

# BCPP NEWS

Welcome to BCPP News, the newsletter brought to you by the Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) through its Building the Community-Pharmacy Partnership (BCPP) Programme. We hope you enjoy reading about some of the projects we have funded recently.



## GORTIN WOMEN'S SHED & CORRY'S CHEMIST

### BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE

Owenkillew Community Development Association provides services and activities for the benefit of the community in Gortin village and surrounding areas which have a high level of rural isolation. The group covers areas such as personal development, wellbeing, healthy eating, dance, music and art. One of its projects is Gortin Women's Shed.

“We are so excited to be part of the BCPP project delivered alongside Pharmacist Aisling Mann from Corry's Chemist. We have been enjoying every minute so far and have so much more to come. The project is running throughout the year and will focus on promoting health and wellbeing, increasing awareness and improving knowledge about what services are out there and how to avail of these services.

The group had many varied health issues and lacked confidence overall so decided to apply for some funding to help us build confidence and enable us to make more informed decisions for ourselves, family, friends and community. The sharing of experiences, knowledge and ideas made the group bond even further.

We have learned about what the local pharmacy can do for us and the multitude of quality services on offer. We have been focusing on mental health, managing medications,



complimentary therapies and stress. We have also been running some great sewing workshops alongside these classes, putting some of our stress relieving tactics into practice. Expressing creativity is an excellent way to help your mental wellbeing and we definitely forgot our worries when enthralled in what we were making.

Later in the project, we will be welcoming Drink Wise Age Well to discuss alcohol awareness and Ulster Bank to talk about the different services that can be offered since the closure of the bank in Gortin. We have planned a nutrition workshop, one element focusing on how to reduce caffeine intake, so we will be testing alternative teas and learning of their benefits, yum yum!

This project has been such a great benefit to our group already. By the end of the project, participants will have a tool kit to help them address issues and achieve positive change. Our women are getting so much from it, they are building connections and are already feeling more confident to make informed decisions around wellbeing.'



*I've lately been feeling under pressure from work and family commitments, so much that it is overwhelming and I just can't function. BCPP Wednesday at the Women's Shed is my day to focus on something else. We have been learning about so many different things and it has opened my eyes about what I can do at my local pharmacy therefore saving my GP's time. We have been looking at mental health awareness and practising different techniques to relieve stress which has been really helpful. Being introduced to sewing as something I can do when I am feeling overwhelmed has been really positive for me. 9*

Participant

*The women made me feel so welcome just as though I was a member of their group and the discussions have been open and honest from the start. It was a great opportunity to expand my knowledge through engaging with community/ voluntary organisations and I will now be able to share this learning with others when they visit the pharmacy. 9*

Aisling Mann, Pharmacist

# TOOME MEN'S SHED AND GRIBBIN'S PHARMACY

## A NEW LEASE OF LIFE...

The Toome area has a high level of unemployment resulting in health-related inequalities where many men suffer from stress, anxiety, loneliness and a lack of basic skills. Toome Men's Shed is a safe place for men who share the same problems to come together for support and friendship and also offers woodworking furniture repair within the community.

The Men's Shed received BCPP Level 1 funding in 2018 in partnership with Pharmacist Anita Gribbin who delivered a six week course to the men on topics such as stress management, addiction issues, nutrition, prescription medicine queries and the use of supplements.

The success of this programme meant the group felt confident to apply for a Level 2 grant of £10,000. Working with Anita again, they identified a group of 15 men who were keen to engage. Some suffered from isolation, lack of confidence, family break up or physical health issues.

Addressing topics that men felt were pertinent to the group, this project aimed to build a network of support around these men and confirm their place in the community.

One participant, on retirement, felt he had lost his way and had nothing practical to offer the Men's Shed however the six week taster sessions appealed to him and gave him a reason to attend. He found the sessions very informative and a great way to meet other similar men and was excited to attend the sessions in the Level 2 project.



CONTINUED



The Level 2 BCPP programme will run for a year and involve a wider range of healthcare professionals and community/voluntary sector organisations. It will incorporate a gym taster session, first aid training, heart health, an introduction to self-care and a mental health awareness workshop. The group plans to explore employability, cookery and budgeting as topics and has already forged links with local schools and other community organisations such as Toome House, SOLAS and the Rainey Centre in Magherafelt.

The Men's Shed has grown massively in the last 18 months and hopes to encourage others in the community who are suffering from health issues to have the confidence to join this fantastic group and avail of the support and facilities on offer. The group's engagement with other community organisations will bring more people together and encourage them to look after their health in a number of ways.



*“It was amazing what the men got out of the initial programme in such a short space of time some saying they had a new lease of life. As a direct result, these men are now approaching pharmacists with their health queries and feel empowered to take responsibility for their own health.”*

*Anita Gribbin, Pharmacist*

*“On retirement, I found I had lost the discipline and structure of a routine with no purpose to my day. An unexpected opportunity appeared with a visit to the Men's Shed. Here I have the chance to meet people, to chat in a relaxed atmosphere and get involved in all it had to offer including the extremely beneficial BCPP project.”*

*Participant*

# TRIANGLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION AND GORDON'S CHEMIST

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Triangle Housing Association provides housing to people including those with learning disabilities who are supported to live independently. This BCPP project engaged with a group of adults with a learning disability in order to build relationships and promote independence in understanding and managing healthcare.

The project aimed to develop the group's skills and knowledge in using and accessing health care services appropriately while identifying and reducing barriers to inclusion. Topics over the weeks included the role of the pharmacist, healthy eating, healthy lifestyle, sexual health and looking after your mental health. The sessions were interactive and were a mix of information sessions, videos, group work, exercise activities and health checks. Sessions were delivered by Tom, the Pharmacist, Triangle Housing Association and other organisations such as Aware NI and the Family Planning Association.

