

## CASE STUDY

# LEAPING INTO ACTION

Ten primary care trusts (PCTs) in neighbourhood renewal areas across England have been selected to run pilot schemes - Local Exercise Action Pilots, or LEAPS - to encourage people to take up more physical activity.

LEAP is a £2.6m programme jointly funded by the Department of Health, the Countryside Agency and Sport England. It is designed to test the best ways of encouraging people to be more active, especially those who do little exercise and those at risk from health problems.

The LEAP projects went live in early 2004 with a wide range of activities reaching various target groups, from activity camps for children to community walking programmes for elderly people recovering from strokes.

The pilots support the Cancer Plan, national service frameworks for community health development, older people, mental health and diabetes, and the forthcoming national service framework for children and young people. The pilots will run for two years and will be rigorously evaluated to find out what works well and why, with the results shared with interested groups nationally such as strategic health authorities, local government and PCTs.

The Dudley LEAP project aims to increase the use of parks and open spaces in Dudley for health-enhancing physical activity. The physical activity message of five 30 minute sessions of moderate activity per week is promoted through the PCT and a Borough-wide marketing campaign.

The PCT is engaged to develop an activity referral scheme, where patients can find out more about why they should be active, and where they can be active. The monitoring

system provides a detailed insight into the uptake, content and adherence to physical activity.

Five parks in the most deprived wards within the Borough are being developed as managed activity stations. A full time parks-specific physical activity co-ordinator is responsible for developing a sustainable parks activity programme which is based on a community needs assessment and parks audit.

There have been numerous family fun events, with bouncing castles, sports workshops and competitions. In addition, sponsored walks have been held in partnership with Action Heart, the local cardiac rehabilitation centre. Children's activities include multi-games such as rounders, parachutes, mini-soccer and much more, with the aim being to show children how much fun their local park can be. Parents have been encouraged to join in, and some have now taken sports leadership courses.

There are regular Health Walks which operate under the national Walking the Way to Health scheme, where patients meet up for a brisk walk and chat, followed by a cup of tea.

The project works with community groups such as Friends of the Parks to identify need, channel funding appropriately and work towards sustainability. Groups are being given opportunities to gain the skills and knowledge they need to empower them to lead and support activity programmes in their area, such as walk leader training and community sports leaders awards.

For more information about the Dudley LEAP project, please contact the LEAP Dudley team on T: 01384 366598 or E: [melanie.taylor@dudley.nhs.uk](mailto:melanie.taylor@dudley.nhs.uk).



