

# Bracknell and Ascot CCG and Bracknell Forest Council:

## Self-Care Week 2015 in Bracknell Forest

### **Prevention and Self-Care in Bracknell Forest**

Bracknell Forest lies at the heart of the Thames Valley, within the county of Berkshire. The borough's population is approximately 118,000 and the health of its people is generally better than the England average. Life expectancy is increasing and is currently 81.3 years for men and 84.2 years for women, higher than the England average.

Bracknell Forest Council and Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group have pioneered a joint working approach to Prevention and Self-Care. This has had a significant impact on ensuring all individuals within Bracknell Forest have the opportunity to learn about and participate in activities that will maintain their long-term wellbeing and independence in their own homes for as long as possible. This approach has contributed to a 4.7% reduction in avoidable non-elective admissions between March 2015 and March 2016 in the Borough.

A key part of this approach is Self-Care Week, which in 2015 was run as part of the Better Care Fund's Prevention and Self-Care programme. Building on the successes of the previous Self-Care Week events held in Bracknell Forest since 2012, 2015's plan was more ambitious with larger numbers of volunteers, more free activities, an increase to the reach of promotion and communications, and in turn setting a firm foundation for the future comprehensive preventative work scheduled to take place in the Borough as part of the Year of Self-Care.

The full Self-Care Week 2015 in Bracknell Forest can be viewed here:

[http://www.bracknellandascotccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/scw2015report-final\\_web1.pdf](http://www.bracknellandascotccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/scw2015report-final_web1.pdf)

### **Self-Care Week 2015 in Bracknell Forest**

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Planning and implementation of this event was led by Matthew Clift, Joint Project Manager for Prevention and Self-Care, and saw involvement from all Council departments alongside the Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group and Bracknell Forest Public Health. Other stakeholders included Berkshire NHS Healthcare Foundation Trust, Involve (CVS), Healthwatch Bracknell Forest and the Bracknell Forest Health and Wellbeing Board.

Planning for the event started in July 2015, allowing for stakeholders to be fully engaged and lots of free events to be planned. Highlights of the week included:

- A large presence of trained volunteers throughout the week in Bracknell's main shopping

centre carrying out self-care prescribing. The Self-Care Prescription was developed as a tool to be used by health professionals and trained volunteers to engage the public in a meaningful conversation about their health and wellbeing. The volunteers were trained to talk to the public about the local support available and what that person felt would help improve their health and wellbeing. The professional and volunteers would then “prescribe” the chosen support by sticking a label with the details of that service onto the person’s prescription to take away. These services were made available free of charge.

- Bracknell Forest Council managed Children’s Centres worked with Health Visitors to present self-care themed lessons around sugar in soft drinks and activities for families.
- Buggy Walks were held for Parents and Children by the Children’s Centres.
- A calendar of free events was held throughout the week including Zumba, Yoga, Pilates, Tai-Chi, Ranger Walks, Coffee Afternoons looking at issues around social isolation, a “Boot Camp” exercise session and a Run Coaching session.
- Patient Group clusters representing the Bracknell and Ascot Clinical Commissioning Group organised and ran educational events about social isolation, end of life care and mental health.
- NHS seated exercise plans were distributed to all Sheltered Housing, Residential and Nursing Homes in Bracknell Forest so all the residents and staff could come together and take part.
- Over 200 locations across Bracknell Forest were provided with information packs in order to have a Self-Care Week 2015 presence. Locations included GP surgeries, Children’s Centres, Bracknell Urgent Care Centre, Bracknell Leisure Centre and community cafés.

Information on offer to the public, at the stands in the community, included posters and leaflets on:

- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Falls prevention
- Talking Therapies
- Befriending and Community Choices service
- Healthwatch Bracknell Forest’s “Alternatives to A&E” campaign
- Winter messages for maintaining physical and mental wellbeing.

## Conclusion

One of the notable successes of Self-Care Week was the extent and level of interest shown by members of the public; both in volunteering for the training / information session held in early November and in the Self-Care Week itself. Over 710 conversations took place with members of the public about self-care in central Bracknell alone. The Self-Care Prescription was used to initiate more in-depth conversations to signpost people to local services.

This high level of public engagement is linked to certain key factors:

- A larger Self-Care Week publicity campaign across multiple digital and print media, with the

social media plan being followed by all of the partner organisations. There was strong branding and good quality media.

- Increased number of community locations hosting Self-Care Week stands to reach more people despite a reduced budget. The more locations the better!
- Planning for the event started early, and built on the lessons learned from previous years. This is a big undertaking so it is advised to start your planning in June or July for November.
- Strong partnerships and relationships from previous Self-Care Weeks and preventative campaigns gave a stronger starting point for recruiting volunteers and getting stakeholders to take responsibility for organising events.

## Lessons learned

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Key learning points from the Week's activities, that influence future prevention & self-care activity in Bracknell Forest, include:

- Further co-ordinating communication to departments of partner organisations in publishing preventative messages all year round through their media channels.
- Continue local "Choose Better" publicity campaign including Patient Group led public educational events as part of the local calendar of events to be funded from the Prevention and Self-Care budget.
- Educational support for individuals living with long-term conditions like dementia, depression, anxiety as well as those who are socially isolated.
- Continue to work with internal departments and external providers to run a series of free physical activities at intervals throughout the year in community locations throughout Bracknell Forest.

It is recognised that self-care is not just for Self-Care Week. The Prevention and Self-Care Programme has continued to promote throughout 2016 preventative information in the Borough. Through this high level of engagement with the residents of Bracknell Forest, they are given the support needed to manage on-going medical conditions. It will ensure the public know how to eat healthily, exercise regularly, maintain emotional wellbeing and know that the right support is available to them when they need help taking care of themselves.



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