# **Self Care Forum Self Care Innovations Award 2022**

# **Award Application Form and Eligibility**

***The Self Care Forum is inviting applications of good practice and innovations in self care, personalised care, and social prescribing that have made a difference to individuals, groups, or organisations.***

**Who can apply?**

This invitation is open to everyone, whether you are an individual, a community champion, an employer, GP practice, Local Authority, school, college, business, or services organisation (public, private, or charitable). For a guide, see examples table below.

**£500 bursary**

The winner will receive a £500 bursary to spend on a self care related initiative and the top entries will be included on the Self Care Forum website to share best self care practice and excellence. The winners will be announced during the UK’s National Self Care Week (12 – 18 November) as part of its launch and promotional activity.

Closing date for admissions: **31st July 2022.**

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| Examples of possible initiatives | If specific health-related conditions were targeted, they might include |
| * 2021’s Self Care Week activities * Coronavirus related self care * Signposting to services * Protecting mental health and wellbeing * Promoting self care to the shielded population * Self care for the elderly or other specific groups * Self care introduced by employers * Local authority population or community initiatives * Pharmacy initiatives * GP initiatives * Self care education by schools, universities, or community groups such as Scouts, Guides etc * Empowering vulnerable groups | * Long-term conditions * Obesity * Diabetes * General health * Nutrition * Exercise * Mental Health * Self-treatable conditions/minor illness |

## Please use the form below to tell us about your self care initiative.

If you are typing directly into the form, do not worry if the box extends beyond the page – it will continue onto the next one.

## Title and contact details.

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| Title of Initiative Healthy Eating Group |
| Name of Organisation and Region (please state context, ie general practice, community care etc)  Heaton Road GP Surgery, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear |
| Name of person/team/individual being nominated Tracy Bell |
| Contact name for entry Tracy Bell |
| Contact email for entry t.bell4@nhs.net |
| Timeframe and dates of initiative Three groups each lasting 12 weeks. Oct-Dec 2021, Jan-March 2022, April-July 2022. A further 2 groups a year are planned going forwards. |
| Date of submission 19/07/22 |

## Problem(s) and how you tackled them.

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| What was the problem you were trying to tackle? (max 200 words)  As a GP surgery we had access to an initiative called 'Exercise on referral'. That stopped during Covid and nothing had been started in it's place. Our patients were desperate for something to combat the extra weight they had put on during Covid. I was getting multiple calls a day asking for help. I was also talking to the surgery pharmacist who was having an increasing number of patients presenting with diabetes or pre-diabetes and who was struggling to identify suitable programmes to refer them to. Many of the available weight management programmes had restrictive criteria which our patients didn't meet, or they were on-line which didn't suit them or they couldn't access. Some of them were for patients who were very overweight ie BMI over 30, but a lot of the patients asking for help wanted something to stop them reaching that point ie early intervention. If there were face to face programmes available there was a cost, even if it was just a cost to get to the venue and a lot of our patients couldn't afford it. |
| Please give a brief description of your self care innovation (max 250 words)  I found a very basic NHS 12 week printed guide focussing on exercise with some healthy eating tips. Using this as a starting point, I expanded it to a face to face 12 week programme focussing on healthy eating education and exercise. Every week had a different focus: fibre, exercise, the importance of breakfast, food cravings and snacking, drink, protein, eating out, fruit and veg, food swaps, practical cooker session, practical gym session and a motivational session to encourage participants to maintain healthy eating once the group finished. The sessions are very interactive: every week there is a small group activity. There is no cost to the participants, but everyone brings an item of healthy food every week ie a piece of fruit, tinned veg etc and someone is chosen to 'win' the bag of food. I also make something every week for them to try ie popcorn, rice crackers, banana bran loaf, crispy kale, breakfast muffins and tomato soup. We also have a virtual group walk to Paris and back with participants reporting how many steps they have done each week and progress is recorded on a chart. A major benefit for some of the group is combatting isolation. For some, this is the only time they get out of the house and socialise. Numbers are exchanged and friendships built. At the end of the first programme there was a collective loss of 28.5kg between 11 people and many have made friends and feel better equipped to maintain a healthier lifestyle. |
| What challenges or barriers were you faced with and how did you solve the problems or overcome the barriers? (max 250 words)  We needed a venue that was big enough to take up to 20 people whilst maintaining social distancing. I found a local church that were happy for us to use their hall once a week and was central to the area the surgery covers.  I received permission from the practice manager that the weekly hire cost of £20 would be covered by the surgery.  I had a request from a patient whose first language was Portuguese to attend the group. She said she would be able to understand most of the session, but her understanding was less when reading English. I translated the handouts into Portuguese, and she attended the group every week, occasionally asking me questions at the end of the session if there was something she didn’t understand. |
| Did you collaborate with other partners or organisations, if so, who were they?  For variety I invited 'experts' to deliver alternate sessions ie a hospital dietician, gym instructor (following a conversation I had with the gym manager they are looking at the possibility of passes for all Healthy Eating Group participants to encourage regular exercise), surgery pharmacist and the practice manager for the motivational session. The sessions were held in a local church which brought income into the church and was accessible to all. We have also had a cookery session delivered by a local charity. |

