

PRESS RELEASE

Date of release: Wednesday March 8 2017
Approved by: Jackie Daniel, Chief Executive UHMB
Issued by: Simon Rigg; simon.rigg@mbht.nhs.uk
Reference: 1703 - 03

BARROW LOCALS TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR WELLBEING

Barrow locals have begun training to lead activities to improve the health and happiness of local communities as part of a scheme to reduce social isolation in Barrow in Furness.

'Furness Wellness Days' which are based at Walney Cottage, Barrow-in-Furness were introduced to bring the community together to promote health and wellbeing through a range of different activities.

The initiative was launched following conversations with members of the public who all explained that happiness improves their ability to manage their own illness within the community. Happiness is also directly affected by social isolation, for example Age UK have suggested that feeling alone and vulnerable can lead to depression and a serious decline in physical health and wellbeing. This is an increasing concern as Age UK have reported that two fifths of older people say the television is their main source of company.

Dr Farhan Amin, GP at Burnett Edgar Medical Centre in Walney, said: "Furness Wellness Days give the people of Barrow in Furness a place to engage with the community, have coffee and lunch together, and lead and participate in various activities that help them achieve happiness and independence."

Each Tuesday local people of all ages gather at Walney Cottage to take part in a variety of activities on offer including chair yoga, pilates, meditation and reflexology.

Betty Ducie, community member from Walney who attends the Furness Wellness Days said: "It's good fun, it's exercise and we get to meet people!"

Anne Cottam, who also attends the days, said: "It's very good exercise. I haven't been able to touch my toes in years until I started coming to these classes."

The activities and therapies were initially available thanks to facilitators from external organisations including Christine Kay Wellness and the World Health Innovation Summit (WHIS). As part of the second phase of the programme, the external facilitators are training local people so that they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver the sessions themselves to fellow members of the community.



Farhan added: “We have been overwhelmed with the response we have received from the community following the launch of the Furness Wellness Days. It’s fantastic to see that people are coming forward and want to become trainers and take it upon themselves to deliver the wellness sessions within the community.”

Along with activities aimed at rehabilitation and improving mobility, the centre provides a space for local people to meet up to chat, for example take part in a ‘natter group’ which can also incorporate knitting.

Walney cottage is connected to the Burnett Edgar Medical Centre on Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness.

Ends//

Notes to editors:

1. Better Care Together is a partnership of eleven organisations, including Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the North West Ambulance Service, Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, NHS Cumbria Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Lancashire North Clinical Commissioning Group and the two Local Authorities: Cumbria County Council and Lancashire County Council and two GP Provider Federations: North Lancashire Medical Group and South Cumbria Primary Care Collaborative working together in partnership.
2. Clinical leaders from across all organisations have designed a new clinical model of care for Morecambe Bay, through a series of design workshops and clinical. The new care models have been strongly influenced by the wide ranging engagement with stakeholders which has taken place over the past two years.

