

The LACE UP pilot programme provided grants to projects in Cumbria and Wiltshire to increase participation in physical activity in rural areas, particularly people who were not already involved in physical activity. The programme was managed by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) on behalf of Sport England.

A residents group at Inglewood Care Home in Wigton applied for funding to purchase equipment, train staff and take residents to local sports venues to try activities.

Background

Inglewood is a County Council run care home in Wigton with an 'outstanding' rating from the Care Quality Commission, and its not hard to see why. There are 40 residential places, a day centre and lots of different people and organisations coming into the home to deliver or take part in activities. Residents at the home have an Amenities and Service Users Group that fundraises for, plans and delivers a full activities programme.

Care home manager Audrey McKay, attended an Active Cumbria event in the autumn of 2016, looking for ways to support the residents group to increase physical activities at the home. Audrey spoke to ACTION with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) CEO Lorraine Smyth about a possible grant to train staff to provide activities both for residents and the many people from the local community who come into the home. As the LACE UP pilot programme was still in development Audrey and Lorraine stayed in touch to see what could be possible.

The Project

The grant programme supports community projects encouraging people to be more physically active, so it was important that any funds were not for the running of the care home. As the local lead for LACE UP in Cumbria ACT was able to assist the residents group to develop their project and submit a grant application.



Inglewood Bowls Club

The group began by carrying out a survey of both residents and visitors about what activities people might like to try. Their application included funds for two other local care homes, with the idea that staff could learn together and that there could be inter home friendlies in the new activities.

Discussions were held with Active Cumbria about the type of training and equipment they could provide and the costs involved. The group were also able to agree a special rate with their local minibus firm and included in their grant application funds for trips to local sports clubs to try activities.

The survey results showed bowls was the most popular activity, so the group planned to visit the local bowls club in Wigton. They also planned a range of activities for the day centre which is attended by both residents and other older people from the local community.



Alan, enjoying a game of bowls



On the minibus travelling to Wigton Bowls Club.

Freeing up staff time for the additional training was a challenge so funds were also sought to back fill their roles while they attended the sessions.

What has been achieved?

- The group's grant application was successful and they were awarded £9,000.
- Care home residents have been visiting Wigton Bowls club once a week since November 2018.
- Residents and visitors to the day centre have been participating in a range of activities three times a week, including: table tennis, hoopla, and sitting netball.
- Care home staff have received training with staff member Barbara commenting that "Its all about knowing what we can do with the equipment to make it interesting and safe for older frail people to participate and have fun"
- One of the residents Alan (pictured above in his bowling jacket) was involved with the bowls club years ago and is pleased to be back.
- Another resident, now enjoying bowls for the first time, is Florence. Despite her family all having been involved in the club (daughter Cath is a volunteer coach there

and her granddaughter is now Manager of the England Bowls Ladies Under 25 team!) Florence is a newcomer to the sport. What she may lack in experience she more than makes up for in enthusiasm and is nicknamed 'Oliver' because she always wants more!

The Learning

- Living Life to the full is important, whatever and despite your age.
- Local sports clubs are often keen to support people to have a go and to welcome new members.
- Opportunities don't always come in easily recognised parcels - chance meetings can bear fruit!
- Involving people in organising activities and raising funds means they value them and decide what they want and follow it through.

Contact Details

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ACT champions community and rural issues

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