## Impact and outcomes

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| Who was the initiative directed at and what were the benefits to the targeted group or individuals? (max 250 words)  The initiative was directed at any patient registered with the surgery who wanted to learn about healthy eating. They did not necessarily have to want to lose weight. One man attended said he lived on anti-depressants and cigarettes. He didn’t need to lose weight but certainly needed to learn about healthy eating.  Weight loss was the motivation for many of the participants. The latest group only finished last week and one gentleman proudly told me he had lost 3.5 kg over the 12 weeks and had learnt enough to continue on his weight loss journey.  I needed help setting up at the beginning and clearing away at the end. One of the participants asked if he could help and he has been coming to every session since and I gave him the official title of Volunteer Assistant Facilitator. He recently applied for a job and was able to list me as a referee.  One lady has been coming since the first group started. She has made friends and has gained the confidence to join other groups and get out of the house more. |
| Were there further benefits to you, your colleagues, your organisation or to a wider area such as the NHS? If so, what were they? (e.g improved job satisfaction, smoother running of facility, happier service users, better use of scarce resources, cost saving)  The participants have more positive things to say about the services the surgery provides at a time when the NHS is going through a difficult time of long waiting lists and cuts to services.  Doctors have reported a reduction in appointments from some of the participants since starting the group, freeing up time for more available appointments.  The group is an efficient use of my time as I get to work with 12-20 people for 90 minutes rather that the three or four I would normally be able to work with in that time.  Hiring the church hall brought an income into the church. |

## Evidence

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| Please quantify the benefits of your initiative. (e.g. cost improvement, numbers of people helped, time saved)  There were an average of 14 participants at each session  At the end of each group an average of 10 participants reported losing weight  An average of 8 participants per group report improved mental health |
| Do you have formal or anecdotal evidence of success? (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, informal feedback?)  I have qualitative, quantitative and informal feedback. Eg.  Participants reported weight loss. Scales were available for participants to use.  Pre and post GAD – 7 scores show improved mental health.  Reports of less sugar being consumed, more fibre being eaten, better choices being made.  Participants describe taking more exercise than they used to |
| What was the cost of this initiative in terms of time, money, and/or other resources? Please be as specific as you can  For each group, 12 weeks:  £200 to hire the church hall  Approx. £50 for healthy snacks each week and items for ‘goodie bags’ given out at the final session  18 hours of social prescriber time  Photocopying paid for by Newcastle GP services. Cost unknown |

## And, finally…

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| Are there any lessons you learned or top tips that you would like to share? (max 200 words)  Two groups per year is sufficient  Bringing in additional experts has worked really well and will continue for future groups |
| Did you use any of the Self Care Forum’s resources? If so, please specify.  No |
| Please state your social media addresses including all those who were involved in the initiative.  https://www.facebook.com/EastEndPool/ |
| Why do you think this initiative deserves to win the award? (Max 100 words)  This initiative makes a lot of difference to a lot of people, when all other opportunities for similar activities has stopped. We provide free help and support for participants to regain control of their eating and to improve their knowledge of healthy food. We have improved the mental health of the majority of participants, and those who were previously isolated, are no longer. Doctors are reporting a reduction in appointments by participants, resulting in more appointments available for others. It is low cost and supportive of the local community. |
| Do you have an image, materials or weblinks to supplement your application? Please supply no more than 2 images which may also be used to promote your application if successful.  <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/health/social-prescribing-byker-heaton-doctors-23603050> |
| Your application may be chosen to be uploaded to the “best practice” page of the Self Care Forum website to share excellence so that others might use the learnings in your application to empower more people. We will also include your email address so that people may get in touch with you. If you would prefer that your application and/or email address was NOT chosen then please make it clear in the box provided below. |
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We look forward to receiving your application. Please email your completed form to:

[selfcare@selfcareforum.org](mailto:selfcare@selfcareforum.org)

**About the Self Care Forum**

The Self Care Forum supports organisations in helping their communities and service users better understand how to self care. It is the leading independent provider of best practice around self care and the ‘go-to’ place for top quality resources, current opinion, and self care interventions in the UK.It is a charity and aims to improve public health by promoting self care at national policy level. It creates resources, runs the UK-wide National Self Care Week, and supports robust research evidence.

For more information about the Self Care Forum please go to the website. [www.selfcareforum.org](http://www.selfcareforum.org).