# Mental Health Charter | SPORTATION | PPF | Professional | Profess Case study







**June 2017** 

1. Project name: Healthy Lifestyles programme

2. Organisation name: Start Again Project

- 3. Target group: Young people aged 13-30 years old who have a variety of mental health diagnosis, including some with severe mental illness such as psychosis
- 4. Aim of project: The Healthy Lifestyles programme uses sport and leisure activities to improve the wellbeing of young people who have experienced a first episode of psychosis

## 5. Project overview:

Start Again aims to help young people in their personal, spiritual and social development and enable them to live a full life in their communities. One of the ways it reaches out to young people and helps them develop as individuals is through sport and physical activity.

Start Again has a strong interest in helping people with mental health issues. It was set up eight years ago to use sport and physical activity to help outreach workers connect with people who were suffering from mental ill health. Start Again also provides semi-supported accommodation to over 40 young people who are referred to them by a number of Government agencies or organisations. The young people who Start Again offer rooms in their accommodation are either care leavers, homeless or are newly arrived/claiming asylum.

The Healthy Lifestyles programme was developed in partnership with the Early Intervention Service (EIS) at Forward Thinking Birmingham (which provides mental health services for people up to the age of 25 in Birmingham). The Early Intervention Service provides comprehensive support to people who have experienced a first episode of psychosis and maintains support and recovery throughout the following 3 years. The Service aims to provide timely and youth-sensitive therapeutic engagement and interventions to reduce the debilitating effects of psychotic illness by reducing the duration of undiagnosed psychosis (DUP), reducing hospitalisation and symptoms, and improving client social functioning. It also aims to facilitate employment and employability, improve quality of life and service satisfaction as well as assist with people's recovery and aspirations.



It is funded by Sport England's small grants scheme and Birmingham Council's Community Safety Fund.

The programme was designed with clinicians to engage young people and aims to 'improve social recovery'. Participants on the programme are offered an individual package of activity based on their care plan and recovery goals. This consists of a variety of sporting and social activities such as football, netball, walking, biking and trips to the park which are designed to help participants build up their confidence and help them with their social recovery.

# 6. Impact of project:

Reports from staff and service users suggest high levels of satisfaction with the programme alongside gains in social confidence and wellbeing. In particular, two participants have found the programme extremely beneficial.

## Chris' story

Chris was referred to Healthy Lifestyles following an episode of psychosis which led to him withdrawing from any form of social or physical activity. But, since joining the programme in 2015, Chris has regained his outgoing side and has taken part in a variety of sporting and social activities, like walking, cycling, badminton and trips to the cinema and local parks. Over the thirty-two weeks he has been engaged with the programme, he has completed 240 hours of physical activity.

Because of the Healthy Lifestyle sessions he has attended, Chris' mental health is improving and he now feels healthier and stronger all round. Chris comes from Poland, and attending the sessions have not only helped him improve his social and communication skills but also his English language skills. He is now working towards a Level 1 Qualification in Sports Leadership and has led Tai Chi classes run by Healthy Lifestyles.

## Rosie's story

Rosie was referred to the Healthy Lifestyle programme after an episode of psychosis. When she first started the programme, Rosie suffered from low self-esteem and often found social situations awkward, due to her autism. She relied heavily on her mother and wasn't very independent nor had much of a social life.

So Healthy Lifestyles worked with Rosie and her mother to put together a package of activity that would help her gain some independence and meet people of her own age. She started attending a two-hour weekly group session that consisted of an hour of multisport physical activity followed by an hour of socialising.



Since she started attending the weekly session, Rosie has built up her confidence by gradually taking part in more and more activities. She plays badminton as often as she can and has been taking part in social activities such as going for meals, walks and exercising with different groups. These activities are run in different places across Birmingham, so she has experienced a number of new places for the first time. She has even started to travel to the sessions on her own without her mum.

As a result of coming to and enjoying the activities put on by Healthy Lifestyles Rosie is now studying for a Sports Leaders Award: A Level 1 Qualification in Sports Leadership.

Start Again Project Outreach Lead Chantel says:

"Rosie has made brilliant progress. She travels on her own now – she's very punctual and reliable – and she attends almost everything that is suggested to her. At the moment, she's coming to three sessions a week and we can see how much her social skills have improved by the way she communicates with the other young people during the activities. She tells us she really enjoys doing and seeing new things, which is brilliant."

Chantel also recorded an interview with Rosie talking about how she has found taking part in the Healthy Lifestyles programme, which can be viewed here.

## 7. Future Plans:

The Start Again Project has now ended and an evaluation of the project is nearly complete, which will go to Sport England which is expected to release the findings. Start Again is trying to secure long-term funding to replace the previous funding they received from Sport England and Birmingham Council.

#### 8. Further information:

http://www.start-again.co.uk/news\_events/

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