

Adult Learning, Health and Well Being

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The case for adult and family learning...

- Supports general wellbeing and public health
- Increases health awareness and health literacy
- Enables communities to participate in health decision making
- Contributes to local priorities such as supporting stronger communities, developing a culture of learning and work in families and communities
- Supports skills development for the health workforce and potential workforce
- Supports a healthy workforce
- Can reduce costs of medical bills

What's the evidence?

- Learning is 1 of the 5 ways to wellbeing.
Foresight Report, 2008.
- Learning has positive effects on smoking cessation, taking exercise and improvements in self rated health and well being.
Hammond & Feinstein, 2006, Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning
- *Participation in learning prolongs active life, delays dependency, and sustains independent living.*
Gladdish, 2006, The benefits of learning on the health and well-being of older people: NIACE

What's the evidence?

- The act of joining and being involved regularly in organised groups, such as learning groups, has a significant impact on health and well being.

Putnam; 2000, Bowling Alone

- *Learning activities for older people in care homes can increase quality of life, as well as reduce health and social care costs.*

Aldridge 2009, Enhancing Informal Adult Learning for Older People in Care Settings NIACE

- *Learning appears to slow the development of two brain lesions that are the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease*

Journal of Neuroscience; 24th January 2007

Return on Investment.....

Learning in a residential care home meant:

- Better sleeping patterns for residents
- Less sleeping in chairs during the day
- A reduction of approximately one third in medication costs such as anti-depressants
- Chair- based exercise reduced orders of incontinence materials by 75%
- Residents have improved social contact -with 80% now going out on a regular basis.

From the NIACE study on people in care homes. 2009

Adult and Community Learning in Dudley Borough

- In 2011/12, 6000 adults, 19+ were on community courses.
- 52% of learners were on skills for life and work courses.
- 34% of learners were unemployed.
- 18% of learners were from BME groups.
- 29% of learners from priority neighbourhoods.
- 22% of learners were aged 60 and over.
- 93% of learners achieved their learning outcomes and 95% achieved qualifications.
- 88% of learners said their health and well being had improved as a result of their participation in learning.

Learning Impacts on Health

Physical changes

- Distraction from dwelling on problems
- Less aches and pains
- Being more active, sleeping better, improved diet
- Less reliance on medication
- Fewer health consultations
- More interest in physical appearance

Emotional / psychological changes

- Happier and more optimistic for the future
- Increased confidence and self-esteem – ‘can do’
- Improved motivation – a sense of ‘will do’
- Sense of self-empowerment
- Greater sense of trust
- More assertive

Social benefits

Increased friendships and networks
Getting out of the house
Being more assertive in using services
A sense of ‘solidarity’ and ‘shared learning’

Being skilled

Improved work and voluntary work opportunities
Managing own lives
Accessing services and information
Critically evaluating and using services

Case studies: Dudley Adult Learners

A is an adult with learning disabilities. After leaving school she developed severe depression. With the support of a health professional she began learning at a drop-in arts project. Learning gave her a sense of achievement she had never experienced before. She became a regular independent learner progressing on to achieve English and maths qualifications. She said, “I feel much better and confident in myself. I would now like to work with people in the same position as me”.

B had led an active life until an accident left him with severe physical disabilities. He found it difficult to be independent, often felt isolated and frustrated but he was persuaded to join an art class at a local library by his wife. He said, “I was very reluctant to join but very glad I did and actually really miss it when the class is not on. The people are a great crowd whom I share many interests with. I love painting at home and practise many nights. This course has transformed many hours I used to spend just sitting watching television”.

Case studies: Dudley Adult Learners

- C worked throughout his life as a lorry driver having left school with no qualifications. His past experience of education had become a lifelong barrier to learning for him. He joined family maths and English classes to support his grandson with homework and made excellent progress. He has recently gained a Level 2 qualification in maths and English and is a volunteer Community Learning Champion. He says he feels optimistic about retirement, would like to continue onto an A Level programme and consider teaching in the future.

Adults health, well being, targeted learning, joint working

- **Sheltered housing:** workshops and healthy living classes
- **Expert Patients Programme:** referrals
- **GPs:** referrals, anxiety management, literacy, family learning
- **Schools, Children's Centres:** Family learning, Oct. Festival
- **Age UK:** Full of Life workshops and events
- **Healthy Hubs:** health and fitness classes
- **Falls Team:** progression opportunities
- **Dementia Gateway:** classes for users and carers
- **Halas House:** performance project
- **Kick Ash Project:** 16-25 yrs creative arts
- **CHADD:** arts, healthy living workshops - progression
- **Homestart:** families in crisis, healthy living programmes
- **ArtSpace:** engagement & workshops, MIND and Rethink
- **Integrated Mental Health Team:** work clubs, referrals
- **Learning Disability Board:** Safe places, communication strategy
- **Elizabeth House:** independent living skills
- **Community Care Services, DCVS:** volunteer programme

What next in Dudley?

