

Self Help Toolkit



Promoting Self Care through the development of effective support and signposting to Self Help Groups for people with long term conditions

West Midlands Pilot



Self Help Nottingham is a social enterprise which has been supporting the development of Self Help Groups in Nottinghamshire for nearly 30 years. We create high quality searchable information about groups which can be made available to professionals and the public.

The Department of Health has funded us to create a guide - 'The Toolkit' which will help other areas to recreate what has been achieved in Nottinghamshire; namely a well known and supported self help groups sector.

The purpose of this initiative is to increase the amount of information available about groups locally in order to increase awareness about self help groups and integrate the signposting to groups within the care package offered to people with long term conditions.

Self Help Toolkit

Introduction

The evidence base, policy drivers, socio-economic conditions and changing demographics of our population all suggest supporting people to self care is a key objective for those serving the public.

Self help groups are integral to self care. They provide a setting in which people who share similar experiences come together to offer practical and emotional support in a reciprocal and mutually beneficial manner.

The Toolkit Pilot combines our extensive knowledge and experience of supporting self help groups and providing quality information about them to health practitioners with the learning gained from implementing information and support techniques in the pilot areas to create the Toolkit.

The five pilot areas are:

- **Dudley**
- **Worcestershire**
- **Stoke**
- **Telford**
- **Shropshire**

In each pilot area we are:

- Creating a robust, high quality and sustained information provision about self help groups that will be used by health and social care professionals as well as the general public to signpost potential group participants to groups.
- Enabling groups to access support which will help the development of new groups and the sustainability and best practice of established groups.
- Promoting the value of engagement with voluntary and community sector support and development organisations in delivering effective and efficient support to self help groups.

Our Approach

We aim to seek local ownership of the project, developing sustainable resources without incurring any additional direct costs through the use of existing resources and partnering with ongoing initiatives.

The Partnership

Our partners in this project are central to the long term sustainability and success of this initiative. We are working closely with local voluntary sector development organisations, mental health services, primary care trusts, acute health services, local authorities and others as we progress the pilot.

Creating the information provision

In all areas there is information available about self help groups. It is held in many different sources with a variety of formats, detail and quality. Knowledge of these sources is also patchy. This project is collating information from existing sources, bolstering it with new information obtained from professionals and the public and improving detail, quality, accessibility and awareness.

Where an area has an existing platform that can be used as a searchable online database we will seek to use this. Where no existing platform exists we will explore how we can create a shared facility.

Projected Outcomes

The pilot will produce a high quality searchable database in each area which can be made available to the public and professionals online and via printable directories. This information can be used when developing support and care plans for patients and integrated into the provision of Information Prescriptions. The Pilot will be providing us with valuable learning to develop the fully evidenced version of the Toolkit for use by health and social care commissioners, GP consortia and Health and Wellbeing Boards in 2011-12.

Self Help Group Support - The minimum offer

Research and experience has shown that self help groups are better able to thrive and survive if they are supported. Existing groups achieve better practice and are more sustainable if they have access to good quality support which understands the needs of self help and mutual aid groups. We are therefore developing a 'minimum offer' for groups which will be made available in each locality at no additional direct cost to partners.

The Minimum Offer will be shown on a website with links to further information and will have the following:

- The 'Starter Pack' – a guide for new groups
- Details of Local Voluntary Sector Development Organisations and the support they can offer

- Details of support available through public sector organisations
- A link to a website where groups can search for their national organisation who often offer support to groups
- (where appropriate) information about local networks they can access
- (Considering) a link to a community website where groups can easily and cheaply create their own web page

Spotlight on Worcestershire

In Worcestershire the pilot programme is well underway. Partners have worked hard to develop effective joint working which has created a dedicated self help group section on the existing Carewise website. New and established groups can now access support from the voluntary sector support organisation WAVOCC who are working with us to increase awareness and signposting to groups. Over the next stage of the pilot, processes are being put in place to ensure that both the self help group information and support is sustained and continues to grow in Worcestershire.

Growth potential

The activities in the pilot areas provide the basis for on-going provision that can be built upon to provide greater benefits to each locality in the future.

As the project progresses the number of groups on each database will increase. Through promotion of this new information provision, new groups will be encouraged to form and groups which have been operating for some time will come forward to share their details with the public.

We aim to promote links to structured self-management programmes which may encourage participants to develop groups beyond the support available from health professionals to enhance their learning and extend the benefit of self care.



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If you would like to be kept informed about the progress of the pilot or to find out how we can support your area to develop similar resources please contact:

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