The people with learning difficulties involved in the group certainly benefited from this Level 1 BCPP project as they explored all of the topics at a pace that suited them. The practical activities such as trying on the 'fat suit' so they could feel the impact on their bodies of carrying excess weight and looking at the Eat Well plate had great engagement from the group and led to many questions. Competition set in when the group members were given pedometers and the Pharmacist's dog, Sally, got plenty of walks!

Leanne McCafferty, Triangle Housing Association, told us 'Our BCPP project has been a great success. People with learning disabilities often face challenges within society,

such as poor access to mainstream services and a lack of accessible information in relation to these.

We wanted to help break down some of those barriers and this project helped us to do just that. By working in partnership with the Pharmacist, we were

able to deliver information, tailored to their need and interests, in an accessible and engaging way. Everyone involved had great fun getting to know each other better whilst at the same time developing their skills. The participants' growing confidence was evident for all to see as they engaged, asked questions and applied their learnings as the sessions progressed. Tom and the other facilitators benefited by gaining a better understanding of the abilities and communication preferences of people with a learning disability.'



“Working on this BCPP project was great fun, we learned a lot from the pharmacist. We all became better friends through the project – now we go on outings, call to visit each other and watch movies together weekly. We even decided to put our learning into practice by cooking a healthy lunch and we're going to continue to do that.”

Participant

# Health Literacy Projects

We have much evidence around the impact that BCPP projects have on improving health in local communities and CDHN was keen to explore how this approach could be used to improve Health Literacy. We decided to fund two pilot projects which would use the BCPP model of delivery and have a specific focus on improving Health Literacy in their communities.

## WHAT IS HEALTH LITERACY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Health Literacy is about people having the knowledge and skills to obtain, understand and use health information in their everyday lives. This includes knowing what makes and keeps them healthy, having the confidence to be active partners in their health care and being able to navigate the health and social care system to get support when they need it.

It is estimated that nearly 50% of people in

Northern Ireland have low Health Literacy with this being recognised as a significant public health concern across the world. When people have low Health Literacy they are less likely to have the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to make decisions that will protect and improve their health.

## HOW IS HEALTH LITERACY LINKED TO HEALTH INEQUALITIES?

There is a strong evidence base which links an individual's Health Literacy levels to their social



### CARRICK YMCA AND MEDICARE

“At the start of the sessions, everyone got together to make breakfast giving people the opportunity to strike up conversations and build relationships. It was clear through the project that different people have different levels of understanding of Health Literacy and it was great to see the knowledge increasing over the weeks.”

Mo Shearer, Carrick YMCA



circumstances. Educational attainment strongly predicts good Health Literacy. People with limited financial and social resources are more likely to have limited Health Literacy. CDHN believes that improving Health Literacy will lead to improving health outcomes, creating more effective use of Health Services and therefore reducing inequalities in health.

## THE PROJECTS

We chose two significantly different groups for the pilot. The National Childbirth Trust had paid staff and some BCPP experience while Carrickfergus YMCA was volunteer led and had extensive experience of the BCPP Programme. Each received funding of £5,000

to carry out a 10-week project with a group of 15 participants. CDHN delivered one-to-one training with the group leads and the participating pharmacists to ensure they had a good understanding of Health Literacy and the intended impact of the projects.

During the planning stages of the Health Literacy Pilots, CDHN designed evaluation tools and techniques to include specific Health Literacy measures meaning that we can extract data from our evaluation system which will demonstrate the impact that BCPP projects (individually and collectively) have in relation to key strategic policy areas.



### NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST AND MCCARTAN'S PHARMACY

“Health Literacy was a new term for most of us within the group. The BCPP programme helped us to explore many different topics and gauge the participants’ understanding of their own physical and mental health. With a better understanding of Health Literacy, we hope to be able to improve general health and wellbeing in our communities. We were just delighted when we received an award from Pharmacy in Focus for this project – it demonstrated clearly to us the value placed on our work.”

Stephanie Haughey, McCartan's Pharmacy

# BCPP Funding

**LEVEL 1** funding - grant up to

**£2,500**

project lasting up to six months

**LEVEL 2** funding - grant up to

**£10,000**

project lasting up to one year

We recognise that health is impacted by much more than the everyday lifestyle decisions that we make, important as they are. Research shows that social isolation can be as damaging for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

With this in mind, our projects aim to address these wider issues and tackle the root causes of poor health. These vary greatly for different groups of people and may include mental health issues, housing issues, low educational attainment, poverty or debt. Group work and relationship building is at the core of all our projects. As can be seen from our stories, by sharing our assets, our lived experiences and supporting each other, we can achieve great things.

## Should I apply for Level 1 or Level 2?

Each BCPP project must be a partnership between a community/voluntary organisation and a community pharmacy and make links with other support organisations in the community.

Level 1 projects are BCPP taster projects giving partners the opportunity to get a flavour of a BCPP project without committing to a full Level 2 project. In Level 1 projects, partners are able to explore how they work together, the management of the project, organising the sessions, working with the group and the evaluation, monitoring and reporting requirements.

These projects also allow the partners to work with people in their community to identify the need for a Level 2 project, the topics or issues they would like to explore further and whether there is an interest from people in the community to commit to a full BCPP project.

If you already know your pharmacist well and feel that a Level 2 would be more appropriate, a Level 1 is not compulsory.

The BCPP team offers support to all applicants so if you have a project idea and want to discuss it, please give us a call on the number below.



☎ 028 3026 4606

✉ [bcpp@cdhn.org](mailto:bcpp@cdhn.org)

@ [www.cdhn.org](http://www.cdhn.org)



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