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LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HEALTH &
COMMUNITY STUDIES

Can a Community Empowerment Intervention Improve Health and Wellbeing in a Post-industrial UK Town?

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1. Leeds Beckett University 2. New Economics Foundation

Oral Presentation at the 16th World Congress on Public Health 2020
Online event from 12 – 16 October 2020

Local People

The Programme

- Funded by the People's Health Trust
- 29 sites around Great Britain
- Sites supported by a local practitioner from a national charity
- Funding for up to 8 years

The Aims

- Improve health
- Reduce inequalities
- Increase social connections
- Increase collective control

Overcoming Challenges

Challenges

- Poor mental health
- Poverty
- Cuts in public services
- Long working hours
- Lack of trust

Facilitators

- Project practitioners
- Grant money
- Long-term funding
- Working on what is important to the residents
- The knowledge and skills of the community

Findings

- Social connections within and between groups of people increased
- People's enjoyment, sense of belonging and community spirit grew
- Quality of life improved
- Better places to live were created

“People are thinking a bit larger now that they are more confident, now that they feel they’ve got more skills to work together”

Biddulph

“I feel I’m better than I was maybe 10, 20 years ago. I’m able to move that little bit better, I enjoy going out more, and mixing, meeting people, having a joke and a laugh and a cuppa.”

“A lady who comes in a wheelchair, she couldn’t move her arms before she came and now she can hit a tennis ball with a tennis racket.”

Conclusion

Putting residents in control can lead to:

- Increased connectedness
- Improvements in some aspects of health and wellbeing
- Increased confidence, skills and quality of life

There was limited evidence that the programme:

- Affected the wider determinants of health
- Increased the influence residents have over those in power

The programme and evaluation were funded by the People's Health Trust