

ShowCase

Up for It

Topic: Obesity

Organisation: NHS Kirklees; Kirklees Council

Location: Kirklees (Yorkshire and Humber)

Dates: November 2007 to June 2009

Budget: £100,000

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Overview

The Upforit project was funded by the Kirklees Partnership, which consists of internal stakeholders from Kirklees Council and NHS Kirklees. Using Communities for Health funding, the Partnership established a project in collaboration with The NSMC to halt the year-on-year rise in overweight and obesity levels among 16- to 24-year-olds attending further and higher education (FE and HE) institutions across Kirklees.

Using a 'stealth not health' approach, the project delivered various initiatives at local FE and HE institutions that focused on improving healthy eating, cooking skills and physical activity in a fun and social way, without preaching about health. These included providing food starter packs, organising high-profile events to promote new activities such as dance classes and dodgeball societies, and using social media to engage students around interactive competitions. The Upforit brand was created, which focused on meeting new friends, having fun and learning new skills, rather than getting healthy or losing weight.

Evaluation results showed some (although limited) behaviour change amongst the target audience. Nevertheless, feedback from students and stakeholders has been used to inform an ongoing second phase of the project, where several of the activities have been improved and are now being sustained by the educational institutions.

1. BEHAVIOUR

- Increase physical activity
- Cook more meals from scratch
- Increase awareness of calorific content of alcohol in relation to food and takeaways

2. CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

- Desk-based scoping research
- Focus groups with FE and HE students with a BMI of 25 or over
- Stakeholder workshops held during scoping and development stages
- Pretesting key themes and emerging propositions with students

3. THEORY

- **Stages of Change:** Aims to move people from pre-contemplation of a new behaviour, through contemplation, towards action and maintenance
- **Diffusion of Innovation:** Using early adopters to lead the way

4. INSIGHT

- Target audience appreciated that their current unhealthy lifestyles needed to change, but they lacked the motivation
- They would not engage with 'health-related' activities directly linked with the NHS
- Heavy drinking and socialising are seen as 'rites of passage' for students
- Target audience wanted fun, social activities that were not patronising and would not label them as 'fat' or 'obese'
- Lack of self-confidence is a particular issue among female target audience members
- Denial or acceptance of weight gain among males

5. EXCHANGE

Barriers:

- Lack of cooking skills
- Tight budgets and the perception that healthy food and gym memberships are too expensive

Benefits:

- Socialising with others and meeting new people
- Having fun
- Trying something new
- Looking fitter
- Boosting self-esteem
- Coping with stress

6. COMPETITION

- Hectic study and social calendars
- Laziness
- A strong takeaway and drinking culture
- A high concentration of pubs, clubs and fast food places in the town centre
- Unhealthy food options in the canteen
- Television
- The Internet

7. SEGMENTATION

- Males and females aged 16 to 18 in further education
- Males and females aged 18 to 25 in higher education

8. METHODS MIX

- Free food starter packs at Freshers' Fair
- High-profile dance and cooking events
- Discounted dance classes
- Viral video competition
- 'Come Dine with Me' initiative
- Dodgeball societies and tournament
- Health and wellbeing assessments
- 'Up for It' brand
- Campaign website and Facebook page