk

DHPSS supports the healthy towns programme in a number of ways, including updating schools on the programme's progress, consulting with young people regarding what type of activities they would like to see at the Hubs and supporting the evaluation process with schools.

Healthy Towns Poster Competition

DAGB and DHPSS worked in partnership to develop a poster competition which is reported elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Cyber coach

Cyber Coach is an interactive media system for schools, youth clubs and leisure centres. It allows the young and old to enjoy hundreds of hours of enjoyable exercise.

The system acts as a Virtual Dance Instructor and allows users to choose from a wide selection of work-outs, tuition and dance classes, including cheerleading, bollywood dancing, Royal Marine training, salsa, aerobics and yoga, many of which have been linked to the PE curriculum. Each session can be tailored to different abilities and ages and features some of the best instructors in the World.

DHPSS have purchased one of these systems for secondary schools to loan out on a rotational basis every half term.

Primary schools also have the opportunity to take up a 30 day free trial for CyberSMART which is a system specifically designed for primary schools which is streamed via the internet directly through to interactive whiteboards in the classroom. For those schools that prove that they are committed to utilising the system for 20 hour per month will have funding supported by HPS and the School Sports Partnerships.

Both systems have been specifically developed to assist schools in achieving their 3 hour sports/physical activity offer.

Anna and Ruth Hill

Schools Obesity Prevention Co-ordinators

(Note: MOPA Theatre is a national organisation based in Hertfordshire. Dudley NHS worked with them specifically to develop a national programme for “change4life” – see their web-site at <http://www.scriptedmeaning.co.uk/> . MPOA stands for Method Of Physical Action Ed)